

The Dark Eye



THE BLUE TOME
THEATER KNIGHTS II

Castle Korswandt



Palace

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------|----|-------------------------------|
| P1 | Dining Room | P5 | Monks and Novices |
| P2 | Kitchen and Pantry | P6 | Sun Legionaries |
| P3 | Stables | P7 | Guests and Voluntary Patients |
| P4 | Workshop | | |



5th Floor



4th Floor



3rd Floor



2nd Floor



Ground Floor



Dungeon

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|----|--|
| D1 | Treatment Room | D7 | Cell: Tirulf of Ask-Jarlak |
| D2 | Armory | D8 | Cell: Paale of Grotzkin-Beyondsevenducumbers |
| D3 | Spiral Staircase | D9 | Other Cells |
| D4 | Cell: Emjan of Hursakoje | H1 | Secret Room: Badger's Head |
| D5 | Cell: Fetanka Jantareff | H2 | Secret Room: Bear Paw |
| D6 | Cell: Alinja of Dallengthin | H3 | Secret Room: Moose Antler |

Theater Knights 2: The Blue Tome



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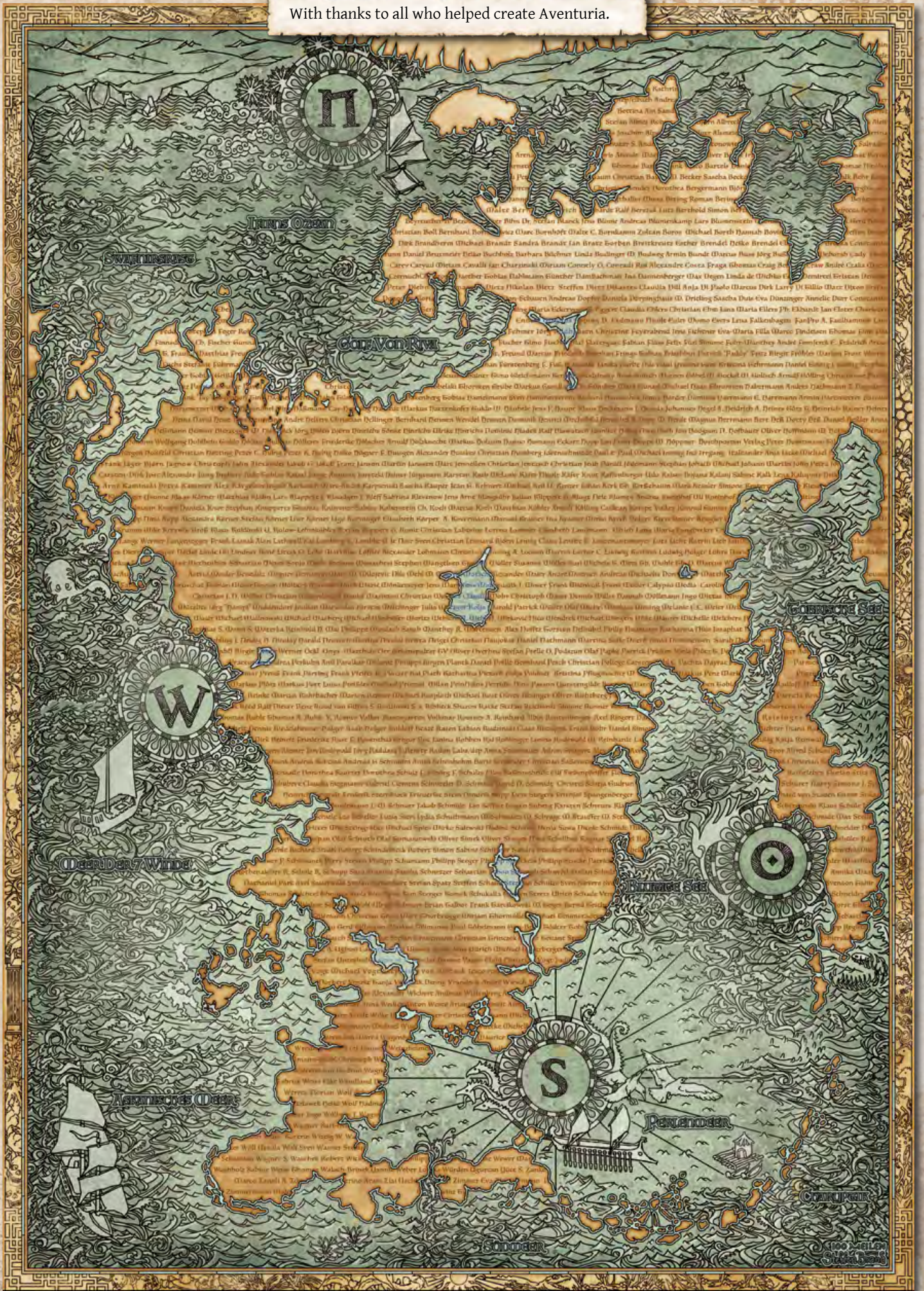
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Use these ideas to make a scene easier for the heroes.



Use these ideas to make things more difficult for the heroes.

- **Read Aloud Text:** Some sections include text that is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased for the players. They contain no GM-only information.
- **GM Information:** These sections offer helpful hints for the GM and may contain information that your heroes need to discover or deduce, bit by bit. Some information serves only as background information for the GM. •
- **Rumors:** Heroes that try to gather information sometimes overhear rumors and hearsay. Rumors are either true (+), false (-), or partly true and partly false (+/-).
- **NPC Stat Boxes:** Note that while some NPCs, such as spellcasters and Blessed Ones, possess a large number of skills, we do not necessarily list every skill with a rating higher than 0 if it is not immediately relevant to the scenario. Feel free to add skills and assign ratings as you see fit.
- **Additional Rules:** References to rules explained in other books include page references to those books. The abbreviated name of the book and the page number appears in superscript after the name of the rule. For

• These “Master Mask” boxes contain important information about the adventure!

example, for the special ability Stomp^{ABE8}, ABE8 means the rule appears on page 8 of the *Aventuria Bestiary*.

Quality, Prices, and Beds

Taverns, inns, and the like have ratings for *Quality* (Q), *Prices* (P), and *Beds* (B). Q refers to the level of accommodations, while P modifies the standard prices for services as listed in the *Core Rules* on page 382. See the table for an explanation of these ratings. B is simply the total number of beds available. For example, a place with a rating of (Q4, P3, B25) is a good inn that is cheaper than expected and offers 25 beds.

Level	Quality	Price
1	Sorry excuse for a rat trap	Very cheap (50% of the standard price)
2	Dirty dive	Cheap (75% of the standard price)
3	Average tavern	Normal (standard price)
4	Good inn	Expensive (150% of the standard price)
5	Exquisite hotel	Very costly (200% of the standard price)
6	Luxurious accommodation	Prohibitively expensive (400% of the standard price)

Currency Calculator

Unless noted otherwise, any mention of money refers to Bornland’s currency. Most areas of Bornland accept Middenrealm coin.

Bornland	Middenrealm	Value in Silverthalers
Batz	1 Ducat	10
Groat	1 Silverthaler	1
Farthing	1 Haler	0.1



Introduction

“We assembled in the shadow of the Spirit Cliff, filled with divine power. Rondra was far away, but she had sent her son whose power gave us the strength to pursue the goblins, tear down their idols, spill their blood, and seize victory.”

— Excerpt from the *Blue Tome*, around 200 FB

Introduction for the GM

Greetings to the Twelve! You hold in your hands *The Blue Tome*, the second adventure in the six-part Theater Knights Campaign, for *The Dark Eye* role playing game. All six adventures build on each other and are meant to be played in order, although each may be played as a stand-alone adventure, if desired. In such cases, you should change certain elements that are of particular importance to the campaign. We mark these elements with the symbol:



Many of these elements appear in several adventures, so it is a good idea to write down the decisions your heroes make during these encounters. These decisions can have major consequences for the campaign, as the heroes have the greatest influence on the story's outcome.

Certain characters, such as Anshag the Blessed One of Rondra, Leudara of Firunen, the adept Olko Knaack, and members of the Norbard Jantareff family make many appearances throughout the campaign, lending additional cohesion to the story.

The campaign's metaplot follows what we call the awakening of the Bornland. The primal powers of river and land are reclaiming what humans took, and change is occurring everywhere. Animals act uncharacteristically aggressively, farmers report seeing ghostly images of past battles in their fields, and so on. Bornland's inhabitants try vainly to make sense of these events, and opinions abound, but few have actual insights. We mark scenes directly related to the awakening of the Bornland with the symbol:



You can include these scenes even if you are not playing *The Blue Tome* as part of the campaign.

The Blue Tome

This adventure sees the Alliance of Kor's Sign establishing itself more firmly in the Bornland. At the beginning of the adventure, the heroes are asked to escort the Blue Tome, a relic of the Theater Knights, to its new home in the town of Hinterbruch.

They arrive at a tavern called *The Red Ram's Horn* to deliver the book to its new guardian, a mage named Count Thezmar Alatzer, but Thezmar hurriedly left town several days earlier. Clues surrounding his departure lead the heroes to the ruins of an old Theater Knight castle in the abandoned village of Pilcrest. While they search the ruins for the mage, members of the Alliance of Kor's Sign attempt to steal the tome with the aid of a pearl dragon.



Bruised but not defeated, the heroes return to Hinterbruch to find a horrible scene: while they were gone, the Alliance burned down the tavern, brutally murdered the servants, and stole one of the mage's artifacts, namely a stone ram's horn. The heroes and a Norbard family named Jantareff pursue the villains to a monastery/hospital of Praios at Castle Korswandt, where some of the inmates are secretly possessed by angry ghosts.

The heroes investigate the events at the monastery and uncover an even greater crime about to occur: at the base of Blood Cliff, where Kor once appeared to the Theater Knights, the Alliance of Kor's Sign is planning human sacrifices as part of a bloody ritual to prepare its members to seize control of Bornland!

Bonus Content

Visit www.ulisses-us.com for bonus downloadable content for the Theater Knights Campaign, including background information on the kingdom of Bornland (the setting for the campaign) and a glossary of common Bornnian terminology.



Appropriate Heroes

The adventure is about goblin magic, an ancient cult of Kor, about ghosts and possession, so there are many roleplaying challenges for goblins, believers in Kor, ghost hunters, and soul healers. Toughness and combativeness are important virtues, noble origins might help at some places, and negotiation skills can be very important. Rangers are a big help for journeys through the Bornnian winter and stealth actions, such as are required at the conclusion of the adventure. There are also some secrets to solve for heroes well-versed in history and magical theory. Players should not choose heroes that are enemies with the Norbards or the Church of Praios, and should also avoid heroes that are susceptible to the cold. All in all, the heroes should care about the fate of the Bornland, and they should be respectable enough that one of the three employers can recommend them to the Temple of Efferd in Neersand with a good conscience.

It All Starts in Neersand



The adventure begins in the city of Neersand. If needed, the city's warrior academy, mage academy, and famous Temple of Efferd can serve as points of contact for some heroes. Also, the Marshal of the Order of the Ram, Dobrishanja of Hollerow-Rivilauken, resides in the village of Lowerwals on the opposite bank of the Walsach River. As an alternative, the heroes can be recruited in Festum, Rivilauken, or Swordhills.

Neersand, Trade City at a Watershed

Region: Bornland

Inhabitants: 2,100

Ruler: Crown Protector Tjeika of Notmarch, Mayor Prenjasha Torvinnen

Temples: Efferd, Peraine, Rondra

Trade and Commerce: Ship building, pelts, pottery (Neersand clay jars)

Important Inns: Residence Hotel (Q5/P5/B29), Neersand Hotel (Q3/P3/B26), Noble Boatman (Q2/P2/B24), House Walsach View (Q5/P5/B25), Red Ram's Horn (Q2/P4/B14), Dune Pub (Q3/P3/B16), Wave Rider (Q3/P3/B18).

Military: 50 halberdiers of the City Guard, 25 disciples and teachers of the Warrior Academy, 20 river guards, 700 sailors and marines

Special: Home port of the Bornian navy; Bornian Warrior Academy; School of Control (mage academy located two miles north of town); the Neer, a whirlpool at the port's entrance that hindered sailing for years but which is now just a weak vortex that appears only during the changing of the tides (when it was a permanent maelstrom, Neersand became a famous holy site of Efferd with an important temple); headquarters of the Order of the Ram (a knightly Order that defends the beastinger-occupied wilderness along the Walsach).

Trade Routes: Neersand, on the remote eastern border of Bornland, is connected to Festum by the Coastal Road and, from the north, by the Walsach Road, which follows the Walsach River. The river itself, which empties into the ocean here, is navigable from Notmarch on. Neersand's harbor is one of only a few natural harbors on the entire eastern coast of Aventuria.

Mood in the City: The inhabitants of Neersand look optimistically to the future. Since the whirlpool weakened, sea trade has begun flourishing again, and some traders now view the city as a trade rival to Festum.

The Assignment

Escort: The heroes are supposed to escort a Blessed One of Efferd, *Sulja Elmsjen* (see page 10) to Hinterbruch, where the old mage Thezmar Alatzer, Count of Hinterbruch, pursues his decades-long study of the mysteries of the Theater Knights and the goblins.



Delivery: Sulja is transporting a precious relic from the time of the Theater Knights, namely a tome which now belongs to the local Temple of Efferd. She and the heroes must personally deliver the tome to Thezmar Alatzer.

