

HORROR ON THE  
ORIENT-EXPRESS



BOOK IV

CONSTANTINOPLE  
& CONSEQUENCES

## XII. SOFIA



# Repossession

*Wherein a sure-thing for the investigators fails bewilderingly and bloodily; in losing the Head, they risk in consequence heads even more precious to them.*

by Richard Watts

**N**O LEADS FOR SOFIA exist other than Prof. Smith's somewhat casual statement that 'one part was lost near Sofia during the Bulgarian War in 1875.' Before the investigators need start painstaking research, however, the Head comes to light in its own way, as magical things are wont to do.

### Keeper's Information

The undead Fenalik is patient no more; he has been so long away from his beloved statue that his body warps into an ever-more hideous form; his body craves release and renewal; he squirms in his coffin like an adolescent. Trusting that the investigators board the train again as soon as they have found the piece near Oraszac, he goes to Sofia ahead of them.

Situated in necropolitic splendor beneath the ancient city, Fenalik anticipates the juncture of the simulacrum and the completion of his plans. He senses that the Head, the controlling organ of the Sedefkar Simulacrum, is somewhere in the region.

For, perhaps responding in some strange way to the gathering of its parts after centuries of severance, the Head of the statue has surfaced from obscurity. Mehmet Makryat and the Brothers of the Skin are alerted as well to its discovery at much the same time as Fenalik. Chaos soon follows.

### ABOUT THIS SCENARIO

Keepers should read this chapter with an eye toward expansion. It would be a shame, for instance, to present the incident of Nikolai-the-Initiate and pass over the actual chase, even though it ends in failure. Won't some of the investigators demand to join in? The discovery of the eyeball must be prompted by something—what? How do the police react?

When the investigators climb aboard the train for Constantinople, lay out the remaining train, which should include the engine, tender, two fourgons, two or three passenger coaches, the dining car, and the *salon car*. Mentally fix where Fenalik's coffin is, and have the players choose the compartments in which they'll ride, and be sure, if the compartment is shared, that those who share it are identified. This allows the players to make their own mistakes, and to not feel put upon after disaster ensues.

The investigators have thus far gotten off easy—the impending challenge of Fenalik is by far the most dangerous single threat to the investigators in this campaign. The keeper will be sorely pressed to create a convincing narrative that keeps the investigators captains of their fate, that remains honest to the actual roleplaying situation, and that is able to keep the campaign itself alive: who wants to see everyone die now, so far along the tracks? Be alert to procedures and rationales by which the badly-wounded may cling to life.

Alone of the major cities in this campaign, no convincing map of Sofia, circa 1923, could be found.

## Conclusion

The investigators deserve to regain some Sanity, for this scenario and for the campaign. Keepers will recall that Sanity regained cannot exceed individual maximums.

- For defeating the reincarnated Makryat, 1D10 SAN each.
- If the Skinless One broke the simulacrum, 1D10 SAN each.
- When the scrolls decompose, 1D6 SAN each, for understanding that the power of the Skinless One cannot now be evoked.
- For seeing the defeat of their enemies, survivors of the Constantinople chapter receive 1D4 SAN each.

- For having completed the entire campaign, survivors receive 4D6 SAN each. They may count their remaining limbs and consider retiring from active duty before their astonishing luck finally runs out.

### GRATITUDE

In due time, crested watermarked envelopes arrive by courier at each investigator's home, and inside each is a message of appreciation written in ink on very stiff, hand-torn paper. They are from a person very well known in the British Empire. The efforts of the investigators which proved of value to the royal family have not gone unnoticed. Thereafter, survivors traveling within the Empire occasionally encounter unexpectedly deferential treatment, as some bureaucrat or official reads through his lists and encounters the high recommendations therein pertaining to these men and women.

## Alternate Outcomes

Significant chances exist that the investigators will choose an ending alternate to that desired by the authors. The keeper should give careful thought to the two possibilities sketched below, and be prepared to launch either of them the same evening as the supposedly climactic encounter.

Investigator Sanity gains for alternate outcomes must be left to the keeper.

### Mehmet Foiled

Cunning investigators may not be deceived by Mehmet's phony ritual. Makryat thus remains dead, the Skinless One remains not summoned, and the simulacrum remains unbroken.

That makes for a peaceful conclusion to the campaign, but leaves our heroes in possession of an unholy artifact which they have no means of destroying; they must continue to recast the Ritual of Cleansing every 100 hours.

An additional adventure may be required to put things right. The simplest solution is to con-

tinue to perform Rituals of Cleansing, to translate all the scrolls, and to find a way to call the Skinless One back to reclaim his simulacrum.

Future events are necessarily left to the keeper.

### If Mehmet Survived

If Makryat survived the bizarre train ride back to Paris, the keeper must engineer a different climax.

In London, Makryat makes for his shop, there to recover the Ritual of Cleansing. The investigators naturally remember the address, and can get there first, or at the same time. If Mehmet gets there first, he will leave, taking the Ritual with him. The investigators soon weaken and die from the corruption of the simulacrum, and degenerated into festering, unidentifiable puddles.

That may be too sad an ending for most, so presumably a showdown ensues.

If Mehmet escapes, but the investigators manage to save

themselves with the Ritual of Cleansing, the chase is still on. Makryat carries on with his plan to replace the Duke of York, who is vacationing at Balmoral. The authorities will help the investigators if they can prove themselves somehow.

Having Elena Costanza with them would be a big help, and she is likely to offer to go with them to protect the King's son. However, Elena will make the fatal mistake of rushing to the aid of Edward. An idea roll from an investigator may remind her that the King has more than one son. If Miss Costanza has already expired, perhaps Sir Douglas Rutherford could show up, to smooth the way.

This scenario is best left to an entire session. Mehmet will not use the statue again until he is in proximity with the Duke, so he is vulnerable. If Mehmet escapes, with or without the Sedefkar, Keepers may wish to keep him as an ever present threat in an ongoing campaign. Could this person be Mehmet? You never know.

Makryat directs the Skinless One to attack, yet the god stands unmoved. Screaming hysterically, Makryat commands that, by the power of his ownership of the Sedefkar Simulacrum, the Skinless One must obey. The Skinless One looks at him again, then turns to observe the scattered pieces of the simulacrum.

### NONE WEARS THE SIMULACRUM.

The Skinless One's observation is correct. Makryat moves to the pieces, to merge with them. "Obey me, for I am now your master!" he screams.

This is the investigators' chance to act. If they prevent Makryat from donning the simulacrum, he is unable to command the Skinless One. However, the reincarnated Mehmet cannot be killed, and the statue pieces are unbreakable.

If any investigator tries to flee with a piece, Makryat summons a dimensional shambler to fetch it back. If an investigator should manage to don the simulacrum, without performing the Ritual of Enactment, he or she instantly corrupts into slime.

The Skinless One watches impartially, arms open as if ready to receive something. If a piece of the simulacrum is thrown to the livid god, the Skinless One snaps the piece in half with a brittle crackling.

### THE USURPER IS UNWORTHY. MY GIFT IS SUNDERED.

When the first piece is broken, Makryat stops dead. His hideous cadaver collapses, lifeless forever. Pieces he might have worn clatter to the floor. If these are thrown to the waiting Skinless One, it breaks each in turn.

When the Skinless One squeezes the head of the statue, for a brief second faces flash across it: Sedefkar's, Fenalik's, Selim's, Mehmet's, the Duke's, and the investigators'. Then it crumples into the hollowness of itself, like a rotten puff-ball from an oak tree.

### THE GIFT OF SKIN IS REVOKED.

The last piece destroyed, the Skinless One departs. The broken simulacrum fragments disappear into the center of it, sucked down. Any Sedefkar Scrolls present, including the vital Scroll of the Left Hand, are tugged into the circle and also disappear, unless grabbed and held. Makryat's corpse is dragged down, and any investigators still standing in the circle begin to lose their footing as well—allow a DEX x5 roll or a luck roll to leap clear.

The investigators have won.

Keepers may decide whether or not their corruption continues to ravage them. Logically, the simulacrum gone, its effects stop, or perhaps fade or reverse over time; just as logically, a Ritual of Cleansing may be needed in order to end impairments whose spread has been halted, but whose effects continue.

In the latter case, use the following sub-section.

## Scroll of the Left Hand

Obviously the contents of this scroll are not the same as those of the false transcript; to make sure, the investigators merely need read the scroll or have it translated. Fortunately, they are a mere few minutes' taxicab ride from the British Museum, and the important translation and scholarly services which that institution commands or with which it can communicate.

Investigators with sufficient contacts, scholarly credentials, cash, or Credit Rating can have the scroll translated into English in less than a day; it may be a tense time as the hundredth hour draws near.

"Gentlemen," the translator reports, "these writings are most mad and blasphemous, and there is about them a sense of hopelessness utterly blighting to the human spirit. I have completed your commission, and I hope to your satisfaction, but I must state at the outset that I decline all further such work. I fear I shall not sleep well for many weeks."

### THE RITUAL OF CLEANSING

To learn the Ritual of Cleansing requires a successful INT x5 or less roll on D100.

This simple ritual must be performed every hundred hours by those contaminated by the Sedefkar Simulacrum. The caster must sacrifice all but one magic point; the Ritual of Cleansing halts the corruption caused by the simulacrum. To reverse any existing effects, 1 POW must also be sacrificed.

The ritual also removes any effects of the Ithaqua medallion encountered in Trieste. At the keeper's option, the ritual may occasionally be of use in future cases of possession, supernatural disease, infestation, and so forth.

### THE END OF THE SCROLLS

When the Skinless One withdraws his gift, the Sedefkar Scrolls lose the agent of their preservation, and slowly decompose. Within a week of the simulacrum's destruction, they have rotted away. Unless the investigators learned spells or made copies in that time, the knowledge is lost.



The Skinless One

Neither successful Cthulhu Mythos nor Occult rolls make sense of the syllables, which seem to be a short chant. Though the investigators may deduce that these syllables compose the Ritual of Cleansing, they do not. After reflection, Makryat foresaw that he might lose the simulacrum and his own life, and so has arranged his reincarnation as a precaution.

### THE RITUAL UNLEASHED

When the words of the transcript are spoken, they act as a conduit to bring the consciousness of Mehmet Makryat to life in the body of the investigator closest to the center of the circle—determine their positions at that moment by calling for luck rolls. The highest result, whether success or failure, determines which investigator is the target.

Match Makryat's current POW 23 against the target investigator's POW on the resistance table. If the investigator is lucky, he (or she) beats back the possession, hearing Makryat's screams inside his own skull, feeling the acid drip of insanity lap against his soul—lose 2/1D6+1 SAN, but saves the day.

More likely, however, the victim's consciousness slowly extinguishes, like a fading projection lamp—his body begins to twist and warp and turn into a hideous mockery of the Skinless One, and in his mind all goes black forever.

Before the remaining investigators, their friend dies; they can do nothing. Request his character sheet, and offer commiseration, then warn that the rest surely face doom; the ghastly outlines of Mehmet Makryat can be perceived shifting inside the livid, splattering form which was their friend.

Makryat has been reborn, but without skin. All his internal organs continually shift and writhe, slithering through and across himself as enormous worms and slugs might course through gelatin. Burning in his forehead is a third eye, which remains fixed with the other two while all else moves. Sanity loss to witness his return is 1/1D10 SAN.

If the investigators make no move, this is a last chance for Makryat to answer questions and tie up loose ends before he destroys them.

That done, shouting his barbaric triumph, Makryat calls for the Skinless One, and turns to attack the other investigators with hands like twisted claws. With each hit scored, Mehmet grows some skin. Then the floor begins to quake as the true Skinless One arrives in the circle. Sanity loss to witness the Skinless One's arrival is 1D10/1D100 SAN—everyone knows instinctively the horrible power of the god condensing before them. Behind him swirls a vortex of glowing-orange clouds and dark smoke.

## XV. LONDON AGAIN



# The Fog Lifts

*Wherein our heroes seek their salvation, confront a card played from beyond the grave, and end their journey as do all, where first they began.*

by Geoff Gillan

**T**HE INVESTIGATORS ARRIVE in London, in sore need of the Ritual of Cleansing which Mehmet Makryat said he hid here. Without it, they die in a few days or less—one hundred hours after losing ownership of the simulacrum in Constantinople.

This final encounter assumes that Makryat died in France, in “Blue Train, Black Night,” at the hands of the investigators or by those of the Jigsaw Prince. If Makryat did not die, the conclusion to the campaign is different; ideas for its presentation occur in a nearby box titled

“Alternate Endings,” which considers two important possibilities.

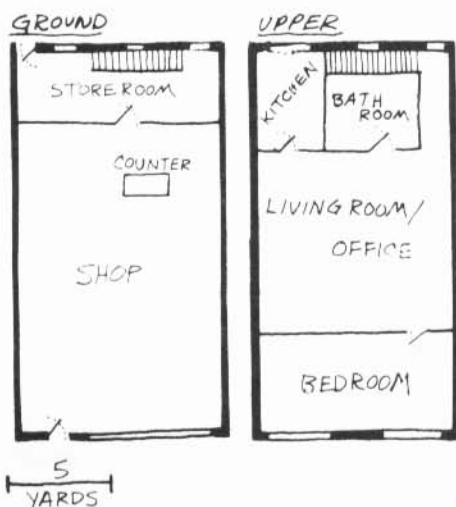
## The Antique Shop

Makryat’s shop is in Islington, its blinds drawn and seemingly as weeks before, when the campaign began. Just before he left London, well after the investigators departed, and after the time that the police entrusted the premises to Makryat’s greedy solicitor, the leader of the Brothers returned there and carefully designed a trap which could bring him back to life if his plans failed.

If they visited the shop at the beginning of the campaign, the investigators notice major changes when they creep back in.

In the office upstairs, the carpet has been rolled back and the hardwood floor beneath is carved with an intricate and somewhat disturbing pattern. On the desk is a scroll, at a glance obviously one of the Sedefkar Scrolls. It is tied with a red ribbon. A note in English is next to it.

## Makryat's Shop



**Master, as you instructed.  
The simulacrum must be present.  
Yr. servant.**

The scroll is in the same confusing combination of Arabic and Turkish as the others. Beneath it a handwritten transcript, in the same hand as the note, sets forth a number of unfamiliar words, apparently written phonetically. Fair-minded keepers may allow the investigators idea rolls, or Spot Hidden rolls, etc., to remember that they may have seen this style of handwriting before—a note in the same hand was attached to poor Beddows’ body in the British Museum.

## New Spells, continued

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spells connected with the target. The borrowed organs and members appear in the caster's hands, sodden and rotting. Bereft of vital organs, the target quickly dies.

The spell costs no Sanity unless it succeeds, in which case the rotting parts appear in the caster's hands—that costs 1D10 Sanity unless the caster has had experience as a doctor or nurse.

### Enchant Flesh

It allows the caster to preserve and ensorcel 1 SIZ point of the skin and flesh of a victim. The flesh must be cut away with an enchanted knife and immediately thereafter the spell must be cast upon the skin. The spell takes five minutes to cast and costs the user 10 magic points and 2D4 SAN. The block of flesh so-enchanted is now immune to most forms of damage (firearms still do minimum damage, enchanted weapons do normal damage). Furthermore, the flesh will age instead of the caster, adding one year to his or her life.

Unless applied with a Graft Flesh spell, the ensorcelled flesh lasts for (POW of victim) x2 weeks; after that it loses its magical properties

and goes the way of all flesh. If Grafted, the flesh lasts forever.

Nominally, then, 10-11 such flesh blocks can completely armor an average-sized human.

This obscene variant of the Enchant Item spell was created by the Duke himself, combining teachings of the Skinless One with other magicks of the Mythos. Selim would kill the Duke for this spell, if he knew he had it. Only the Duke knows Enchant Flesh.

### Graft Flesh

This spell allows the caster to graft a piece of Enchanted Flesh to his or her body, and have the flesh and its armoring effects last forever. The spell costs 10 magic points and 2D6 Sanity points to cast. The lengthy ritual involves two hours of chanting and prayer. The caster must remove from his or her own body a corresponding area of skin (costing 1D4 hit points) before the Enchanted Flesh can be Grafted. After the spell has been cast, the Enchanted Flesh properties become available to the user forever.

Only the Duke knows Graft Flesh.

## New Spells

### Create Flesh Creeper

To cast, the spell costs 1D10 SAN and 1 POW; 3 magic points must be expended for each flesh creeper to be created, and a separate star-shaped lump of raw flesh must be hacked from a living human. All flesh creepers have identical statistics.

The spell empowers the flesh to be animate and seek out a magically-designated victim. The caster must know the appearance of the target, and know his or her approximate location.

Once the victim is found, the flesh creeper leaps onto the victim's face and grafts instantly to the skin around the nose and mouth, sealing shut the victim's airways. Once in place, normal asphyxiation rules apply. After a victim dies, the creeper can detach and seek new prey until the caster's POW x minutes have passed; then the flesh creeper dies.

### Call Avatar of Skinless One

Invoking the dread 680th name of Nyarlathotep, the caster causes an artifact or living being to become possessed by an avatar of the Skinless One for one day, or until the caster shall dismiss the avatar, or die. The spell costs 6 Sanity points, 12 magic points, and 1 POW.

If the object to which the avatar is summoned is inanimate, it takes on certain characteristics of life, including its own will; if animate, it takes on certain characteristics of dead matter, including the invulnerability to pain and shock.

The characteristics of 100 CON, 15 INT, and 20 POW never change; movement is always twice that rate possible before possession. Other characteristics and functions vary with that which is possessed, including Sanity loss to see, which is never more than 1/5th in points of the avatar's apparent SIZ. See the Across Europe chapter for the portrayal of it as a locomotive.

Once called, the avatar always adopts and magnifies the tendencies of that which it is possessing; thus it makes a stronger, speedier locomotive in the adventure. But to do so, it always finds a way to cause or promote death and destruction—it is inherently evil, and only evil comes of it.

### Turn to Skin

This spell turns a non-living surface or artifact to skin and flesh; an action done primarily as religious homage to the Skinless One. The cost is 1 magic point per 10 points of SIZ, plus 1 POW, but the caster can only call on such SIZ as has previously been flayed from victims dedicate to the Skinless god, and thus in that way quantifies piety.

### Brew Dream Drug

This spell allows the magician to create a drug which facilitates entry into some world of dream. Making the drug takes about five hours. Casting the spell costs 2 Sanity points and 4 magic points. After the first dose, each additional draught made costs one additional magic point; thus to make 5 draughts would cost a total of 8 magic points.

The drinker of a draught falls asleep very quickly, for about four hours; the subjective length of the dream may be long or short, and memories of the dream may be distorted. Importantly, all who drink of the same drug together are together in the dream.

By the origin and proportion of the ingredients, the caster may make dream entry into a specific area correlative to the waking world, such as a specific city, or to any random place or universe.

A large number of herbs are used in its creation, some commonplace, others mystical and difficult to find. The end result is a thin brown liquid which acts as a mild narcotic, making the mind of the user more relaxed and therefore more in tune with the land of dreams.

This drug does not concern the Dreamlands of Earth, and cannot be used to go there, except by accident.

### Detransference

The spell costs 10 magic points and 2 POW, and takes one minute to cast. Match the caster's magic points against the target's magic points on the resistance table. If the caster succeeds, then the spell reverses any Transfer Body Part

**New Spells continued next page**



# Statistics

## MEHMET MAKRYAT (Soucard, et al.), Age 39, Leader of the Cult

STR 18 CON 16 SIZ 13 INT 18 POW 25\*  
DEX 14 APP 14\*\* SAN 0 EDU 16 HP 15

\* After casting Control Skin on Gatling and then creating the flesh creepers, Makryat's POW is 24, and he has 2 magic points left. His magic points regenerate by the third night. After calling the avatar of the Skinless One, his POW is 23, and his magic points are 12.

\*\* 9 as Soucard.

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** .38 revolver 70%, damage 1D10

Knife 90%, damage 1D6+1D4

Fist/Punch 45%, damage 1D3+1D4

Quoit (thrown) 65%, damage 1D8+1

**Armor:** after he has donned the simulacrum, Makryat is immune to the first 10 points of damage from any kinetic attack.

**Skills:** Bargain 45%, Climb 50%, Cthulhu Mythos 30%, Disguise 38%, Dodge 60%, Drive Automobile 40%, English 60%, Fast Talk 45%, French 45%, Hide 80%, History 25%, Library Use 40%, Linguist 20%, Listen 70%, Occult 35%, Oratory 45%, Pick Pocket 25%, Pharmacy 20%, Psychology 40%, Skin Human 90%, Sneak 75%, Spot Hidden 85%, Throw 70%, Track 40%, Treat Poison 30%, Turkish 90%.

**Spells:** Animate Flesh Thing\*\*, Call Avatar of Skinless One\*, Contact Skinless One\*\*, Control Skin\*\*, Create Flesh Creeper\*, Fist of Yog-Sothoth, Melt Flesh\*\*, Skin Walker, Summon/Bind Dimensional Shambler, Summon/Bind Fire Vampire, Transfer Body Part\*\*, Turn To Skin\*.

\* new spells;

\*\*new spells found at the end of the Constantinople chapter.

## FLESH CREEPER

STR 3 CON 3 SIZ 1 INT 5 POW 1  
DEX 15 Move 12 HP 2

**Damage Bonus:** -1D6, but not applicable.

**Weapon:** Seal Mouth 90%, asphyxiation damage—use rulebook drowning rules.

**Armor:** a flesh creeper must either be cut off or reduced to zero hit points, but split the damage from successful attacks between the creeper and the victim.

**Skills:** Find Designated Target 99%, Leap Onto Face 75%.

**Sanity Loss to See:** 1/1D4 SAN; having one stuck on your face costs a further 0/1D4 SAN.

## 12 BROTHERS OF THE SKIN, Age About 30

*These cruel men are all insane, so-rendered by their evil desires. They may decide to capture and not to kill targets who seem to have remarkable beauty, grace, ability to leap or climb, and so forth—attributes which seem worth stealing. These men are of various backgrounds and races.*

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Weapons:** Fist/Punch 50%, damage 1D3+1D4

Grapple 45%, damage special  
Stiletto 55%, damage 1D4+1D4

**Skills:** Dodge 25%, Follow Orders 45%, Hide 30%, Listen 40%, Skin Human 35%, Sneak 30%, Spot Hidden 40%, Track 25%.

**Spells:** Control Skin\*, Turn to Skin\*, plus Transfer Body Part\* at the keeper's option. \*new spells.

	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	POW	HP
One	16	9	13	14	14	11
Two	15	13	11	14	11	12
Three	15	14	12	14	11	13
Four	13	12	15	13	11	14
Five	15	14	13	13	11	14
Six	14	17	15	13	10	16
Seven	16	15	9	12	8	12
Eight	11	13	16	12	6	15
Nine	15	9	12	12	9	11
Ten	13	11	12	11	10	12
Eleven	11	11	14	11	7	13
Twelve	13	8	13	11	9	11

At the keeper's option, particular Brothers may have dead men's parts, heightening some skills. Here are some ideas:

**Arms:** raise STR to 18, add Grapple 60%, damage special.

**Ears:** raise Listen to 60%.

**Eyes:** raise Spot Hidden to 60%, can see in the dark.

**Face:** change APP to anything from 3 to 18.

**Fingers:** raise DEX to 16.

**Hands:** raise STR to 16, add Scimitar 50%, damage 1D6+2+1D4.

**Legs:** raise Move to 9, add Kick 50%, damage 1D6+1D4.

**Tongue:** can chant in nonhuman languages.

**Sanity Loss:** for confronting a Brother with obvious sewn-on additions, 0/1. If those additions can be identified as coming from a friend or acquaintance, 0/1D4.

## DUC JEAN FLORESSAS des ESSEINTES, Age 90, Duke/Jigsaw Prince

STR 12 CON 14 SIZ 15 INT 18 POW 19  
DEX 13 APP 15(2) SAN 0 EDU 20 HP 15

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** Knife 75%, damage 1D6+1D4

Sword Cane 70%, damage 1D6+2+1D4

**Armor:** his body is enchanted. Melee attacks and weapons slide off his flesh without causing damage. Bullets striking him do minimum damage. Enchanted weapons do normal damage. His head, however is vulnerable—any attack result which is 10% or less of the attacking skill percentage does normal damage to the head, regardless of the kind of attack.

**Skills:** Credit Rating\* 90%, Cthulhu Mythos 30%, Dreaming 80%, Dodge 40%, English 70%, Fast Talk 78%, French 90%, German 80%, Hide 50%, Occult 75%, Oratory 55%, Sneak 45%.

\* The police of various cities suspect him of many crimes, all unprovable.

**Spells:** Animate Flesh Thing\*\*, Brew Dream Drug\*, Control Skin\*\*, Detransference\*, Dominate, Enchant Flesh\*, Enchant Item, Enchant Knife, Graft Flesh\*, Melt Flesh\*\*, Shrivelling, Voorish Sign.

\* new spells; \*\*new spells found at the end of the Constantinople chapter.

**Sanity Loss:** lose 2/1D6+1 for seeing the Prince's body uncovered.

nerable and likely to take a few people with him. A successful Spot Hidden roll suggests that he is neither very strong nor very agile. The investigators might correctly deduce that a group melee attack could simply overpower him. They could Grapple him down, or make a more deadly attack. They might simply lock him in a compartment, since he's too fat to squeeze out the window. This would keep him occupied until he Dominates the guard or some passerby, is freed.

Their best bet is a cold one—to push him off the train while it's still moving.

## Paris at Dawn

The engine ceases to be the Locomotive Beast the moment Makryat disintegrates, and arrives in Paris hours before it should, ending the strangest Orient Express trip in history. The engine stands steaming at the Gare de Lyon, while the passengers and crew stream from the train, pale and stumbling. If there are wounded or insane, hospital services are requested; if there are dead, the police arrive as well. Managers and directors from Wagons-Lits descend to reassure, to compensate, and to commiserate. If he survived, the Chef de Brigade is suspended, investigated, and finally reinstated and commended.

If any investigators went insane after Milan, they are placed in Charenton unless their companions make other arrangements. Screaming investigators who refuse to go, reinforce their insanity in the minds of the authorities. If they do damage or injury while resisting, criminal commitment may result.

Now that the train has stopped, and Makryat is dead, remaining investigators can thoroughly search the train. The Chef de Brigade or his surviving assistant helps this time; after what they have seen and been through, they now trust the investigators.

Inside the welding underneath the Calais coach are the pieces of the simulacrum, three of the Sedefkar Scrolls, plus false passports and other papers for Mehmet Makryat.

Inside a large oilskin envelope, newspaper clippings and documents deal with the Duke of York. There is a weekly summary of his movements. If Elena Costanza sees these, she is puzzled: she had assumed that Edward

was in peril. She makes a full report to British intelligence.

## The Scrolls

The same difficulties of translation and comprehension exist for these scrolls as for the Scroll of the Head. That scroll is not necessary to understand these.

### THE SCROLL OF THE BELLY

This is Sedefkar's mad litany to the Skinless One, a document insane enough to make the reader's skin crawl with revulsion. It confers 7% Cthulhu Mythos, and costs 2D6 SAN to read. If reading it makes someone insane, he or she develops a phobia concerning his or her naked skin, and thereafter goes clothed top to bottom, regardless of weather, comfort, or bath.

### THE SCROLL OF THE LEGS

Here are many of the spells of the Skinless One. Time needed to learn the spells is left up to the keeper; some could be mastered quickly, some would take years. Most of these spells are summarized in the Constantinople chapter. The spells are Animate Flesh Thing [x3], Call Skinless One [x1], Contact Skinless One [x2], Control Skin [x5], Create Flesh Creeper [x2], Create Skin Beast [x1], Curse of the Putrid Husk [x1], Detransference [x5], Melt Flesh [x4], Prepare Corpse [x4], Skin of the Sedefkar [x2], Skin Walker [x4], Transfer Body Part [x3], Turn To Skin [x3]. Spell time-to-learn multipliers are appended.

### THE SCROLL OF THE RIGHT HAND

This scroll contains the Ritual of Enactment. It can be learned with a successful INT x2 roll; make the roll once for every month of study. This ritual empowers the Sedefkar Simulacrum. Any person who dons the simulacrum without performing this ritual instantly corrupts into viscous matter. The ritual is long and complex, requires the sacrifice of 10 points of POW, and costs 1D100 SAN.

## Conclusion

The investigators are still bound; their bodies will continue to corrupt until they acquire the Ritual of Cleansing, or until 100 hours pass and they dissolve into slime. Their salvation or damnation occurs in the next chapter, the final one of the campaign.

### SANITY REWARDS

For having destroyed Mehmet Makryat, each investigator receives 1D8+2 SAN; for having destroyed the Jigsaw Prince, 1D6 SAN each; for having recovered the Sedefkar Simulacrum, 1D3 SAN each.



"Gentlemen, we owe you our lives."

Inside the Prince's car, the investigators encounter luxury greater than the Orient Express. Huge tables sag beneath mounds of suckling pig, joints of beef, sweetmeats, fresh breads, and the finest wines and ales. Haunting melodies emerge from behind decorous tapestries. All is bright and clean, and the servants attentive and cordial.

Stairs lead up and out of sight to rooms and towers above, and if the keeper wishes, additional halls can connect laterally on this level as well; the cathedral car can expand its interior to be as large as desired.

On his high throne the Prince waits, wearing only a satin loincloth. The investigators see his true form for the first time: Sanity loss 2/1D6 SAN to see the ghastly seams and slumps between different original bodies, and the livid scars marking where Graft Flesh has been performed.

His hideous bulk lounging upon a gem-encrusted throne, the Prince greets the investigators warmly. He assures them that all past transgressions have been forgiven. He wants the statue, nothing more. Presumably the investigators want to live. Do we have a deal?

If the bargain is struck, the Prince is unbearably smug. "My good friend Selim did not teach his arrogant son everything. A simple spell will show you which aboard the train he is, and then it will destroy him." The spell is Detransference, discussed with the Prince's statistics at the end of this chapter, and quickly taught to any investigator who receives a successful INT x5 roll.

This spell was jealously guarded by Selim, to keep the Brothers firmly controlled by him. The Prince is no fool, and has scrupulously avoided using any Transfers on himself—his longevity stems from his Enchanted Grafted Flesh. However, the Prince is not interested in exposing himself to Makryat's power: he is safe while in the cathedral car, and so he wished the investigators to come to him.

## Attacking Makryat

Even if they do not intend to bring the simulacrum to the Prince, the investigators should be eager to learn how to get rid of Makryat. The Prince will not reveal that each casting costs the caster 2 POW; even if the investigators ask directly, he dissembles or lies outright, though he does suggest that the spell exhausts the caster and that no one should cast it more than once a day.

Having learned the spell, they can test it on a suspect. The visible portion of the spell consists of two elaborate hand gestures, followed by a three-syllable word—the whole takes about five seconds to complete. Non-Makryats feel nothing and are totally unaffected.

Makryat has become aware of the Jigsaw Prince, but not of his intentions. He intends to play the skins-game

once more, now trying to capture an investigator and assume his or her identity. Failing that, he takes Elena Costanza instead, though the keeper may wish to keep Miss Costanza as a reserve, if the investigators deserve her.

En-skinned, then, as someone, he/she then accuses the Chef de Brigade of being Makryat. Players should be careful, even though Makryat is low in magic points, if exposed, Makryat attempts to flee, but does not leave the train. Cornered, he offers to tell them where the simulacrum is if they let him go, but by this he intends merely to buy some time—they cannot get at the undercarriage until the train stops, and he will lie to avoid dismissing the avatar.

Presumably the investigators will not now trust a man who has so mislead them and ended Dr. Smith's brilliant career in so horrifying and callous a manner.

The spell applied, Makryat squeezes apart, like putty. Makryat dead, the avatar vanishes, and the engine slows as the fire dies and the drive valves close off. The train halts somewhere not far from Paris, leaving the Swiss, Italian, and French border police a-buzz far behind. Perhaps the investigators take that opportunity to recover the simulacrum, or they wait—see the sub-section "Paris at Dawn" for a little more information.

### IF MEHMET MAKRYAT SURVIVES

Escaping, Makryat steals another identity and gets away with the help of Parisian cult Brothers. The Simplon-Orient Express steams in, hours ahead of schedule, well before dawn. Perhaps by car if no trains are yet running, Makryat then heads for Calais, to cross for London and his shop there.

## About the Prince

If the investigators are silly enough to return to the Prince's cathedral, he demands they fulfill their bargain. If they refuse, he leaps up and lunges for them. As they are in the Dream realm, his pursuit becomes like a nightmare; they run in slow motion, with the Prince closing on them, drawing inexorably nearer, so that they seem unable to make it out in time. But they do, slamming the door behind themselves—in the Prince's livid face, so to speak. The cathedral car vanishes.

If they don't return to the carriage, it vanishes all the same, soon after Makryat dies.

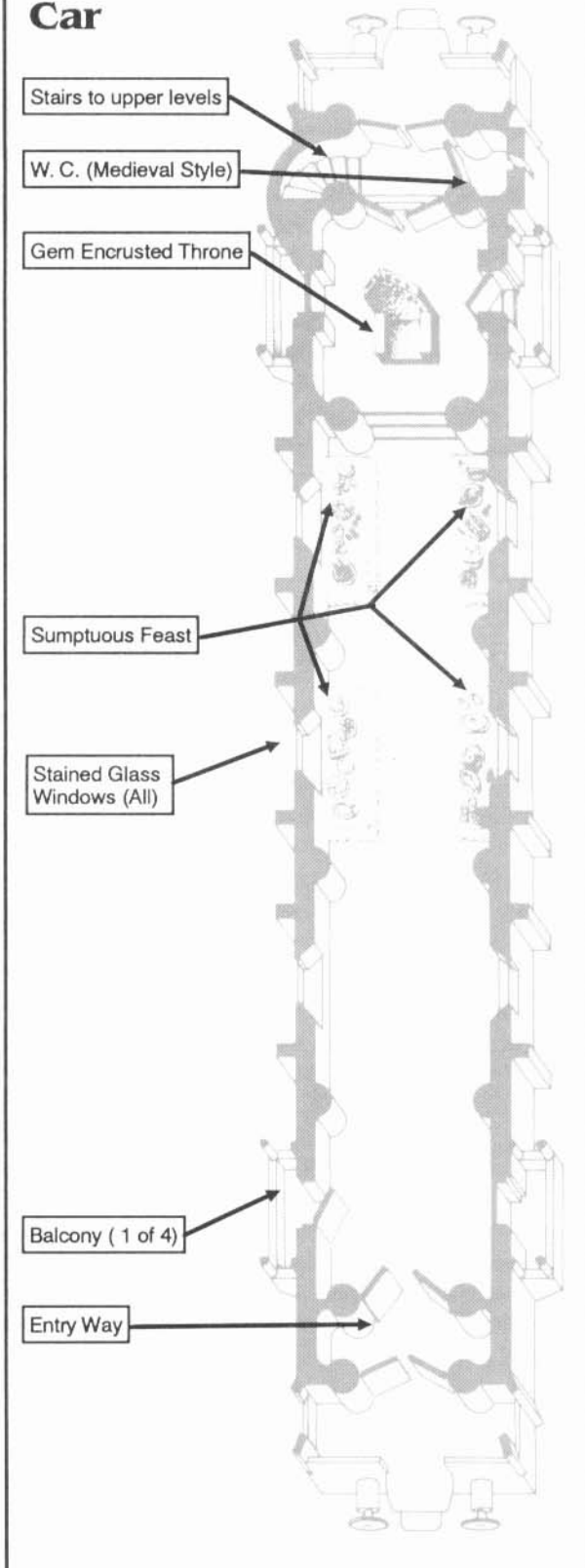
Whether or not the cathedral car vanishes, the Prince stays on the train if Makryat is dead. He wants the simulacrum and will kill whoever interferes. Play this ruthless bully as nastily as possible.

In a fight at close quarters, the investigators can win if they choose to shoot at his head, but he is mostly invol-



*The Cathedral Car*

## Floorplan of Cathedral Car



### THE LOCOMOTIVE BEAST, Avatar of the Skinless One

STR 80 CON 100 SIZ 100 INT 15 POW 20  
DEX 10 HP 100 Move 20 on rails only

**Damage Bonus:** +10D6.

**Weapons:** Spit Flame 50%, damage 1D6 plus ignites Flesh Tentacle 50%, damage 1D10 and sweeps off train without successful DEX x5.

Crush Under Wheels 100%, damage 10D6\*

\* Target must be on tracks; a successful Dodge or Jump roll gets the victim to safety.

**Sanity Loss to See:** 1D3/1D20.

A successful know roll establishes that damaging the avatar enough to stop it would probably derail the whole train. Since their speed is now nearly 60 miles an hour, most people aboard would die. Finding Makryat, at which they have been failing for days, promises better results. Presumably they re-enter the train's interior, leaving the whole to hurtle as it will through the night.

If they think to look, all watches and clocks have stopped.

## The Cathedral Car

Could things get worse? Yes. They reach and pass through Lausanne like a thunderbolt. As the west edge of town flashes past, all feel a disconcerting hesitation or suspension, as though the entire train had decided to wait just a moment, and then to roar on.

When the train rounds the next bend, they see that an extra car has been added.

If the Orient Express car plans are laid out, add the new one wherever opportune. If the investigators are already comfortable with a particular layout, then make it a new tail-end car, so that unexpected problems of how to get there from here don't arise.

The new car is a weird one, like a tiny gothic cathedral on wheels, and appears to be made of stone. Peculiar buttress-like structures hang off the sides for no apparent purpose; the lighted windows are stained glass. Above the rush of the rails comes the tolling of a bell, strangely distorted, as if from a vast distance. The faint smell of burning incense wafts to them. Surely this new phenomenon is worth investigating.

The avatar and the simulacrum have sent shockwaves through the magical aether. Responding, the Jigsaw Prince has transferred a chunk of Dream Lausanne to the train, and there, secure until the distances become too great and his magic points run out, the Prince waits enthroned for the investigators to come to him. He can sense that the statue is on board somewhere, and he wants to discuss a deal with the investigators. If they hesitate, a young page brings cordial greetings and offers a truce, so that a meeting can take place.

Paris coach and attempt to search the Calais coach for it as the train crosses Lombardy.

#### DAY, 9:32 A.M.

The Orient Express departs Trieste. Between here and Milan, Makryat makes no move, preferring to wait for darkness to try the next assault, which he is sure will clear his own timetable for London. Keepers should have sufficient tasks running the various non-player-characters and defending against investigator accusations.

Investigator and player paranoia should be running high. If there is any information that must be given to only one investigator, for instance, take that player aside to do so, and let the others begin to wonder if perhaps one of them is not now playing Mehmet Makryat. If the keeper likes, have an investigator who goes insane during the trip back come to believe that she or he is the real Mehmet, and then have him or her begin to randomly or episodically plot against the companion investigators. A good roleplayer could be inspired by this option.

If possible, resolve fellow-passenger quirks and the loose ends of such plots before nightfall. After the train leaves Milan, these matters will be distractions.

#### DAY, 4:10 P.M.

The Orient Express arrives in Milan. Five Brothers of the Skin meet Makryat here. If by luck the investigators are tailing the right suspect, they see the meeting. These cultists are Italian; they book aboard the second-class car.

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## Night Three

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**D**ARKNESS FALLS as the train leaves Milan. The five cultists wait until the Express reaches the mountain grades, which it slowly climbs, and then open a window and clamber out onto the roof of the train. Unseen, they easily move up to the engine. There they attack and kill the crew, taking control.

Investigators looking out the window have a Spot Hidden chance to notice a motionless fireman beside the tracks who has just been pitched out of the cab. When the track curves, so that they can see the front of the train, all observe that an extraordinary blue-white nimbus now clings to the engine. The Brothers are casting the spell Turn To Skin on the locomotive. Slowly it begins to transform.

Meanwhile, the train unexpectedly picks up speed after a few jolts and shudders that astonish the Wagons-Lits staff and any experienced passengers.

Encourage the players to understand that this may be Makryat's strongest effort and that they are now in danger of losing everything.

The upward grades continue. The investigators find it easy to climb onto the roof, and to go forward to the engine—no rolls are needed. The coal car offers convenient cover, if any have brought firearms. The cultists have just finished casting their spell; for a surprise hand-to-hand attack, require a successful Sneak roll or DEX x3.

The train will enter the seemingly endless Simplon Tunnel (nearly 20 kilometers long) in the thick of the combat. At all times then, investigators or cultists who stand up on car roofs or who lean out too far, or who fall from the train risk (luck roll) striking the surrounding walls and being swept away (lose 5D6 hit points).

When the fight ends, the Express emerges from the Simplon tunnel into Switzerland.

The speed of the train is now faster than usual. Ahead, switches are thrown magically to clear the way, as plodding freights on the same track are shunted aside to make way for the untimely Express. It is now running ahead of schedule. Accelerating, it makes no more stops, scheduled or unscheduled: it is no longer the Simplon-Orient Express, and no ordinary human can control it.

## A New Development

Regardless of how the cultist battle goes, Makryat has meanwhile called an avatar of the Skinless One to inhabit the locomotive. After this, his POW drops to 23; he has 12 magic points. Make clear that the changes start after the Brothers in the cab have been eliminated, so that the connection of effect to the still-unidentified Makryat seems logical.

Now the locomotive physically changes, as the Avatar takes effect. The engine's iron, steel, and brass become rubbery flesh, thicker and tougher than whale hide. The open firebox door becomes a ravening maw which spits flame and consumes all that is thrown into it. Its controls are now massive, pulsing veins and tendrils, and its gauges glinting, leering eyes.

If an investigator climbs around to the front of the engine, he or she sees the horrific appearance shown on the front of the *Orient Express* box, completed by a three-lobed burning eye which becomes the only headlight. Seeing this, a successful Cthulhu Mythos roll confirms this as an evocation of Nyarlathotep.

Nothing the investigators do here much affects what the engine has become. There are no working controls. The living locomotive is not physically invulnerable; in fact, it slows every time the investigators shoot it or seriously stab it, but then it speeds up again—it is too massive for them to hope to disable it.

Call for luck rolls. Investigators receiving failures notice a dim mountainous shape moving through the gloom. It is Baba Yaga's hut, pacing alongside the steadily-moving train, its bizarre chicken legs pumping, keeping even with the coach.

### MIDNIGHT

Baba Yaga's harassment ceases. In the meantime, investigators may not have been too preoccupied with the appearance of Baba Yaga to have seen Lord Margrave and Jack Gatling leave the dining car or the salon car, and go to Margrave's compartment—or, if Makryat is still Soucard, then he beckons Gatling with a message—or, if Makryat is still Doña del Garda, then he tempts Gatling with the same scandalous story from her perspective.

Gatling, sure he is onto something good, ignores any investigator cautions. Once alone and secure in the private compartment, Makryat clubs the columnist unconscious, something many have wanted to do in the past, and binds him firmly. After casting Control Skin to seal his mouth, he wakes Gatling and cuts six chunks of flesh from Gatling's belly. With these he creates six flesh creepers. Those prepared, he waits until he believes the investigators are asleep.

### NIGHT, 1:13 A.M.

Departing Zagreb, the train reaches the Italian border in two hours.

When only the click of the tracks and the snores of passengers can be heard, Makryat unleashes the flesh creepers. Notes for these ghastly little things occur at the end of this chapter. All have 2 hit points each.

Run this attack fast and furiously. The creepers are tiny—they could be anywhere—they dart out of nowhere—they suck onto people's faces. Give the investigators almost no time to react before the next one strikes. If the flesh creepers win, they continue to make attacks until they die

He, in the meantime, returns Gatling to his compartment the moment that the investigator leaves it, and removes the Control Skin. Gatling, having witnessed the ritual and his own part in it, is insane. He rolls about in his berth moaning, "They came from me, they came from me." He does not remember who did this, nor thinks to ask for medical help. Only if the investigators examine

him, do they learn that six star-shaped lumps of flesh have been cut out of him, all with the same shape as the tiny attackers. Sanity cost to realize this is 0/1 SAN.

### NIGHT, 3:17 A.M.

If investigators survive the flesh creeper attack, Elena Costanza reveals to the investigators what she knows: a person named Mehmet, who has affiliation with some members (traitors and heretics in Constantinople) of an organization called the Brothers, is planning to assassinate the King of England's son. If the keeper feels there is a more appropriate time for this information to be revealed, then they should use it. By now Miss Costanza may be demanding explanations of the strange events happening; to get some answers, she is prepared to reveal some information herself.

### NIGHT, 3:23 A.M.

At Ljubljana, Makryat lures away Sir Robert Harrow and, with the help of any remaining Brothers, leaves behind the skin of his last victim as well as that of Harrow's corpse. He does this on the platform and hides the remains well. Now dressed in Harrow's skin, he sends a telegram to Milan whose contents are mostly identical to the first one he sent. This time he is very careful about being followed.

### NIGHT, 4:05 A.M.

Beyond Ljubljana, the Serbian police begin their exit check, then the Italians begin their entry procedures.

Some time later, the train passes into Italy. Szorbic comes to the investigators and tells them he knows they are looking for a killer. He thinks Groenig is the murderer. He tells the investigators he saw Groenig with the last person they suspected; he is convincing enough that a Psychology roll cannot detect that he is lying.

If awakened, Groenig is affable and slightly bemused by any outlandish claims, but threatening if crossed or pushed too far. He calls the Chef de Brigade, who has no sympathy for the investigators and their wild stories.

Szorbic enters the picture if the investigators have made loud claims about someone who is changing identities—otherwise Szorbic attempts to kill Groenig in Trieste, as he has planned.

## Day Three

The train arrives in Trieste at about 8:30 in the morning. If any of the investigators slept after Szorbic came to their compartment, the Iloigor at Postumia disturbed their dreams and took their magic points.

If the investigators did not give back the medallion, then Iloigor cultists take compartments in the Trieste-



"Mon Dieu! Another Scream!"

lives, despite the victory on the outward journey. Do nothing to soothe such fears.

If investigators have been attacked in some way, especially by Makryat's Brothers from Svilengrad, Elena Costanza approaches the investigators sometime today.

Breakfast is served. Brave or lazy investigators can order that breakfast be brought to their compartments, where they can eat alone.

#### DAY, 11:15 A.M.

At Sofia, Jack Gatling jumps off the train and races to send a telegram. Since he waits until the last moment, there's no chance to learn the contents of the message. It is in fact a tattling cable to his newspaper confirming the affair of Countess de Bruessy and Kurt Groenig.

This is another chance for the Brothers to assassinate one or more investigators. The train departs at 11:50 A.M.

#### DAY, 12:48 P.M.

Having crossed the Yugoslav border, the Orient Express departs Tzaribrod and the Serbian customs police. The Brothers of the Skin should have killed or wounded an investigator by now, though they make no obvious attacks aboard train. Let the investigators take the offensive if they wish; it will make them feel better for a while. In any case, they should continue to be interested in spotting Makryat.

- If Makryat is still Soucard, they overhear the Chef de Brigade complain that Soucard is ignoring his duties.
- If Makryat is Doña del Garda, then perhaps Lord Margrave is heard in the salon car complaining of his paramour's inattention, or her maid notices some change in her, or perhaps the investigators notice how clumsily she has repaired her cosmetics.

#### DAY, 2:28 P.M.

At Crveni Krst, the Brothers kill another investigator if they can. If they fail, and if Makryat feels his Doña is under suspicion, he/she wanders off with Lord Michael and comes back wearing Margrave's skin—having, with Brothers' help, murdered and skinned the poor man in the station toilet. He slaps himself on the face so that his cheek is red, and dresses a Brother in del Garda's clothes. He has the fake del Garda drive off in a taxi, then exclaims loudly about their lovers' quarrel in the salon car.

Jack Gatling hears about this within minutes, and Makryat/Margrave suggests they talk about it tonight, in his compartment.

#### DAY, 2:58 P.M.

The train underway again, the journey to Belgrade takes approximately four hours. In addition to the ones detailed

below, the keeper might improvise additional re-encounters, if desired.

If Jack Gatling meets with Margrave/Makryat, as suggested previously, he jokes about the impending meeting to his investigator compartment-mate.

## Night Two

They near Belgrade. In the outskirts, the investigators notice a little white cottage, clean and neat and in good repair, squatting among the ruins like a tiger ready to leap (lose 0/1 SAN to see this).

If any investigators descend to the platform, a swarm of black chickens attacks, exactly as happened in the Belgrade chapter; check there for statistics and tactics. These black birds come from nowhere, and after 1D6 rounds vanish as quickly. With a successful idea roll, alert investigators notice the number of attackers suddenly increased when the investigators were close to the Calais coach (where the simulacrum is hidden).

What are Baba Yaga's intentions? When will she strike again? Let the investigators spend an uncomfortable hour here. No cultists attack, because Makryat senses the force of the new attacker, and hopes she can do the job for him. He waits. He has other plans, for later tonight.

The train pulls out at 7:35 P.M.

#### NIGHT, 8:04 P.M.

Dinner is served. Only a few diners precede the investigators. After they are seated, the Maitre D'Hôtel ushers in an elderly woman and places her nearby. As she straightens up, the investigators see that she is Baba Yaga. Her baleful stares doom the meal—everything is tasteless and cold. Complaints to the Maitre D'Hôtel meet stern assurances that the Duchess should indeed be here. A successful Psychology roll suggests

that he is under compulsion to act on Baba Yaga's behalf.

If the investigators flee the dining car, they find her standing outside one of their compartments, waiting. If they enter another compartment and shut her out, they find her staring in at them through the train window as it races through the frosty night. As they close the curtains, they find her image fused through the glass.



*Come, gentlemen, the Countess Escorzy is our frequent guest. Please, I beg you to desist*



**NIGHT: 12:01 A.M.**

The train continues to the border, halting at Sinekli as Turkish and Interallied police board to make exit checks of passports and visas.

If investigators charge Soucard with the poisoning, the Chef de Brigade is outraged. Soucard is a man of long and faithful service and he protests mightily at his being held. The police know the Orient Express staff well, and will require significant evidence before acting on the tip. Soucard returns to his duties.

**NIGHT: 12:19 A.M.**

The train rumbles on slowly for a few minutes, then stops for a moment as the Greek police enter. If the investigators have made any trouble, the Chef de Brigade hints that the police look especially closely at the investigators' documents—he is hoping for an excuse to put them off the train.

**NIGHT: 12:40 A.M.**

If Makryat feels he has been spotted before Svilengrad, he creeps into one of the Calais coach cabins and takes the identity of a passenger—perhaps the Doña del Garda, as she has a single compartment. After skinning her, Makryat dresses in the skin and silently drapes Soucard's skin in the compartment of the investigator who was most vocal against him.

In the meantime, Makryat dumps what's left of Doña del Garda out her window. Those investigators who are awake have a Spot Hidden chance to see the body fall; sleeping investigators notice nothing. If anyone sees the body fall and reports it or pulls the emergency cord, Makryat's substitution may be understood, since del Garda's recovered body and Soucard's discovered skin do not match. Anticipate this development. Chances are that the investigators throw away Soucard's skin as incriminating and thus fail to press their case just when most opportune.

The point is important, because the discovery of a murder here logically halts the train while either the Bulgarian or the Greek police (choose one side or other of the border, for jurisdiction) initiate a stultifying investigation—not a good way to start the climax of the campaign. Keepers unready to entertain such a possibility neither plant Soucard's skin nor allow detection when Makryat rids himself of his female victim.

If he has a choice, the Chef de Brigade prefers to discover a murder in Italy, or points further west, where courts and police are more likely to make rapid concessions to the demands of passengers and train.

When Soucard disappears, the Chef de Brigade fears the worst, for Soucard has given long and impeccable service. He launches a thorough search of the train, though one calculated not to disturb the passengers in the

slightest. Investigators who have somehow already gained the trust of the Chef de Brigade might be accepted as volunteers in the search, and thereby gain access to areas normally prohibited to them—such as a baggage car. Lacking evidence, however, the Chef de Brigade has no reason to assume that Soucard is dead, and so the train continues on its progress.

Another conductor assumes Soucard's duties.

**NIGHT, 3:20 A.M.**

Arriving in Svilengrad, the Bulgarian police board for inspection. Countess de Bruessy takes the occasion to emerge from Groenig's compartment, proceed to the water closet, then go on to the compartment she shares with the Count, who is snoring away. It is no one's business, of course, but if investigators are in the passageway and make gallant gestures, she smiles amusedly. If, however, Jack Gatling looks archly at her at breakfast, she assumes that they gossiped about her to him, and thereafter ignores all the investigators.

The Brothers requested in Makryat's telegram board second-class; unless the investigators keep watch on the station platform, they do not know that anyone has boarded. In fact, however, the Bulgarian police are looking for some Turkish nationalists agitating among the border population; if the investigators bring these Turks to their attention, the investigators have a luck roll's chance of seeing them detained and causing them to miss the train.

**NIGHT, 4:35 A.M.**

As the train departs Svilengrad, Makryat is in someone or other's skin, and he/she tries to get to the second-class coach and alert the cultists about the investigators.

If possible, the cultists are to ambush the investigators while their targets stroll some station platform, stretching their legs. Makryat is keen not to delay the Orient Express, since he has his own timetable to keep.

Once an investigator can be isolated, he or she is stabbed or strangled, as inconspicuously as time allows, and then the corpse is hidden in shadows. Since the Orient Express staff handles the paperwork as national boundaries are crossed and no roll is taken other than by each coach conductor, no one may notice anything amiss for hours.

## Day Two

Before Sofia, dawn comes. Guardian or sleepless investigators see wolves pace alongside the slow-moving train, their breath clearly visible in the chill air. The investigators may suspect that Fenalik or another vampire still

**ENGINE & TENDER**

The engine is the only other place the investigators might choose to search. The searing heat of its innards makes it mostly inaccessible. The tender can be reached by crawling along the roof of the train, and the coal could be sorted through and the water tank explored, but these extended tasks could not be hidden from staff.

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## A Little Train of Horrors

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**W**HAT FOLLOWS IS a chronology of the adventure which evolves as the train chugs west across Europe, and while the investigators work frantically to find the simulacrum.

Some events hinge on the actions of the investigators, but most will occur despite their best efforts. Some scheduled events are courtesy of Wagons-Lits, others are not.

### Day One

The Simplon-Orient Express departs Constantinople's Sirkecki station at exactly 4:30 P.M. and steams slowly around the southern periphery of Stamboul, bound for Paris, Calais, and London. Investigators spend the time in playing Spot-the-Mehmet, in settling in, and in meeting their compartment-mates.