Research: The heroes also receive a side assignment that seems minor at first, but which has major implications later during the campaign.

The heroes receive the following information:

- The Blue Tome, which originally had a red cover, was bequeathed to the temple in 337 FB by a woman named *Thora Fataburuq*, Seneschal of the Order of the Theater, before she sailed east with some squires fleeing from the Emperor Priests.
- An evil river pirate named *Mjesko One-Hand* tried to steal the tome from the temple in 1024 FB, but the theft was foiled by a party of adventurers. To curtail other attempts at theft, priests tossed the tome into the sea as an offering to Efferd.
- Later, in 1034 FB, temple leader *Jesidoro de Sylphur* had the tome recovered from the ocean floor. That same day, a powerful tidal wave destroyed most of the harbor, though the tome was delivered undamaged to the temple.
- The tome is enchanted with a protective spell that harms anyone who touches it, which is why it must remain sealed in its crate. No living person knows what the tome contains.
- After its recovery from the sea floor, the tome's red cover slowly turned blue. Jesidoro hesitantly called for a magical analysis, but a specialist willing to take the risk proved hard to find. Thezmar Alatzer agreed to the task, but only after many months of negotiation.
- The transfer of the tome to Hinterbruch is a closely held secret. The payment for undertaking this task is a generous 5 batz per hero. If the heroes encounter trouble on the road, the Temple promises to double their payment.

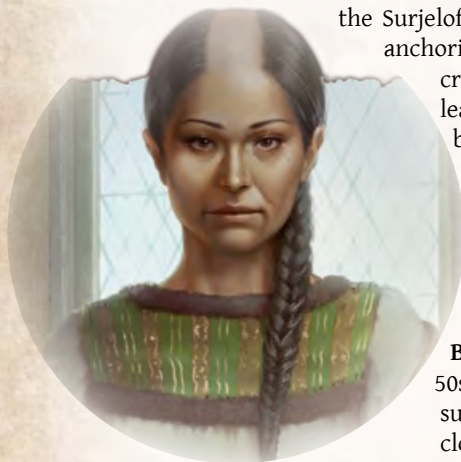
The Employer

The assignment that draws the heroes into the adventure originates with the Church of Efferd. If you desire an alternative opening, the heroes know three people from the first adventure in the campaign (*The White Lake*) who recommend them to the Temple.

🏰 Umerike Surjeloff

Umerike meets with the heroes in a lavishly appointed, heated cabin on the *Urnislav II*, a merchant ship owned by the Surjeloff Trading House that is anchoring in Neersand. Various crewmembers enter and leave the cabin on ship's business, and several bald, muscular Norbard men with glorious mustaches stay nearby. They appear to be Umerike's bodyguards.

Brief Description: Mid-50s; expert trader; petite; subdued but expensive clothes; tight braid;



strangely immobile eyebrows.

Function: This employer is well suited for contacting business-like or shady heroes.

Background: This cautious trader has learned that someone plans to open the tome. She fears that doing so will lead to the reinstatement of old prohibitions against the Norbards and thus might endanger her people's position in modern-day Bornland. For this reason, she wants (with the heroes' help) to be among the first to learn the tome's contents.

Side Assignment: Umerike has heard many good things about goblin sailors on merchant ships. Goblins are quicker and more agile than humans, and they eat less, settle for lower wages, and mind their manners around female crewmembers. But Mantka Riiba, the goblins' leader in Festum, advises goblins to refrain from serving aboard merchant vessels. Umerike hires the heroes to discover whether so-called *wild goblins* would make suitable substitutes.

Portrayal Tips: Fold your hands; keep your body stiff but move it rarely (move your head instead); speak softly and politely, but be brief and concise.

Important Stats: *Commerce* 14 (16/14/14), *Empathy* 10 (16/14/14), *Fast-Talk* 11 (13/14/14), *Willpower* 8 (13/14/14), SPI 2.

Connection to the Heroes: Umerike has connections with *Radulja Swerenski*, the leader of the Free Alliance of Traders and Craftsmen, as well as to the long-distance traders and craftsmen of Neersand. She also has some underworld contacts that could put the heroes in touch with Umerike, provided that they are discrete.

🏰 Alwin K. Wippwinger

This retired magister is currently conducting a lecture series called *Helpfulle Artifacts for the Wandering Adept* at the School of Control, where the meeting occurs. Servants lead the heroes to the Great Parlor, an unheated lounge where they are greeted by Wippwinger.

Despite the chill in the air, the room's large wing chairs, prove quite comfortable with the addition of warm blankets. If some heroes still feel uncomfortably cold, Wippwinger raises the room's temperature a bit with a quick spell.

Brief Description: 78; brilliant mage; expensive, classic mage's robe; always smokes a pipe; thin, reedy voice; talkative.

Function: This employer is well suited for scholarly and humorous heroes.

Background: Wippwinger's conscience has been troubling him after he printed a scathing review of his colleague Thezmar Alatzer's latest book in the *Salamander*, the quarterly publication of the mage guilds. Now he tries to support Alatzer's research as much as possible. To partially atone, he placed his gifted student Olko Knaack at Alatzer's service and wants to make sure, via the heroes, that the precious Blue



Tome reaches Hinterbruch without trouble. Casually laugh off the embarrassment, like a true statesman.

Side Assignment: Wippwinger needs facts about the primitive culture of the goblins and wants to study the peculiarities of interactions between goblins and humans from various points of view. He can interview the goblins of Festum himself, but since he no longer desires to travel, he must ask the heroes to research wild goblins for him.

Portrayal Tips: Present an absent-minded, old-fashioned scientist who often gets caught up in conversation, loses himself in details, and gesticulates wildly. Wippwinger always has a pipe in his mouth, whether he is smoking or not.

Important Stats: Afraid of... (Insects) III, *Commerce* 6 (17/14/15), *Empathy* 6 (17/14/15), *Willpower* 7 (14/14/15), SPI 3.

Connection to the Heroes: The heroes could be recommended to Magister Wippwinger by *Gritten Raudups* (the leader of the School of Control) or other mages.

Important Stats: *Commerce* 8 (14/13/15), *Empathy* 10 (14/13/15), *Willpower* 4 (15/13/15), SPI 2.

Connection to the Heroes: High-ranking and honorable heroes might be directed to him by an academy teacher, the Blessed Ones of the local Temple of Rondra, or officers of the Order of the Ram. Rangers, serfs, pirates, half orcs, and other exotic heroes might have ties with him from his days of adventuring.

Scenes in Neersand

Use the following optional scenes to add color and life to Neersand. A particular scene's likelihood of occurrence nominally depends upon the employer you choose, but you are free to use them as you wish.

The Count's Publications

If the heroes investigate Alatzer, they learn about his recent publication, which they can buy for 28 batz or simply view for a fee of one goat. Titled *The Four-Head of Hinterbruch: Magical Analysis and Considerations on the Elemental Magic of the Suulak*, his book broadly describes the religion and magic of the goblins and the history of the famous Order of the Theater Knights, always relating these subjects to the idol known as the Four-Head (see page 12).

The key points of his book are as follows.

- ◆ In his book, Alatzer proposes that the Four-Head was actually fashioned by goblins. The Theater Knights captured it and put it on display around 220 FB both to taunt the goblins and to commemorate the Order's victory over them near Hinterbruch.
- ◆ Alatzer found traces of elemental magic in the idol, leading him to hypothesize that the Four-Head, along with many others of its kind, once formed part of a network of elemental pathways through the Bornland. Travelers walking a path in these statues' line of vision gained protection from all manner of elemental effects.
- ◆ He blames the downfall of Pilcrest (sometimes called *Pilkamm* on old maps) on the vandalism of the Four-Head of Hinterbruch, which deprived the roadway to Pilcrest of its elemental protection and exposed travelers to the hazards of a marsh known as the Great Mosse.

Magister **Alwin K. Wippwinger** gave Alatzer's book a very unfavorable review in an article published in the *Salamander* (see *Aventurian Herald* #176, *Special Edition*), and Alatzer's central thesis was jeered by many experts. The Alliance of Kor's Sign, however, read the article with interest.

The *Aventurian Herald*, a free magazine for the roleplaying game *The Dark Eye*, covers historical events and current affairs on the continent from the perspective of Aventurian journalists. The *Herald*, which is published in German, is available in print and in .PDF format from Ulisses Spiele. Several issues (including #176) are now available in English, and more are planned. For more information, please visit www.ulisses-us.com.



◆ Jucho of Elkinnen and Ramthrust-Bloodford

As a Steward, Jucho is always traveling the country. Since he trained as a warrior in Neersand, he is more often found here than anywhere else. He might meet the heroes in the Warrior Academy, at a drafty Theater Knight castle, at the Temple of Efferd, or even by chance in an inn, such as House Walsach View.

Brief Description: 45; excellent warrior; inexperienced politician; first graying streaks in his hair; dimple on his chin; plain chainmail, above which he wears a mediocre coat with elk fur trimmings; powerful voice.

Function: This employer is well suited for recruiting nobles, warriors, and other dignitaries.

Background: Jucho is a principled but lucky man with youthful charm; he is tolerant and possesses chivalric ideals. His task for almost a decade has been the administration of the (few) estates of the Bornian State, small dots spread all over the land. He is often in the right (or wrong) place and can address the heroes at the behest of the Temple of Efferd. Alternatively, he wants to protect the precious tome due to his excitement over learning the secrets of the Theater Knights.

Side Assignment: Jucho's life was saved by chance by a group of adventurers in the wilderness. He tried to reward the brave adventurers with hereditary titles, but his most deserving rescuer, a wild goblin named Ruchlik, didn't understand Jucho's intentions and refused the title. Determined to make good on his promise, Jucho hires a hero. To find a solution to this problem, the hero should probably start by learning more about goblin culture.

Portrayal Tips: Make grand, slow gestures; show the occasional slip of the tongue and use rude expressions; notice too late that they are inappropriate for someone of your social standing and offer your apologies.

Harbor Theology

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

As you walk through the harbor district, you see two female mercenaries looking at a peddler's tray of goods, which consist mainly of little statues of gods and saints. The mercs' lively argument is audible from far away: "Look, Anshag is a knight and a true hero! I'll buy one of him!" - "I'm not interested in noble knights! Arannja's the one for me." - "Arannja? The agitator?" - "Agitator against the damned Emperor Priests, you simpleton! She was a patriot! And loyal to our black lord Kor!" - "Bah! She was a farmer, not a fighter! If you want something related to Kor, get Ghorio. Do you have a Ghorio?" The mercenaries glare at the peddler, who fearfully stammers "Un-unfortunately no, butbutbut how about a Rondra?"

The poor trader **Rowin** (38; short; sparse beard; thick woolen clothes; loves his children; hates his poverty; needs a warm meal; Willpower 4 (12/13/13); SPI 1) sells his hand-carved images of gods and saints for 5 kreutzers. **Paale** and **Malinja** are two mercenary marines (30 and 28, respectively; large and strong; worn gambesons and simple fur clothes; love meskinnes; hate Thorwalers; need sleep; Religions 2 (10/10/12), Empathy 2 (10/12/13), Willpower 4 (15/12/13); SPI 1) who have been on shore leave since yesterday and show obvious signs of having celebrated all night. They are still drunk (Stupor 1) and in the mood for a brawl (LP 31, PRO 2, INI 13+1D6, Brawling AT 11 PA 6 DP 1D6).



The mercenaries can be prevented from attacking with a competitive check using *Seduction (Flirting)*, *Intimidation (Threats)*, or *Fast-Talk (Manipulate or Flattery)* +1. Otherwise, they rough up Rowin and toss his wares on the ground. They might even start a brawl, which isn't unheard of by the harbor, but they give up after losing half of their LP.

Check with *Religions (Rondra or Kor)* +2, *Myths & Legends (Bornland)* +2, or *History (Bornland)* +2

QL 1: Anshag of Glodencourt was the last Marshal of the Order of the Theater. Rondragabund of Riedemer once hid the Swords of the North, which were blessed by Rondra, from the Emperor Priests. Ghorio is said to be the only saint of Kor.

QL 2: Ghorio also visited the Bornland on his journeys in the year 300 FB. Arannja led a peasant's revolt against the stewards of the Emperor Priests in 422 FB and remains popular with fighters from Neersand.

QL 3: Arannja managed to conquer Neersand and Sirmgalvis. Ghorio is said to have fought a decadent marshal of the Theater Knights.

QL 4+: Followers of Kor venerated Arannja for a time, but no relevant Kor worship of the simple farmer woman has survived down through the years.

Threat from the Mountains

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

A dirty girl runs past you, shouting "Beastingers! Beastingers! A magical otter!" and heading towards the banks of the Walsach. A group of people has gathered near a tall, white shape that stands helplessly, his arms raised in appeal. As you approach, you see he is an elf. He says, "Good people, it's only a sisa sidhe. It will be gone soon." His attempt to disperse the curious crowd fails. Eventually you see the beastinger. This one looks like an otter wearing a necklace of shells. It frolics happily in the Walsach. A few brave souls are already walking toward it on the ice at the edge of the quay when somebody shouts, "If you catch a beastinger, it has to grant you a wish!" Four or five of the people standing near you foolishly jump into the water in pursuit of the nimble creature. They have no chance of catching it, but they do have a very good chance of dying in the icy depths unless someone rescues them.

If the heroes wish to assist in the rescue of the overconfident fairy hunters, they can...