The investigators will almost certainly attempt to switch their compartment assignments, to place two investigators per compartment. Resist their efforts, at least for the first night, unless the players present very good cause.

As on the journey out-bound, the conductor of each car takes possession of the passports, visas, customs forms, and other entry or departure documents required of passengers, so that the guests of the Orient Express are not disturbed by things so petty as national borders. This allows Makryat, as Soucard, to learn a bit about his foes. These documents are passed on to the Chef de Brigade, who accompanies or delegates someone else to accompany the border police, as they satisfy themselves car by car. The ability to sleep through border crossings is one of the reasons travel via the Orient Express is so prized.

All trains are sealed while border inspections occur—don't be rigid, but cause the investigators to deal with the problem as it rises logically.

### Night One

On this train, dinner seating is by coach. With stealthy guile and considerable luck, since his new persona has many duties elsewhere and absolutely none in the dining car, Makryat has arranged that a carafe of water poisoned with antimony be placed on the investigators' table. Antimony is a colorless, odorless poison.

He cannot poison their meals since he does not know what they will order, nor is he (as Soucard) even allowed in the kitchen, and the investigators' wines or mineral water will be opened for them at the table. If anyone specifically drinks the water, then normal poisoning rules apply (the poison is POT 10—match that number against the drinker's CON on the resistance table. If the investigator is overcome, vomiting, nausea, and cramps set in within an hour. If the investigator receives a successful luck roll, in the process of regurgitation, he or she vomits up the poison and suffers no further ill health.

The Wagons-Lits staff is horrified, and the Maitre d'Hôtel painstakingly investigates the food and drink which the investigator consumed; he fears food poisoning. He will be stunned to learn that an open water carafe was served without it being requested—not a common event in a society which, for long-standing reasons of health, drinks bottled mineral water or wine as a matter of course. Whether or not a proper water sample is still available, if any of the investigators receive a successful Chemistry roll, traces of the vomit (or the contents of the stomach) can show that the problem was poison. This creates general consternation.

If someone dies, his or her body is taken off at the border. There the Turkish and Interallied Police come aboard and question everyone. This delays the train for two hours; accordingly adjust all times given below.

#### NIGHT: 11:25 P.M.

The train arrives at the Turkish frontier, where Soucard uses a pretext to leave the Express and send a telegram forward, to cultists at Svilengrad.

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He uses the 24-hour clock. Investigators keeping watch out the windows spot him entering the station if they're quick, a bribe at the telegrapher's window reveals the content of the telegram. Soucard has a 75% chance of noticing the investigators' action, and thereupon changes identities again once across the Bulgarian border.

## (16) Danton Szorbic

A small, rotund, balding man, who wears bifocal glasses, he is nonetheless (aside from Mehmet Makryat) the most dangerous man on board, physically far more powerful than his appearance suggests.

Szorbic is a professional assassin, hired by a competitor to kill Kurt Groenig. Szorbic intends to murder Groenig during the stop in Trieste, and then re-board the train as if nothing had happened. If the crime can be pinned on the Count de Bruessy, so much the better. However, once killings begin on the train, he may use the confusion to cloak his murder of Groenig.



*Danton Szorbic, Assassin*

### DANTON SZORBIC, Age 49, Assassin without a Country

STR 15 CON 18 SIZ 10 INT 15 POW 17  
DEX 17 APP 8 SAN 37 EDU 10 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

**Weapons:** 9mm automatic 90%, damage 1D10  
.303 Single-Fire Competition Rifle 80%, damage 2D6+3  
Grapple 70%, damage special  
Stiletto 90%, damage 1D4+1D4

**Skills:** English 30%, Forge Identity Papers 88%, French 65%, German 25%, Hide 30%, Italian 75%, Make Silencer 65%, Martial Arts 65%, Library Use 35%, Smuggle Weapons 90%, Sneak 85%, Spanish 40%, Spot Hidden 90%, Track 35%, Treat Poison 80%, Use Telescopic Sights 85%.

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## Investigator Actions

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**T**HE COURSE OF THE SCENARIO is in part dictated by the investigators. Though they do not know Makryat's identity, they may search for the simulacrum while Makryat must stay his hand for a while.

A successful idea roll can establish that searching cars which are not going to Paris makes little sense, and that the investigators should therefore confine themselves to the four or five cars that are going through to Paris. The engine and tender will change several times on that journey, as well, exempting those locations.

Five cars are scheduled for Paris: a first-class sleeping car, another first-class sleeping car, a second-class car, and the two front fourgons.

### THE FOURGONS

Two guards sleep in each of the three luggage vans. They fiercely resist attempts by investigators to search the belongings of passengers. Here the efficiency and integrity of the Orient Express organization works against the investigators—no attempt at bribery or deceit succeeds. The Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits hand-picks its conductors and other staff; these men are beyond temptation. Rigid honesty is as much part of the special atmosphere of the Orient Express as is its aura of complete courtesy and detailed attention.

A successful know roll suggests that there is also the special parcel-delivery fourgon in the lead, where security will be even tighter. Makryat may have simply expressed the simulacrum to Paris by parcel post, there to be picked up or trans-shipped to London.

In fact, as we know, the simulacrum is welded to the undercarriage of the Calais coach.

The doors to the fourgons can be difficult to open, if the keeper prefers, perhaps only with a halved Mechanical Repair roll.

### PASSENGER BERTHS

Obviously compartments must be searched, but these are usually occupied, or are being cleaned, or locked up tight. Only conductors have pass keys—big brass things on lanyards round their necks. Washroom compartments offer some protection from curious eyes, but the locks for these internal doors are no less secure.

Nonetheless, though the Orient Express locks are well-made, they are not elaborate or complex; a successful Mechanical Repair roll opens any of the compartment or washroom doors.

At night, the conductor for the car sits in a chair at the end of the carriage, with a clear view of all outside compartment doors.

### DINING CAR, SALON CAR

These semi-public areas are likely to contain staff or passengers at almost any hour. The dining car has enough nooks and crannies, especially in the wine cabinets, to hide the simulacrum, but nothing unusual is there. The locked liquor cabinets in the salon car bar might also hide the simulacrum, but do not. All these cabinets can be specially locked, if the keeper wishes, requiring halved Mechanical Repair rolls to open. All should yield to force, however, with STRs of 16.

**KURT GROENIG, Age 30, Scion of German Industry**

STR 16 CON 12 SIZ 14 INT 16 POW 14  
DEX 12 APP 13 SAN 70 EDU 13 HP 13

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** Fist 60%, damage 1D3+1D4

9mm Groenig Automatic Pistol 70%, damage 1D10

**Skills:** Afternoon Dalliance 89%, Bargain 80%, Create Product Line 55%, Credit Rating 70%, Debate 55%, English 40%, Fast Talk 60%, French 60%, German 80%, Italian 45%, Make Eye Contact 70%, Sneak 40%, Solve Production Problem 77%, Squeeze Out Competitor 89%.

**(12) Rama Ho-Tet**

A mysterious, wealthy Egyptian, tall and heavy-set. Ho-Tet avoids casual conversation with everyone. He was most annoyed when he booked (at the last minute) and had to accept a shared berth. He deals in Egyptian and Middle Eastern antiquities from a large shop in Alexandria. His silence broached, he is a knowledgeable and pleasant companion.

Ho-Tet is an excellent source of information about rarities and ancient lore. The keeper might use him to plug any gaps in the investigators' knowledge of the Sedefkar Simulacrum's history.



*Rama Ho-Tet, scholar*

**RAMA HO-TET, Age 53, Scholar and Antiquities Dealer**

STR 10 CON 12 SIZ 16 INT 18 POW 17  
DEX 9 APP 10 SAN 81 EDU 20 HP 14

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** none.

**Skills:** Arabic 90%, Aramaic 45%, Archaeology 75%, Credit Rating 50%, Cthulhu Myths 6%, Debate 50%, Demotic Egyptian 50%, Dreaming 17%, Egyptian Hieroglyphs 55%, English 80%, Evaluate Jewelry 85%, French 55%, Good Taste 89%, Hebrew 40%, History 50%, Library Use 70%, Listen 55%, Occult 40%, Spot Hidden 45%, Syriac 45%.

**(14) Lord Margrave**

The Baron is a tall, snobbish Englishman with brown hair worn thick and a thin moustache. He has a penchant for bow ties and butterflies; he can speak endlessly on either topic, though on not much else but money.

Gatling and others have hinted that he is having an affair with the fiery Spanish noblewoman, Doña Margarita del Garda, who occupies the next compartment. There

is more to this than it seems: Margrave has been selling piecemeal his estates to the wealthy del Gardas, and is trying to recoup his heritage through romance. Since he is estranged from Lady Margrave, Margrave prefers the scandal of the romance to the scandal of having sold his birthright, although he would prefer to hide both.



*Lord Margrave*

**Lord MICHAEL****MARGRAVE, Baron of Blackpool, Age 45**

STR 11 CON 12 SIZ 15 INT 10 POW 10  
DEX 16 APP 12 SAN 50 EDU 16 HP 14

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** none.

**Skills:** Botany 25%, Butterfly Catching 60%, Butterfly Mounting 30%, Collect Stamps 48%, Credit Rating 60%, Spanish 25%, Zoology 25%.

**(15) La Doña del Garda**

She is a classic Spanish beauty, widowed without children. She is quiet and tough—she quietly poisoned her brutal husband three years ago. But the heart knows only itself: she has fallen for Lord Margrave perhaps because, like her deceased husband, he is so lacking in charm; she does not suspect Margrave's ulterior motives. Having enjoyed a holiday with him, she now returns to Paris. From there, she goes to Madrid while he journeys to London.



*La Doña del Garda*

**Doña MARGARITA del GARDA, Age 35, Spanish Aristocrat**

STR 14 CON 17 SIZ 10 INT 12 POW 10  
DEX 11 APP 14 SAN 50 EDU 13 HP 14

**Damage Bonus:** +0.

**Weapons:** none.

**Skills:** Botany 50%, Credit Rating 70%, English 35%, Fast Talk 65%, Spanish 60%, Wear Black 67%.

look after herself. She'll be loathe to reveal her employer unless truly necessary.

Jack Gatling starts the rumor of a spy on the train; no doubt investigators suspect Sir Robert Harrow in preference to this quiet, unassuming young woman.

### AN UNHAPPY INVESTIGATRIX

Madame Costanza's female compartment-mate has a hard time. If she has an appearance of over ten and is under forty years of age, Sir Robert makes repeated contemptible efforts to get into their room during the night. To all appearances, Madame Costanza sleeps through the entire affair, and wakes refreshed the next morning.

The compartments with berths 5 & 6 and 7 & 8 have doors connecting to the same washroom; when one door is unlocked, the other door cannot be opened. Passengers are requested always to keep their doors locked when not using the washroom.

#### ELENA COSTANZA, Age 30, British Spy

STR 13 CON 15 SIZ 12 INT 17 POW 15  
DEX 15 APP 14 SAN 75 EDU 14 HP 14

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** .22 automatic 60%, damage 1D6  
Fighting Knife 45%, damage 1D4+2+1D4

**Skills:** Bargain 65%, Bluff 75%, Bulgarian 25%, Chat Amusingly 50%, Codes & Ciphers 45%, English 45%, French 40%, Greek 55%, Hide 35%, Italian 85%, Listen 60%, Martial Arts 30%, Seduce 75%, Spanish 55%, Spot Hidden 65%, Track 25%, Turkish 55%.

## (9 & 10) The Count and Countess

Henri Matthieu, Count de Bruessy, and his wife, Emmanuelle, are returning from a holiday east. He is stout, hale, and hearty, with a drinker's red complexion and gray hair. She is half his age, of red hair and green eyes, and of sophisticated demeanor. They make an elegant, if loosely-allied couple.

Gossip-mongers, among them that repellent American, Jack Gatling, have seen the Countess with handsome German industrialist Kurt Groenig. Count Henri, who has his own private amusements, is a tolerant and cosmopolitan man whose anxiety is only for his family name. All three do their utmost to avoid Gatling, efforts with which the Orient Express staff are in sympathy.



*Madam Elana Costanza,  
British agent*



*Count de Bruessy*



*Countess de Bruessy*

#### HENRI, COUNT de BRUESSY, Age 57, Aristocrat

STR 11 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 12 POW 10  
DEX 12 APP 15 SAN 50 EDU 14 HP 14

**Damage Bonus:** +0.

**Weapons:** 20-Gauge Shotgun 75%, damage 2D6/1D6/1D3  
8mm Lebel Revolver 55%, damage 1D8-1

**Skills:** Accounting 35%, Collect Rents 70%, Credit Rating 85%, English 50%, Evaluate Wine 88%, French 60%, Listen 55%, Orate 65%, Rumanian 35%, Seduce 55%, Turkish 40%.

#### EMMANUELLE, COUNTESS de BRUESSY, Age 31

STR 12 CON 9 SIZ 10 INT 14 POW 11  
DEX 11 APP 15 SAN 55 EDU 16 HP 10

**Damage Bonus:** +0.

**Weapons:** none.

**Skills:** Amuse 75%, Collect Jewelry 45%, Credit Rating 75%, English 30%, French 60%, German 30%, Hold Salons 75%, Read Novels 55%, Rumanian 75%, Sneak 55%, Take What Pleasure Comes 95%.

## (11) Kurt Groenig

A young German industrialist, Groenig is just thirty, with blond hair, blue eyes, and a chiselled Teutonic profile which he can soften in an instant to good-natured boyish charm. No woman bothers to resist him, for he makes the moment so enjoyable and the consequences so insignificant. Astonishingly to him, he has fallen in love with the Countess de Bruessy, whom he fears is only using him.

Among men, Groenig is reputedly ruthless, as he helps his father bring back Groenig Fabrikat from its collapse at the end of the Great War.



*Kurt Groenig, industrialist*

**Skills:** Bargain 79%, Be Pompous 55%, Credit Rating 50%, English 25%, Enjoy Food 90%, Fast Talk 65%, French 45%, German 65%, Italian 75%, Mimicry 15%, Opera History 67%, Sing 70%, Spanish 45%, Try New Food 90%.

### (3) Jack Gatling

He is a syndicated columnist who specializes in high-profile gossip for American newspapers. Gatling is 32 and slightly balding, but a handsome man none the less, with black hair and brown eyes. He has a world-weariness only partly cultivated. Gatling has heard about the Baron of Blackpool and Doña Margarita, and is on the train to get the scoop.

If he sees a story in what the investigators are doing, he'll make himself a nuisance fast. Wild or outlandish statements they make to him may be circulated all over Europe—he definitely writes about them if any investigator is wealthy or famous.

Sharing with Jack Gatling is no picnic for an investigator trying to keep something quiet. Gatling is under foot whenever he isn't spying on someone else.

The columnist is also good for background on the other passengers, and might make personal observations that could help unmask Makryat. Gatling can relate incidents to which the investigators have not been privy.

The compartments with berths 1 & 2 and 3 & 4 have doors connecting to the same washroom; when one door is unlocked, the other door cannot be opened. Passengers are requested always to keep their doors locked when not using the washroom.

#### **JACK GATLING, Age 32, American Gossip Columnist**

STR 14 CON 10 SIZ 12 INT 16 POW 12  
DEX 13 APP 11 SAN 65/57\* EDU 13 HP 11

\* The lower Sanity figure applies after Makryat has used Gatling for the *Flesh Creepers*, while Gatling is temporarily insane.

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** Fist 65%, damage 1D3+1D4.

**Skills:** Bargain 45%, Bluff 55%, Dodge 45%, English 85%, Fast Talk 75%, Hide 65%, Photography 55%, Sneak 80%, Type 20%.

### (5) Sir Robert Harrow, Bart.

Wealthy adventurer and man-about-town, Harrow is tall, strapping, and very English. He sports a bristly moustache and a crooked grin; in his forty years he has been



Jack Gatling, columnist

everything from a big game hunter to a member of parliament. He regales any investigator, especially his compartment-mate, with tales of his adventures. When the horrors begin to mount, however, Sir Robert hides in the toilet or gets drunk in the salon car.

He has an eye for the ladies, about whom he frequently exclaims, sometimes boorishly. Apart from his profound cowardice, Sir Robert is pleasant enough. He is Makryat's first choice if the sorcerer needs a new identity.



Sir Robert Harrow, Baronet

#### **AN UNHAPPY INVESTIGATOR**

Sir Robert often is unable to sleep. The more he smokes and reads, the more the idea of the ladies next door moves him. Frequently through the night, the cad importunes their favors, alternating between irritating pleas and disgusting assaults upon the intervening door.

The compartments with berths 5 & 6 and 7 & 8 have doors connecting to the same washroom; when one door is unlocked, the other door cannot be opened. Passengers are requested always to keep their doors locked when not using the washroom.

#### **SIR ROBERT HARROW, Age 40, Minor Politician and Poseur**

STR 13 CON 11 SIZ 17 INT 13 POW 8  
DEX 14 APP 13 SAN 40 EDU 15 HP 14

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapon:** Fist 55%, damage 1D3+1D4.

**Skills:** Angle For Appointment 35%, Billiards 40%, Play Cards 35%, Credit Rating 60%, Flatter 45%, Flirt 55%, Lie 55%, Make Up Amusing Story 65%, Orate 45%, Spend 65%.

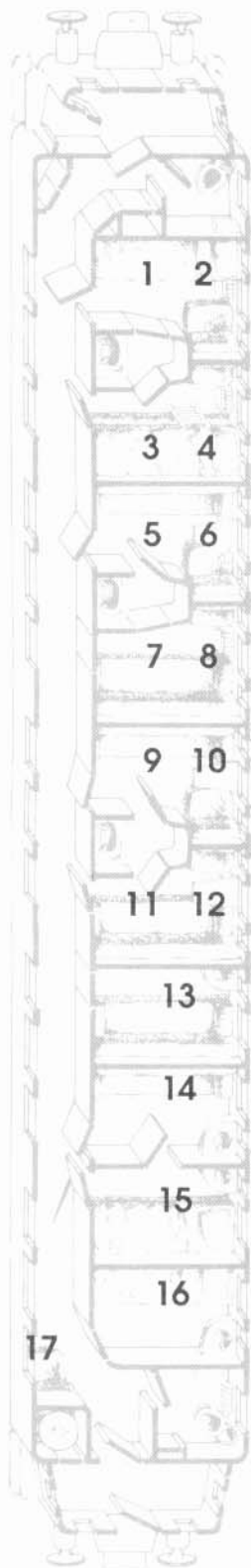
### (7) Elena Costanza

A woman of obscure background who has earned her money and style. Her dark hair and exotic beauty support Mediterranean origins. She is a British agent. She has heard a rumor of a plan to assassinate the King of England's son from a Brother just interrogated; she assumes that Edward, the elder son, is the target.

She allies with the investigators when she realizes they are up against the same foe, or if she has learned of the investigators' trustworthiness from Sir Douglas Rutherford. She has spent two perilous years in Constantinople. She is intelligent, capable, armed, and well-able to

## Location of Calais Coach Passengers

- 1. upper Martinell
- 2. lower investigator (male)
  
- 3. upper Jack Gatling
- 4. lower investigator (male)
  
- 5. upper Sir Robert Harrow
- 6. lower investigator (male)
  
- 7. upper Elena Costanza
- 8. lower investigator (female)
  
- 9. upper Count de Bruessy
- 10. lower Countess de Bruessy
  
- 11. upper Kurt Groenig
- 12. lower Rama Ho-Tet
  
- 13. lower investigator (either sex)
  
- 14. lower Lord Margrave
  
- 15. lower Doña del Garda
  
- 16. lower Danton Szorbic
  
- 17. Emile Soucard (conductor)



impeccable manners, which Mehmet apes but cannot achieve. Kindly keepers allow a Spot Hidden or idea roll to notice the failure.

The new Soucard is friendly to the investigators. He has seen them from a distance already, so no investigator Psychology roll betrays him now. He greets them affably and informs their porters of the correct compartments. Investigators wishing to observe the arrival of their fellow passengers may loiter on the platform, or peer out a Calais coach window.

### (1) Luigi Martinelli

A 57-year-old opera *basso*, Signore Martinelli has completed an extended private engagement in Constantinople, and now moves to a season in London. He has heard nothing of Caterina Cavollero's tragedy in Milan, and is appalled at the news if any investigator acquaints him with it. A loud and aggressive man, Signore Martinelli finds himself very amusing. He also considers himself a fine mimic and practices his impersonations at every opportunity. Investigators overhearing his exercises may draw the wrong conclusions.



Luigi Martinelli, opera star

The first night, Martinelli complains to his investigator compartment-mate about having to climb into the top bunk; he pleads or insists that they swap. He is very overweight, enough that he makes the top berth sag alarmingly. Only the cruelest (and most foolhardy) investigator refuses. When Makryat sends an assassin, politeness saves the investigator's life, since the villain knifes the wrong man.

Martinelli's rich and melodious snores are as loud as thunder; the investigator sleeps badly unless receiving a POW x3 or less result on D100.

The compartments with berths 1 & 2 and 3 & 4 have doors connecting to the same washroom; when one door is unlocked, the other door cannot be opened. Passengers are requested always to keep their doors locked when not using the washroom.

#### LUIGI MARTINELLI, Age 57, Opera Basso

STR 11 CON 16 SIZ 18 INT 14 POW 15  
DEX 8 APP 13 SAN 75 EDU 15 HP 17

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: none.

that only first-class tickets are available in the through coach to Calais. These berths are in various compartments—the investigators must share with strangers. The clerk is apologetic but firm: there is no other option.

It is important to the plot to arrange things in this manner; if necessary, it transpires that no other berths are available on the entire train.

Passengers are advised to be at the station half an hour before departure. Their luggage can be checked through, though it will be surprising if the investigators have any belongings left at this point.

The service departs at 4:30 P.M. Attempts to find Mehmet Makryat before departure are fruitless and dangerous. On every attempt, call for a luck roll—a failure indicates that the queries came to the attention of a Brother.

## On Skinning Humans

It should not be difficult to remove a human skin intact. Ed Gein, the Wisconsin mass-murderer, is said to have skinned his victims intact with a long slit down the back, but this may be folklore. Start by cutting from ear to ear along the hair line in the back of the head. Then from the middle of this line, I would cut down the back about halfway. The skin could then be peeled off like a rubber glove, using a short curved knife to separate the skin from other tissue, especially at the sticky cartilaginous areas. A long pointed knife would poke through and ruin the hide; ordinary surgical tools would do excellently. So would taxidermy tools.

For a single accomplished cultist, skinning should take less than an hour, perhaps as little as twenty-five minutes. Presumably two or three skinners could work together faster still. Since the skin would be separated from the body at the subcutaneous fat layer, anything which would make this fat more liquid should speed matters. Heat and mild acids might help, and skinning would be better done when the body is very warm.

In order to slip into a captured skin, the evildoer might lubricate himself with a magical ointment containing baby fat, like the enchanted oil reputedly used by witches to enable them to fly.

About that twenty-five minute skinning process: it may occur to some ghoulish keepers to have a victim skinned alive. This would certainly be an effective torture, but the skin would never escape unspoiled, no matter how well restrained the victim is. And bear in mind that the process will spill a lot of blood.

— William A. Workman.

## ON THE PLATFORM

Passengers are harassed by merchants and beggars crowding the platform, since Orient Express patrons always mean good business for those who ply the station. Keep these rug dealers and curiosity brokers insistent, annoying, and oppressive. The investigators should not be able to tell whether these people are what they seem or Brothers of the Skin in disguise. However, no harm comes to the passengers on the platform—that comes later, on the train.

The gleaming blue and gold coaches of the Simplon-Orient Express sit waiting for the investigators. The train is a-bustle with people boarding. Steam rises from an engine well-stoked and ready to roll.

## FELLOW TRAVELERS

With the exception of Emile Soucard, who is off-duty only at odd moments, each of the non-investigators in the Calais coach is numbered, and that number corresponds to the number of a berth in the accompanying coach diagram. In the diagram, the lower number of a pair represents the upper berth.

Keepers who have a high number of female investigators, or more or less than five investigators, must alter bookings and berths (and sexes of passengers) carefully, in the light of full understanding of the events to come. Be sure to record changes as they occur. The first non-player-character to be removed in favor of an investigator should be Luigi Martinelli.

Presumably the keeper has a few characters available from *Strangers on the Train* to round out shortages in the passenger list.

When an investigator goes mad or dies, grant that player the role of one of these characters, to keep them in play. Elena Costanza and Rama Ho-Tet are the most likely to get themselves involved.

## Emile Soucard

The conductor for the Calais coach, Emile Soucard (Mehmet Makryat) stands on the platform at the carriage door. He inspects the tickets of each politely, and each time salutes. He checks off his passengers as they come aboard.

The real Emile Soucard was a powerfully-built Corsican who made up for his almost-alarming appearance by



Emile Soucard (Mehmet Makryat)



## Deterioration Effect Table

roll 1D20	Effect
01	sweat heavily
02	strong body odor
03	cracks in skin*
04	growth of thick ropy hairs*
05	skin flakes off*
06	veins swell and bulge out from skin*
07	patches of hair fall out
08	acne*
09	small sores and lesions erupt*
10	sores ooze blood*
11	sores ooze mucous*
12	black fungus sprouts*
13	vomit-like liquids ooze from pores*
14	skin loosens and hangs flapping*
15	skin tightens, threatens to split*
16	something alien moves beneath skin*
17	skin creeps continuously*
18	skin discolors like necrotic tissue
19	eyes distend and cannot bear sunlight
20	roll again; apply to two locations

## Body Location Table

roll 1D20	Location
01-03	right leg
04-06	left leg
07-10	abdomen
11-15	chest
16-17	right arm
18-19	left arm
20	head

## The Simulacrum Empowered

Once the Ritual of Enactment has been invoked, and the Sedefkar Simulacrum donned, Makryat has considerable powers at call. However, as owner, he must perform the Ritual of Cleansing every 100 hours. If this is not done, his body begins to corrupt.

The simulacrum confers the following powers.

- POW of 25.
- 10-point armor against kinetic damage.
- The ability to assume the identity of another human by donning the skin of that person. This confers the voice

and walk of the person, but not his or her skills and memories. All statistics remain the same, except for APP and SIZ, which conform to those of the new body. One cannot wear any skin more than once; once changed, the old skin is no longer wearable, though it is perhaps identifiable.

Should the wearer be killed, he or she resumes his or her own appearance.

- The ability to Call an Avatar of the Skinless One. This can take any form, as long as a flesh receptacle is available for it to inhabit (this can be prepared with the cult spell Turn to Skin); such a call costs 1 POW, plus half of the caller's magic points. Statistics vary according to the form taken. This spell is unique to the Simulacrum owner.
- The ability to Call the Skinless One without the usual required sacrifices. This costs 2 POW, plus all of the caller's magic points, save one.
- Now in harmony with its owner, the simulacrum no longer lowers luck, know, and idea rolls—those function at Makryat's normal levels.

## Investigator Deterioration

Having possessed and lost the Sedefkar Simulacrum, the investigators now must suffer the corruption which Makryat told them about. Their physical decay continues until they learn and cast upon themselves the Ritual of Cleansing.

Every morning after Makryat dons the simulacrum, cause each player to roll CON x5 or less on D100 for his or her investigators. The successful roll postpones decay for another day. Failing, they then must roll CON x5 or less every hour for affected investigators.

Failing the hourly CON roll, the investigator begins to show signs of the infestation: his or her player should thereafter roll once on the Effect Table every six hours. Effects with asterisks involve only one body part: roll on the location table to determine the body area affected.

The keeper describes the actual appearance of these effects. Start lightly, then build up to real virulence.

## Boarding

**E**VEN INVESTIGATORS with return tickets have no booking for a specific day's departure on the Orient Express. Sirkecki station staff inform them that the next Orient Express service is in the evening and

## XIV. ACROSS EUROPE



# Blue Train, Black Night

*Wherein the investigators take the west-bound Orient Express in pursuit of Mehmet Makryat, and thereby find themselves aboard the Express to Hell, sans stopovers.*

by Geoff Gillan (Nick Hagger for the Jigsaw Prince)

**T**HE CHASE IS ON. Play this adventure at accelerating speed; it encompasses the entire return journey between Constantinople and Paris. As the first few borders are crossed, the pace can be restrained, as investigators try to identify who is Mehmet Makryat. Hours pass as they meet fellow passengers in the corridors, the salon car, or at dinner, and perhaps become involved with individual non-player-characters. West of Milan, the horror escalates, as Makryat takes full control of the train. Investigators are thereafter subjected to a breakneck ride threatening oblivion to all.

Along the way, old enemies pay new visits to the investigators.

## Keeper Information

Mehmet Makryat has taken the identity of the conductor for the first-class Calais coach of the Simplon-Orient Express. He intends to maintain that identity for the whole of the trip. He is to outward appearances Emile Soucard, Wagons-Lits conductor. To smooth passage to London, he arranges for Brothers of the Skin to join the train at later stops.

Other Brothers, masquerading as Wagons-Lits staff, have secreted the entire simulacrum beneath the train, welded within a steel box to the framework of the Calais carriage. To the casual observer, the box appears to be part of the undercarriage.

In Paris, Makryat will recover the simulacrum and proceed to his shop in London, performing the Ritual of Cleansing on himself, then implementing his plan to swap places with the Duke of York.

The reigning King is George V, who rules from 1910-1936. His natural successor is Edward VIII, his eldest son. As it happened, of course, Edward was never crowned, abdicating after a few months in favor of Mrs. Simpson. The second son, the Duke of York, thereupon became George VI, King of England. Makryat has no way to know the future—he merely plans to learn the ways proper to Windsor royalty as the relatively inconspicuous second son, and then to replace the Heir at a suitable time. (Perhaps he stages a fall from his horse, and ostensibly loses part of his memory, then regains it manfully, to the adoration of the public.)

Makryat knows full well that the royal house no longer wields significant political power, but the Windsors are nonetheless fabulously wealthy and enormously influential. Biding his time, Makryat will come to rule the British Empire—unless, of course, the investigators kill him first.

During the return trip, other passengers can help or hinder the investigators. Their characters and aims are detailed in the section “Boarding.” When Makryat sees the investigators—and he must see them, since they’ll be in the Calais coach—he moves against them, first subtly and then with increasing ferocity against survivors.

## New Spells, continued

### Skin Walker, continued

Used in attack, the Skin Walker crawls onto the face of the target and attempts to smother him or her—use the rulesbook drowning rules to play it out.

All human skins nominally have STR 12, but keepers may raise and lower this figure according to recentness or ancientness of the corpse, whether or not it was embalmed, and the wetness or dryness of the grave. To pull off the smothering skin, the target must receive a successful STR roll on the resistance table. Succeeding, the target takes 1D3 damage to his or her face. At the keeper's wish, or perhaps with a luck roll, pulling it off also costs 1 APP.

Sanity to view the Skin Walker is 0/1D6. All physical characteristics are 12 each, with POW 1.

o

### Transfer Body Part

To cast, the spell nominally costs 1 POW point, 1D10 magic points, and 1D10 SAN. If the victim is already dead, it costs 2 POW. More complicated transfers carry heavier costs: 100 magic points are needed for Transfer Head, for instance. There is no requirement that organs or limbs be interchanged.

Preparing for and effecting the spell takes about an hour, including the magical thread, then an additional amount of minutes equal to the actual magic points required. Since the procedure is often clumsy,

the caster usually casts the spell on a second Brother, and helps effect the actual transfer.

The Brothers stake out particular victims for prize pieces of anatomy, e.g. an athlete's legs, a boxer's fists, a diver's lungs, a pianist's hands, etc. The many disgusting variations inherent in this spell need not be detailed.

To return to an original body part requires casting a similarly-arranged spell, *Detransference*, to achieve. The Jigsaw Prince, in the "Across Europe" chapter to come, knows it, as did Selim in this chapter.

### Turn to Skin

This spell turns a non-living surface or artifact to skin and flesh; an action done primarily as religious homage to the Skinless One. The cost is 1 magic point per 10 points of SIZ, plus 1 POW, but the caster can only call on such SIZ as has previously been flayed from victims dedicated to the Skinless god, and thus in that way quantifies piety.

This unconscionable activity creates the Skin Beast, which lives for one hour, and then dissolves into putrescence.

Sanity loss to witness this is 1D3/2D6+4 SAN. Additional description of the creation occurs in the "Uskudar" section of this scenario.

## Create Flesh Creeper

To cast, the spell costs 1D10 SAN and 1 POW; 3 magic points must be expended for each flesh creeper to be created, and a separate star-shaped lump of raw flesh must be hacked from a living human. All flesh creepers have identical statistics.

The spell empowers the flesh to be animate and seek out a magically-designated victim. The caster must know the appearance of the target, and know his or her approximate location.

Once the victim is found, the flesh creeper leaps onto the victim's face and grafts instantly to the skin around the nose and mouth, sealing shut the victim's airways. Once in place, normal asphyxiation rules apply. After a victim dies, the creeper can detach and seek new prey until the caster's POW x minutes have passed; then the flesh creeper dies.

## Create Skin Beast

As an act of piety and discipline, this spell is cast only on special occasions. It creates a short-lived creature which absorbs living targets as instructed. One dozen children are sacrificed to make it, and the casting procedure costs 120 magic points, 1 POW point, and 1D20 Sanity points. The spell Melt Flesh is needed to provide additional mass and to meld the mass into one.

## Curse of the Putrid Husk

This spell is one of terrifying illusion, and after repeated applications can drive a target insane. The cost to cast it is 10 Sanity points and 10 magic points; to take effect, the caster's magic points must overcome the victim's magic points on the resistance table.

Curse of the Putrid Husk makes the victim feel as though he or she is inside his or her skin, wearing it like a suit of armor. The skin then seems to rot and corrupt, so that the victim feels it outside and inside. His or her outward appearance appears to deteriorate swiftly, so that great rents and tears occur through which internal organs begin to tumble out, after which the target always faints for a few moments. None of the damage (except for the faint) is real, but the Sanity loss to the victim is always 1D10 points. The spell's entire cycle of effect takes about 20 minutes; to cast, the spell takes only a few seconds.

Experienced a second or additional times, the spell is always as terrifying as the first time, though details of the illusion will be different.

As described, the illusory effect of the spell is apparent only to the target. For an extra 5 magic points, the illusion of the spell affects everyone; observers lose 0/1D6 SAN as well.

For 20 SAN and 5 POW, the caster can make the appearances of the spell actually happen. After twenty agonizing minutes, death occurs.

The target has no way of knowing which version of the spell has been cast on him or her.

## Detransference

The spell costs 10 magic points and 2 POW, and takes one minute to cast. Match the caster's magic points against the target's magic points on the resistance table. If the caster succeeds, then the spell reverses any Transfer Body Part spells connected with the target. The borrowed organs and members appear in the caster's hands, sodden and rotting. Bereft of vital organs, the target quickly dies.

The spell costs no Sanity unless it succeeds, in which case the rotting parts appear in the caster's hands—that costs 1D10 Sanity unless the caster has had experience as a doctor or nurse.

## Melt Flesh

It heats dead flesh to its melting point in one combat round, requiring 1 magic point to melt 3 SIZ points worth of flesh. It takes five minutes, and costs 1D4 SAN to cast. If used on animate flesh, cost is instead 1 POW per 3 SIZ points, and the victim's magic points must be overcome. Seeing the flesh melt off a friend's bones costs 1/1D6 SAN.

## Prepare Corpse

This spell neatly de-bones a cadaver, eliminating all bone and cartilage, allowing the flesh to be stored away. The cost to cast is 1D6 magic points and 1D8 SAN. Since it can be cast only on entities without POW, it achieves nothing against the living or undead such as vampires or zombies. Each use requires 15 minutes to cast.

## Skin of the Sedefkar

Provides the caster with magical protection equivalent to possession of the empowered Sedefkar Simulacrum. The cost to cast the spell is 10 magic points and 1D3 SAN. For twenty four hours after casting the spell, the subject is protected against all kinetic attacks by 10 points of invisible magical armor. However, each attack reduces the armor by 1 point; e.g., after two bullets, the spell stops only 8 hit points of damage.

## Skin Walker

This spell causes a specified grave to open, and the skin of the body within to rise, retain humanoid shape, and to follow some simple instruction. Cost to cast Skin Walker is 1D6+2 magic points and 1D4 Sanity points.

**New Spells continued next page**

Trip Up 25%, damage special

**Skills:** Archaeology 80%, Anthropology 10%, Astronomy 10%, Bargain 40%, Bon Mot 88%, Chemistry 10%, Credit Rating 70%, Cringe 55%, Debate 60%, Detect Fraud 45%, English 90%, Fast Talk 35%, French 80%, German 80%, History 45%, Hyperphysics 05%, Italian 85%, Library Use 50%, Linguist 60%, Listen 40%, Maneuver for Knighthood 60%, Norwegian

65%, Occult 25%, Oratory 45%, Parapsychology 25%, Pharmacy 20%, Photography 45%, Physics 15%, Psychology 55%, Spot Hidden 75%.

### THE FLAPPING MAN, Ageless Bloody Apparition

INT 15 POW 20

Sanity Loss to See: 0/1D6 SAN.

## New Spells

### Animate Flesh Thing

This spell can be used to animate dead skin and flesh, stripping it of bones and recognizable organs, transforming it into a thick, fleshy rug which can move to capture or attack. The cost is 1 magic point per 1 SIZ point animated, and 1D6 Sanity points. The spell takes three minutes to cast.

The Thing so-created can either attack or capture; see the Beylab Thing in the Beylab section for its specific characteristics.

Created, Flesh Things have uniform statistics and capabilities, though the Sanity points and magic points need to make them vary with the subject corpse used.

### Call Avatar of Skinless One

Invoking the dread 680th name of Nyarlathotep, the caster causes an artifact or living being to become possessed by an avatar of the Skinless One for one day, or until the caster shall dismiss the avatar, or die. The spell costs 6 Sanity points, 12 magic points, and 1 POW.

If the object to which the avatar is summoned is inanimate, it takes on certain characteristics of life, including its own will; if animate, it takes on certain characteristics of dead matter, including the invulnerability to pain and shock.

The characteristics of 100 CON, 15 INT, and 20 POW never change; movement is always twice that rate possible before possession. Other characteristics and functions vary with that which is possessed, including Sanity loss to see, which is never more than 1/5th in points of the avatar's apparent SIZ. See the Across Europe chapter for the portrayal of it as a locomotive.

Once called, the avatar always adopts and magnifies the tendencies of that which it is possessing; thus it makes a stronger, speedier locomotive in the adventure. But to do so, it always finds a way to cause or promote death and destruction—the avatar is inherently evil, and only evil comes of it.

### Call Skinless One

Calling the Skinless One is a major exercise, and one which Selim resorts to no more than once per decade. Freshly flayed corpses must be offered, and each cadaver gives a 1-percentile chance of success: thus 35 sacrifices grant a 35% chance. Exactly 100 magic points must also be expended. If the roll fails, the Skinless One may yet materialize to collect the sacrifices, and takes that number again from among the worshipers (in the case of the example, 35 cultists would be taken as well). If the Skinless One comes, all present lose 1D10/1D100 SAN.

### Contact Skinless One

To contact the Skinless One, 2D10 magic points and 1D10 Sanity points must be sacrificed, and a fresh-skinned corpse must be available. The Skinless One manifests in this corpse and, before the corpse liquifies and evaporates, answers no more than three questions. Sanity loss for viewing this is 1/1D10 SAN; seeing the Skinless One costs an additional 1D10/1D100 SAN.

### Control Skin

Allows the caster to meld, bend, and alter the skin of one general body area per casting. This spell costs 1D6 SAN and 5 magic points to cast, after which the caster must overcome the target's magic points on the resistance table unless the target is willing.

Areas correspond to the parts of the Sedefkar Simulacrum: head, torso, right arm, left arm, right leg, left leg. By spending 30 magic points, the entire body can be controlled. Simultaneous castings of body areas require only one Sanity roll, but each casting requires another 1D6 Sanity loss. The spell can change the appearance of a body area or areas enough to make an individual unrecognizable.

Ordinarily the spell affects the skin for 15 minutes, after which the skin reverts to its natural state; if a point of POW is expended along with the 5 magic points, the spell is permanent until undone with a second casting. The Brothers of the Skin use the spell as reward, punishment, and tool. It is essential to them.

**Arms:** raise STR to 18, add Grapple 60%, damage special.

**Ears:** raise Listen to 60%.

**Eyes:** raise Spot Hidden to 60%, can see in the dark.

**Face:** change APP to anything from 3 to 18.

**Fingers:** raise DEX to 16.

**Hands:** raise STR to 16, add Scimitar 50%, damage 1D6+2+1D4.

**Legs:** raise Move to 9, add Kick 50%, damage 1D6+1D4.

**Tongue:** can chant in non-human language.

### HAKIM THE UNRULY, Age 41, Seedy Captain

STR 15 CON 14 SIZ 12 INT 10 POW 9

DEX 13 APP 8 SAN 45 EDU 8 HP 13

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapon:** Small Knife 55%, damage 1D4+1D4

**Skills:** Bargain 40%, Estimate Value 77%, Shiphandling 45%.

### HAKIM'S CREWMEN, 3 Seedy Sailors

**Damage Bonus:** +0.

**Weapons:** Knife 45%, damage 1D4

Oar 40%, damage 1D8

**Skills:** Boat 45%.

	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	POW	HP
One	10	15	9	11	14	12
Two	13	12	11	10	11	12
Three	14	16	10	9	9	13

### COMPANION-OF-THE-DEAD, Age 69, Old Loon

STR 8 CON 18 SIZ 9 INT 6 POW 7

DEX 12 APP 6 SAN 21 EDU 2 HP 14

**Damage Bonus:** +0.

**Weapons:** none.

**Skills:** Cackle Gleefully 65%, Hide 99%, Stay Confident 90%.

## The Skin Beast

A Skin Beast can make as many attacks as it has targets. A successful hit does mild damage but the creature then pulls the victim into itself. The victim is engulfed by skin after three rounds. The victim may escape by resisting STR 10 on the first round, STR 20 on the second, or STR 30 on the third. After the third round death occurs, and soon the head of the victim (complete with long fleshy tongue) protrudes from the Skin Beast. Clothing or possessions are left in the creature's trail of blood and mucus.

### THE SKIN BEAST, Ritual Monster

STR 30 CON 100 SIZ 50 INT 10 POW 12

DEX 10 HP 75 Move 10

**Damage Bonus:** +4D6.

**Armor:** 5 points; gunfire does half damage.

**Weapons:** Tongue(s) 50%, damage 1D2 + drag in

Absorb 100%, takes three rounds

Crush 50%, damage 4D6

**Skills:** Scent Prey 90%.

**Sanity Loss:** 1D3/2D6; seeing a friend ingested costs an added 1/1D4 SAN.

### SELIM MAKRYAT, Age 69, Leader of the Brothers

STR 8 CON 14 SIZ 9 INT 14 POW 21

DEX 8 APP 10 SAN 0 EDU 14 HP 13

**Damage Bonus:** +0.

**Armor:** none, however Selim often casts the spell Skin of the Sedefkar\* before going anywhere: this costs 10 magic points and stops 10 points of damage.

**Weapon:** Knife 120%, damage 1D6

**Skills:** Cthulhu Mythos 15%, Oratory 70%, English 25%, Skin Human 90%, Spot Hidden 85%.

**Spells:** Animate Skin\*, Call Skinless One\*, Contact Skinless Ones, Control Skin\*, Create Flesh Creeper\*, Create Skin Beast\*, Curse of the Putrid Husk\*, Detransference\*, Melt Flesh\*, Prepare Corpse\*, Skin of the Sedefkar\*, Skin Walker, Transfer Body Part\*.

### FLESH CREEPER

STR 3 CON 3 SIZ 1 INT 5 POW 1

DEX 15 Move 12 HP 2

**Damage Bonus:** -1D6, but not applicable.

**Weapon:** Seal Mouth 90%, asphyxiation damage—use rules-book drowning rules.

**Armor:** a flesh creeper must either be cut off or reduced to zero hit points, but split the damage from successful attacks between the creeper and the victim.

**Skills:** Find Designated Target 99%, Leap Onto Face 75%.

**Sanity Loss to See:** 1/1D4 SAN; having one stuck onto your face costs a further 0/1D4 SAN.

### MEHMET MAKRYAT (Aktar), Age 39, Leader of the Cult

STR 18 CON 16 SIZ 13 INT 18 POW 18

DEX 14 APP 14\* SAN 0 EDU 16 HP 15

\* 10 as the gypsy.

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** .38 revolver 70%, damage 1D10

Knife 90%, damage 1D6+1D4

Fist/Punch 45%, damage 1D3+1D4

Quoit (thrown) 65%, damage 1D8+1

**Armor:** after he has donned the simulacrum, Makryat is immune to the first 10 points of damage from any kinetic attack.

**Skills:** Bargain 45%, Climb 50%, Cthulhu Mythos 30%, Disguise 38%, Dodge 60%, Drive Automobile 40%, English 60%, Fast Talk 45%, French 45%, Hide 80%, History 25%, Library Use 40%, Linguist 20%, Listen 70%, Occult 35%, Oratory 45%, Pick Pocket 25%, Pharmacy 20%, Psychology 40%, Skin Human 90%, Sneak 75%, Spot Hidden 85%, Throw 70%, Track 40%, Treat Poison 30%, Turkish 90%.

**Spells:** Animate Flesh Thing\*, Call Avatar\*, Contact Skinless One\*, Control Skin\*, Create Flesh Creeper\*, Fist of Yog-Sothoth, Melt Flesh\*, Skin Walker\*, Summon/Bind Dimensional Shambler, Summon/Bind Fire Vampire, Transfer Body Part\*, Turn To Skin.\* \* new spells.

### PROFESSOR JULIUS SMITH, Age 62, Head and Torso

*The Professor has no arms, legs, or eyes.*

STR 3 CON 11 SIZ 6 INT 17 POW 17

DEX 1 APP 1 SAN 17 EDU 21 HP 9

**Damage Bonus:** -1D6.

**Weapons:** Bite 25%, damage 1D3-1D6

task is done. Look well not at the skins, which are the Brothers' to command, but at the hearts beneath, which not even gods can conquer."

He folds his cloak over himself and disappears.

With a successful Spot Hidden, the investigators see that the simulacrum has been removed from the niches beneath the dome. Makryat has taken it and the Sedefkar Scrolls with him.

The Brothers need time to recover, enabling the investigators to run out of the mosque and down streets washed with morning. James Rutherford crouches nearby and sprints to join them. Their last glimpse of the Shunned Mosque is a vision of blood running down the dome. This could be due to the rising sun, but it is not called the Shunned Mosque for no reason.

### THE NEXT STEP

The only certain way to London within 100 hours from a place like this is via the Orient Express. Compartments are available. If they find a plane, it crash-lands in Bulgaria, from where perforce they take the Orient Express westward.

## Conclusion

The investigators gain no Sanity for this scenario; after all, they have lost dismally. However, some isolated acts are worth reward. Destroying the Beylab Thing or the Stranger Thing nets 1D6 SAN, the Skin Beast 1D8 SAN. Rescuing the children from the Mosque adds another 1D6 Sanity points. Killing or rescuing Professor Smith adds 1D3 SAN.

Now that Makryat has taken the simulacrum, their idea, know, and luck rolls return to normal thresholds.

The successful retrieval of James Rutherford garners the full friendship of the British ambassador, whose references are read with respect in London and at other points around the world. If the investigators are low on funds, Sir Douglas gladly advances any reasonable sum with no repayment expected. If the money does come back to him some day, he will think all the better of them: gentlemen do not forget courteous behavior, in small things or in large.

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## Statistics

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This chapter includes a number of new spells; these are marked with asterisks in the statistics which follow.

### FEYAR, Age 29, Agent for the Brothers of the Skin

STR 12 CON 14 SIZ 9 INT 16 POW 15  
DEX 15 APP 13 SAN 0 EDU 12 HP 12

**Damage Bonus:** +0.

**Weapon:** Small Knife 65%, damage 1D4

**Skills:** Arabic 35%, Bulgarian 45%, Cthulhu Mythos 7%, Debate 40%, Dodge 60%, English 45%, FastTalk 65%, Greek 65%, Hide 55%, Library Use 60%, Listen 65%, Make Maps 25%, Occult 15%, Russian 25%, Sneak 50%, Spot Hidden 50%, Turkish 80%.

**Spell:** Control Skin\*.

*Feyar's favorite melee technique is to use Control Skin to pull the skin of his opponent's forehead down over his eyes, totally blinding him for five minutes. He then sneaks up and stabs his foe to death.*

### SIR DOUGLAS RUTHERFORD, Age 55, British Ambassador

STR 11 CON 10 SIZ 15 INT 12 POW 14  
DEX 10 APP 14 SAN 63 EDU 15 HP 13

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapon:** .32 revolver 20%, damage 1D8

**Skills:** Be Smarter Than He Seems 65%, Credit Rating 70%, Evaluate Port & Sherry 88%, Oratory 55%, Serve the Crown 85%.

### BEYLAB THE PERSPIRER, Age 45, The Man Who Knew Too Much

STR 15 CON 16 SIZ 18 INT 17 POW 16  
DEX 8 APP 9 SAN 71 EDU 12 HP 17

**Damage Bonus:** +1D6.

**Weapon:** none.

**Skills:** English 35%, Fast Talk 75%, French 25%, Sweat Profusely 99%, Turkish History 85%.

### BROTHERS OF THE SKIN, 12 Madman Cultists

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** Knife 40%, damage 1D6+1D4

**Skills:** Dodge 25%, Hide 30%, Listen 40%, Skin Human 25%, Sneak 30%, Spot Hidden 40%, Track 25%.

**Spells:** Control Skin\*, plus Transfer Body Part\* at the Keeper's option. Some man know an additional spell or two, such as Create Skin Beast\*.

**Sanity Loss:** for confronting a Brother with obvious sewn-on additions, 0/1. If those additions can be identified as coming from a friend or acquaintance, 0/1D4.

	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	POW	HP
One	16	15	9	16	8	12
Two	15	8	13	16	14	11
Three	11	13	16	15	6	15
Four	14	13	11	15	11	12
Five	15	9	12	14	9	11
Six	13	14	12	14	11	13
Seven	13	11	12	13	10	12
Eight	13	12	14	13	11	13
Nine	11	11	14	12	7	13
Ten	14	14	13	12	11	14
Eleven	13	8	13	11	9	11
Twelve	14	17	15	11	10	16

*At the keeper's option, particular Brothers may have dead men's parts, heightening some skills. Some ideas follow.*

## Prof. Julius Smith

They are left alone with the real Professor Smith, or what is left of him, who has become conscious, and heard all. He can fill in the story. The first thing he knew of this whole affair was when a horrible monster bore him here. Since then he has been imprisoned, and gradually dismembered. A Sanity roll is appropriate when the investigators fully comprehend the fate of their friend, whose genius was wasted merely to snare the investigators (1/1D6 SAN). There is no hope for him now, and he knows it.

There is hope for the investigators. The professor tells of the Flapping Man, an apparition in a cloak of skins who mounts the minaret stairs at certain times. The Brothers believe he is an apparition of rage, an amalgam of all the people sacrificed to their cult. They fear him and flee from him. If the investigators can make the Brothers think that the Flapping Man is among them, their escape will be easier.

## The Flapping Man

After an unknown time, a single pair of guards arrive, and nervously unbolt the investigators. One does the unshackling, the other holds a knife at the throat of the person being released. Once released, each is instructed to stand in the far corner, while the guards move to the next person. The door behind them is enticingly open.

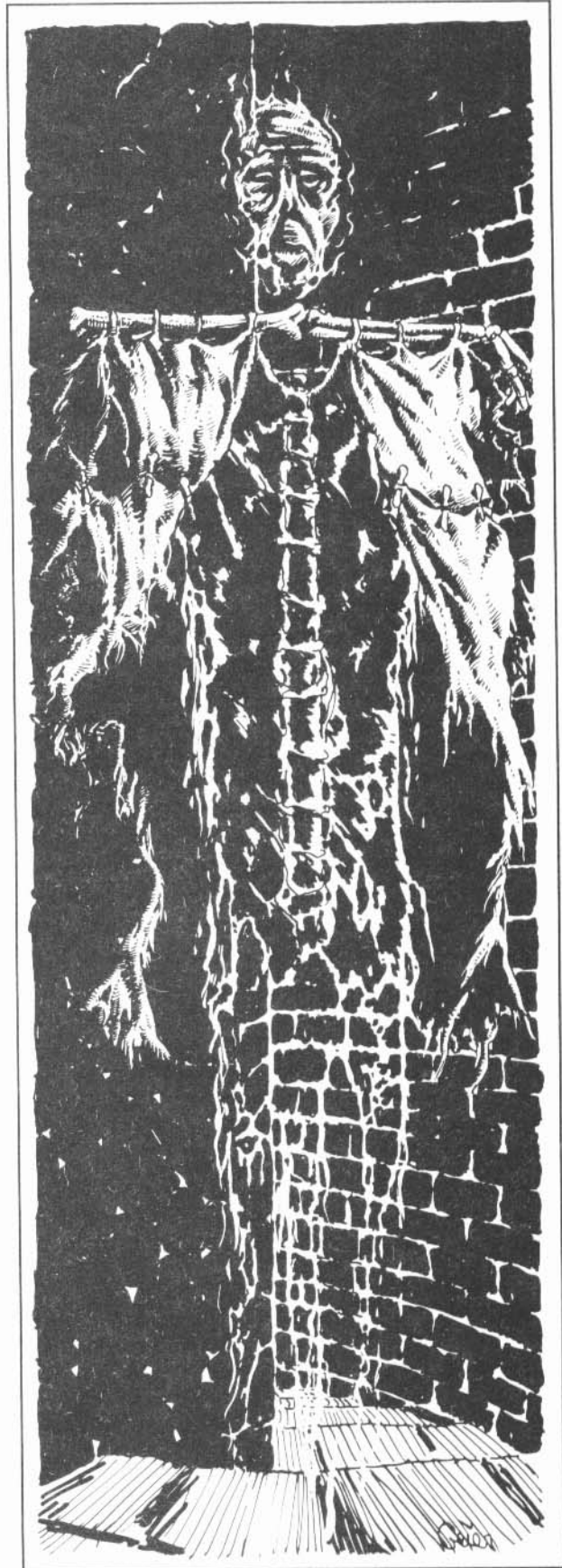
The keeper should make it possible for the investigators to overpower the guards at this point. They can be easily tricked into believing that the Flapping Man is behind them; or Professor Smith, forgotten in the refuse, can bite the ankle of the man holding the knife, or trip him up; or the investigators could just rush the pair.