- **Jump into the water** and use *Swimming (Treading Water)* -3 to drag one of the freezing men from the water (see *Heat and Cold* in the *Core Rules*, page 346; the water inflicts Cold Level IV).
- **Use boards, fishing poles, or ropes**, to pull the swimmers back to land with *Feat of Strength (Dragging & Pulling)* +1, 1 CR, 10 attempts.
- **Organize the crowds** to do just that. To do so, they must first get the crowd's attention. When in doubt, call for a check using *Intimidation (Threats)* -1 or *Fast-Talk (Begging or Manipulate)*.

When all the people have been rescued, someone notices that the beastinger is gone. The elf approaches the heroes and expresses gratitude for their help. He introduces himself as Magister Extraordinarius **♣** *Cirrusil Icegaze* (128; firnelf; ghostly pale; ice-gray eyes; serious; loves the wind; hates all things fleeting; needs someone who can converse at his level; *Magical Lore* 16 (13/13/17), *Earthcraft* 13 (12/12/11), *Survival* 18 (15/14/15), *Swimming* 8 (14/15/11), *Willpower* 7 (15/17/14), SPI 3).

If the heroes appear trustworthy, he tells them that he is watching the Weal Mountains, where, according to his intuition, “the rock will birth a dark creature in the coming decades.” He has no proof, just a feeling. While Cirrusil remains in Neersand, the beastingers patrol and give him regular updates. He considers the fact that the beastinger chose the harbor for the exchange of information as rather unfortunate.

• Beastingers are fairy creatures that look like various common animals. Those that live near the Walsach usually appear to be otters. They behave mischievously around people and especially enjoy stealing hair. They seem to trust the firnelf, Cirrusil, completely.

The Journey to Hinterbruch

The journey to Hinterbruch along the coastal road occurs without trouble. **♣** *Sulja Elmsjen* (30; brown hair; plain face; irascible; loves oak trees; hates mushrooms; *Persuasion* 8 (15/13/12), *Sailing* 15 (13/14/13), *Willpower* 7 (15/13/12), SPI 2), a Blessed One of Efferd, is appropriately equipped, but unfortunately a rather taciturn travel companion. The greatest challenges are the cold weather and possible ambushes by bandits or swamprecks. Swampreck attacks are rather rare here during wintertime, but when food is sparse in winter, hunger can drive the monsters to leave the nearby marsh.



Traveling During Winter

It's cold (Cold Level II, see *Core Rules*, page 346), but the heroes can warm up in one of many farm houses and fisher huts they find along the way, especially if they are accompanied by a Blessed One. But even in these fortunate conditions, bad weather can strike at any time. The heroes and Sulja get caught in a blizzard on a roll of 1-4 on 1D20. If you wish to quickly establish the risk of exposure to the cold, don't bother to roll—the blizzard occurs when you want it to occur.

A successful *Survival (Predict Weather)* check allows the heroes to notice the brewing storm in time, granting them 2D6x5 minutes to find shelter. With a cumulative *Survival (Find Campsite)* check +1, the heroes find an appropriate campsite or else find a house or other safe place to wait out the storm (and not suffer damage from the cold). Heroes caught in the storm suffer +2 Cold Levels and suffer a penalty of -5 to *Orienteering* checks. The storm lasts 1D6 hours and is followed by 1D6 additional hours of heavy snowfall (+1 Cold Level). Clothes that become soaked during the blizzard don't protect against the cold, and in fact raise the Cold Level by 1 (to a maximum of IV).

Puspereiken

Puspereiken (400 inhabitants; County of Hinterbruch; The Crown Inn (Q4/P4/B20); Green Bush Inn (Q2/P2/B24), Cornucopia Tavern (Q3/ P3/B4); gathering site for the popular blue clay traded via Neersand) is a good place to sleep if the heroes want to cover the distance from Neersand to Hinterbruch in two days. If the heroes have not previously heard of Alatzter, they can learn more about this respected researcher here. He is viewed as an intelligent and just ruler, even though his family is not descended from the Theater Knights.

Bornian Heroes

Optional Content


If the party is unfamiliar with Bornland, they are joined by a young Bornian noble named **♣** *Salwinja of Elkenfield* (20; copper-colored hair; pageboy cut; smokes mochorka in a pipe; loves spring flowers; hates romance novels; seeks a buyer for her wolf pelts; scale mail; long sword; *Body Control* 9 (12/12/13), *Feat of Strength* 12 (13/15/15), *Survival* 7 (14/12/15), *Warfare* 8 (14/11/12), *Willpower* 4 (14/12/12), SPI 1, TOU 2, Swords AT 13 PA 7 DP 1D6+4; LP 35; PRO 5; ENC 1; DO 5; INI 11+1D6) is an alumnus of the Neersand Warrior Academy who thinks facing swamprecks is no more challenging than drinking with bibulous heroes in the evening.


•• Salwinja's dramaturgical function is to present the good side of Bornian knighthood before the heroes uncover its darker secrets. Later, if their situation grows dire, she can reappear and offer to help. The heroes meet Salwinja again in *The Black Forest* (Part 3 of the Theater Knights Campaign)

The Mosse Taketh Away

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

The marsh known as the Great Mosse, a wide, white-brown plain, extends away south of your path. Fog billows over the reeds, creating hoarfrost on the leaves. Suddenly the silence is broken by a loud cracking sound followed by a terrified man's cry for help.

A few hundred yards from the Coast Road, a fisher's hut has suddenly sunk into the marsh. Several roof beams splintered and fell on the fisher  Jasper (40; stubble; lanky; silent; loves silence; hates his father; needs a stove; *Fishing* 12 (13/12/14), *Sailing* 8 (13/12/13), *Willpower* 3 (12/12/12), SPI 1). He slowly sinks into the mud and drowns if nobody comes to his aid. Haste is of the essence, but the ground is broken and treacherous. Heroes who want to help the screaming man must first reach him by making a cumulative *Body Control* (*Running*) check +1, 3 CR, 7 attempts. Heroes who reach Jasper must succeed at a cumulative group check (*Feat of Strength* (*Lifting*) +1, 1 CR, 5 attempts) to pull him from the mud. If nobody reaches him within 15 CR, he sinks so deeply into the mud that he loses 1D6 of his current 25 LP (out of 33, total) each CR. When rescued, Jasper remains terrified and confused for several hours but calms down when he warms up and gets some rest. Afterwards, he tells the heroes about his recent nightmares wherein he had to flee from creatures that were bleeding from horrific wounds. Anyone examining the rubble with *Woodworking* (*Carpentry*) +3 learns that rotting support beams caused the collapse. With QL 2+, the hero discovers an unusual presence of multiple kinds of algae on the wood.

 Jasper's screams attract swampreeks from the Mosse. The creatures gain easy access to the hut through the hole made when the support beams shattered. Jasper owns no furniture that could block the gap, but it could be blocked with his nets. Anyone defending the hole (two heroes at most) suffer the state *cramped* (see *Core Rules*, page 35). If desired, damage to the roof allows yet another swampreek to break in.



Swampreek

Size: 5 to 6 feet tall

Weight: 100 to 140 pounds

COU 11 **SGC** 15(a) **INT** 13 **CHA** 13

DEX 15 **AGI** 15 **CON** 16 **STR** 14

LP 32 **AE - KP - INI** 14+1D6

DO 8 **SPI** -1 **TOU** 0 **MOV** 8

Bite: AT 12 DP 1D6+2 RE short

Claws: AT 14 DP 1D6+1 RE short

Thrown Rock: RC 14 RT 1 DP 1D6 RA 5/10/20

PRO/ENC 1/0

Actions: 1

Advantages/Disadvantages: Darksight I

Special Abilities: Grapple (Claws), Precise Shot/Throw (Rock)

Skills: *Body Control* 10, *Climbing* 7, *Feat of Strength* 5, *Intimidation* 6, *Perception* 7, *Self-Control* 5, *Stealth* 6, *Swimming* 7, *Willpower* 4

Number: (number of heroes+2), or 1D6+2 (pack)

Size Category: medium

Type: Animal, humanoid




Loot: 25 rations of meat (inedible)

Combat Behavior: Lone swampreeks rarely attack human-sized targets, but groups spur one another on. At first they throw rocks and make feints. After 1D6+1 CR they attack in close combat.

Escape: Loss of 50% LP or suffering two levels of the condition *Pain*. When half of a pack of swampreeks perishes or flees, the rest flee as well.

Pain +1 with: 24 LP, 16 LP, 8 LP, and 5 LP or less.

Animal Lore (Monsters)

-  **QL 1:** A single swampreek is cowardly and avoids humans (competitive check, *Intimidation* vs. *Willpower*). In packs, they are much braver and pose a serious threat to travelers.
-  **QL 2:** Swampreeks make mock attacks to distract opponents.
-  **QL 3:** Legends tell of humans who turned into swampreeks. Anyone pricked by the thorns of a morningthorn bush quickly turns into a swampreek.

Special Rules

Pack: When multiple swampreeks attack the same opponent, they receive +1 AT (max. +4 AT) per additional swampreek beyond the first.

Mock Assault: Swampreeks launching feinting attacks must make a competitive check (*Intimidation* vs. *Willpower* (*Resist Intimidation*)). If successful, their opponents suffer a level of *Confusion* lasting 1D6 CR. The GM makes one check for the entire swampreek pack, while their opponents must resist individually.



Hinterbruch

The Village

Inhabitants: 160

Ruler: Count Thezmar Alatzer of Hinterbruch

Temple: Shrine of Peraine, Rondra (in ruins)

Inns: Tavern *The Red Ram's Horn* (Q4/P3/B28).

Military: 1 bailiff

Special: The Four-Head of Hinterbruch, an ancient goblin idol.

This small village on the Coast Road is important mainly because of its famous lord. Count Thezmar Alatzer of Hinterbruch (see page 24) is a wealthy amber trader, a learned mage, and a popular innkeeper. He lives a modest life in his tavern *The Red Ram's Horn*, where he continues his studies. The village is also home to some traders, a cartwright with a small forge, and several of the count's serfs. When the heroes arrive in town, they should stop at the count's tavern first.

The Four-Head

In the center of the village, where the Coast Road meets the Crown Road to Rivilauken (formerly the way to Pilcrest), a 15' tall statue of a goblin-like figure made of sandstone stands on a small, artificial hill. Its four faces each look towards one of the roads, but the face pointing toward Pilcrest has been hewn off. Depending on their skills, the heroes might gain more information. If they are familiar with the basics of Alatzer's latest research on the Four-Head, they receive +1 QL; if they have read his book in full and have a minimum SR 6 in *Religions*, they receive +2 QL.

Check with *Religions*

QL 1: The statue is a goblin idol made to guard or protect its surroundings.


QL 2+: The carving does not represent one of the known goblin deities.


The following important NPCs are present in Hinterbruch when the heroes first arrive.

• *Adeptus Olko Knaack* (page 14) from Festum has been working as Alatzer's assistant for a few weeks now, and is the first to contact the heroes.

• *Anshag of Rodebrannt-Ask* (page 14), a Blessed One of Rondra, starts out as a silent observer. Anshag is eventually revealed to be the heroes' most important enemy.

• The *Jantareffs*, a Norbard family, camp in Hinterbruch (page 16).

•  Anshag is accompanied by *Leudara of Firunen* (page 15), whom the heroes met in the adventure *The White Lake*.

•  The heroes have already met *Alriksej Jantareff* (page 17), who married in from the Trebritzki family (among Norbard clans, men sometimes take the surname of their wife's family).



Check with *Myths & Legends (Bornland)* +1

QL 1: A yard-long, stone ram's horn once sat cradled in the statue's arms. It is the source of the tavern's name, and was displayed there on the wall until a few years ago.

QL 2+: The damage to one of the statue's faces is related to the downfall of Pilcrest.

Check with *Magical Analysis*

QL 1: The position and alignment of the statue implies a magical connection between it and its surroundings.



QL 2: The magical spell imbued within the statue was created by a true expert.

QL 3: The statue absorbs arcane energy from the surroundings, but this power leaks from the damaged face.

QL 4: The statue bears scars from amateurish investigations into its magical structure. The statue once contained an elemental spell, but knowledge of its use has been lost.

QL 5+: The statue's magic stems from the Tradition of the goblin sorceresses. Its focus was the stone horn that once rested in its hands, but that horn is now missing. Depending on whom one asks, the horn resembles either a ram's horn or a cornucopia (a horn of plenty).



Where is Alatzter?

The Red Ram's Horn Tavern is situated in a massive stone building with merlons and a tower. The tavern's common room is very spacious. It features three large tables with benches, plus three smaller tables with chairs and stools. The tavern also has a small, private room for discrete negotiations and conversations, and the bar seats seven. The tavern was named after the stone ram's horn that once hung above the fireplace (a few years ago, Alatzter moved the horn to his study, to examine it more closely; see page 29).

The heroes arrive in the evening and learn that Alatzter is not at home. He unexpectedly set out with his serf Jassev to visit the ruins of the old Theater Knight castle in Pilcrest, and they should have returned two days ago. Olko is informed about the arrival of the Blessed One of Efferd and he arranges rooms and an appropriate dinner. He has already received instructions on how to store the tome, but Sulja is determined to deliver it only to Alatzter, so she decides to travel to Pilcrest the next day and asks the heroes to accompany her. If they hesitate, she promises another 3 batz per hero as a further enticement.

While talking to Olko, the heroes should learn the following.