As the investigators steal down the four flights of cells, they encounter no Brothers. In the lower portions of the Minaret hang the trophies of the cult, the flayed skins. If someone donned many of these (lose 0/1D3 SAN to wear such stuff), he or she would resemble the hideous apparition of the Flapping Man from whom the Brothers run—an idea roll might suggest this plan.

When they get to the floor of the mosque, a huge panic is occurring, with Brothers fleeing in all directions. The true Flapping Man has come forth.

The Flapping Man is an apparition skinned and raw. He wears a cloak and loose robes of skins joined together loosely. His eyeballs bulge from their skinless holes in his head and the moment the investigators appear, the Flapping Man heads toward them (lose 0/1D6 SAN).

If they appear friendly to him and hostile to the Brothers in any way, he regards them with a pitying look, chilling in one so devastated himself. He points a skinless finger at them. "This is how many will appear before the



The Flapping Man

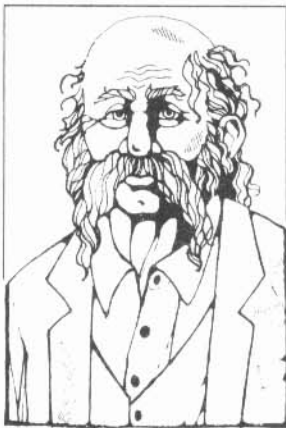


## THE CELL

After four levels of this kind the investigators are shut together in the top-most cell. They are chained to the wall by both wrists. Any attempt at escape is brutally put down by the guards, who try for a knock-out first but will kill if necessary. Asking questions of the guards simply brings grunts, indicating that the prisoners should shut up.

The only thing the guards appear to be afraid of is a creature they refer to as *The Flapping Man*. They mumble this name to each other and look about nervously as they are securing the captives. They are keen to get the task over and done with and get out of the minaret as fast as possible. The investigators can hear the guards scampering down the steps.

A sound from within the cell draws their attention. There is someone else in there with them, a shape huddled in the corner, in rags, pallid and horrible. It is a torso and head, with no eyes, one ear, and a working tongue. The rest is gone. Patches are crudely wrapped over the newer amputations, and a stained suit jacket thrown over his shoulders, for warmth. A crimson-stained blanket covers the right shoulder



Prof. Smith undone

and the crotch. In a bleating, terrified voice, the pathetic figure asks who is there. Investigators have a chance of INT x2 of recognizing their London friend, Professor Julius Smith, who then lapses into unconsciousness again. Hours pass.

## Mehmet Makryat

A jangle of keys in the lock and the door swings open to reveal Aktar, or rather now Mehmet, as he has removed his false beard and neatly combed his hair. Did he bother to change clothes? —probably, on such a momentous occasion.

He lights a cigarette and relaxes against the stone in a friendly and familiar way. He takes great delight in recounting the entire story from his point of view, how he tracked and chose them, and how he duped them—from his initial impersonation of the Professor, to their finding the pieces of the simulacrum for him, to their help in defeating his father. Smugly, he points out that the story of the simulacrum's destructibility was a fabrication; there is no way known to destroy it.

He enjoys his recitation so much that he elaborates further on to the powers of the statue, and summarizes the sorts of powers it allows—especially, in term of the plot, the new ability he has to wear other peoples' skins undetectably. (Study "The Simulacrum Empowered" at the beginning of the next chapter.)



Mehmet Makryat

Before he turns to more grandiose topics, he may want answers concerning Fenalik and Fenalik's actions, unless he was aboard the Orient Express the night of the battle. Then he makes his own plans plain.

"For too long the Brothers have been idle, limiting themselves to minor atrocities and the pursuit of petty evils. They slavishly serve the Skinless One, without seeing that He too is in *our* arsenal, fit to be used. With him, we should hold dominion over the earth.

"The first step of my plan will be for me, with the power of the Sedefkar Simulacrum, to assume the position of a man in power. Great, worldwide, Western power.

"I leave for England at once, so I am sorry that I will not be able to see your demise. Unhappily you will not be able to give your limbs in service to the Brothers. Your corruption has begun, you see. It began when the power of the Sedefkar was activated and since you have borne it for so long, you will suffer. I shall let you out of the chains so that you can see the amusing way your bodies pervert—at close range.

"As for myself, I am for the moment protected by the simulacrum. It must be recharged soon, but the corruption will not begin in earnest for one hundred hours, and by then I shall have retrieved the Ritual of Cleansing from London, so I will be whole again soon. As for you, at the end of that time, or shortly thereafter, all of you will become worse than beasts, less wholesome than slime.

"Your slow and agonizing death carries with it much reward from the Skinless One. When you cease to be flesh, you shall be for eternity clasped to his putrid bosom.

"Farewell, then. I left the Professor's tongue in his head that you may while away the days enjoyably before the corruption unfortunately forces you to devour him. Meanwhile I shall dine on better, aboard the Orient Express. *Au revoir.*"

underway, he can create a distraction while the others rescue the children.

Now the pieces of the simulacrum are brought out by cultists in red robes and each one placed in one of the six niches. The configuration is not that of a star, but that of a human figure—the simulacrum. The pieces are not yet joined to each other. The robed figures then step back.

Four more cultists carry out Selim and set his chair before the stone column. Everyone tenses as Selim draws from his robe a long parchment scroll and unwinds it. Any investigator near Aktar notices his sharp intake of breath.

Selim begins the ritual. The investigators should position themselves so they can get to the children and dispatch the needlemen. If any of the investigators can understand the archaic combination of Turkish and Arabic in the scrolls, then they understand the following, which may give them pause: “I ask this by the powers of the Sedefkar, by the torment of the flesh to be endured by those corrupted by it.”

Then Selim steps into place to be absorbed into the simulacrum. He raises the parchment to say the final words, but Mehmet casts Control Skin on him, sealing his mouth with a huge flap of skin. Selim’s magic points are low because he needs to activate the ritual—thus Mehmet easily beats him. All eyes are on Selim as he struggles to negate the attack; it is a perfect moment for the investigators to help the children escape.

As they do, Aktar/Mehmet runs forward, pointing at the investigators, yelling “Foreign spies! Help the master!” Confusion erupts in the mosque.

Mehmet gets to his father and snatches the scroll from his hand, stepping beside the simulacrum niches and saying the final words. This occurs in a matter of seconds. Now the simulacrum appears to close around him, encasing him in armor. The power of the Sedefkar Simulacrum is invoked.

As the simulacrum segments congeal to him, they seem to dissolve, as though being absorbed into his flesh. His body swells to the proportions of the simulacrum, the skin stretching. His head bulges, as do his eyes. He opens his mouth to scream in agony but the scream becomes a peal of maniacal laughter echoing out into the dome above the heads of the assembled Brothers. The cultists are still, their collective breath held.

“Your master’s son has returned. I, Mehmet Makryat, am the Skinless One’s own hide. Take this imposter.” He kicks Selim at the Brothers who fall upon their old master, overwhelmed by the force of the simulacrum and their devotion to the ideal of it. They tear Selim’s skin from his body with their nails, and he screeches until dead. Mehmet’s proportions subside and he becomes as before. The simulacrum segments appear back in the niches.

“Seize the infidels! Bring them to me alive!” The voice of Mehmet booms over the heads of the investigators as they start to run.

The cultists wheel on the party, eager to serve their new master well in this initial task.

“No longer will the Brothers of the Skin cower beneath the dome of this place, fearing to make their presence felt in the world. With the power of the simulacrum we need serve no one, not even the Skinless One. The simulacrum gives us power of even He, and the Skinless One shall do our bidding, and make great our destiny!”

## Capture

It is desirable that some or all of the investigators will be captured. They are taken to the prison in the minaret. Escape from the main hall is unlikely. Guards in the entrance hall of the mosque will block exit that way. If the investigators flee via the secret entrance that Aktar/Mehmet showed them, cultist await them on the steps of the Yerebatan Satay, with more closing in from behind.

However, if the investigators managed to free them, the children are forgotten in the confusion and can escape: Mehmet Makryat has no wish for the Skin Beast. His plans lie elsewhere.

Investigators who managed to escape can aid their fellows from the mosque, or observe Makryat’s movements. Having some investigators free in Constantinople at this point could be a useful way for keepers to disclose Makryat’s intention to return to London aboard the Orient Express.

### THE PRISON IN THE MINARET

The four minarets of the Shunned Mosque share the same layout, combination prison/shrines. Escorted by two Brothers per investigator, they are taken up stone steps, past cult relics of skins and skinless victims dried and withered and hanging on walls, to a level lined with stone cells, like monks’ cells. There are three per level, since the minarets are narrow in diameter.

On the way they pass a parade of other prisoners. Some squirm, some beg, others lie propped against walls. Some are native, some foreign. All have suffered cruel amputations of ears, of limbs, of eyes.

One prisoner slams against his door as the investigators pass, drooling hideously and grunting from a mouth which has no tongue. He attempts to grapple the investigators and tear out their tongues to replace his own, with the strength of the insane. The Brothers help fend him off, not gently.

blood; cultists get the perfectly maintained gleaming steel implements.

Alongside the tools, racks of earthenware jars hold strange concoctions. An investigator drinking of them dies immediately (poison POT 30). These are embalming potions, for the rituals needed for making use of non-cult dead skins and limbs.

The door out is merely a curtain, and the way leads into the mosque proper.

There is another chamber directly next door, but this must be reached from the Mosque hall, as there is no connecting door between the two rooms.

### THE DEAD PARTS ROOM

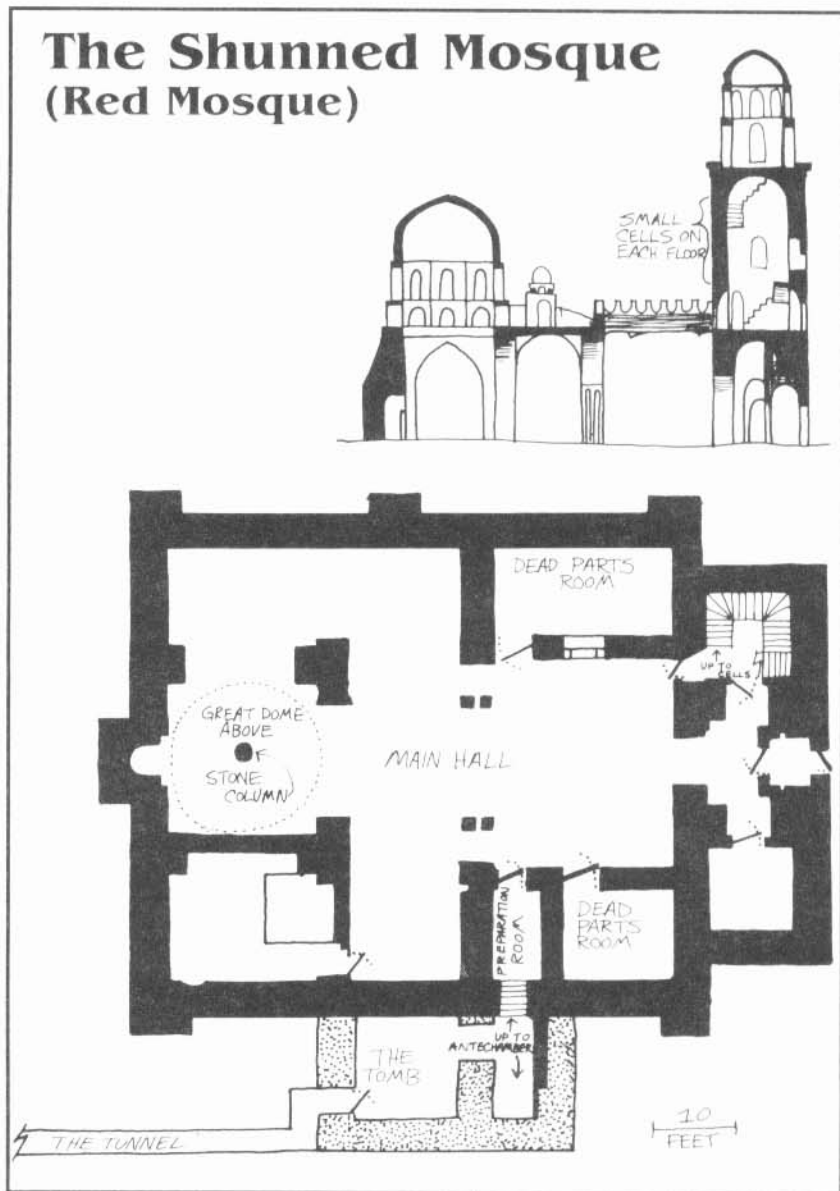
A cold light emanating from a blue lamp lights the room, which holds dead parts of victims. This room is a locker of organs and members waiting to be sewn into bodies of living cultists. A similar room exists at the opposite end of the mosque. Both rooms have a stale smell, but not the odor of decay normally associated with dead things. The blue light is the cause of this: anyone disturbing it or extinguishing it witnesses the immediate and utter corruption of every tissue here. This horrific and overwhelming reminder of mortality requires a Sanity roll: lose 0/1D3 SAN.

## The Mosque

From here on, the investigators are in the mosque proper. The preparation for the ritual of the Sedefkar Simulacrum is already underway. Mehmet/Aktar is delighted.

All up the arcades and beneath the hall of the mosque are cultists, over three hundred in number. The investigators can creep out into the great hall and join the throng of cultists, provided they dress casually or inconspicuously; the air of enthusiastic expectation is so great that the investigators find it easy to mingle, as the crowd fixes its eyes or one point.

## The Shunned Mosque (Red Mosque)



That area, beneath the great dome, is empty save for a stone column with six niches carved into it. The arrangement of the niches resembles a five-pointed star with a central spoke.

The last of the missing children are brought out under the dome. The ambassador's son, James Rutherford, is among them. These children have not yet been harmed. The cultists tense like an expectant theater audience at curtain-rise. Figures with twitching stitched-on fingers hover near the children, holding needles and thread. Selim intends to end the ceremony by creating another Skin Beast in homage to his master, the Skinless One.

The investigators need a plan of action. Aktar suggests that if they can move forward once the ritual is

*they stayed out of trouble. Yet I was in trouble. They found me out. I suspect they have friends in the police who told them.*

*They did not come against me, though. They are cowards, so low that they took my daughter, my only child. I followed them, desperate to learn where my little girl was kept, all the time hoping I could find her alive and rescue her. Then I did find her. I wished I had not. They had done terrible things to her, to a girl of ten. Things taken from her—I cannot say more.” He begins to weep. When he regains himself he continues.*

*“I stole in and killed her where she was kept captive. Then I fled to the gypsy camps. You may say I was cruel to kill my daughter. This is not so. I was kind.*

*“I learned of the trap they were laying, but I did not know for whom it was laid. You must be strong enemies of theirs. You can help me bring them down at last. To you I will reveal a secret, if you will use it to destroy these men.”*

Taking stock, the investigators realize that the simulacrum is or soon will be in the hands of the Brothers. They must act fast. If the investigators hid each segment separately, then keepers may wish to stage a pitched battle for one or two pieces by having the cultists and the investigators arrive at the same time. Naturally the Brothers have superior numbers.

Such attempts at preservation or delay presumably concluded, Aktar advises that they go at once to the Shunned Mosque. He knows a secret way into their hideout. Once they have seen with their own eyes what goes on in there, he wants them to prod the British and French to intervene, since the local police will not respond to his incredible story.

If the investigators are loathe to trust him, Aktar eventually reveals to them the secret entrance to the Shunned Mosque and then enters there himself as a cultist, ready to reveal the presence of the investigators.

## The Secret Entrance

The gypsy's secret way is through the Yerebatan Satay, the “Sunken Palace,” a huge flooded Byzantine cistern, covering two and a half acres and originally built by Justinian to provide water for his fountains. Aktar leads them there through rough and dark streets, avoiding thieves and packs of dogs. Then a small stone staircase leads downwards. These steps lead to further stairs, dank and musty and, far below, the sound of lapping water.

The stairs simply continue into the water, but tied to an ancient rung, a small boat waits, capable of seating six. Taking the oars, Aktar sends them gliding silently through a world of dark water. Above, fluted stone columns join at the top in huge archways. At the furthest column, even a successful Spot Hidden would detect

nothing unusual, but Aktar reaches up and slides his dagger into a small crack in the center and gradually levers out a door of stone about two feet square. Behind it, a narrow spiral staircase leads down. One by one the investigators are boosted up and in, giving a hand to Aktar, who ties the boat to the open door.

If anyone asks how much further down they must travel, the gypsy answers simply, “To Hell, my friends.”

At the bottom of the long, stifling stairs, a stone shaft about five feet high runs out horizontally from them. Before they reach the end of this tunnel, they begin to smell something rotting. The lanterns reveal that the walls of unblemished stone are now coated with a black ooze. The tunnel ends at a door.

The gypsy speaks in hushed tones, “We are now in the realm of the Skinless One.”

## THE TOMB

Through the door is a tomb, lit by a flickering greenish glow. Here are buried the revered dead of the cult. Hideous carvings represent the secret services of those servants of the Skinless One. Glancing up, investigators can see small apertures in the ceiling. Aktar warns that noise here will reverberate up into the main dome of the mosque—they must be silent. A small doorway leads to an antechamber beyond.

## THE ANTECHAMBER

A guard waits here. His eyes and knife hand are sewn-on additions. He must somehow be silenced.

The antechamber is a small room; it holds some 200 scrolls for cult burial services. Most of these are gibberish, but receiving a successful POW x1 roll, an investigator examining the scrolls closely can find one that actually contains the spell Prepare Corpse, a cult spell which de-bones the body, allowing the flesh alone to be stored in massive urns which in turn are buried in the tomb beyond. From here, steps lead up to the Preparation Room above.

## THE PREPARATION ROOM

A room little bigger than a closet, there is enough space here to walk around, look at the wares, and then leave again.

Here sit cult preparations, boxes of candles, bottles of minerals, and jars and vials of potions used in magic and in the treatment of their dead.

Cult surgical equipment is here also, and investigators who have been subjected to a cult transplant require Sanity rolls, losing 0/1D6 SAN. Failing the roll, those investigators might manifest signs of previous insanities. There are two kinds of surgical tools: non-cultists get the ones which are stained and pitted with rust and dried

terable secret syllables that accompany the casting. The hot flesh melds the obscene mass into one. As it settles over the children, all that can be seen are their maddened staring eyes, and their mouths through which shoot tentacles of skin. The whole entity begins to undulate, and arms and legs of the children poke through the hardening crust of flesh. It is upon these limbs that the now-formed Beast begins to slowly move, always toward the horrified investigators.

Sanity loss to witness the entire despicable creation of the Skin Beast is 1D3/2D6+4 SAN.

Selim Makryat gives the order to depart, disappointing the cultists who are eager to see the Skin Beast devour their enemies. Selim wants the simulacrum, and sees no need to wait. Investigators whose eyes are not glued to the approaching Skin Beast notice something dark and winged whisked Selim from his chair and away across the Bosphorus into the night.

## Escape

The hapless investigators have several ways to free themselves from the horror bearing down on them, and the keeper will think of others.

- They might burst their bonds, in a feat of strength. Each investigator may have one roll only, against STR 20 on the resistance table.
- Companion-of-the-Dead may pop up and cut them free, gibbering and spitting at the Skin Beast. "Nasty. Nasty. Foul oh yes, yes! They're not laughing, not laughing!"
- Just as the Skin Beast is set to pull off someone's face, a dreadful roaring comes and a bear lumbers out of the dark and attacks the Beast. The two fight, and the bear is inexorably overwhelmed and drawn into the Skin Beast's mass. While it is engaged, though, the investigators may flee.

As they escape, some of the departing cultists realize that things have gone awry, turn back, and give chase. Ahead a figure beckons to the investigators, encouraging them in his direction. If they follow him, he leads them straight to his boat, which is hidden among rocks on the shore. It is Mehmet, as the gypsy; that was his 'bear.'

Freed, if they make for Hakim's vessel, they find it moored out in the water and no amount of yelling will make Hakim (or whoever is operating it) come in. Investigators swimming out find that the Brothers got here first, killing all on board and taking what limbs they desired (lose 1/1D4 SAN).

Once on Hakim's boat, they realize it is slowly sinking. The gypsy Aktar (see below) arrives in his boat to

rescue them. If Feyar is still with the investigators, then Aktar the Gypsy exposes him as a spy, and urges prompt disposal. Though the Bosphorus is calm, keepers may want to keep things tense by causing Brothers to pursue the investigators on the return trip.

# The Shunned Mosque

REACHING STAMBOUL, Aktar takes the investigators to a tiny cluttered room. There the gypsy settles them and offers tea and bandages. He identifies himself by telling 'The Gypsy's Tale,' below. Even if the investigators were not caught in the trap at Üsküdar,

Mehmet Makryat soon presents himself to them as Aktar, and tells his story.



Aktar

If the investigators have only encountered Makryat as Professor Smith, no resemblance is noted. If Makryat helped them fight off Fenalik during the terrible mass murder, Aktar reminds everyone of someone they have met, but are unable to remember who. If the players are the sort who will chew endlessly on this minor clue, consider reducing Makryat's POW by 1 to let

him disguise himself with Control Skin—his POW always rises to 25 when he dons the simulacrum.

Having already decided how Aktar speaks, the keeper may want to read aloud the following handout.

## Player Handout #22

### The Gypsy's Tale

*"I am Aktar, and I am your friend. I was a spy for Ataturk and his police. I spied against many of my good friends, but I am a loyal Turk and this was for the good of my country. They think I am a gypsy. This is not true, though I am a friend of gypsies. I am a true Turk. I spied upon the men who pursue you, this organization known as the Brothers of the Skin. I spied upon them and reported their activities to the police, but somehow*

An overwhelming stench rises up as they slide open the sarcophagus—CON x5 rolls are necessary to continue to examine the site, or spend the next round paralyzed with nausea. Astonishingly, within is a bubbling vat of flesh. Alas, while it is the wrong body, it's the right grave—Garaznet's remains have long gone elsewhere: what's inside is a Thing planted there last night, formed from a random abductee.

If the investigators acquitted themselves valiantly against the Beylab Thing, there's little justice in putting them over the same hurdle again—if the keeper wishes, this version of the Thing has been instructed merely to grab as many investigators as possible and hold them for the Brothers to gather up. Or perhaps he or she may wish to substitute a Skin Walker (see the spells at the end of this chapter).

If they ran away when confronted with Beylab Thing, or if they killed the first Thing quickly, through a fluke perhaps, then this Thing should attack at least one investigator without mercy, in order to divert and pin the rest. The Thing will be much harder to kill here, in this vast, waterless, grassless cemetery.

#### STRANGER THING, product of Animate Flesh Thing

STR 15    CON 40    SIZ 20    INT 5    POW 1  
DEX 8    HP 30    Move 7

**Damage Bonus:** not applicable.

**Weapons:** Touch 90%, damage 1D4\*\* or grapple

*it can attack up to three targets in front of it, dividing its chances for successful attacks as 90%, or as 45%/45%, or as 30%/30%/30%.*

*\*\* it burns anything it touches for the indicated damage per round, until peeled off the victim by matching STR against STR 15 on the resistance table—or it can simply grapple up to three targets, STR 15 to maintain each hold.*

**Armor:** 7-point rubbery hide.

**Skills:** Bubble and Hiss 99%, Find a Victim 99%, Flow 99%, Lock On Target 99%.

**Sanity Loss to See:** 1/1D8+1

## The Trap Sprung

Forty Brothers wait in the darkness beyond, enjoying the joke but not the cold, biding their time to see a fresh holy miracle of the Skinless One, and thereafter capture for dismemberment the infidels so-nominated by Him. While the investigators engage the new Thing, the Brothers spring from hiding and seize the trespassers. They rise from behind stones on all sides; to startled investigators it seems as if the dead have risen everywhere.

Armed and in overwhelming numbers, the Brothers strive to capture their foes, then herd them through the graveyard toward where yet more Brothers wait. The investigators are brought within this new circle, disarmed,

and tied securely to ancient stone monuments. Any weapons are tauntingly placed just out of reach.

The circle parts to admit six cultists carrying a large oilskin-wrapped bundle between them. The bundle bleats, squirms, and whimpers. Following this, four more men bear in Selim Makryat on a chair supported by poles, and stand motionless under his weight. Though never introduced, this Makryat is old and shrivelled. He glares down at the investigators from his makeshift throne.

Through a translator, he quizzes them on the location of the simulacrum, if he does not know already, and about the location of the Scroll of the Head.



Selim Makryat

If they refuse information, he systematically casts Curse of the Putrid Husk on them, a new spell described at the end of this chapter. Almost certainly at least one investigator is driven insane, and babbles everything.

Having learned what he wishes to know, Selim scowls at the investigators. "You are flyspecks beside men of knowledge, and worth nothing to our cosmic

lord. You shall die appeasing our master, the Skinless One, and he shall look favorably upon me when I assume the mantle of the Sedefkar Simulacrum. Your agony will satiate his lust to revenge your audacious meddling." He then begins the spell Create Skin Beast.

### THE SKIN BEAST

Unwrapped, the oilskin bundles reveal twelve writhing children, alive but in horrible torment. They have been literally sewn together with stout twine—almost randomly by limb, by torso, by nose or ears, wherever sufficient skin might be pulled away from a body, there it has been stitched to another child. A few pitiable victims snivel and wail, but most kneel dazedly, beyond all belief, reason, or tears.

Three large tubs are brought forth. Gesticulating cultists gather around each. The air crackles with dark magical energy, and soon the contents of the vats are heard to sputter and hiss. A smell rises up which reminds the investigators of the Beylab Beast. In the tubs is human flesh, heated to melting with Melt Flesh spells. The contents are then poured over the screaming children.

As the greasy, scalding flesh envelopes them, Selim chants the words of the spell, accompanied by those Brothers whose dead men's tongues can chant the un-

The ferry runs every two hours until 11 P.M. If the investigators wish to excavate in private, they choose the last service, and remain on the south shore until morning. Foreigners boarding the ferry with picks and shovels will look suspicious, and could attract the interest of the police.

Hiring a boat is much more private, but comparatively expensive. A motor launch with captain hired for six or eight hours costs nearly £10.

## HAKIM

At the docks is a seedy fisherman, Hakim. He is of dubious repute, but he regularly takes a motorized fishing launch into the Sea of Marmara. When he sees the digging equipment and lanterns, he asks no questions but doubles his fee to around £20, explaining that the wise and circumspect effendis forgot to inform him of the true risk he would run.

Hakim is burly and big-bellied, with shifty eyes. If he thinks the passengers are weaponless fools, then he and his unsavory crew of three attempt to murder them on the way across, dump their weighted bodies into the Bosphorus, and then sail home for a profitable night's sleep.

Hakim is a businessman first; if things look a little dangerous, and the investigators have not told him what may happen, he will likely abandon them on the Üsküdar side. At the very least, he reckons that he deserves additional pay.

Crossing the Straits, call for luck rolls. A success detects another small fishing boat, on a course rather like their own. At all times the craft stays well out of their way. It is Mehmet Makryat.

## The Cemetery

Presumably the investigators have brought someone who can read Turkish and Arabic, or have received very careful instructions from the staff at the Topkapi Museum. Perhaps Hakim could do this if no one else comes forward, but the investigators deserve to pay dearly for his services, and must meekly accept his sudden pomposity when he becomes chief scholar in the party.

Monuments of Christian and Islamic faith rub shoulders by section. Many of the stone plaques and markers are of great antiquity. The cemetery is huge. Finding the



*Hakim*

actual grave of the Kurd takes careful exploration. The winter weather, chill ocean, and the fantastic dark shapes of the monuments combine to make a bleak weirdness appropriate to grave-robbing.

Locating the Kurd's gravestone takes 1D3 hours. Finally located, the grave is so hemmed in by other, later places of rest that only two investigators at a time can dig. Garaznet's mausoleum is of antique carved stone worn almost smooth by time, then seemingly overblown by the dust of centuries. However, if one of the two diggers receives a successful Geology roll, he or she notices that the earth is not compacted as it should be, though it shows no overt sign of disturbance. A successful Track roll could also raise this problem. Perhaps someone has made an attempt to tidy the area sometime in the more recent past.

As the party reach the stone box within which Garaznet was lain, they hear someone approach. Among the jumbled stones shambles a figure strange in the yellow beam of the lamp, a man with loose folds of skin hanging from his body, dressed in rags and showing bared teeth. It gibbers as it comes.

If Hakim or Feyar is present, he identifies the figure as a beggar, a demented old fool known as Companion-of-the-Dead. He lives in the cemetery and babbles constantly to the spirits who, he is certain, are restless and need placating in their loneliness. He is harmless, and hops upon a gravestone and watches their digging with bright eyes and many interjections in Turkish. He whistles a half-tune. "They are restless tonight. Oh yes. They

move in great numbers."

Though no one could tell, he refers to the Brothers, busy setting their trap, and not to the dead.

As the investigators clear the area, preparing to raise the gigantic stone slab overlaying the supposed remains of Garaznet, Companion-to-the-Dead encourages them, cackling and clapping his hands. "That's what he needs. That's the way. Get closer to him. Keep him company!" He keeps this up until the inves-



*Companion-to-the-Dead*

tigators wedge their picks and begin to prise up the lid.

Then the old man shrieks, "Don't let him out!" Companion-to-the-Dead lunges at the nearest investigators, fighting like a demon, but only a very weak demon. Once they have shoved or beaten him away, he squats behind a stone and hisses menacingly. The investigators are free to attend to their prize.

He assures them over and over that Beylab knows all, ask what you will, in good (although heavily accented) English. If asked about the cultists, the ritual, the simulacrum, the missing children, anything, he has the same answer, prepared for him by Selim. He tells it very convincingly, since he thinks his continuing health depends on it.

## Player Handout #21

### Beylab's Statement

*"There is indeed within our city a group of maniacs who are said to worship a lost statue. I have heard that this statue is now found. It is a fabulous treasure, and it is said could only be destroyed by one means, a magical ritual. There is a grave of a Kurdish scholar, Garaznet, in the ancient cemetery of Üsküdar, on the Asian side of the city. The ritual you seek lies within it, for this cult you speak of had its enemies, and this man was one.*

*"The ritual and the statue are two-faced: they can be employed for good or evil. The Kurd knew the good path and used it. Go to his grave, my foreign friends. You will not be disappointed. If you break the statue, you will break the cult. But the city officials, they have no love for foreigners, and there are cultists among them. No, go to the grave of Garaznet. Take picks. Take shovels. Go in the night and pry the tomb's secrets from it. But be cautious."*

He stops. The clattering of clogs on stone echoes as customers move about in the haze. Figures can be seen dimly, weaving to and fro. Beylab reaches down, to scoop out cool water over himself, but a cultist attendant jumps up behind him and cuts his throat from ear to ear before he can speak another word: lose 0/1D4 SAN to witness this.

The assassin leaps down from the navel stone. Investigators making a Listen roll hear the roar of flames from below. They have one round to get off the stone before great gouts of flame rip up from beneath and curl around the stone, incinerating the massive Beylab where he lies in his death throes.

The customer cultists continue to act their roles, unless the investigators show signs of pursuing the escaping Brother. A successful Spot Hidden allows any investigator who is looking at the other customers to see the scars around the dead parts of the unclothed Brothers. These are fingers and ears in the case of the males, much more in the case of the females.

#### The Beylab Thing

Then the flesh of Beylab tentatively slips off the stone, leaving behind its dripping skeleton, the separating bones

tilting and clattering to the marble floor. In the punctuated silence, the new thing of flesh heaves and shakes as it wriggles steaming and molten across the floor. In a few seconds more it has become amalgamated and spread carpet-wide, a vast red-mottled wrinkled surface which pours up and across intervening stone platforms, plainly purposeful, sensate, and malevolent. Sanity loss to see this is 1/1D8+1 SAN.

It attacks the investigator who receives the highest Dodge roll result; if all succeed, call for luck roll tie-breakers. It splashes and wraps itself around the feet and ankles of each victim, scalding and burning as it ascends to the calves and knees. If targeting only one investigator, it covers him in three rounds and stays until the target is dead, then seeks another.

A successful idea roll suggests that anything which burns might be dismayed by water; Beylab's basin of water still rests beside his gleaming skeleton. The Beylab Thing must lose 30 hit points of damage before it dissolves into lumps of inanimate flesh. Nominally, 30 SIZ points of water must be poured on it before it expires. If the keeper likes, a pool can be handy whereto (with suitably horrible sacrifice) the victim's companions can drag man and monster, and there plunge in both.

#### THE BEYLAB THING, product of Animate Flesh Thing

STR 15    CON 40    SIZ 20    INT 5    POW 1  
DEX 8    HP 30    Move 7

**Damage Bonus:** not applicable.

**Weapons:** Touch 90%, damage 1D4\*\* or grapple  
\*it can attack up to three targets in front of it, dividing its chances for successful attacks as 90%, or as 45%/45%, or as 30%/30%/30%.

\*\* it burns anything it touches for the indicated damage per round, until peeled off the victim by matching STR against STR 15 on the resistance table—or it can simply grapple up to three targets, STR 15 to maintain each hold.

**Armor:** 7-point rubbery hide.

**Skills:** Bubble and Hiss 99%, Find a Victim 99%, Flow 99%, Lock On Target 99%.

**Sanity Loss to See:** 1/1D8+1

If they choose to flee rather than fighting the Beylab Thing, the hideous screams of the remaining innocents cause a Sanity loss of 1D6 SAN for each investigator.

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## Üsküdar

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**N**O BRIDGE SPANS the Bosphorus in the 1920s. Investigators can cross over to Üsküdar and the cemetery there by means of the ferry, or by hiring their own boat.





*Beylab the Perspiper*

women's section with one exception: towels are not worn by women, who traditionally go naked.

The Turkish bath is comprised of three significant rooms.

- The first is the *Camekan*, or dressing room, where the customer disrobes and later redresses. After the bath they may recline here and sip tea.
- The second is the *Sogukluk*, a room where the bather lingers in warm temperatures to prepare for the heat of the steam room.
- Finally there is the *Haratet*, the steam room itself. Temperatures here rise to 125 degrees Fahrenheit.

There are five Brothers of the Skin within the baths. One is an attendant, and is sorting towels in the *Sogukluk*. The others are present as customers within the baths, two 'women' and two men. The 'women' are actually male cultists who have been altered so as to appear female.

## Meeting Beylab

On arrival, the investigators are told they can only enter the bath as customers, and so must disrobe and go into the *Haratet* in towels to meet Beylab.

Female investigators cannot meet him, because the baths are segregated. There are two attendants and five customers in the female section, two of whom are cultists. The two 'female' cultists are ready to pounce on any investigator ready to cause trouble from her end.

The male investigators may meet the Perspiper. They enter a world without obvious boundaries. They begin to sweat immediately. Steam and haze are everywhere. The floor and the walls are marble. Above, thin shafts of light filter down from star-shaped cuttings in the ceiling, barely piercing the mist. Thick hexagonal blocks called navel stones are arranged around the room, heated from below. The bathers lie on these. Marble washing basins stand in the corner.

On one navel stone sprawls a grotesquely fat man, Beylab, running with perspiration. There are eight other customers, six genuine, two cultists. There are also three attendants in the room, massaging one customer and washing down another with a mixture of soap and water.

When the investigators approach Beylab, he hails them with one upraised fat hand. There is no way to be comfortable in the oppressive atmosphere of the baths except by lying down also. They can stare upwards at the false stars as they listen to him.

boy and all the children. You are doomed. The Skin Beast will come. Soon you will sleep in the arms of the Skinless One." Then the tattoo on his forearm begins to writhe as an automatic spell is invoked to prevent him saying too much. His mouth wrenches open and the skin on his face runs like liquid and pours into his mouth and down his throat, choking him (1/1D6 SAN to see this). Rutherford thereafter spares no effort to help the investigators.

The ambassador has a theory that the reported criminal activities around the Red Mosque may be linked with the people who have his son. The police say that they have searched the Red Mosque and found nothing. Rutherford can tell the investigators where the Red Mosque is, and feels that new efforts with the police will meet with no better results. He has, he admits, secret resources of His Majesty's government, but this matter is thus far a private one, and those worthies are committed to certain secret activities along the sizzling Turko-Greek border.

Sir Douglas mentions that he has heard of a man who apparently is an amazing source of information, one Beylab the Perspirer. Perhaps he might know where the children are being held.

Concerning his son, James was playing in the garden when he disappeared, dressed in Turkish robes as he liked to wear. Rutherford says that his son had browned in the sun from his stay in Turkey and enjoyed pretending to be one of the street urchins. Perhaps he was taken by mistake.

Then Rutherford will ponder, "If they took him by mistake though, what was the spy doing here?" Or an idea roll assists an investigator in drawing the same conclusion. Rutherford then realizes that these 'Brothers,' whoever they may be, must spy on all the embassies as a matter of routine. This should not mean anything to the investigators unless they have chosen an embassy for the hiding place for their statue. If so, they find upon returning there that anything they have hidden is gone.

## The Red Mosque

The investigators may visit the Red Mosque (the Shunned Mosque). There is only one obvious way in, one kept well-guarded.

The ruined mosque has an air of desolation uninviting to tourists or pious passers-by. Muck and grime are thick upon the walls. Dead animals and rubbish clot the doorway. Two studded front doors, always closed, open into a front chamber.

A half-dozen or more of the younger Brothers lounge about the mosque, some by the front door, some inside the front chamber. They give a good impression of being a disreputable street gang. They try to sell the tourists

'nice things,' goods obviously stolen. They discourage the investigators from entering the mosque.

The front chamber, once a stirring invitation to worshippers of the One True Faith, is now as cold and bare as a tomb. A ragged curtain, which may once have been a priceless Persian rug, hangs at the rear of the chamber, and blocks the view into the vault (or dome) of the mosque.

More of the Brothers lounge here, and they advance menacingly on investigators who make it this far. The investigators had best leave. Nothing incriminating nor any clue can be seen in here.

They find no other way into the place. However, if they watch the front entrance for a day or two, they confirm that none of the gang enters or leaves, implying that those within have another way in and out. See the subsection "The Secret Entrance," below.

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## Beylab

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**B**EYLAB THE PERSPIRER once feared nothing, but the Brothers have re-educated him in this, and now he is happy to oblige them. The Brothers have had time to warn Beylab to give out only the information which leads the investigators to the trap at Üsküdar Cemetery. Selim has decided that the meeting with Beylab should be as convincing as possible: Beylab will be murdered, as if the cultists are desperate to silence him.

The investigators can pass word in the market that they wish an appointment with Beylab. A time and day is arranged, when they must come to a certain bath-house in Pera, on the north shore of the Golden Horn.

The quickest way there is across the Galata Bridge but that is perpetually jammed with traffic. The keeper should press a bit here: the investigators were warned that Beylab demands punctuality. They must negotiate an unfamiliar part of a foreign city and reach a strange destination before an allotted hour in the afternoon. The bustle and panic of these roads will contrast with the eerie peace and spectral atmosphere of the baths they go to.

### THE BATHS

The Turkish bath is an age-old institution, still popular in Constantinople. This particular bath is segregated by rooms (others are segregated by having female customers at certain hours and males at others). All customs in the Turkish Bath are observed equally in the men and

Garaznet turns out to have been a Kurdish scholar who died some four hundred years ago. Little is known of him, except that he left no descendants. He is buried at Üsküdar Cemetery.

If the investigators check the records to see who last handled the scrolls, the only man listed is one Selim Makryat, in 1823. He is otherwise unmentioned in any document.

## Out at Night

If investigators wish for night life, they may go to any of the many street cafes and enjoy the belly dancers, an age-old Turkish custom. Some night-life is less welcome.

### THE GYPSY AND THE BEAR

At night, they are shadowed by the Gypsy and the Bear. The Gypsy seems innocuous at first, one of many street gypsies, leading his trained bear on a leash. However, the pair are never fully seen, always lurking in half-shadow. Once when they pass by in the street, a successful Listen roll catches the Gypsy's mutter of "Take care, my friends" as he and his pet shuffle away.

On each sighting after that, the Gypsy grows more and more disturbing. Sometimes he and the Bear seem to blend into one fantastic shape, or into separate but disturbing and haunting ones.

The Gypsy is in fact Mehmet, and the Bear a strange creature he has summoned which can alert him to the activities of the investigators at all times. The statistics of the creature are irrelevant, as the investigators should never see it up close, except in its Bear-shape. The keeper may hint that it could be virtually anything. His face disguised again, Mehmet later introduces himself to them as Aktar in "The Gypsy's Tale," below.

### THE BROTHERS OF THE SKIN

On their nights out, investigators always face attack by the Brothers. Some Brothers are less subtle than others, and a darkened alleyway full of their master's enemies may be too tempting for the watchers not to attack.

In all such attacks now, the Brothers take as many investigators captive as possible, especially those who seem to know more than the others, or who appear to be leaders. These are spirited to the Shunned Mosque and tortured with the Curse of the Putrid Husk until they reveal the whereabouts of the simulacrum and anything else they may know. Under such torture they should last all of two hours. Then parts of them will be cut off to provide new pieces for the Brothers. This should prove a nasty shock (requiring a Sanity roll) for the remaining investigators when they meet someone who wears one of their friend's limbs (identified by a signet ring, for example).

## The Ambassador's Plea

Around the British clubs and hotels there is word that the British Ambassador seeks someone to look into a matter for him. The implication is that he trusts neither the agents available to him nor the Turkish or Interallied police.

If the investigators have been in the news (suffering attacks from Brothers, or present at the murder of Beylab), or if there is some reason that His Majesty's representative to Turkey should know of them (perhaps the odd affair that occurred not long ago on the London to Liverpool line) then Sir Douglas may take it upon himself to contact them. In this case, they receive an urgent summons and a car by which to go to the embassy. It is in Pera-Galata.

Sir Douglas sees the investigators at once. He refuses entrance to any Turkish national with them, including Feyar.

### SIR DOUGLAS RUTHERFORD

The Ambassador is a tall, thin, stooped man with a crooked nose and gray hair. He has a habit of clapping his hands together for emphasis while he talks. He is a stuffed shirt, a snob and a xenophobe, but he has the traditional British stiff upper lip and could prove a staunch ally.



*Sir Douglas Rutherford*

At present he is distraught. Last night his son was abducted, becoming the latest known kidnaping. Dropping all pretext, he implores the investigators, as fellow Westerners in this strange land, to help him find his boy. He offers them money. More importantly, with Rutherford as an ally, they can use his position and influence in the city.

The young Rutherford is named James, age 9. He was last seen in the embassy garden. Sir Douglas suspects the involvement of the servants, and summons the Turks if the investigators wish to see them—these men and women mainly clean and garden; the rest are British. Alert investigators (successful Spot Hidden) sees that one of the staff has curious scars around his eyes and ears. On closer examination, the man (Kuredeff) has eyes that stare out blankly—dead man's eyes. He is a spy for the Brothers of the Skin.

Before he can be questioned, Kuredeff tries to escape. Captured, he screams at them, "The Brothers have the

- No mention of the Sedefkar Simulacrum can be found. However, successful Library Use and luck rolls uncovers mention of the Sedefkar Scrolls, ancient documents held in the collection at the Topkapi Museum.

## Gossip

Places of learning aside, the best source of information in Constantinople are the markets and tea houses, where gossip is rife and all manner of stories old and new can be heard.

### THE MISSING CHILDREN

There have been more than twice the reported number of missing children, since many have been taken from very poor homes who have not gone to the authorities or who have been ignored in their complaints.

The freshest gossip is that the son of a wealthy European has just been taken. Now perhaps action will be taken.

### MOSQUE, BROTHERS, SIMULACRUM

Asking after the Shunned Mosque, the Brothers of the Skin or the Sedefkar Simulacrum, they face one of three responses. Roll 1D10 each time they ask someone.

- 1 — The person knows of these things, but is too afraid to talk, as a successful Psychology roll reveals. If forced or threatened, they flee.
- 2-9 — The person honestly has no idea.
- 10 — The person is an agent for the Brothers, or an agent is within earshot. The investigators are marked.

### BEYLAB THE PERSPIRER

If the investigators look for information in the markets, or the Spice Bazaar, or the Grand Bazaar especially, they always hear whispers of one infallible source of information: Beylab the Perspirer. His haunt is a Turkish bath on the waterfront, in Pera.

Beylab, for the right price, can find out anything about anyone, and many of the voices in the market place speak of him in hushed tones. He likes foreigners, as they pay more than locals. Feyar warns that the man is notorious, and not to be trusted, but wherever the investigators ask, Beylab's name comes up.

To contact him, a message should be sent to the Turkish bath, announcing the time and the day the caller will come; Beylab will make himself available. This should be several days from now, to allow the investigators to complete other lines of research.

Beylab is a man who does not like to be kept waiting; if any appointment is not kept, then the investigators are unlikely to gain a future one.

## The Police

The police have hundreds of unsolved cases that might be the work of the Brothers of the Skin, but they emphatically deny any such cult could thrive in modern Turkey. As far as the child disappearances are concerned, this is the work of slavers or bandits, nothing more. The more the investigators push their inquiries, the less appreciative the police become of their presence.

## The Topkapi Museum

Part mosque, part palace, part treasure house, part place of learning, the museum is a wonder of Constantinople. However, the officials in the Museum see the Sedefkar Scrolls as a blight and an embarrassment, believing that they show the heritage of Turkey in a bad light. To even learn of them, the investigators must receive a successful Library Use roll while checking the museum's catalogue.

Importantly, the catalogue lists four scrolls as being held..

To gain access to the scrolls, they must convince the Director, Professor Azap, a Turkish traditionalist with a generous distrust of foreigners, especially foreigners with Greek, Slavic, or British surnames.



Professor Azap

Mention of the Sedefkar Scrolls does not make him feel more favorable, but if the investigators number among them an academic, and if they succeed in a Debate roll, he agrees to allow

them to view the manuscripts. They will not be allowed to study them. He will not listen to Oratory, Fast Talk, Bargain, or bribery, unless the investigators can somehow show that their study will enhance Turkey's position within the world, and grant greater respect from Europeans and Egyptians.

Alas, the tubes in which the scrolls rested are empty, save for a note in Turkish.

*The Skinless One reclaims what is his.  
Cursed be Garaznet the Thief.*

The Brothers stole the scrolls long ago, but the note was planted here in the last few days, to lead the investigators to the trap at Garaznet's grave in the Üsküdar Cemetery—see the sub-section below, "Beylab Speaks," for more information.

shaking victim gathers his belongings, attempts to repair his desk, and goes on with his daily business.

### FEYAR

If the investigators got involved, the little scribe introduces himself as Feyar, in most excellent English. He is a slight and handsome young man with a quick alert gaze and an engaging manner.

“Good people, I am sorry. These men had business with the government which went badly through no fault of my own, though I was their instrument. They can do nothing against the government, so they choose to take their anger out on me. I must apologize. You seem most alarmed.” He is disarmingly worried about the investigators and offers his services.

He is also an agent of the Brothers of the Skin, and the beating was staged so that he comes to the attention of the investigators in an unsuspecting way. Though an agent, he is also a brilliant scribe, and in that capacity is quite useful around Constantinople. He participates fully in any research the investigators do, and proves to be an assiduous, perceptive scholar.

If the investigators don't hire him, then he shadows them without being spotted.



Feyar the Scribe

## The Newspapers

The two major local newspapers are the *Orient* and the *Tanin*, Turkish-language papers which are the best sources of Constantinople news. Both have their offices in the city. Weeks-old foreign papers can be bought at a premium, but they feature little news of Turkey.

The following story appears in the first Constantinople paper the investigators consult. It is the latest in a series.

### Player Handout #20

## Rash Of Missing Children.

Police Suspect Slavers.

Questioning Of Greeks.

Today the fifteenth missing child was reported from the city area.

Blatek Mayval, age 7, was taken from the front of his father's tea house in Stamboul yesterday at midday, in the midst of bustling lunchtime traffic.

Police have no immediate suspects, but believe that a slave ring is responsible. The citizens of the city are alerted to watch their children carefully.

In a round up of suspects, the police are interviewing many Greeks, following a report that this country may be the receiver of the stolen infants.

If the investigators search through the back issues at the newspaper offices, they find previous reports of the child abductions, but do not learn anything more.

The children have in fact been stolen by the Brothers, as instructed by Selim. They are being held at the Shunned Mosque.

### THE SHUNNED MOSQUE

The newspapers carry no mention of the Shunned Mosque. A Library Use roll takes an afternoon and turns up nothing. If the roll succeeds, the investigators feel sure that their search was thorough, but that there was simply nothing to find. With a successful idea roll, it occurs to them that perhaps the Shunned Mosque is not a public or often-used name.

With the latter in mind, they may use the newspapers for reports of crime adjacent to mosques. A second afternoon spent, and another successful Library Use roll gives them a candidate, the Red Mosque, near the south shore of Stamboul.

The Red Mosque, long abandoned, has acquired a dire reputation as a meeting ground for hoodlums and worse. Those who have valuables avoid it, though it is not far from the Topkapi. One editorial argues that it should be either restored properly or torn down. The Red Mosque is, of course, the Shunned Mosque.

## University Library

The university, more accurately described as a college, is located in Beyazit Square in Stamboul, not far from the Grand Bazaar. The staff is helpful, especially to visiting academics; they are eager to promote the school as a seat of Turkish learning which compares favorably with its western counterparts.

- As yet, no mentions of the Brothers of the Skin or any such organization exist, for no one has dared (or lived) to expose their secrets. However, a successful Library Use roll uncovers obtuse references in histories of recent Constantinople to a criminal cult, rumored to have cannibalistic inclinations. These villains are said to gather at what the sole extant guidebook to the city terms “a ruined mosque, of roseate tincture.”

cial through their own ineptitude. Keepers should attempt to keep this kind of problem as an undercurrent throughout the scenario.

## Finding a Scribe

The hotel staff points out to the investigators that the best way to ease themselves into the city is to use a scribe, who will help them with general knowledge and customs, and with translating Turkish. Constantinople has high adult illiteracy; scribes are regularly employed to write letters and answer official queries.

Confront investigators ignoring such advice with a problem which requires a ready knowledge of Turkish or of local manners—a traffic jam, a stolen wallet, or an arrest as Greek spies could make them realize they are vulnerable here, and need help.

The best place to find a scribe is in the Grand Bazaar in Stamboul. Its eight huge iron gates are drawn open at 8 A.M. Fifty acres of stalls stretch within the massive domed and vaulted halls. Everything is sold here—car-

pets and ornaments, jewelry and clothing, dictionaries and clocks, finely carven chests and brass telescopes; strange peddlers linger in dark corner stalls with the esoteric and the deadly. The investigators pass throngs of eager merchants before locating the scribes. As they do so, they see five large men, Turkish nationals, who close in fast.

As the big men surge forward, they pass close enough to the investigators that our heroes could mistake the men's move as intended attack. If any investigator steps out and engages them in combat, the five are astonished, but fight back alarmingly well, using fisticuffs and body smashes. They quickly make it known, however, that they are not interested in the foreigners at all, but in the small, young scribe beyond them.

The five beat him thoroughly, smash his lap-top desk, and trample his pens, inks, and papers. He puts up a brave fight but is quickly overwhelmed. Satisfied, they leave. If the investigators try to intercede, the attackers wave them away and stalk off, yelling curses at the young man. The

dot a city rightly known as "The City of Mosques." Turkish culture is a very religious one, and cries to prayers can be heard everywhere calling from the minarets, those rocket-like towers which flank the mosques.

Ethnically, the city is mostly Turkish. Substantial minority populations of Jews and Gypsies, and especially of Armenians and Greeks exist.

Constantinople is a city of the sea, bordered by the waters of the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn. The city is divided into three provinces. Stamboul, the old city, is on the south edge of Europe; Pera-Galata, or the new city—essentially the European quarter—is across the Golden Horn, still in Europe; and Üsküdar is across the Bosphorus, in Asia. No bridge links Üsküdar with Europe until 1973. Passage must be by ferry or private boat.

The city is infamous as one of the dirtiest in Europe. Refuse includes dead pigeons, packs of wild dogs, feral cats, cluttered garbage, and rotting fish. Visitors often find this to be quite overwhelming, and the Allied occupation has probably exacerbated the condition.

Because of the occupation, civil administration generally and police services particularly are tenuous. The handful of Interallied police mostly protect European property and rights; much civil authority is left *de facto* to crumbled agencies of the former Sultanate, which are unsystematically overseen and financed—or ignored—by the Allies. Unless one makes oneself most conspicuous, in such circumstances money prevails over justice. Many natives will welcome Atatürk.

Besides the often-superb public architecture and fountains, two special public pleasures here are the tea-houses and the baths. Rarely will women be seen in any of these; the Turkish woman dominates the home but rarely takes her pleasures outside. The Turkish baths are for both sexes, theoretically, and have their own designs and etiquette. The tea-houses are for men: sometimes they are trellis-garden affairs, but most likely crammed and harshly-lit rooms full of smoking men playing backgammon or chess and sipping their tea. Turks drink tea sweet with sugar; milk is considered an insult to good tea.

The Topkapi Museum was founded in 1892, and under the able direction of Hamdy Bey became a treasure-house of things historic and priceless. The nearby archaeological museums were founded in 1836, and the Museum of the Janissaries in 1726.

## Transport

Constantinople evolved for the pedestrian, and the horse and cart. Its streets are often narrow and crammed. It is almost impossible to traverse many streets in any automobile. The hundreds of dead-ends often defy the navigational skills of lifelong residents.

All the public transport are versions of the bus or taxi. The city buses and trolleys are usually crowded; the free-enterprise "peoples' buses" are vans, trucks, carts—anything wheeled that can carry passengers. These are often hung with strings of blue beads, to ward off the Evil Eye. There are also private taxies, and those which are shared (*dolmus*). In the latter, the driver crams in what fares as he can, then cruises along the street or footpath looking for more.

The investigators' ally is the staff of the Orient Express. The fourgon conductors are mortified if any Wagons-Lits passenger has been inconvenienced. The efficiency of the Orient Express service is demonstrated when all their lost belongings show up intact, only one hour later.

No matter how the simulacrum is returned, upon the return call for a luck roll. If the roll fails, the Brothers of the Skin learn thereby before nightfall that the precious statue has returned to their homeland, and they now know also the identities of those who have brought it.