- People in Hinterbruch are worried, as Alatzter is no longer young, and they don't have the equipment to survive in the wilderness for long.
- Due to the bad weather, nobody else volunteered to accompany Alatzter on his trip. Jassev has a reputation for being reliable, and the count is known for prolonging his study travels at a moment's notice.
- An old Norbard woman visited Alatzter recently and told him about Alhanian glyphs and secret notes she discovered in her family's Seffer Manich. • This is believed to be the reason behind Alatzter's trip. Olko thought this was strange, but he didn't say anything because he doesn't want to create the impression that he is prejudiced towards Norbards.

• Term for the written family history of a Norbard *meshpocha* (clan).

Nobody in Hinterbruch knows that Alatzter also met Fetanka, the Norbard zibilja (see *Fetanka's Poem*, on page 34).

The Four-Head is one of four statues which the Theater Knights stole from a goblin holy site in Kor's Forest after defeating the legendary queen and high shaman of the goblins, Kunga Suula. Originally, this statue represented the *Fertile Father* (see *The Last Heroes of the Suulak*, on page 39). As her last act of defiance, Kunga Suula cast a goblin *Pathway* spell on the statue to disguise its true purpose, thereby hiding it from her enemies (this is the magic that Alatzter detected and tried to describe in his publication; see page 29). After some experiments, the Theater Knights learned to shape and use this elemental magic for themselves, and thus were able to maintain the magic that protected the road to Pilcrest.

On the night of a new moon, Kunga Suula hewed one of the faces from the Fertile Father and used the power of the statue to curse the Theater Knights. Pilcrest began filling up with sand and was abandoned in 270 FB. The stone ram's horn that once powered the Four-Head had disappeared when the statue was moved by the Theater Knights, but it resurfaced and has been in the Alatzter family's possession for several generations. Thanks to Kunga Suula's magic, it binds a spirit known as the Fertile Father to the mortal plane, and its protective spells are so firmly embedded that neither the rituals of the Church of Praios or the Alliance of Kor's Sign could destroy it, although they did weaken it. The awakening of the land caused the horn to bleed—a sign that the power of the land itself may be dissolving the arcane structure of the statue. This is what first attracted Alatzter's interest in researching the statue. While he will continue studying the phenomenon for many years, the ram's horn is currently of no importance to him.



🏹 Adeptus Minor Olko Knaack

Brief Description: 20; experienced guild mage; Wippwinger's favorite former student; gangly; reddish-blond, chin-length hair; soft beard with gaps; gray mage robe with symbols sewn on the hem.

Motivation: Wishes to conduct his research in peace and avoid problems.

Agenda: Provides the heroes with accommodations and information about Alatzer's location, as he was ordered.

Function: Likable but long-suffering ally who is abducted by the villains much too soon.

Background: This goblin expert from Festum recently entered Thezmar Alatzer's service at the behest of Wippwinger. Olko was a keen proponent of communication between the races, but his dream of peaceful coexistence was shattered by his autumnal adventure through the Marches (see *The White Lake*). Two goblins whom he believed to be his friends abused his trust and used dark magic to incite violence between Norbards and Middenrealms. He has traveled far from Festum and its endless political angst to focus on magic, science, and assisting Alatzer, as well as trying to forget his bad experiences.

Animosities: Injustice, disloyalty, dishonesty

Portrayal Tips: Present yourself as friendly and open. Use magical/scientific jargon. Debate with passion, but remain rational and respectful. If the conversation turns to the events of the previous autumn, or the idea of coexisting with goblins, hang your head and become taciturn.

Fate: Olko is kidnapped by the Alliance of Kor's Sign, and the heroes don't get a chance to rescue him until later in the campaign.



Greetings of Rondra!

Anshag of Rodebrannt-Ask, a Blessed One of Rondra dressed in snow-covered traveling clothes, arrives at the *Red Ram's Horn* shortly after the heroes arrive. He enters the tavern, utters a curt, old-fashioned warrior's greeting, orders food and a room, and sits down at a table. He greets the heroes politely but does not try to strike up a conversation. If the heroes insist on talking to him, he excuses himself and retires to his room.



If playing this as part of the Theater Knights Campaign, Anshag is accompanied by *Leudara of Firunen*, who greets the heroes warmly (as long as they all parted on good terms in the adventure *The White Lake*). She seems withdrawn but does not talk about the true reason for her presence (she shrugs it all off as boring, unimportant Church business). Leudara soon says goodnight, too.

🏹 Esquire Anshag of Rodebrannt-Ask

Brief Description: 45; skilled Blessed One of Rondra; plate armor; short hair and clipped beard; proud bearing; two fingers missing on his right hand (a war wound); veteran of several wars; seeks the meaning of life, and expects to find it in battle.

Motivation: Only the true heirs of the Theater Knights, those who keep Kor's virtues in mind and are always ready to risk their life, deserve to rule Bornland. Anshag is one of these heirs.

Agenda: Anshag is utterly dedicated to the goals of the Alliance of Kor's Sign. He has no qualms against spilling innocent blood if it furthers his cause.

Function: Main villain of this adventure; he commits murder in Hinterbruch and conducts human sacrifices during a bloody rite at the end the adventure.

Background: As a nephew of Count Wahnfried of Ask, Anshag is part of an important family but inherited no land of his own. His distant relationship to the famous Ask family drives him to seek the meaning of life in battle, hoping it either brings him gold and power or leads to a good death on the battlefield. He fought at the *Battle of Ox and Oak* as well as at the *Vallusan Meadow* (1020-21 FB), where he began to worship Kor as the lord of battles. Anshag soon joined the Alliance of Kor's Sign and was quickly promoted to the Inner Circle for his heritage and skills. Hidden beneath his clothes and armor, his entire right arm, leg, and chest are covered with arabesque, decorative scars, and colorful tattoos of swords, lion's eyes, lightning, and red waves. His chest bears these tattoos as well, but also has images of dragon scales.

Animosities: Traders, Norbards, goblins, and any who claim they deserve some of the authority that rightfully belongs only to true warriors.

Portrayal Tips: Be militaristic, curt, and humorless. Show interest in conversation only if war and battle are the topics. Anshag understands jokes, but does not react outwardly.

Fate: Anshag is supposed to be defeated by the heroes at the end of the adventure, although he may escape by a slim margin, only to be defeated by the heroes at a later time (and with greater satisfaction).



Important Stats: Noble I, Blessed One, Negative Trait (Vengeance), *Feat of Strength* 6 (15/15/15), *Intimidation* 6 (15/12/12), *Perception* 5 (11/12/12), *Self-Control* 9 (15/15/15), *Willpower* 5 (15/12/12); for other stats, see page 60.

“Do not grow lazy. Practice your swordcraft every day and you will achieve greatness!”

“Spare me your tricks! Go amuse the country folk. You deserve each other.”

“Be silent, or I will silence you!”



Leudara Argentalis of Firunen, Squire of Rondra

Brief Description: late 30s; skilled Blessed One of Rondra, inexperienced cultist of the Alliance of Kor's Sign; tight braid; thoughtful, brown eyes; confident stride; firm voice; competitive; stern but just.

Motivation: Visions about Kor's Claw and the Alliance of Kor's Sign make Leudara think that she is destined to play an important role in renewing the Bornland.

Agenda: She wants to fulfill her assignment, draw Alatzter to the side of the Alliance of Kor's Sign, and obtain the stone ram's horn. She is

unaware of Anshag's cruel plan.

Function: Leudara only appears at the beginning of this adventure, to give the heroes a chance to notice that she has dealings with dark powers, and to serve as an example that everybody does not have to share the heroes' opinions about everything.

Animosities: Cowardice, stupidity, loss of control.

Portrayal Tips: Say what must be said. Give clear, reasonable answers. Allow yourself to smile once in a while (but not too often). Avoid conversations about yourself.

Fate: The heroes meet Leudara again later during the campaign and can affect her ultimate fate.

A Happy Evening in the Red Ram's Horn

The rest of the evening is pleasant. There is enough mead and ale to go around, and the heroes enjoy themselves at Alatzter's expense. Let them clink glasses with NPCs, tell stories, laugh, roll the dice, play a game of throwing knives, and drink some more. If any of the following NPCs later become victims of the Alliance of Kor's Sign, the heroes should feel their loss more keenly.

• **Tsarina** (37; runs the tavern for Alatzter; brown ponytail; pockmarked face; likes to talk; loves a full tavern; hates cold feet; needs a better selection of ales).

• **Brinja** (32; serving girl; redhead; freckles; great memory for names and food/drink orders; loves horses; hates the sea; needs more sleep).

• **Travin** (55; one of the count's serfs; full beard; graying at the temples; sings some sad songs during the evening; loves fire; hates fish; needs new pipe tobacco).

• **Grimje** (41; blacksmith's apprentice; stout; thick braids; challenges the heroes to a game of boltan or dice; likes

to wager a few kreutzers; loves potatoes; hates goblins; needs his own workshop).

• **Veroskja** (31; widower of the grocer; blond locks; laugh lines; loves dancing; hates the cold; needs a new fur coat).

• **Karenjan** (23; amber cutter; loves sunshine; hates singing; needs more excitement in his life; *Earthencraft* 12 (14/14/14)).

• **Gorwinja** (24; serf; wide nose; heavy brow; loves arguments; hates goblins and Norbards; rude).

Example Stats* for Those Present

Gambling 4 (13/13/12), *Empathy* 6 (11/12/13), *Singing* 5 (11/13/13), *Dancing* 4 (11/13/12), *Fast-Talk* 5 (12/12/13), *Willpower* 4 (12/12/13), *Carousing* 5 (11/13/11), SPI 1

*Feel free to vary these SR by up to 4 points, the attributes by 2 points.

The two people most eager to become the heroes' drinking buddies are a woman named *Veroskja* and a man named *Karenjan*. Both are interested in spending the evening in a way pleasing unto *Rahja* (*Seduction (Romantic Arts)* +1). *Veroskja* prefers men, while *Karenjan* is interested in both sexes. If they do not find any likely prospects, they leave the tavern around midnight.

A Chat at the Fireplace

The heroes may receive the following information this evening.

Alatzter

• *“The count is just and fair.”* (+/-; from everybody)

• *“He was very disappointed that his book received a bad review. He worked on it for decades.”* (+; from *Olko*, *Tsarina*, *Brinja*)

• *“This disappointment was probably his reason for starting such an ambitious project at his age.”* (+/-; from *Olko*, *Tsarina*, *Brinja*)

• *“Recently, he suddenly grew quite eager to prove his theories.”* (+, from *Olko*, *Tsarina*, *Brinja*)

• *“A Norbard woman visited him three days ago and told him about seeing magical symbols at *Pilcrest*, and he left to investigate at once. Nobody knows who exactly that woman was.”* (+; from *Olko*, *Tsarina*, *Brinja*)

Four-Head

Olko has also studied the *Four-Head* and can give the heroes all the information from the section *The Four-Head* on page 12.

• *“Blood sometimes issues from the stone ram's horn.”* (+; from *Tsarina*)

• *“Before Alatzter took the stone ram's horn from the statue, the horn sounded on nights of the full moon.”* (-; from *Travin*)

• *“The best way to gain more insights involves reuniting the stone ram's horn with the statue, but Alatzter feared that this would result in terrible chaotic effects.”* (+; from *Olko*)

• *“I think the *Blue Tome* contains detailed information on goblin magic, which the Theater Knights probably witnessed for themselves—and maybe stole, like they stole the *Four-Head*.”* (+; from *Olko*)

Pilcrest

- “It was built around 190 FB. Today it lies in ruins, but it was the main seat of the Order of the Theater.” (+; from everybody)
- “The castle fell when Peraine punished the last Marshal, Gerbald of Ruckenau, for his hubris by making rice grow in the harbor of Pilcrest, which silted up within a short time.” (+; from everybody)
- “Today, the old castle is a hideout for smugglers and other criminals (sometimes +; from everybody), but the ghosts of the knights drive them mad.” (-; from Brinja)

Goblins

- “Festum’s Goblins have adapted to human customs (+/-), but this has made them vengeful and greedy, just like humans.” (-; from Olko)
- “So-called wild goblins have no concept of property or violence and live harmoniously in a matriarchal society (-) that must be protected from the temptations of civilization.” (+/-; from Olko)
- “Never trust a goblin. Well, maybe their women, a little. On second thought, it’s probably best not to trust any of them.” (+/-; from Brinja)
- “Goblins are like animals. They must be hunted and captured.” (-; from Gorwinja)
- “Goblins are cowardly thieves and cut-throats. No pride and no honor.” (+/-; from Grimje)

The Mosse

- “The marsh is dangerous and full of monsters. Swamprecks and morningthorn bushes are harmless. Surviving travelers talk of living roots and giant pit worms.” (+; from everybody)
- “A few days ago, two serfs saw a pearl dragon circling above the moss.” (+; from everybody)
- “The ghost of Marshal Gerbald is still haunting the Mosse (+; from everybody) because he had dealings with demons.” (-; from Travin)

The Jantereffs

The Norbard Jantereff family has about 40 members and owns nine kaleshkas (coaches). They had to break their winter camp early when insect larvae ruined the bulk of their supplies and must now travel from village to village to make a living. At the moment, their kaleshkas are drawn up in a laager at the northern edge of the village.

If desired, the heroes can inquire about purchasing goods and exotic wares from the Jantareffs. Otherwise, the meshpocha keeps to itself and avoids trouble. Anyone approaching the laager can see the glow of a cheery fire and hear the sounds of people celebrating within.