## Accommodations and Defense

As the investigators arrive by the Orient Express, they probably have been pre-booked into Wagons-Lits' own hotel, the Pera Palace, north across the bridge in Pera-Galata. It would be highly unlikely for Wagons-Lits staff not to have recommended this excellent hotel to first-time travelers to Constantinople, since it is good business as

well. This is a standard luxury hotel with local staff and European management, comparable to any in Paris or London. Many more modest establishments are also available.

Especially during this scenario, the investigators must take steps to secure the simulacrum from theft. If in no other scenario, investigators here should always fear what might happen to the statue in their absence.

If the protective steps they take are too obvious, then the Brothers may be tempted to steal the pieces immediately, rather than wait for Selim's plan to work. Cult attempts at theft should be tailored by the individual keeper in light of the investigators' actual circumstances, but the forces deployed by Selim in the old and new city rarely numbers more than a dozen; times are uncertain, and the military are apt to intervene if a large gang is reported.

Any official depository for the statue (police station, bank, railway check-room) may be learned-of by spies for the Brothers. A luck roll measured against the efficiency of the methods employed by the party should suffice, then a second roll to see if the things are waylaid by the offi-

## Constantinople (Istanbul)

**T**HE CITY, and all of Turkey, are in the throes of great change. In 1922, Ataturk came to power, promising a unified nation of Turkey, but the British, French, and other allies have occupied Constantinople and certain adjacent territory since 1918. They do not evacuate until Oct 2, 1923. Less than two weeks later, Ataturk chooses Ankara as his capital over Constantinople, reflecting his distaste for the old sultanate, corrupt and riddled with foreign influence, of which Constantinople is the living symbol.

The new military regime controls most of Turkey. It threatens many aspects of former life. Veils and fezzes have been banned; signs of the old regime are crumbling. People's reactions range from the fanatical to the gently philosophic. This ancient city has seen many masters and empires since the ancient Greeks laid its foundation as Byzantium.

Thus the Ottoman Empire is merely the latest empire to collapse; its actual presence is a fic-

tion—the last Sultan, Mehmed VI, fled in 1922. All references to the Ottomans conclude when the Treaty of Lausanne is signed. On Oct. 29, 1923, the Republic of Turkey comes into existence.

Technically, Constantinople does not become Istanbul until 1926, when the Turkish postal service so-recognizes it. However, the Turks and Islam generally have long called it Istanbul, taking the Greek phrase *eis ten polin* ('in the city') as its name. The West, long under siege by various Islamic armies, refused to accept any enemy name for so historic a site even after Constantinople fell, and so the Western lands continued to refer to it as Constantinople as late as 1950. Those who prefer Istanbul should use it; in this supplement, the name is uniformly Constantinople.

Recently (1920-22) the Turks have been warring with the Greeks, and anti-Greek feeling runs high. Anything untoward is likely to be blamed on subversive Greek influence. Nevertheless, Constantinople is a cosmopolitan

city, with room for all. Foreigners safely roam the city and enjoy its culture, treasures, and architecture. This gateway to the Orient, redolent with history and mystery, is truly a fitting final destination for the Orient Express.

### Money

The nominal unit of currency in Turkey is the Turkish pound (abbreviated TL in the West). It once floated in parity with the British pound, but since Turkey's defeat as one of the Central Powers in World War I, the present exchange rate is about 25% of that. By the end of the decade, the decline comes precipitous, to nearly 10:1 in favor of the pound sterling. In consequence, in Turkey, foreign currency is in private readily accepted throughout the 1920s.

### The Present City

The people of Constantinople are mostly Muslim, following the religion of Islam and worshiping in mosques. These domed edifices

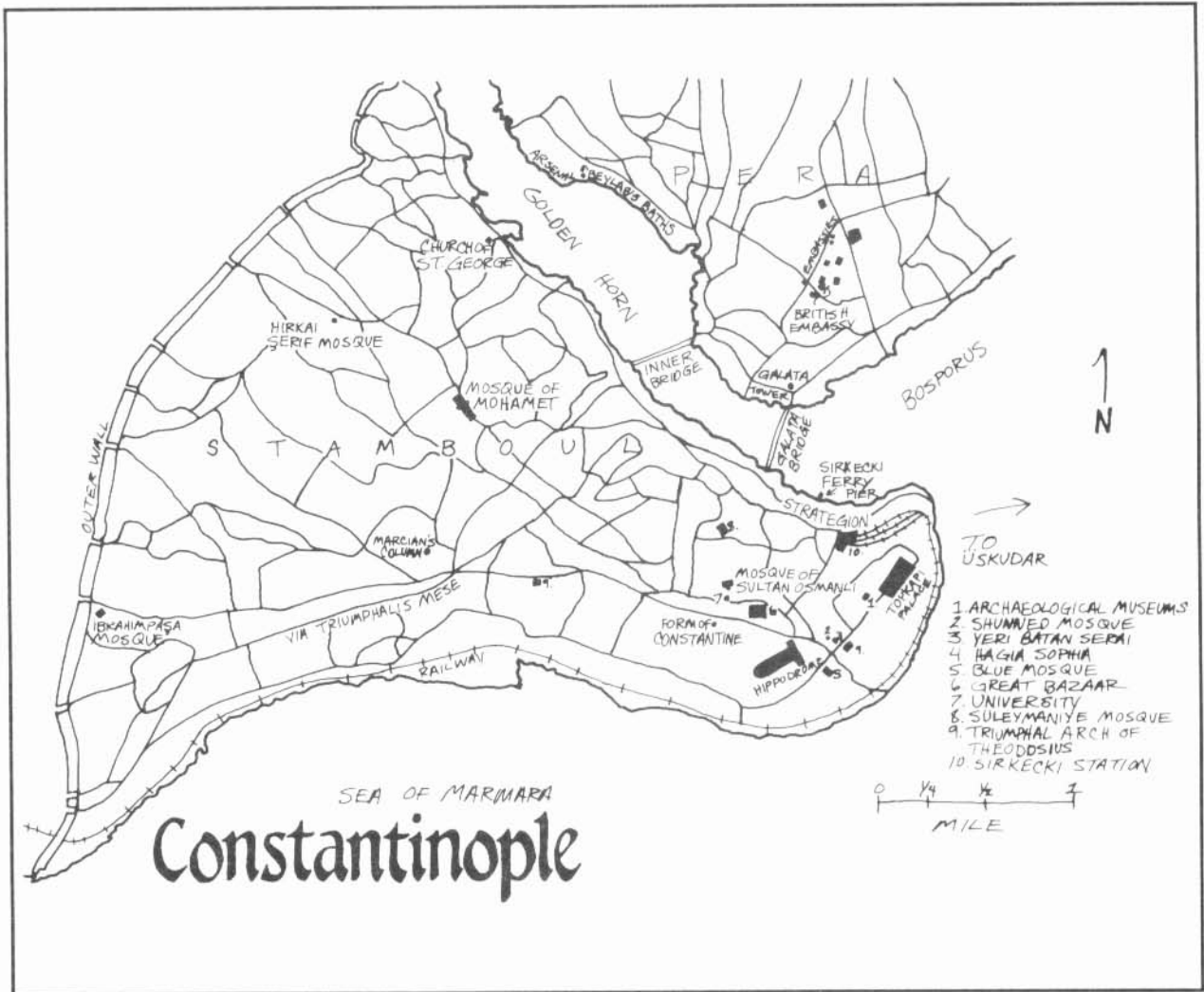
# Investigator Information

**A**RRIVING IN CONSTANTINOPLE, the investigators need to secure their unwieldy baggage from the train. To this end they have one enemy and one ally at the station.

The enemy is officialdom at the rail terminus, in this era one noted for failing to bother about such things as other peoples' belongings. In the frantic bustle of languages and people that is Sirkecki Station, the final stopping-place of the Simplon-Orient Express, all must be ordered and arrayed for customs inspection. This sudden, random imposition of order on chaos is too much for some to bear. Things get lost.

Items belonging to the investigators, especially the simulacrum itself, go astray without very careful precautions. Discussions beforehand with seasoned travelers or Orient Express staff could warn the investigators; the conversation at the London Train Spotter dinner included this information.

If the simulacrum does go astray, the investigators must sort through layers of officials—the baggage office staff, the baggage transfer staff, the customs officials, the assistant station manager, the station master himself. To a man, they promise earnestly to find the missing baggage, and to a man they are true to their words, but the results are astonishingly slow and at first seemingly without effect. Then, 1D3 days later, the missing pieces suddenly turn up at the hotel. Perhaps something from a particular bag is missing, but probably not. The suitcase or trunk has just been somewhere, but somewhere incomprehensible to all involved. "We are most happy you have been enjoying our great city," says the smiling deliveryman.





## XIII. CONSTANTINOPLE



# By the Skin of the Teeth

*Wherein the investigators reach their last stop, and find there betrayal and despair, and the makings of even deadlier puzzles.*

by Geoff Gillan

**I**F THE INVESTIGATORS HAVE SURVIVED Fenalik, they arrive in Constantinople possessing the complete Sedefkar Simulacrum. Having overcome the vicious vampire, they reasonably may expect victory here, at the end of the line.

The keeper might consider allowing the investigators to rest a week or two, to prepare for the dangers to come, since there are no time requirements in the plot. Presumably our heroes still have plenty of money, or at least plenty of Credit Rating. If money is needed, perhaps a wealthy stranger on the train provides some cash, in return for being let in on the fun.

## Keeper Information

Concerning Constantinople, Professor Smith told them of two things to be learned here—the ritual they must perform to destroy the artifact, and the location of the Shunned Mosque, where the ritual must be performed.

In fact, of course, the ritual does not exist: no written method destroys the Sedefkar Simulacrum. Professor Smith lied in this, as he did in so much else. The time the investigators spend searching for the ritual and the Shunned Mosque is the time it takes Selim (and Mehmet) Makryat to ensnare them.

Possible sources of written information are the newspapers, the library at Constantinople University, and the Topkapi Museum. Possible oral sources of information are the police, market gossip, and an individual by the

name of Beylab the Perspirer. All are detailed below. To learn anything, the investigators need to know Turkish, or need to employ a scribe-translator.

### MEHMET MAKRYAT

Makryat plans that the investigators lose the simulacrum to the cult, preferably at a trap set by Selim Makryat at Üsküdar Cemetery. Once Selim has the simulacrum, he will perform the Ritual of Enactment in the Shunned Mosque to awake its power. At the critical moment of that ceremony, Mehmet Makryat plans to step in and seize control of both the statue and the cult. He arranges for the investigators to be present, to provide a handy distraction at the right moment.

### SELIM MAKRYAT

The Brothers of the Skin have a considerable spy network, including staff at the hotels, taxi drivers, policemen, and railway workers. Selim Makryat has set up Feyar, his chief spy and scribe, in the market place, with instructions to attach himself to interesting foreigners.

The leader of the Brothers senses that the Sedefkar Simulacrum is soon to appear, but fears it as well as anticipates it, for several minor prophecies suggest that it may prompt the downfall of his cult. Consequently, he has been trying to strengthen his power by creating a Skin Beast, the cult's ritualistic monster. For the past few weeks he has been gathering the live children he needs for this.

As monsieur le Comte, Fenalik might very well have practiced the suave eroticism recorded of Dracula, Carmilla, and others. Perhaps, having regained the simulacrum and the semblance of humanity, Fenalik would turn again to such amusements. For now, he forages to survive.

As a man, Fenalik attacks once per round with Claw, Bite, or Gaze; as tiger or wolf, he attacks with Claw and Bite simultaneously; as a bat, he attacks with Bite only; as mist, he attacks with Gaze only.

Proximity to garlic halves all of his skills and attacks.



*Is it true about the vampire? Monseur, I am only a waiter!*

### FENALIK, Semi-Immortal Vampire, Previous Owner of the Sedefkar Simulacrum

STR 32    CON 14    SIZ 19    INT 17    POW 14  
DEX 16    APP 3    SAN 0    EDU 40    HP 17+

+ regenerates 1 hit point per round, but does not regenerate at all in direct sunlight.

**Damage Bonus:** +2D6.

**Weapons:** Bite\* 80%, damage 1D4+2D6

Claw\*\* 80%, damage 1D4+2D6

Gaze\*\*\*, match POWs on resistance table

\* If a vampire's Bite attack does damage, maintaining the Bite stifles any resistance from the target, and drains 1D6 STR (blood) from the victim each round thereafter.

\*\* With a successful magic point against magic point roll on the resistance table, the touch of a vampire drains 1D3 magic points from the victim, transferring them to the vampire. Each successful roll drains another 1D3 magic points. Magic points so-acquired vanish after the vampire's POW in hours.

\*\*\* If the POW against POW roll succeeds, the target is always hypnotized, and can be made to follow simple instructions. If these instructions are self-destructive, the target may roll INT x5 or less to snap out of it at the start of each round.

**Skills:** Bargain 90%, Climb 95%, Dodge 70%, English 75%, Fast Talk 95%, French 80%, History 20%, Italian 60%, Jump 70%, Latin 35%, Listen 85%, Occult 35%, Oratory 75%, Russian 65%, Scent 83%, Sneak 80%, Spot Hidden 70%, Track 60%, Turkish 75%.

**Shapes Favored:** bat, mist, tiger, wolf.

**Sanity Loss to See:** 1/1D8 SAN. Witnessing a shape-change for the first time costs 1/1D6 SAN.

stops in Bulgaria. If the train stops in Turkey, then Greek-bandits did it. If the Interallied police first take notice of the crimes, then Soviet or Persian provocateurs did it.

The investigators always should arrive in Constantinople either unknown or under suspicion of grave crimes.

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## Statistics

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### NIKOLAI, Initiate Brother of the Skin, Eye-Taker

STR 18 CON 16 SIZ 13 INT 12 POW 11  
DEX 14 APP 10 EDU 6 SAN 0 HP 15

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** Hooked Dagger 85%, damage 1D4+2+1D4  
Eye-Gouge 90%, damage is eye plucked out.

**Skills:** Bulgarian 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 11%, Fast Talk 55%,  
Hide 75%, Occult 19%, Sneak 80%, Spot Hidden 45%, Turkish  
50%.

**Spells:** Transfer Body Part.

### SEVEN BORDER GUARDS

*The customs police want to apprehend criminals and political foes, and to foil the transfer of currencies and of obviously valuable objects. They do this by painstaking scrutiny of usually meaningless documents, and by banging their weapons against door jambs. Occasionally they actually find something.*

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Weapons:** Fist/Punch 50%, damage 1D3+1D4  
Grapple 45%, damage special  
Nightstick 50%, damage 1D6+1D4  
9mm Machine Pistol 45%, damage 1D10, burst available.

**Skills:** Climb 45%, Follow Orders 65%, Jump 45%, Listen  
50%, Misunderstand Foreign Language 55%, Sneak 40%, Spot  
Hidden 50%.

	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	POW	HP
Commander	13	13	13	14	14	13
One	13	9	13	14	12	11
Two	14	13	12	14	12	13
Three	15	14	12	12	12	13
Four	13	12	13	12	10	13
Five	15	14	13	11	10	14
Six	15	16	15	8	10	16

### A. CHEDENKO, Age 70, Professor-Academician

STR 9 CON 17 SIZ 8 INT 17 POW 9  
DEX 8 APP 12 EDU 21 SAN 45 HP 13

**Damage Bonus:** +0.

**Skills:** Anthropology 20%, Archaeology 85%, Bulgarian 85%,  
French 60%, German 75%, History 60%, Library Use 80%.

## Fenalik the Vampire

*"We find, indeed, a note of something deformed, as it were, something curiously diseased and unclean, a rank wealth of grotesque and fetid details which but serve to intensify the loathliness and horror."*

— Rev. Montague Summers, *The Vampire In Europe*.

The ferocity of the nomadic Scythian tribes, who roamed the lands around the Black and Caspian Seas, is well-known. The ancient Greeks recorded that they scalped and flayed alive defeated enemies.

One Scythian chieftain-priest was so bloodthirsty that not even death ended his evil. Three nights after his corpse was laid to rest, the chieftain rose again, now a ravaging, bestial thing more terrible and more powerful than before: a vampire.

For thousands of years the thing that became Fenalik hunted, lurking on the outskirts of human society. When it acquired the Sedefkar Simulacrum in 1204, it was able to rejoin that society. Eventually its tastes betrayed it, and so Fenalik came to spend the last one hundred and fifty years confined in the asylum at Charenton.

In appearance, Fenalik is presently a twisted mockery of a man, a feral and emaciated horror whose parchment-like skin mapped with a network of scars and knotted veins stretched tight over its bones; obscenely long arms, tipped with razor-sharp talons, dangle at its sides. But its face is worst of all. Framed by a patchy tangle of knotted and filthy hair, Fenalik's jaws jut forward like a muzzle, thin lips doing little to hide the insane conglomeration of fangs which sprout from his peeling gums. His nose has long since rotted away, leaving only a stinking pit beneath the sloping forehead. More terrifying yet, his bulging eyes that burn with all the evil of its years.

### NOTES

Fenalik is unable to move abroad in daylight, since exposure to direct sunlight costs him 1D3 hit points per round. Properly muffled up, though, and especially when shielded by fog or storm, he would be able to make brief forays before technical sundown and after technical sun-up. Vampires seek to cheat the clock, as well as the laws of God and man. Were he to don the simulacrum, of course, he could to go abroad in daylight

Vampires who respected a religion while alive may show that respect when undead. Fenalik's youth antedates all of the great monotheisms, and the shamans he knew are long-since dead. No extant moral or social appeal has any affect on him.

Fenalik attacks after dark; once the sun rises, he loses his powers of shape-change and regeneration, and returns to his coffin. The investigators should surmise that the creature must be at rest somewhere on the train. So, if they can hold out against it all night, they can hunt down its coffin (in the rear fourgon) in the morning and destroy it there.

To do this, the 24-hour guard in the fourgon must be convinced; several Fast Talks or other rolls will be needed to conduct a search of coffin-sized freight therein.

## Playing Fenalik

Fenalik fights on his own terms. He strikes when he chooses, and always strives to get in the first blow. Even when his hit points drop to zero, he can simply fade into mist and float away, to regenerate quietly somewhere and then come back for more.

Other passengers and Express staff may be dragged into the fray as the keeper sees fit. For each innocent who dies in the investigators' stead, one point of Sanity should be lost.

Temper Fenalik's bloody enthusiasm with the understanding that conspicuous passenger death or extensive damage to fittings brings the attention and participation of the train staff, and they may as a result stop the train. Halting the train aids the investigators much more than the vampire; a prolonged halt almost surely dooms Fenalik.

Only by causing the vampire permanent hit point loss from magic spells or enchanted items can they stop it, or with an impale result with a wooden implement.

The simulacrum parts are themselves enchanted, and used as clubs they can do physical harm to Fenalik. Nowhere is this written, though the idea might be deducible. A simulacrum part does 1D6 hit points of damage for each successful blow.

By whatever means the investigators use to kill it, once Fenalik's hit points reach zero, thousands of years of its unholy existence catch up in one fell swoop. Instead of slowly crumbling away into dust, the vampire explodes, showering the investigators and everything nearby in a pall of foul-smelling ash.

## A Wild Card

The investigators, having gotten so far, may at the keeper's choice now be under the observation of Mehmet Makryat, whose magical abilities could come into play if necessary. The keeper should not invoke him unless the campaign is threatened; just overhearing his name at dinner could activate the investigators to effect an alliance—or an attack, perhaps, if they wrongly deduce the meaning

of the London newspaper story concerning the three Makryats.

Since Mehmet reappears in Constantinople pretending to be the character Aktar, he must be disguised or transformed either here or there, should the keeper choose that he surreptitiously intervene.

## Conclusion

A thorough search of the rear fourgon uncovers Fenalik's coffin, a heavy wooden crate some eight feet long and tightly locked. Within, nestled on a layer of blood-soaked earth, grins the Head of the Sedefkar Simulacrum, and any pieces of it missed by the investigators up until this

time. Its eyes are blank and mocking. Who knows what sights it has seen?

Reward surviving investigators with a gain of 1D10 SAN for killing Fenalik. If useful, the keeper also may want to award a single point of Sanity (vengeance satisfied) for each investigator who died at Fenalik's hands aboard the train. Survivors also gain 1D4 SAN for recovering the Head of the Sedefkar Simulacrum, with a 1D4 Sanity point bonus if they now have all of the pieces.



*I have brought candles for the search.*

If they now possess all the parts of the simulacrum, uniformly reduce their idea, know, and luck roll thresholds by 30 percentiles each.

## MASS MURDER, MASS PUBLICITY

The worse the fighting with Fenalik has been, and the more passengers who died, the more the keeper must stretch to present the incident in an anonymous, understandable light. What newspaperman would not give page one to a fight to the finish with a vampire aboard the Orient Express? Anarchist plots, Red Menaces, and Hunnish depravities pale in comparison; survivors of the fight with Fenalik become the fêted heroes of civilization.

Because such developments would alter the thrust of the plot, they should not happen. The police believe no tale of a rotting corpse arising and ravishing the train.

If only investigators died, police may choose to believe that another investigator is the murderer, and hold him or her until a likelier suspect surfaces in a few days.

If bystanders died as well, then the police will be inclined to believe that Turkish bandits did it, if the train



Fenalik Awakes

### SHAPE-CHANGE

Fenalik can shape-change. He can seep beneath closed doors as a mist; he can flutter through narrow spaces or across chasms as a bat; he could even prowl the corridors as a gigantic tiger. When he attacks, however, his attacks are always those listed in his statistics.

### AMBUSH

He can cling to surfaces. Thus, answering a knock at the door, the responding investigator looks into an empty corridor. Fenalik is clinging to the ceiling directly above the door, waiting to drop on the target the instant the investigator looks into the corridor.

## Vampire at Bay

Fenalik hesitates when on the train, because the presence of his coffin aboard leaves him vulnerable if he overplays his hand. The more people he faces, the more he hesitates, because an aroused train almost certainly means disaster for him.

The dining car is thus doubly safe; not only is it noisy and crowded, but it is also the only source of garlic on the entire train. Any investigator receiving a successful Occult roll becomes sure of the stinking rose's effect on the undead. Confident investigators should have no difficulty obtaining several heads from the kitchen—but will that be enough? Fenalik cannot willingly approach garlic. If the investigators use the herb to pin the vampire into a corner, Fenalik lashes out, but feebly. Proximity to the herb halves all of the vampire's skills.

If the investigators somehow barricade their sleeping car with garlic, Fenalik may decide to negotiate, grunting and snarling from a distance in a clearly inhuman fashion. This is a chance for the players to learn a little about the simulacrum that they have been collecting; Fenalik refers to it as "my skin." They should come to realize that they are dealing with a previous owner of the artifact. Its patience and willingness to answer academic questions at this point is limited, however. It demands the statue's immediate return; if this is not met, it threatens to kill one passenger every hour. And it will.

The best way to counter Fenalik's threat is to promise to destroy the statue (one piece for every life is perhaps a fair rate of exchange). This stalls Fenalik and prevents further passenger death, even though actually destroying the simulacrum may not be physically possible, Fenalik has no way of being sure that the threat cannot be made true—the strange iron vehicle he rides is proof enough of astonishing science in this new era. He redoubles his efforts to get at them, but not even Fenalik can tear through the steel skin of the carriage.

through a SIZ 1 mouth, too small for any human to follow to conclusion.

Other tunnels lead away, most ending in bubbling pools of boiling water forced up from deep below. The smell of blood and sulphur is choking in the hot and sticky air, and all around the investigators, pools of shadow press inward. Might they not better be returning to the surface?

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## Fenalik Strikes

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**T**HE INVESTIGATORS, and the players, are sure to be confused, disturbed, and depressed. After being whirled along on a savage roller-coaster ride of shocks, despair may set in when the quest of the simulacrum seems to have failed.

Further investigations in Sofia reveal nothing. Whatever obliterated the worshipers in the macabre temple has left no tracks. The investigators should realize that there is nothing they can do except board the train and leave for Constantinople. The Orient Express departs at half-past seven in the evening. Full of gloom, the investigators are carried on into the night by the clattering wheels of the Orient Express. They will not have long to brood on their failings, however, for soon after the train leaves behind the cold, sullen streets of Sofia, plunging into the mountains once more, Fenalik makes his move.

### Mass Murder on the Orient Express

Fenalik's plan has been realized; the investigators have now recovered or helped him to all of the pieces of the missing simulacrum (except for the head, which it was forced to uncover itself). Now they are no longer of use. That night, the creature attacks.

One by one, he attempts to dispatch the investigators, suddenly, swiftly, and savagely. If necessary, he attacks them together, taking all necessary steps to kill them and take the statue.

Fenalik is a supremely intelligent and cunning opponent, with long years of wisdom with which to baffle and destroy his enemies. However, his desperation to regain the simulacrum makes him careless and over-confident; the investigators must perceive his nature and desires if they are to survive.

Suggestions as to how and where Fenalik attacks occur in the sub-section "Attack of the Vampire." Mechanics and notes for combat are discussed in "Vampire Com-

bat." Possible investigator tactics are considered in "Keeping the Vampire at Bay."

These entries are aids. Keepers are encouraged to make up their own ploys, as well as incorporating and improvising upon investigator actions. Rather than a single drawn-out fight, this should be presented as a series of desperate running battles, Fenalik attacking suddenly from the shadows before retreating again into the protective darkness. The investigators should never know when he will attack, only that sooner or later he will.

This crisis is not just the climax to the Sofia scenario; investigators and players alike should feel that this fight is the climax to the whole campaign. On the eve of arrival in Constantinople, their final destination, they come face to face with the bloodied murderer who has been dogging their footsteps across Europe. Let them think that, after this, it is all over. We know otherwise.

### Attack of the Vampire

Some suggested tactics for Fenalik follow.

#### GAZE

Anyone staring out the windows into the night may find themselves gazing into a pair of burning red eyes, listening to a harsh whispering voice that makes such sensible suggestions:

*it's hot inside,  
why not open the window,  
let some air in,  
let me in,  
it's hot inside.*

Match Fenalik's POW against the investigator's on the resistance table; if overcome, he or she is helpless to prevent himself or herself from rising up and opening the window. Immediately after doing so, a scabrous arm reaches in and attempts to drag the victim out into the shrieking darkness. Failure to resist the vampire's STR 32 with his or her STR+SIZ means the investigator is carried kicking and screaming out of sight, although the screams soon stop as the victim is cut open and tossed away. All in the compartment lose 0/1D3 SAN.

#### HYPNOTIZE

Using his powers of hypnosis the vampire might convince another passenger to make an attack. Such victims are fairly obvious, being slow in speech and movement, almost like sleep-walkers. Nonetheless, even a sleep-walker can fire a gun. If the investigators kill such an attacker, they have killed an innocent, and must lose 1D6 SAN and probably face murder charges later, in a Bulgarian court.

sound of water boiling and bubbling ahead, and an increasing stench of rot and decay.

### THE PLACE OF THE HEAD

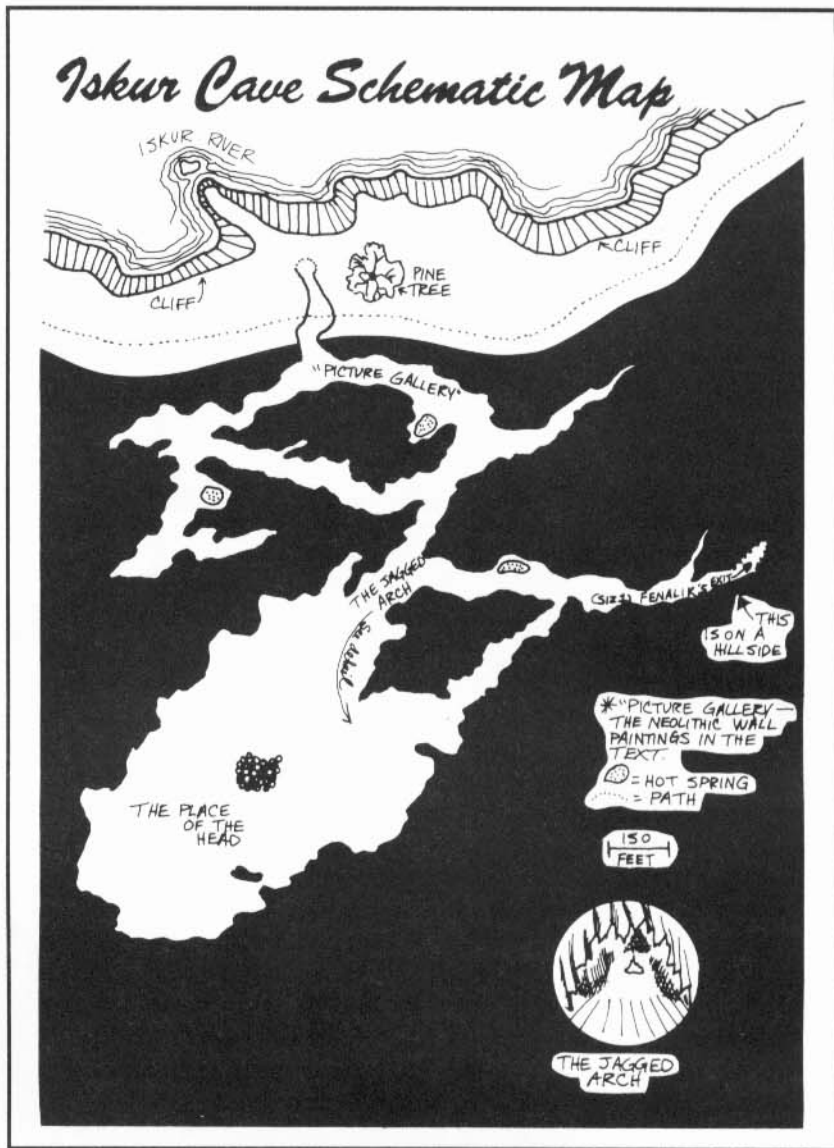
Fenalik's rage has fallen heavily on the Brothers of the Skin. Power great enough and quick enough to perform this necromantic prodigy should give the investigators pause.

Entering the huge, cathedral-like chamber, resplendent with echoes and shadows, the investigators find dozens of bodies, some in rags of black suits, some in rags of red robes, freshly shredded and scattered across the uneven floor; pools of blood slowly drain away. Sanity loss for this carnage is 1/1D4+2 SAN. Who were these people? Have the investigators seen such beings before, formed of seams and chunks of different flesh?

Medical doctors, especially those with experience in forensics, should have a field day, but a mere First Aid roll can be informative. There is far less blood present than there should be for so many corpses. A successful Zoology roll establishes that no known animal has claws and teeth capable of inflicting such wounds. Any sort of successful medical skill roll shows that many of the corpses are already decayed, but a successful Spot Hidden reveals that the rot is oddly partial; the only parts rotted are ones that by rights should not be attached to these bodies, parts that have been sewn on by sorcerous means—this revelation costs 0/1D2 SAN.

A Spot Hidden roll turns up the corpse of Nikolai the initiate, who assaulted the investigator at the Bulgarian border. His own single eye stares upward—the investigator's missing eye a gelid glob of putrefaction in the other socket. Understanding this costs the eyeless investigator 0/1D3 SAN.

The pre-eminent source of the disgusting stench bottled up in the hot and steamy cave is a fifteen-foot-high heap in its center. Surrounded by a circle of unlit torches, thousands of skulls and rotting fleshy heads are stacked in a pyramid, growing ever fresher toward the still-flat top. How were the heads so-arranged without

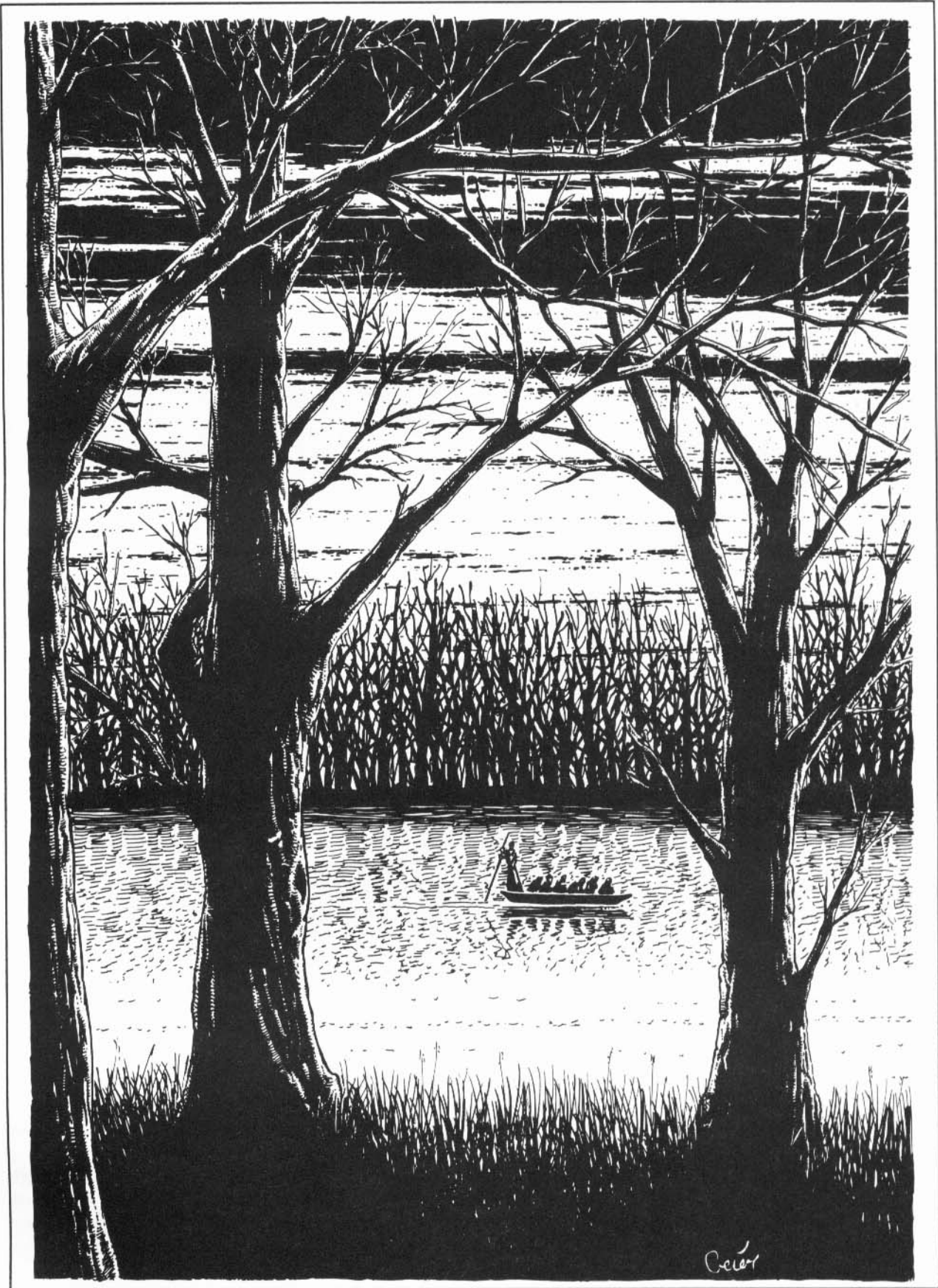


disturbance, or ladder, or crane? —a successful idea roll suggests more magic was involved.

Sanity loss for viewing the pyramid of heads and realizing that at least one of their own heads was destined for the ghastly structure is 0/1D3 SAN.

Two successful climb rolls, an incredibly-strong stomach, and a Sanity loss of 0/1D2 SAN lets an investigator physically reach the top. There, out of direct sight in the center of the shuddering platform, is a golden shrine, its velvet pillow still holding the impression of some heavy object. This was, for a few hours or days, the resting place of the Head of the Sedefkar Simulacrum.

Of whatever it was that destroyed the Brothers, there is almost no sign. Track rolls about the cavern find splashes of blood leading up an ever-narrowing crevice towards the surface, finally emerging into the open air



The Dark River



head of a staff member. Even now they bear their foul trophies back to their temple, a temple the location of which the one-eyed investigator should have some idea.

Fenalik, too, now pursues the thieves, following them through the sewers and caves and dark places beneath the city. By the time the investigators find the temple, they once again are far too late.

## The Library

Either before or after the discovery of the theft of the head, the players may visit the University library.

Several hundred thousand books await perusal, a collection flawed by the number of languages necessary to the holdings. Most are in one or another Slavic language, or German. Translation help can be arranged, but it will take days or weeks to be useful. Should the players ask about information not mentioned below, keepers are encouraged to be creative. Library Use rolls, and judicious language, Occult, and History rolls may prove useful.

- **EYES:** They're the windows of the soul. Certain people have the power of the evil eye—catch their gaze, and wither and die. No one records what happens when they steal yours.
- **HEADS:** Some Langobardi believed that a person's dreams, and hence his or her future, were bequeathed in the head at birth, and that therefore all of life was a playing-out of the original gift of life.
- **HUMAN SOULS:** Kill an opponent and take his head, and his soul is in your power. The Romans said that the Druids kept mounds of skulls in their sacred places.
- **CAVE-PAINTINGS:** Worked by a kind of sympathetic magic; wound an image of the beast and you wound it spiritually, making it easier to kill.
- **SOFIA:** The boxed information about Bulgaria and Sofia given earlier is easily learned; the investigators' sources especially emphasize the many paleolithic remnants in Sofia-area caves. This information allows the investigators to guess the location of the Brothers' temple.

## Going to the Temple

From their limited clues, the investigators should easily deduce that the mystery assailants gather somewhere underground, in one of the caves that dot the Iskur River's steep gorges. Idea or Library Use rolls can hint toward this if needed.

(If Nikolai failed somehow to achieve the eye-swap, the investigators receive no clues from visions. Other lines of investigation will be needed. Witnesses may have seen the black car heading north from the university; li-

brary research may indicate that clandestine groups meet in the river caves, found in the same direction; newspaper articles may mention disappearances in the area, and so on. The scenario must be activated in some fashion.)

The investigator who suffers the visions recognizes objects and places along the river, and is thus able to remember the immediate locality of the cavern entrance.

The cavern in question lies three miles north of the city. The investigators may choose to walk along the river bank beneath the skeletal branches of trees, their feet stumbling along the narrowing and rutted dirt track, shadows cast by the whispering pines darkening their eyes; or perhaps hire a rowboat from someone on the wharfs, and thus slowly make their way downstream along the dark mystery of the river.

### ANOTHER VISION

Shortly before they reach the cave, the investigator who lost the eye is once more assailed by terrible flickering visions. This time the content is horrifying. Blood spews in crimson explosions, faces scream and are ripped apart, limbs are dragged from their sockets with impossible force, all acts performed by something not quite seen—some black, blurred, rushing hell-thing. The images slam into the investigator's mind then vanish in a white explosion of pain from the empty socket. Sanity loss to experience this is 1/1D6+1 SAN for the gibbering, paralyzed investigator. Abruptly, the visions cease, never to return. Depicting the ferocity and power of these quick, brutal murders will give the investigators fair warning of their penultimate opponent's capacity.

Almost at the same time his companions find (with a successful Spot Hidden) a black cave mouth yawning beyond a knotted old tree, almost opening up beneath their feet. It seems to breathe; warm gusts of moist air send wisps and curls of steam out into the frigid air.

## Underground

Within, the darkness is total. Investigators without flashlights or lanterns but with matches might fashion torches—otherwise they should return later, better equipped. The only sound is the steady drip of falling moisture. The slimy floor is slick with condensation from the hot springs within. Needles of stone stab out from roof and floor, sometimes hidden by swirling clouds of vapor; painted bison and deer race frozen across the veins of rock—the picture gallery noted on the map.

A sulphurous, humid heat wells out from all around. The ever-widening passage-way twists down and around for hundreds of feet, a path only suggested on the map, until at last the investigators reach its end, heralded by the

beard if the investigators offer a handsome fee for a few hours of his time; it is he who can instruct a porter to page Professor-Academician A. Chedenko, who has inspected the odd artifact in the newspaper photo. It seems an age before the Professor makes his appearance.

## More Episodic Visions

The investigator missing an eye may have stayed in the hotel, or may be accompanying his friends. By now, the flickers have become flashes of several seconds, scenes superimposed with stark clarity across the present in which the investigator stands.

- He walks through a vast and dim cathedral grown of living stone.
- The walls of the gigantic cavern are of mottled limestone, fretted and water-washed by endless running rivulets and half-hidden by rolling clouds of steam.
- On an enormous overhang, Latin numerals are carved over ancient images, cave-paintings of mammoths and deer and men with antlered heads.
- Without blinking or wavering in focus, the vision holds of a fang-toothed mouth of dripping stone, with black-robed figures swirling insanely in a mindless dance beneath it.

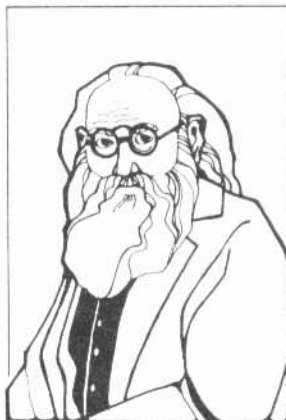
For each of these images, the investigator must receive a successful Sanity roll or lose 1 SAN. These new visions are more intense, and more frequent. They have about them a new intimateness, almost like being there in person. In a way, the investigator is: Nikolai has used a Transfer Eye spell, and now wears the investigator's organ as his own.

## Losing Your Head

Professor-Academician Alexander Chedenko is a wizened and gnome-like man of indeterminate age, though certainly old. Wise dark eyes owlishly blink from behind his narrow gold-rimmed spectacles, set off by a white mane of hair and beard. The Professor does not speak English, but the professor of English may remain to translate for him, or they can speak Latin, or German, or French. All are invited up to Chedenko's office.

Dr. Chedenko explains that the statue head is in his care. As yet, no one has been able to date the artifact, let alone identify the culture in which it was created. Not even the material it is carved from can be determined. It is most puzzling. He is almost ready to consider it a well-conceived hoax using some new material such as an unusual plastic.

If investigators receive a successful skill roll for History, Archaeology, or Anthropology, Chedenko is happy



*Professor A. Chedenko*

to show them the head—informed insight is always welcome. A successful Fast Talk may gain the same result.

The workroom containing the head is a short walk away, down a winding stone staircase and along a wide corridor lined with menacing suits of armor. Two huge wooden doors stand closed at the far end of the hallway; the workroom lies beyond them.

When the doors are opened, the scene that meets their eyes is one of pure chaos. Scattered across the floor amid glittering fragments of glass lie the dead or unconscious bodies of three men, while the sole window yawns open, curtains flapping madly in the chill gale.

One man has no head; his body still spurts blood across the room like a twitching fleshy fountain. The head of the statue is missing also, the now-empty pedestal it sat upon is still rolling across the floor. Of the others, one has been bludgeoned to death, and the second is unconscious.

Call for Sanity rolls—the loss is 0/1D6 SAN. Professor Chedenko faints.

Looking out the open window immediately, an investigator sees a black automobile speed away. If the investigator is he who lost an eye, he recognizes the vehicle from his visions on the train.

The unconscious man was beaten senseless by a blunt instrument, with such force that a fragment of bone has been depressed against his brain. Given months, and the right care, he may recover. A successful First Aid roll, combined with a successful Psychology roll, coaxes a few cryptic words from him concerning men in flapping robes who wear shoulders not their own. This interesting but unhelpful testimony given, Dvorchek lapses into a coma from which he does not recover for weeks.

Presumably the investigators send for help. Shortly the scene is overrun by university staff, police, and medical personnel. Chedenko is helped from the room. The investigators find themselves answering all the questions; the interrogation becomes in a sense a forced introduction, and after a while puts the investigators in a position to make requests and have them carried out. The authorities assume that the crime is a Communist attack.

## MEANWHILE . . .

It was of course the Brothers of the Skin who have stolen the statue's head, and on a whim they took as well the

more than an hour after the incident, he begins to see flickers of things that are not there, phantom visions, seen through the empty socket!

- First come glimpses of running endlessly through dark woods.
- Then in the distance, a black car is seen waiting, and into it the observer climbs. Another man cranks the motor, and the vehicle drives off.
- Now a rutted mountain road is negotiated, sometimes at high speeds. Gradually, images form of lower ground, and of more prosperous villages.

These blurry, indistinct visions are horrifying in their episodic power and their intimations of madness, yet cost no Sanity.

## At the University

The Orient Express stops at a windswept platform in Sofia Station at 7:00 P.M. In the winter, in a time of troubles, even the restaurants close early; the streets are bar-

ren of people, and the doors and windows shuttered and dark. The investigators can find a hotel and take rooms; perhaps they summon a doctor to see to their maimed comrade.

If they go for a stroll in the bitter wind, they spend their time among the cobbled streets dark with the overhanging stories of black-beamed houses. At one moment, they admire the domes and minarets of the Islamic mosques, the next moment they leap an open drain and side-step a steaming heap of goat dung.

### SOFIISKI UNIVERSITET "Kliment Ohridski"

Queries at the university are delayed if none of the investigators speaks Bulgarian or Russian. English-speakers exist—the British and American consuls are two—but no one is willing to be at the investigators' beck and call. English just now is not a language favored in Bulgaria.

University functionaries, their positions serenely independent of gesticulating foreigners, feel no urgency. Finally, the Assistant Doctor-Professor of English arrives; he deigns to answer a few questions and to give a few directions. He warms up and stops stroking his thick gray

## Bulgaria

**A**THWART THE EASTERN half of the Balkan peninsula, Bulgaria has for millennia been important for the countless trade routes that criss-cross the country.

Within its relatively small area, it exhibits a striking range of geographical features, from swampy plain into the north to the rugged river gorges and mountains which dominate much of the heart of the country. Musala Peak, the country's highest mountain, rises some 9,596 feet. Pine-covered slopes contain countless rivers and glacial lakes, as well as mineral springs—more than half of these springs are quite hot, some boiling as they bubble out of the rock.

The Slavic tribes which settled in the eastern parts of Bulgaria in 6 A.D. assimilated the resident Thracian tribes, thus forming the present ethnicity of the nation. Throughout its history, Bulgaria has had a strong sense of national unity, especially during the long centuries of Ottoman domination,

flowering strongly during the country's struggles for independence in the 19th century.

The most widely-spoken language is Bulgarian, although other Slavic languages, Greek, and Turkish are spoken by scattered minorities.

After the Great War, Alexander Stamboliiski, leader of the Peasant Party, became Prime Minister in 1919. Keepers changing the date of this campaign to after 1923 should recall that the military staged a coup in August, 1923, murdering the prime minister in the process. Some months later, after a Communist-Party-led attempt to gain control of the nation failed, Bulgaria became the first country in the world to make communism illegal.

The unit of currency is the *leva*, 25 of which equal one British pound sterling.

### Sofia

Humans have lived on the site of Sofia since at least 4,000 B.C. Their

paleolithic traces are often found in the caves which dot the area's river gorges, particularly those on the banks of the Iskur River, which flows through the outskirts of Sofia. The Sardi, a Thracian tribe, established a settlement near its hot mineral springs as early as the 8th century B.C. That town fell to the Roman Empire in 29 B.C.

Sofia reached its Classical-era height under the emperor Constantine the Great, and in 343 A.D. was the site of an important meeting of Christian bishops. The city fell to the Turkish Ottoman empire in 1382, and was liberated by the Russians in 1878. After being declared the national capital in 1879, Sofia and its citizens played a powerful part in the political struggles of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Its fortunes have languished since the end of the Great War—Bulgaria was allied with the Central Powers—but the city continues to grow in both area and population.

# Investigator Information

**E**NCOUNTERING THE SNOW-CHOKED passes of the Balkan Mountains, the investigators draw near to a series of horrifying encounters. If the keeper wishes to grant a respite from the action, halt the train for a half day or so to clear the tracks, because trouble begins at the Bulgarian frontier.

## The Initiate

In parts further west, few Brothers exist. But in Bulgaria, a chapter of the Brothers of the Skin thrives, with agents everywhere. Naturally new members of the Brotherhood must undergo a suitable test of skill. Thus, as the Express halts briefly at the customs point, an extra policeman boards, hides, then replaces his crumpled uniform with the immaculate livery of the Orient Express.

Dark, lean, panther-like, the initiate notes the investigators at once, and instantly and fatally covets one of their heads, perhaps the man with the highest APP.

As the Express proceeds, the initiate stays alert but relaxed—he can get off anytime, or wait for the other side, miles away, when the border police disembark. Now perhaps the vibrations of the track compel the attention of the target's weary bladder. Perhaps the investigators are now fearful enough that they go to the toilet in pairs, but otherwise Nikolai the initiate strikes without warning, shrieking one phrase again and again as he slashes. If he survives, the investigator later remembers the Bulgarian words, and quotes them to some kindly translator. The phrase means, "Give me your head."

The investigator under attack must resist the initiate's STR 10 against his own by receiving a successful resistance table roll; if he does, his shouts bring rapid aid—and even if the investigator receives a failure, he manages to partially fend off the plunging blade.



*Nikolai the Assassin*

Nikolai is not able to saw off the investigator's head, but he has time to take an eye, swiftly and efficiently gouging one out of its socket and gleefully severing the connecting nerves. As anxious servants and aghast companions run to the scene, Nikolai the initiate unlocks a sealed outer door and leaps from the moving train, vanishing into the forest still clutching his gory trophy.

The train halts. A search is launched. On the ground near the track, police bring back a ghastly souvenir—a dusty damp blob which cleaning reveals to be a human eye. The victim of the attack may believe it to be his own, but it is the wrong color. Call for general Sanity rolls—lose 0/1 SAN.

The investigator who suffered the attack automatically loses 1D4 SAN. In addition, his Spot Hidden and Track skills suffer a permanent and immediate loss of 25 percentiles, and may never increase above a maximum of 75%. Because of poor depth perception (only one eye), he also loses 2 points of DEX and whatever amount of APP player and keeper can agree to.

The attack over, the investigators can do little more than to treat their mutilated friend. Laudanum or opium would be useful, as their wounded companion shivers in brain-numbing pain. Sleep would be a blessing.

## The Newspapers

The train speeds on over plummeting gorges filled with the silent roar of frozen waterfalls. Sofia is only a few hours away. Perhaps they may care to flip through a newspaper to pass the time; local papers were brought on board at the checkpoint. Even if none of them read Bulgarian, they can always look at the pictures.

One photo electrifies them. It shows an elderly peasant farmer, his face a map of weathered wrinkles, hands caked with the dirt of the fields. He holds a head, cradling it lovingly like a mother would her child. It is the head of the Sedefkar Simulacrum.

A train guard or porter can translate the more relevant details. The farmer, one Gabor Verboczy, dug up the head in his back field the previous afternoon, cracking a plough-blade in the process. Bundled with it was a small bag of Bulgarian coins, dating to the time of the Bulgarian War of 1875.

The writer speculates that head and coins were buried to be safe from the scouring armies. The statue fragment has been taken to the University of Sofia for further study.

## A Medical Complication

Settled down in the comfortless luxury of his compartment, the mutilated investigator soon confronts a new terror, one worse in its way than the loss of an eye. Little

# Statistics

## MEHMET MAKRYAT, Ageless, Reincarnated Leader of the Brothers

STR 18    CON 16    SIZ 13    INT 18    POW 23\*  
DEX 14    APP 0    SAN 0    EDU 16    HP -15\*\*

\* drops to 21 when calling the Skinless One; magic points fall to 1.

\*\* The reincarnated Mehmet starts with negative 15 hit points. He can add to this all points of damage he does to investigators, causing proportionally more skin to appear on his body. If he takes damage, he merely drops to greater negative hit points—but it takes him longer to re-skin himself. If he reaches positive hit points, his return to life is complete, and thereafter he can be killed as a normal being.

He is not wearing the simulacrum, but for much of the action he has possession of it, degrading any luck, idea, or know rolls made for him.

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** Claw 70%, damage 1D4+1D4

**Armor:** has negative hit points, and therewith can sustain any amount of damage

**Skills:** while under such hysteria-producing tension, Mehmet must receive a successful INT x2 or less roll to attempt any of the following skills. Bargain 45%, Climb 50%, Cthulhu Mythos 30%, Disguise 38%, Dodge 60%, Drive Automobile 40%, English 60%, Fast Talk 45%, French 45%, Hide 80%, History 25%, Library Use 40%, Linguist 20%, Listen 70%, Occult 35%, Oratory 45%, Pick Pocket 25%, Pharmacy 20%, Psychology 40%, Skin Human 90%, Sneak 75%, Spot Hidden 85%, Throw 70%, Track 40%, Treat Poison 30%, Turkish 90%.

**Spells:** until six hours have passed, Mehmet has only 1 magic point and cannot cast any of these spells. Animate Flesh Thing\*\*, Call Avatar of Skinless One\*, Contact Skinless One\*\*, Control Skin\*\*, Create Flesh Creeper\*, Fist of Yog-Sothoth, Melt Flesh\*\*, Skin Walker, Summon/Bind Dimensional Shambler, Summon/Bind Fire Vampire, Transfer Body Part\*\*, Turn To Skin\*.

\* new spells; \*\*new spells found at the end of the Constantinople chapter.

**Sanity Loss to See:** 1/1D10 SAN.

## The Skinless One

**Description:** an aspect of Nyarlathotep, it usually appears as a muscular eight-foot-tall human without skin, and sometimes with a third eye in the center of the forehead. Power crackles around the god, and the skin of any human within 100 yards starts to itch.

**Cult:** the Skinless One is worshiped by the Brothers of the Skin.

**Notes:** this god usually manifests only in order to attend ceremonies and accept sacrifices.

The Skinning Gaze affects a human at the cost of 1 magic point. If overcoming the target's magic points with its own on the resistance table, all of the target's skin falls away like loose clothing. The victim's movement thereafter is intensely painful, and the victim loses 1 hit point per round until dead.

### THE SKINLESS ONE

STR 20    CON 20    SIZ 20    INT 86    POW 100  
DEX 20    APP 0    HP 20

**Damage Bonus:** +1D6 (not applicable).

**Weapon:** Skinning Gaze 100%, damage 4D6

**Armor:** anyone who shoots or strikes at the Skinless One develops an unbearable itch in the weapon hand, causing an involuntary miss. Attacks of any kind always do minimum damage. Attacks which manage to eliminate all hit points dispel the Skinless One, but it may return with full hit points in 1D6 rounds.

**Skills:** Skin Human 100%, Spot Hidden 100%.

**Spells:** all except those peculiar to other gods.

**Sanity Loss to See:** 1D10/1D100 SAN.