Present the Jantareffs as friendly but silent. Don’t directly reveal that they know more than they are letting on—make the heroes figure it out for themselves. Dasha should seem suspicious from the start. Alriksej is a ray of sunshine who enjoys conversing with strangers. None of them know what the Alliance of Kor’s Sign is truly planning.



The Jantareffs meet the heroes again in a future adventure and provide them with wares, advice, and knowledge that helps them complete the campaign. Dasha and Fetanka play an important role in this adventure, while Alriksej is important for the next adventure in the campaign (*Theater Knights 3: The Black Forest*). For additional background resources, please visit our Downloads page on www.ulisses-us.com.



Norbard Scum!

Optional Content

Over the course of the evening, several Jantareffs wander into town, among them *Fetanka* and *Alriksej*. They want to buy supplies from *Tsarina* because they plan to leave town



the next morning. Upon seeing them, some villagers make rude comments, and then Gorwinja drunkenly claims that the Norbards lured the count to their wagon fort to kidnap him.

The Norbards try to remove themselves from the situation, but unless the heroes intervene, a brawl breaks out. Calming the situation requires a check on either *Persuasion (Public Speaking)*, *Intimidation (Threats)*, or *Fast-Talk (Manipulate)*, at +1. If successful, Fetanka thanks the heroes and quickly says her goodbyes. Even though she suspects that the family's Aunt (Dasha Alatzer) has betrayed her (see page 19), she does not say one bad word about her family, and she avoids provoking new trouble.

Fetanka Jantareff, Zibilja

Brief Description: 35; Masterful zibilja; spiritual leader of the Jantareffs; gaunt; black hair with gray streaks; dark rings under her eyes; first signs of worry lines on her face; tattoos of bees on her bald brow; tattoos of the words "love" and "knowledge" (in Old Alaani) on the backs of her hands.

Motivation: Wants to understand the meaning of the prophecies in her Seffer Manich; wants to enforce honest business practices in her family, to keep it out of trouble and poverty.

Agenda: Reluctantly accepts Dasha's deal with Anshag until she learns about the consequences; works with the heroes if they help her family; she later need the heroes' help.

Function: Knowledgeable but aloof ally with a typically Norbardan perspective; represent Norbard history and tradition; political counterweight to Dasha.

Background: In her early twenties, Fetanka took over the difficult legacy of her predecessor Jaminka, who since died. The young zibilja could slow the family's slide into impoverishment, but not stop it. Since she confronted Dasha, things have begun to change, but progress is painfully slow. When not navigating family politics, she studies the family's Seffer Manich (a task she has undertaken for years), mainly to find explanations for recent mysterious happenings in Bornland. She doesn't really know that she is one of the most knowledgeable experts of Norbardan history. A short time ago, she took on a new student, *Nadja*, primarily because of obligations to her family. She sees little use for children and acts as an aloof and impatient teacher to the stubborn and dreamy seven-year old.

Portrayal Tips: Talk with concentration, sometimes mysteriously and with a raised index finger. If you see a chance, quote rhyming proverbs. Yawn occasionally, but disguise the gesture, as if pretending you aren't actually yawning.

Fate: Fetanka studies the awakening of the land and plays an important role for the future of the Norbards as keeper of one of the the most ancient and important Seffer Manichs in existence. Her student *Nadja* also proves to be important.

"The winds are blowing. The wheels are rolling. Everything is flowing...." (leafing through the book, murmuring a mnemonic)
"... about Turnip War and Flower Splendor: Read role 13, column 8..."
"Nadja, child! What did we say about doing that in public?!"

Alriksej Jantareff (nee Trebritzki)

Brief Description: 27; bald; neat mustache; sensual lips; two shell rings through his left eyebrow; experienced Long-Distance Trader (use the stats of a typical family member).

Motivation: Has been pushed around (and passed around) by the women long enough; needs money to leave his family.

Agenda: Helps the heroes when he can, as he hopes for their help in return.

Function: Contact for the heroes in everyday situations; scapegoat for the Jantareffs' problems, which the heroes might use to their advantage.

Background: Alriksej isn't well respected by the Jantareffs and is treated like a toy by the women of the meshpocha. Because he is a widower, his situation has only grown worse. He wants to leave his family but he doesn't have the money to refund his dowery. He is unaware of Dasha's deal with Anshag.

Fetanka Jantareff

COU 14 DEX 12 SGC 16 AGI 11

INT 14 CON 12 CHA 15 STR 11

LP 29 AE 40 KP - MOV 7

SPI 2 TOU 1 DO 6 INI 11+1D6

Fate Points: 2

Social Standing: free

Languages: Native Tongue Alaani III,
Garethi III.

Scripts: Old Alaani, Kuslik Signs

Advantages: Increased Arcane Power IV, Spellcaster

Disadvantages: Bound to Artifact (Seffer Manich),
Obligations (Family) II, Personality Flaw (Curious),
Sleepwalker,

Special Abilities: Expert at Improvising, Improve
Ability, Tradition (Zibilja), Numerology, other
magical special abilities.

Combat Techniques: *Brawling* 8, *Polearms* 11

Unarmed: AT 9 PA 5 DP 1D6 RE short

Quarterstaff: AT 12 PA 9 DP 1D6+2 RE long

PRO/ENC 1/0 (winter clothes) (includes modifiers for
armor)

Skills:

Physical: *Body Control* 4, *Climbing* 4, *Perception* 6, *Self-
Control* 7, *Stealth* 6

Social: *Empathy* 11, *Etiquette* 4, *Fast-Talk* 7, *Persuasion* 8,
Willpower 9

Nature: *Animal Lore* 5, *Orienting* 5, *Plant Lore* 6, *Ropes* 4,
Survival 5

Knowledge: *Astronomy* 6, *Geography* 8, *History* 14, *Law* 7,
Magical Lore 12, *Math* 10, *Myths & Legends* 12, *Religion* 8,
Sphere Lore 4

Craft: *Commerce* 10, *Driving* 5, *Treat Soul* 10, other *Treat
skills* at least 5

Cantrips: *Firefinger*, *Handwarmer*

Rituals: Many zibilja rituals, but none are relevant for
the adventure.

Combat Behavior: Fetanka avoids fights and defends
herself until she can escape.

Escape: Flees upon receiving one level of *Pain*.

Pain +1 with: 22 LP, 15 LP, 7 LP, and 5 LP or less.



Typical Jantareffs

COU 11 SGC 12 INT 12 CHA 13

DEX 12 AGI 13 CON 12 STR 11

LP 29 AE - KP - INI 10+1D6

SPI 1 TOU 1 DO 6 MOV 6

Unarmed: AT 11 PA 6 DP 1D6 RE short

Molokdeshnaja: AT 11 PA 5 DP 1D6+4 RE medium

Spear: AT 11 PA 6 DP 1D6+4 RE long

Short Bow: RC 12 RT 1 DP 1D6+4 RA 10/50/80

PRO/ENC 3/1 (leather armor) (includes modifiers for armor)

Special Abilities: Alaani III, Garethi II, Feint I, Masterful Improvisation

Advantages/Disadvantages: Socially Adaptable / Negative Trait (Greed), Obligations II (Family)

Skills: *Body Control 5, Climbing 4, Commerce 7, Empathy 7, Fast-Talk 8, Feat of Strength 6, Perception 7, Riding 5, Self-Control 7, Stealth 6, Willpower 2*

Combat Behavior: Prefers ranged combat or spears to keep opponents at a distance. Avoids hopeless fights, prefers to negotiate instead.

Escape: When LP fall below 15; does not flee when family members are in danger.

Pain +1 with: 22 LP, 15 LP, 7 LP, and 5 LP or less.

Special Ability: Tradition (Zibilja)

Additional Rule

- Zibiljas only cast rituals, not spells.
- If they cast their rituals in the presence of members of their family, they receive a casting bonus of 1. To receive the bonus, at least 5 members of their family must be within 100 yards.
- Zibiljas can learn Norbard rituals and create and use traditional artifacts of their culture.
- The Tradition's primary attribute is Intuition.

Prerequisites: Spellcaster

AP Value: 80 AP

Animosities: Traditionalists, greedy rulers, demanding women.



Portrayal Tips: Be open, humorous, and take risks to help the heroes. Tug your earlobe regularly.

Fate: Alriksej plays an important role in the next adventure of the campaign and, with the heroes' help, manages to free himself from the Jantareffs.

Special: Heroes who played through *The White Like* get the feeling they know Alriksej somehow. A check on *Empathy* +1 reveals that he was born a Trebritzki. On QL 4+, you remember that he is Tuminka's brother. Gain +1 to this check if the hero knows Alriksej's first name, his birthplace, and the make of the shell ring piercings in his face.

"Right you are, my friend. Finally, somebody who tells it as it is!"

"Slowly, my Lady! Not everybody wants to be your prey!"

Dasha Jantareff, Aunt

Brief Description: 73 years; white hair; red henna ornaments on her high, furrowed brow; stocky; three scars from cuts on her left cheek; thick eyeliner; masterful trader, always looking out for the greatest possible profit; leader of the Jantareff Family for almost three decades.

Motivation: Wants to make the family rich; wants to get rid of the heroes with no risk.

Agenda: Has no qualms about entering a deal with the Alliance of Kor's Sign, but underestimates the consequences; tries to keep her family out of further trouble.

Function: Voice of the suspicious and greedy side of the Jantareffs that cannot be ignored; Fetanka's rival.

Background: Dasha has held her office for so long because nobody else wanted to take leadership of the unlucky family. She has survived troubles with Blessed Ones of Rondra and Prais, bronnjars unwilling to pay their debts, and the infamous Bornian winters. The hard years have made her ruthless. She will not acknowledge Fetanka's success in staving off the family's downfall, even though others now do. Nevertheless, Dasha has too many supporters to be ousted from her position.

Animosities: Naivety, moralizers, stubborn people.

Portrayal Tips: Be mysterious but friendly. Speak with a frozen smile and a rigid gaze. Pay lip service if it seems to help your position.

Fate: Dasha remains the head of the Jantareff family until Part 3 of the campaign.

"Certainly, Parness. You are the customer ..."

"Challenge us, and you challenge five other families as well!"

"Everything has its price. Everything but family, that is."

Dasha Jantareff

COU 12 SGC 14 INT 14 CHA 16

DEX 13 AGI 10 CON 12 STR 11

LP 29 AE - KP - INI 11+1D6

SPI 2 TOU 1 DO 5 MOV 8

Dagger: AT 11 PA 5 DP 1D6+1 RA short

PRO/ENC 0/0

Advantages/Disadvantages: Socially Adaptable / Negative Trait (Greed), Obligations II (Family)

Special Abilities: Expert at Improvisation, Fencing Stolen Goods, Foxian; Alaani III, Garethi II, Nujuka II, Rogolan II, Isdira I, Kuslik Signs, Old Alaani

Skills: *Body Control 4, Commerce 14, Empathy 10, Etiquette 6, Fast-Talk 12, Geography 7, Perception 6, Persuasion 6, Pickpocket 5, Self-Control 6, Stealth 8, Willpower 8*

Combat Behavior: Dasha tries everything to avoid fights.

Escape: When attacked physically and unable to negotiate.

Pain +1 with: 22 LP, 15 LP, 7 LP, and 5 LP or less.



The Duel



The next morning, the heroes awake to the sound of clashing swords. Silently and grimly, the two Blessed Ones duel in the shadow of the Four-Head statue. Nobody from the gathered crowd dares interfere. Someone says that Anshag called Leudara a coward, and she challenged him to a duel to second blood.

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

The two Blessed Ones circle each other. Anshag moves slowly and keeps his focus, never lowering his guard. Leudara changes from one stance to another with quick, precise steps, keeping her eyes locked on Anshag. Like lightning, she attacks Anshag with her long sword. Her strikes are fast and hard to parry, but ultimately weak.

Anshag counterattacks. He swings his Rondra's crest with force, and exhibits great control. Leudara parries and dodges, avoiding the heavy blade, until Anshag changes his rhythm. It's an excellent maneuver. Leudara takes a hard hit. Before she can regain her balance, Anshag is at her again, hitting her in the face with his weapon's pommel and slashing her chest with his sword's wavy blade. Leudara falls to the ground, bleeding from her nose and

wounds in her leg and torso. Momentarily disoriented, she glares at the look of triumph on Anshag's face—and yields.



Leudara suffered 13 DP in one blow and now just wants to be alone. Wordlessly, she stands up, retrieves her horse from the stable, and rides off. She reluctantly accepts the heroes' help but makes it clear that she does not want to talk about the reason for the duel. It is an internal matter of the Temple of Rondra in Firunen, and it is settled now. She has nothing to add to the decision of the gods.

Anshag also says nothing about the reason for the duel and rebukes those who are curious. He waits for the heroes to depart and then gathers his allies. ● ○

• The reason for the duel between Leudara and Anshag remains a mystery for now. Later, when Anshag is revealed to be the villain, the heroes should wonder about Leudara's connection to him, but guess that she is not entirely allied with the Alliance of Kor's Sign. If they deduce Anshag's role anyway and manage to defeat him, the adventure can still run mostly as written, in which case Anshag is not present for the mass baptism, and Sulja insists on following Alatzer because he might be in danger.



The Actions of the Disciples of Kor's Sign

Alatzer's publication drew the attention of the Alliance of Kor's Sign, as the cultists believe the stone horn will help them with a bloody rite in Kor's Forest (see *The Mass Baptism Ceremony*, page 54). Anshag contacted Alatzer a few years ago and demanded the horn, but the count refused mainly because his family was ennobled only a few generations ago and thus had nothing to do with the traditions of the Theater Knights.

Thezmar Alatzer believed that was the end of the matter, but Anshag felt slighted and sought revenge. To steal the horn from Alatzer, he turned to Dasha, the Aunt of the starving Jantareff family, who were then on their way to Hinterbruch. Anshag offered Dasha 30 batz to lure Alatzer into the Mosse and delay him there for a while. To lure Alatzer away, Dasha concocted a story about a Norbard smuggler who reported seeing mysterious Alhanian magical signs on some old frescoes in Pilcrest, signs which were very similar to those recorded in the Jantareff family's chronicle. As expected, this greatly aroused the scholar's interest.

The cult learned from spies in Neersand and Festum that the goblin expert, Olko, had moved to Hinterbruch, and that the Church planned to transfer of the Blue Tome there as well. The Alliance of Kor's Sign saw their chance to seize several items (the Blue Tome, Alatzer's writings, and the stone horn) and kidnap Olko, whose knowledge would be useful to the cult.

To strengthen their chances of success, the Alliance enlisted the support of Gerwulf of the Shield (see page 26), a dragon rider from the Weal Mountains. Gerwulf traveled to Bornland for the planned rite (see page 54). He and the other warriors in his retinue joined Anshag, who is directs the effort to obtain the objects.

The cultists decide that the tome is probably heading through the Mosse, and they plan a two-pronged attack. One occurs at Hinterbruch, where Anshag plans to obtain the three things (stone ram's horn, writings, and Olko) after Alatzer, Sulja, and the heroes leave town. He also plans to make a bloody example of the serfs. The second attack occurs in Pilcrest, where the dragon rider first tries to steal the tome and stall the heroes' return.

Anshag learned about the heroes' departure from Neersand and visits the *Red Ram's Horn Tavern* the night of their arrival, to see them with his own eyes.



Leudara accompanied Anshag during his first trip here and tried (unsuccessfully) to convince Alatzer herself. Afterward, she reluctantly agreed to Anshag's plan and now justifies this dishonorable course of action with the higher goals of the Alliance, namely, leading the nobility of Bornland back to its old virtues and elevating their devotion to Kor. When she first learns about the planned massacre of the villagers in Hinterbruch, she calls Anshag a traitor and challenged him to a duel.



Alatzer and the Heritage of the Theater Knights



"The knights had won on the field of battle, but they returned full of an unbearable regret, for they had paid for victory with honor."
— From the *Blue Tome*, around 325 FB

The count of Hinterbruch has been studying Bornland's history for twenty years. Even though he was mainly interested in the Four-Head, years of study have made him an expert on the Theater Knights. In this section of the adventure, the heroes meet Alatzer, travel with him to investigate Castle Pilcrest, and subsequently follow a platoon of specters through the Mosse, after which they have a disturbing conversation with the ghost of Marshal Gerbald. This section ends in Hinterbruch, where the heroes learn of the massacre committed by the Alliance of Kor's Sign.

Journey to Pilcrest

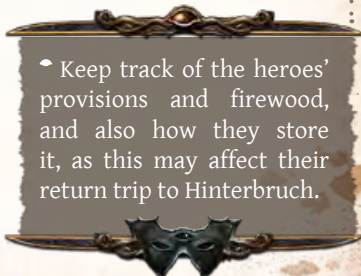
For Sulja and the heroes, the fastest and easiest path to Pilcrest is by sea. Three hours' travel from Hinterbruch, a small group of fishing huts stands on the edge of the Great Mosse. The inhabitants of this village can have their boats ready to sail in six hours. Alatzer and Jashev already have a boat prepared here.

The Blessed One of Efferd has the authority to order the fishing community to assist the heroes and her by preparing a boat, and the villagers are very happy to be paid with a few farthings or groats for their trouble. However, nobody is willing to accompany the heroes, regardless of enticement. They believe Pilcrest was forsaken by the gods, and it is not a place for humans. Sulja dismisses their fears, but does not want to lose any more time.

The ocean is calm, and the heroes can make the trip uninterrupted by making a check using *Sailing (Long Distances)*. If this check fails, a random hero falls into the water during the trip (Cold Level +1), but can be rescued. Sulja demands that the heroes pilot the boat, but takes over if they prove incompetent (*Sailing* 14, (12/12/14)). • ○


Today, the once proud fortress that stood on the rocky prominence at the southern edge of the Mosse is only a ruin. The heroes can see the remains of the High Tower from far off. Formerly an impressive eight stories tall, only 60' of the High Tower remains standing. The ruined fortress is situated on the west side of what was once Pilcrest's great harbor, which is now just a derelict quay of sandbanks overgrown with tall grass and rice.

• Keep track of the heroes' provisions and firewood, and also how they store it, as this may affect their return trip to Hinterbruch.



Pilcrest

The Pier

The heroes easily spot Alatzer's boat, drifting about 30' from the small pier (H8).  *Jassev* (37; count's serf; high forehead; bushy sideburns; spear; loves his wife; hates adventure; needs motivation; *Sailing* 7 (13/11/15), *Prepare Food* 7 (12/13/13), *Fast-Talk* 4 (10/12/11), *Willpower* 2 (10/12/11); SPI 1) waits alone in the boat. He tells the heroes what has happened so far.

- After they arrived, Alatzer began inspecting the castle, while Jassev set up camp in the old wood storage shed. (+)
- A short time later, a horde of wild goblins attacked (+/-), but Alatzer drove them away with magic. (+)
- Since then, Alatzer has been studying the cellars under the Fortress Yard (+) while Jassev guards the boat (at a safe distance, in case the goblins return). (-)
- Last night, Alatzer did not return from his investigation of the ruin, but he is a powerful spellcaster, so there is no need to worry. (+/-)
- Jassev checked up on Alatzer twice, but was ordered not to disturb him. (-)

The truth is that Jassev fled when he and Alatzer were attacked by the goblins, and hopes that Alatzer will not punish him too harshly. If the heroes do not spot his deceptions, Sulja does, and holds the cowardly serf accountable. She commands the heroes to search for Alatzer. •

Castle Pilcrest

The fortress consists of three connected, island-like sets of ruins heaped up on rocky ground, each with a courtyard, various defenses, and outbuildings. A ruined stone bridge connects the gate house with the so-called *Trade Yard* (T) and the pier. Other ruined but useable stone bridges lead to the *Work Yard* (W) and the *Fortress Yard* (F). The old ruins look magnificent at this time of the year. Snow tops the collapsed walls and blankets everything in white. Alatzer's tracks are easy to spot (*Tracking (Humanoid Tracks)* +2), since he searched almost every square inch of open ground in the fortress before he found the *Artifact Room* (see page 23). The tracks of the three goblins can be found only in the *Work Yard* and at the Gate House.

• Sulja insists on remaining at the pier to ensure that Jassev does not run away again. She keeps the tome with her. If necessary, she emphasizes her desire with an emotional outburst that is pleasing unto Efferd (*Intimidation* 9 (15/13/12)). At the GM's discretion, she and Jassev accompany the heroes.

Trade Yard

Originally, the Trade Yard contained the stables and storage sheds for trade goods, grain, and wood. The remains of the bakery and the brewery are still visible. The goblins made camp in the brewery. Since the upcoming battle against the dragon rider takes place in the Trade Yard, include some of the following details in your description to the players. Information in parentheses hints at possible uses during the battle.

- The building's walls are still mostly intact (meaning they can protect the heroes from the dragon's fiery breath).
- Except for the wood storage shed, most buildings have collapsed (the dragon can attack these hiding places from above, but must change his position often).
- The wood storage shed contains a large amount of dry wood (a flame jet through the door quickly sets the building ablaze.)
- A rusty yet robust chain hangs from a pulley on the gable of the wood storage shed. (It might be useful for trapping the dragon.)
- Some stones have fallen down from the merlons of the towers and walls. (These can be thrown onto the dragon from above.)

Work Yard


The largest courtyard in the castle once held many workshops that provided the castle's occupants with military equipment and many useful, everyday goods. The Work Yard also held a large a tavern and a large trade kontor that belonged to the Theater Knights. These ruins look more like the remains of a formerly idyllic town. Over the past 700 years, scores of treasure hunters have poked around, pulled up floor paving

Goblins in the Castle

The goblins were sent here by *Mantka Riiba*, the leader of Festum's goblins, to keep watch. The aged female leader knows that the awakening of the land heralds the return of an old danger, and that the humans will play an important role in upcoming events. She needs Alatzer to find something in the cellars of the ruins, but wants him to think that he discovered it himself.

The goblins did not actually attack Alatzer. Instead they nudged him toward the cellar in the Fortress Yard. They thought it would be easy to do this by acting wild, thus driving him there directly. However, Jassev ran in the wrong direction and Alatzer started casting spells, which forced the hapless goblins to flee into the Mosse to save their own skins. If the heroes search the brewery, they find the goblins' abandoned camp, where they quickly discover some goblin-sized burghers' clothes and 20 rations of provisions in a bag.

stones, smashed furniture, and shifted piles of rubble, and left behind a great deal of exposed but useless items. Some of this litter was left here by smugglers who sometimes use the fortress as a hideout. The exposed buildings stand unused most of the year, but the cellars below the fortress are home to many hungry crypt louses.

 If you think the battle with the dragon will prove too easy for the heroes, draw them into a fight against 1D6 crypt louses to weaken them.

Gate House and Outlying Ruins

The bridge between the castle and the village fell into ruin long ago, and only the remains of a few pillars still protrude from the water. The goblins left a rope stretched between some of the pillars to point the way into the Mosse. Heroes may reach the shore by jumping from pillar to pillar (*Body Control* (*Jumping*) -1) or by climbing hand-over-hand along the rope (*Climbing* +1). A failed check means the hero falls into the water and suffers one level of hypothermia. *Swimming* (the fastest way across) requires no check but inflicts one level of hypothermia.

The village's layout is still visible today, even though little more than foundations remain. The great harbor is overgrown with grass (actually rice, growing due to a miracle of Peraine) and filled with sand. A wide road connects it with a spacious market place that once was surrounded by large stone buildings. The remainder of the village consists of small, simple huts and houses, of which few remain standing. Grass still peeks through the snow in places, but it is very different from the brown reeds typically found in the Mosse. A check on *Plant Lore* (*Crops*) +3 confirms that it is rice, which usually does not grow this far north. With *Religions* (*Peraine*) +1 or *Myths & Legends* (*Bornland*) +3, the heroes remember the legend of the fall of Pilcrest, during which Peraine filled the harbor with sand and grasses as a punishment for Marshal Gerbald's impiety.

Fortress Yard

The most defensible part of the castle encompasses the massive western tower, the High Tower, the temple, the fountain, and the grain mill. Frescoes of important members of the Order, now mostly yellowed or destroyed, line the walls of the temple's antechamber.

Etiquette (*Heraldry & Bloodlines*) or *History* (*Bornland*)

QL 1: These frescoes portray the marshals of the Order of the Theater. Portraits of the last three Marshals—Jadvige of Hummegarben, Gunbald of Neersand, and Anshag of Goldencourt—are missing (they are now on display in Festum).

QL 2: The last and somewhat best preserved fresco shows Gerbald of Ruckenau, the last marshal of the order who resided here. It is larger than the rest.

QL 3+: Images of the first marshal of Bornland, Arvedua of Neetha, as well as Refardeon of Pilcrest, who built this fortress, are both still discernable. Alatzer found some buried vaults beneath the west tower a few days ago (see below).



Crypt Louse

Size: 2 to 3 feet tall; 6 to 8 feet long

Weight: 80 to 140 pounds

COU 10 **SGC** 6(a) **INT** 13 **CHA** 8

DEX 10 **AGI** 14 **CON** 15 **STR** 13

LP 40 **AE - KP - INI** 6+1D6

DE 7 **SPI** -4 **TOU** 0 **MOV** 4

Mandibles: AT 10 DP 1D6+4 RE short

PRO/ENC 4/0

Actions: 1

Advantages/Disadvantages: Darksight II

Special Abilities: none

Skills: *Body Control* 4, *Climbing* 10, *Feat of Strength* 5, *Intimidation* 6, *Perception* 2, *Self-Control* 10, *Stealth* 14, *Swimming* 7, *Willpower* 13

Numbers: 1D6

Size Category: medium

Type: Animal, non-humanoid

Loot: 25 rations innards (inedible), chitin plates (10 silverthalers)

Combat Behavior: Crypt louses lurk in their lair or in dark corners, waiting to ambush their prey.

Escape: Loss of 75% LP

Pain +1 with: 30 LP, 20 LP, 10 LP, and 5 LP or less

Animal Lore (Monsters or Wild Animals)

- ◆ **QL 1:** A crypt louse has bad eyesight and usually waits to attack until targets approach within a dozen yards.
- ◆ **QL 2:** Crypt lice sense strong vibrations up to 50 yards away and are drawn to them.
- ◆ **QL 3:** One can distract a crypt louse with food such as carrion. While feeding, they care little for what happens around them.

The Vaults Beneath the Temple

The fortress is built on solid rock, into which the goblin slaves of the Theater Knights excavated numerous cellars. Beneath the temple, stairs lead to a dank, 30' by 30' vault. Strong vines grow on the pillars that support the ceiling. A *Plant Lore* +1 check shows that the vines are unusually large; with QL 2 the heroes realize that this version of blackthorn bush shouldn't grow here at all. A magical analysis reveals nothing.

Near the south wall of the cellar, between two pillars, the heroes find an 18' deep hole in the ground. It appears to have been opened by the growth of thick vines over many years. The heroes see light and hear a quiet mumbling coming from the bottom of the hole. A *Climbing* +1 check is sufficient to climb down.

The Fresco Room

The bottom of the hole opens onto a 6' by 15' room. A passage extends to the west and a heavy steel door sits in the east wall. The door is blocked by rubble on its opposite side. Examining the ceiling above the steel door with *Earthencraft* (*Stonemason*) +1 confirms that some floor tiles in the cellar

Pilcrest's Downfall and Gerbald's End

"Gerbald of Ruckenau was the first marshal who did not have to battle goblins during his reign. Instead, he committed himself to living well and gathering wealth. One day, he sent a long-distance trader across the ocean in search of the most valuable item he could find. After witnessing a famine, the trader brought Gerbald a shipload of rice, which to him had seemed the most precious thing in the world. In his rage, Gerbald dumped the rice into the harbor and hanged the trader. This angered Lady Peraine, who made the rice grow so fast that within a short time, no ships could enter the harbor. Fearing for his life, Gerbald ordered his most precious treasures loaded onto horses, and he led them into the Great Mosse, where all were drowned. Their spirits have haunted the place ever since. If you chance upon his ghost, you may claim an object from Gerbald's treasure, but after seven years and seven months, you join the marshal's platoon and wander the Mosse forever."

— *The Legend of the Greedy Marshal*, as told in Festenland

room above were installed long after the rest of that room's floor. Apparently, stairs used to lead from that room above to this door. The longer walls of the room are painted with six large frescoes. Four of them are preserved well enough to recognize the motif. Learning the following information requires a successful check with one of the following skills [History (Bornland), Religion (Rondra or Kor), Warfare, or Myths & Legends (Bornland)] and obtaining the respective QL.

- A battle between goblins and knights, with lightning from the sky striking the swords of the knights, a city in the background. (QL 1/1/3/2: The Sword Miracle of Lionsford)
- Victorious knights and dead goblins at the base of a red cliff, upon which stands an imposing manticore. (QL 2/1/4/2: Kor's Manifestation at Blood Cliff, in Kor's Forest)
- Many goblins stand beneath a giant tree, besieged by knights. (QL 3/2/4/3: The Battle for Wjassuula, where Kunga Suula's "throne," a mighty oak tree, once stood)
- A large bowl or timbal (a kettledrum-like instrument) surrounded by dancing goblins. A burning mountain, a tidal wave, and a number of tornadoes stand nearby. (QL 3/3/4/2: The Goblin Timbal, a powerful magical war drum once owned by Kunga Suula)

All of the frescoes include images of lion-headed creatures moving among the knights; some look similar to manticores, some look like Rondra's Arch Valkyrie, Mythrael, and some look like zants.

The Artifact Room

The second room measures 15' by 15' and its walls are lined with stone shelves. A fallen statue, similar to the Four-Head of Hinterbruch, but with only two faces, lies in the center of the room. Each arm holds what appears to be a spear or staff. The shelves hold dozens of fragile scrolls of parchment, stone

tablets covered in writing, and trophies from the days of the Theater Knights, as follows.

- Ancient, painted ram's horns and stag antlers
- A stuffed and painted woolly rhino's head
- A hunting horn made from a large boar tusk
- A hatchet made from the tooth of a purple worm, and two spears made from the bones of trolls
- Stone tablets covered in text that is incomplete and partly encrypted. The readable sections praise Rondra, Kor, and Famerlor
- Fragile parchments (diary entries, pages from war journals, old scouting reports, and treatises on the analysis of goblin magic; Alatzer would need months to analyze it all).

Most of these artifacts were once enchanted by goblins, but the magic has faded over the centuries. If desired, invent some minor magical effects that are difficult to research and require a great amount of luck to activate.

Alatzer has made an exceptional find here and utters sounds of excitement. He cannot wait to examine and sort the scrolls, and plans to memorize the ones that are most fragile. The magical analysis cost him all his AE. He hurt his foot while trying to climb out and decided to spend the night in the room. That his find bears no relation to Dasha's story is of little interest to him.



Alatzer greets the heroes when they arrive. He acts surprised, but friendly, and tries to put off lengthy discussions until later. He is glad that the heroes can help carry out his finds, and wants to limp back to the harbor to greet Sulja.

Count Thezmar Alatzer of Hinterbruch, Mage

Brief Description: 87; minor noble; skillful trader; brilliant clairvoyance mage; wants to restore his scientific reputation; small, but stout; bright eyes; strong and pleasant voice; wears excellent fur-lined clothes; has high-quality equipment and several days' worth of supplies.



Motivation: Wants to save his scientific reputation after his harsh defeat, and seeks some spectacular research successes; he finds his recent studies far more interesting than the Blue Tome.

Agenda: Restore his scientific reputation; make Olko his intellectual heir.

Function: Serve as a guide through the Great Mosse, and also as a source of information about goblins and Theater Knights.

Background: Educated in Punin; inherited a successful tavern and a count's title (purchased by his grandfather); made a small fortune in the amber trade; has studied Festenland magical phenomena (notably the Four-Head of Hinterbruch, the Dream Grove of Jekdisit, and goblin magic in general) for decades. His unexpected research findings renewed his interest in the Four-Head. Alatzer's official duties as a count and innkeeper have long been managed by others. His son, who has taken up the family's trading business, manages the count's office in Festum. His housekeeper Tsarina runs his tavern.

Animosities: Smug nobles, thoughtless action, vagabonds.

Portrayal Tips: Speak with forethought and prudence, listen attentively and patiently, ponder before making decisions. If the conversation turns to your recent failure, act embarrassed, make some self-abasing comments, and change the subject.

Fate: Alatzer lives to a surprisingly old age and inspires a much-respected work about animistic arcane energy storage matrices.

Stats: *Body Control* 3 (10/10/10), *Climbing* 2 (12/10/10), *Empathy* 8 (17/14/15), *Orienteering* 7 (17/14/14), *Survival* 6 (12/10/10), *Willpower* 7 (12/14/15)

Special: If the heroes can somehow give him new AE, Alatzer might call an elemental spirit (*Elemental Servant* 7 (12/15/10)). His other spells are useful only for analysis and testing his theories.

Dragon!

As soon as the heroes return from the castle's cellar, they hear a loud roar and see smoke rising from the direction of the quay. If they hurry back, they find both their boats on fire, and hovering above the wreckage, an impressive pearl dragon with a rider wearing black armor. The dragon is

called Roedvark, and his rider is named Gerwulf of the Shield. Anshag sent them both to Pilcrest to seize the tome.

Gerwulf focuses on capturing the Blue Tome, which he thinks is held by Sulja. If he cannot get to her, he tries to take a hostage to get the tome. If necessary, he might even try a direct attack. If he fails for whatever reason, such as if everybody retreats down into the cellar, he flies away and tries again later. • ○

The outcome of this encounter depends on the heroes' actions since they arrived at Pilcrest, as follows.

- If they posted a guard earlier, the guard spots the dragon's approach sooner, but the attack against the boats still succeeds.
- If Sulja stayed behind with the boats, Gerwulf killed both her and Jassev and obtained the tome.
- If Sulja accompanied the heroes, Gerwulf takes Jassev hostage and demands the tome. Sulja gives it to Gerwulf to save Jassev, and then asks the heroes to recover it (for a reward of 100 batz).
- If the heroes enter combat with Gerwulf and do not look after Sulja, she takes cover in an unfortunate position, is seized by the dragon, and abducted. The heroes later find her dead body in the Mosse. The tome is missing.
- In each case, the dragon rider taunts the heroes with calls like "You fools! The secrets you search for in old dungeons were with you all along." - "The tome is mine!" - "I am the Thundering Rider of Heaven!" and "Kneel, worms!" A check with *Empathy* (*Discern Motivation*) +3 reveals that he is very self-assured and susceptible to provocation.

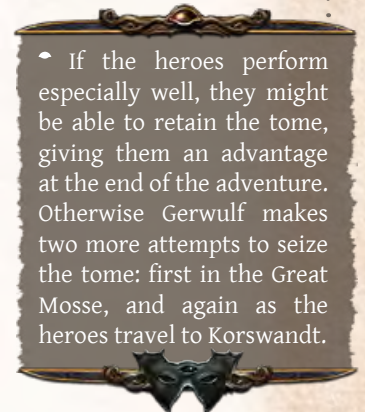
• If Sulja stays behind with Jassev and the tome at the quay, arrange a shocking scene instead of a fight. The heroes might arrive in time to see the dragon bite Sulja's head off and then fly away, its rider laughing cruelly while brandishing the Blue Tome.

Alternatively, the heroes could return to find only burned boats, Jassev's headless body, and Sulja missing along with the tome. If this is the case, they meet the dragon rider again at the conclusion of the adventure.

To Arms!

If combat occurs, use the following information:

- Dragon and rider start the combat about 10 yards from the heroes.
- Gerwulf stays at a distance and attacks first with the dragon's flame breath, and later with aimed lance attacks.



• If the heroes perform especially well, they might be able to retain the tome, giving them an advantage at the end of the adventure. Otherwise Gerwulf makes two more attempts to seize the tome: first in the Great Mosse, and again as the heroes travel to Korswandt.

- If spellcasters or marksmen prove capable of making strong, ranged attacks, Gerwulf attempts to enter close combat.
- The walls of the old, roofless buildings in the fortress provide protection from the flame breath, at least until the dragon flies directly above them.
- The wood storage shed offers the best protection, as its roof is still intact. But the wood in the shed catches fire quickly (5-6 on 1D6 when the flame blast shoots through a door or window).
- The heroes may throw large stones from the merlons (RC check using *Thrown Weapons* +2; 3D6+4 DP). The dragon may attempt to *dodge* the rocks.
- Roedvark can be bound with the rusty chain hanging from the gable of the wood storage shed, or possibly with a rope. To do so, the heroes must make a *Ropes (Knots)* check and then a RC check using *Thrown Weapons* -2. Each check requires 1 action. The dragon may try to *dodge* the chain/rope. As long as the rope or chain holds, Roedvark is *cramped* (see *Core Rules*, page 35), cannot fly, and his action radius is restricted. To hold the chain, the heroes must make a cumulative competitive check using *Feat of Strength (Dragging and Pulling)* +2 against Roedvark (no bonus) each CR. If secured to a wall, the rope or chain gets an automatic 4 QL. Dragon and rider may, of course, try to destroy the chain or rope (structure points for chain/rope: 10/5).

🛡️ Gerwulf of the Shield

Gerwulf, a well-trained warrior and dragon rider from the Weal Mountains, has problems controlling his temper. He introduced the teachings of Graqualos to the Bornian Alliance of Kor's Sign, and he knows some of Graqualos' ceremonies (see page 54). He has no code of honor, unlike the Bornian members of the Alliance of Kor's Sign, and fights with any means available. He wears a red plume on his helmet, and his black plate armor bears the symbol of the Nine-Fingered Claw, though it is obscured beneath his helmet's ventail.

Roedvark

Roedvark is a pearl dragon with reddish scales. He can communicate with his rider and even offer simple advice, but he mainly serves as an extremely dangerous mount. Fighting from dragonback uses the rules for mounted combat (see *Core Rules*, page 239). Also, Gerwulf can direct Roedvark to attack a specific target with the commands *Flame Jet*, *Stomp*, and *Bite*.

• Graqualos looks like a winged lion, and the Alliance of Kor's Sign mistakenly believes him to be an Alveranian of Kor. He is actually a servant of the Nameless God.



Gerwulf of the Shield

COU 17 SGC 10 INT 13 CHA 11

DEX 10 AGI 17 CON 13 STR 14

LP 37 AE - KP 32 INI 16+1D6

SPI 2 TOU 1 DO 8 MOV 7

Unarmed: AT 12 PA 7 DP 1D6 RE short

Lance (from the dragon's back): AT 14 PA - DP 2D6+6

Mace: AT 16 PA 7 DP 1D6+4 RE medium

Short Bow: RC 13 RT 1 DP 1D6+4 RA 1/10/100

PRO/ENC 6/1 (plate armor) (includes armor modifiers)

Advantages/Disadvantages: Increased Life Points III / Personality Flaw (Vanity, Short Temper)

Special Abilities: Blood Pledge, Graqualos' Mediation (see page 55), Grapple, Inured to Encumbrance II, Feint III, Mounted Combat, Mounted Archer, Precise Shot I, Sweep II, Tilt

Skills: *Body Control* 7, *Empathy* 3, *Feat of Strength* 4, *Flying* 11, *Intimidation* 7, *Perception* 6, *Riding* 10, *Self-Control* 6, *Swimming* 6, *Willpower* 4

Ceremonies: *Receive Kor's Sign* 10 (see page 54)

Combat Behavior: He first attacks from the air, targeting mages and archers. He enters melee combat only under the conditions mentioned previously, or if he feels he has the advantage.

Escape: If the tome proves difficult to obtain, he attacks again later when conditions are more favorable.

Pain +1 with: 23 LP, 16 LP, 8 LP, and 5 LP or less.



Pearl Dragon

Size: Size 21' long (without tail), 33' long (with tail); 6' at the shoulder; wingspan 30'

Weight: 4,400 to 5,200 pounds

COU 17 SGC 9 INT 12 CHA 12

DEX 9 AGI 16 CON 24 STR 26

LP 200 AE 20 KP - INI 17+1D6

DE 8 SPI -3 TOU 9 MOV 6/8/20 (Ground/Diving/Flying)

Bite: AT 12 DP 2D6+6 RE long

Claws*: AT 14 DP 1D6+6 RE long

Tail: AT 13 DP 1D6+4 RE long

Stomp: AT 10 DP 2D6+8 RE short

Flame Breath:** RC 12 RT 2 DP 2D6 RA 10/15/20

PRO/ENC 5/0

Actions: 2 (at most 1 x Bite, at most 1 x Stomp)

Special Abilities: Feint I (Bite, Claws), Flying Attack (Bite, Claws), Forceful Blows I-II (Bite, Claws, Tail), Powerful Blows (Tail), Shield-Splitter (Bite, Claws, Tail), Stomp (Stomp) (ABE page 8), Tail Swipe (Tail) (ABE page 8)

Skills: *Body Control* 8, *Feat of Strength* 11, *Flying* 10, *Intimidation* 10, *Perception* 12, *Self-Control* 11, *Stealth* 3, *Willpower* 7

Spells: *Gaze into the Mind* 10, *Motoricus* 12, *Odem* 10

Numbers: 1

Size Category: large

Type: Dragon, non-humanoid

Loot: 1,250 rations (inedible), dragon scales (500 silverthalers), trophy (teeth, 200 silverthalers; dragon tears, 50 silverthalers; dragon saliva, 25 silverthalers; dragon blood, 150 silverthalers; carbuncle, 2,000 silverthalers)

Combat Behavior: Pearl dragons prefer to attack from the air and strike at their prey from above. If trained

to follow a rider's commands, they do as ordered.

Escape: Pearl dragons do not flee.

Pain +1 with: 150 LP, 100 LP, 50 LP, and 5 LP or lower

Animal Lore (Monsters) or Magical Lore (Magical Creatures)

◆ **QL 1:** Pearl dragons love water and are excellent swimmers.

◆ **QL 2:** It is said that pearl dragons can be trained as flying mounts and are extremely loyal to their riders.

◆ **QL 3:** Even though they are not very smart, they use telepathy to communicate and can cast some simple spells.

Special Rules

*) *Claw Attack:* Can only be used while flying.

**) *Fire Breath:* Pearl dragons can use their fire breath up to seven times per day. Flammable targets can catch fire. Clothes catch fire on a 1-2 on 1D6, and the victim suffers the state *burning*. The fire breath hits at most two targets per attack, and both targets must be within 2 yards of each other.

Immunity to Fire: Pearl dragons are immune to heat and flame. They die if cast into a lake of lava, but something like an *Ignifaxius* spell cannot harm them.

Weak Spot: Some parts of a pearl dragon's body have less PRO. Base of the neck = PRO 2; neck = PRO 3; belly = PRO 4; wings = PRO 2. For more about targeting specific areas, see the Level I Focus Rules for Hit Zones in the *Aventuria Compendium*. If not using the optional rules for Hit Zones, attacks targeting these zones suffer a penalty of 4.

Pain +1 with: 150 LP, 100 LP, 50 LP, and 5 LP or less.



Through the Great Mosse

The boats are destroyed, so the heroes and Alatzter must return on foot through the Mosse. If the heroes left their equipment on the boat, it, too, was burned or lost.

Some heroes might try to avoid walking back through the Mosse. Heroes that can fly may encounter a blizzard. Summoning, especially of demons, suffers a heavy penalty due to the proximity to a powerful miracle of Peraine, and the cold is just as troublesome to spellcasters and Blessed Ones as it is to heroes trying to save the boats. Even with these obstacles, it's possible that a single hero might quickly reach Hinterbruch. If so, it is important that they do not hinder Anshag's plan to kidnap Olko and steal the stone ram's horn.

Traversing the marsh in winter is a bit easier than during summer, as the marshy ground is frozen over. However, the gray weather, the desolate expanse of brown reeds, the occasional weeping willow, the creeping cold, the fog, and the eerie silence make the trip rather unpleasant. Heroes with corresponding fears might suffer penalties.

From Pilcrest to Hinterbruch

The journey home on foot takes two days. There is almost no food to be found in the Mosse in winter. Herons and storks have left the area. Hunting turns up only rats, a few newts, and some blindworms. A few starving swampreeks roam

the area, but they do not provide edible meat. The rules for traveling in winter (see page 10) apply.

Departure

A *Survival* +1 check confirms that there is no usable firewood in the Mosse. The heroes can bring along wood from the wood shed (if any survived). Remains of old furniture scrounged

from the fortress could be used as kindling (two pounds of wood provides an hour of fire).

Near the fortress stands the abandoned ruin of the village of Pilcrest, former home of craftsmen and serfs. Observant heroes might notice the rice growing between the foundations, which may serve as a reminder of the legend of Gerbald's demise when the heroes later meet with Gerbald's ghost (see page 30).

The Old Causeway

Alatzter, who knows the area, finds his way using the remains of the old causeway that runs from Hinterbruch to Pilcrest. Considering its former size—trade caravans and companies of knights used the road in the old days—there is surprisingly little left of it. The old embankments are overgrown with brown reeds and largely lost to sight. Only a few cobblestones give evidence that a road once ran through here (they also prove that Alatzter has a good sense of direction).

Goblin Tracks

The goblins that chased Alatzter through the ruins—**Urmeg**, **Seenai**, and **Gnupp** (about 20; overwhelmed; wear ragged fur cloaks; smell slightly of urine; *Willpower* 2 (10/12/11), *SPI* 0)—are tanner's apprentices from Festum with few wilderness skills. Skilled trackers might catch them, and they surrender at once if the heroes draw their weapons.

If questioned (competitive check, *Intimidation* vs. *Willpower*), the goblins provide the following information.

Competitive check, *Intimidation* vs. *Willpower*

QL 1: They live in Festum. A smuggler brought them to Pilcrest a few weeks ago. When the mage appeared and started casting spells, they hid in the Pilcrest village ruins. When they saw the dragon, they fled into the Mosse.



QL 2: They were told to wait for an old human without armor, whom they were supposed to lure to the place where the floor tiles were broken. They hid from everyone else.

QL 3+: They were sent here by Mantka Riiba. The goblins just want to return to their camp. A smuggler is supposed to bring their replacements in a week's time and take them back home to their families in Festum. The heroes are free to decide whether to let them go.

Marsh Pits in Winter

Because of the cold, travelers do not sink into the marsh easily, but they still might break through a hidden thawed patch. Each person traveling through the Mosse should make a *Survival* check at least once per day. On a failure, that person sinks knee deep into the marsh. Victims can pull themselves to safety with a *Body Control (Balance)* +1 check. If this fails, their companions must make a cumulative check (*Feat of Strength (Dragging & Pulling)* +3, 1 CR, any number of attempts) to drag them from the muck. If this requires more than three attempts, the victim's shoes and trousers get soaked through. If dry replacement clothing is not available, the victim suffers +1 Cold Level for the rest of the journey.

A Night in the Marsh

Due to the length of the trip, the heroes must spend at least one night in the marsh. If they have no firewood, reduce their totals for regeneration phases by 2. It's silent, wet, and cold. Will-o'-the-wisps are rare at this time of year, and swampcreeks do not hunt in the dark. Still, the night provides some excitement in the form of the legendary ghost platoon of Gerbald of Ruckenau.

The Ghost Platoon

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

About a mile away, you see a pale hint of light above the reeds. The sallow light draws closer, and you hear whispers and hollow rattling. The glow resolves itself into a marching column of people and horse-drawn vehicles. Pale, translucent soldiers escort four carts, upon which ride four figures wearing hoods and armor. The forward-most is a dignitary wearing splendid plate armor and a tabard printed with a lion rampant. The others' coats of arms show an ilm leaf, a three-tailed fish, and crossed spears, respectively. The horse carts are packed with chests and boxes, jewel-encrusted weapons, magnificent paintings, and gilded furniture. Hunched figures in meager clothes trail the procession, whimpering sadly. The column moves past your camp at a distance of about 60 feet, surrounded by a blueish-white shimmer.

The ghost platoon is incorporeal. The four knights are *bound souls* who have not been allowed to leave the Third Sphere. They are Marshal Gerbald and his three adjutants: *Istvan of Ilmenstone*, *Bogumil of Berlinghan*, and *Turonia of Beilunk* (see *The Writers* on page 64). The figures in plain dress are a mix of the marshal's serfs and more recent victims who died while searching for his treasures. Like the soldiers, they are mere shadows, bound souls, not true ghosts.

A check on *Etiquette (Heraldry & Family Trees)* +1 reveals the knights' origin.

Etiquette (Heraldry & Family Trees) +1

QL 1: The leader wears the coat of arms of the family of Ruckenau. The ilm leaf represents House Ilmenstone.

QL 2+: The three-tailed fish represents the Horasian house of Berlinghan. The spears are not a family crest, meaning that this coat of arms was probably awarded for special services.

Regardless of how the heroes react to the situation, Alatzer insists on speaking with Gerbald in the hopes of receiving important historical information first-hand.

Due to the darkness, reaching the column without falling into the marsh and getting dirty requires checks on *Survival* -1 and *Body Control (Balance)* -1. Each failure incurs a penalty of 1 to the hero's *Etiquette* checks for the remainder of the journey.

When the heroes reach the platoon, Gerbald demands a proper introduction (*Etiquette (Manners)* +1). If they fail, Ilmenstone commands six soldier ghosts to attack the heroes. Gerbald halts the attack after 2 CR with a half-hearted apology. If the heroes continue fighting, or if they start the fight themselves, Gerbald's three adjutants (for stats, see *Knights of the Alliance*, on page 60) join the fight.

Soldier Ghost (Bound Soul)

COU 13 SGC 9 INT 12 CHA 10

DEX 10 AGI 14 CON 12 STR 13

LP 15 AP 30 KP - INI 14+1D6

DO 12 SPI 3 TOU 7 MOV 10

Unarmed: AT 11 PA 6 DP 1D3 RE short

PRO/ENC 0/0

Actions: 1

Special Abilities: Garethi II

Skills: *Body Control* 7, *Intimidation* 10, *Perception* 5, *Willpower* 1

Spells: *Horriphobus* 12

Size Category: medium

Type: ghost, humanoid

Summoning Difficulty: 0

Loot: none

Combat Behavior: Fights only when ordered by Gerbald; starts with *Horriphobus* and then enters close combat.

Escape: Only when commanded by Gerbald.

Magical Lore (Magical Creatures)

◆ QL 1: Bound souls are the spirits of the dead that are trapped in some form of servitude. They long for the peace of nonexistence.

◆ QL 2: These bound souls are tied to Gerbald's spirit.

◆ QL 3: These bound souls may be freed by freeing Gerbald.

Special Rules

(see following page)

Lessons in the Marsh

Alatzer, who accompanies the heroes, is an expert on the Theater Knights, the Great Mosse, the castle and village of Pilcrest, and the Four-Head of Hinterbruch, and as such can provide information about the history and magical phenomena of Bornland. At the very least, he tells the heroes the legend of Gerbald. Alatzer knows and can relate the following statements, and although he believes them to be facts, not all of them are true (for more information about the statues, see page 39).

Alatzer's Departure

- “The Aunt of the Jantareff family, Masha or something like that, mentioned Alhanian glyphs that some smugglers found in Pilcrest. I should have asked more questions.”
- “She told me about magical symbols of concealment that are supposed to make secret rooms invisible. I don't know anything about that. I found a room, not a symbol.”
- “I also spoke with their zibilja, but only about poems.”

Anshag of Rodebrannt-Ask

- “He offered me much gold for the stone ram's horn. When I refused, he had trouble hiding his rage.”
- “His request was indeed strange, but the Church of Rondra researches the history of the land, so I do not think this is suspicious.”
- “I kept the stone ram's horn because it is a valuable object of research.”

Pilcrest

- “I came here before, about ten years ago. I am lucky that the sealed cellar waited until now to collapse.”
- “The breakdown of the causeway to Hinterbruch, which occurred shortly after the face of the Four-Head was hewn off, was instrumental in the downfall of Pilcrest. This happened during the rule of Marshal Gerbald of Ruckenau, between 247 and 263 FB. Gerbald's successor, Jadvige of Hummegarben, moved the Order's headquarters to Festum as a result.”
- “Gerbald's ghost does indeed haunt the Mosse. Years ago, I tried to analyze traces of his arcane signature, but the results were inconclusive.”

Goblins

- “Kunga Suula's empire held out against the Theater Knights for many years. It would be incorrect to compare this empire to the organization of the Suulak tribes of today.”
- “The war chiefs of the goblins probably held more influence back then, as they resisted the Theater Knights for many decades.”
- “The magic of the Suulak is based on the invocation of spirits, among them the so-called Wjassus Suulukai, which is properly translated as goblin ghosts, but today's Suulak do not believe in ghosts or ancestor spirits. Strange, isn't it?”

The Four-Head of Hinterbruch

- “It depicts a goblin hero, but no goblin alive today knows who it is.”
- “It stores energy, and it is slowly recharged by the power of Sumu. Other storage devices, with similar arcane structures, can be found in various places.”

- “I am sure that the faces of the idol allowed the goblins to walk secret magical paths through the wilderness. The forests and brambles were probably much denser back then than they are today.”
- “The Theater Knights learned this secret. They positioned the statue here to create protected roads in four directions, with an emphasis on the road to Pilcrest. Their rough handling of the statue has damaged much of its arcane structure, though, making analysis difficult.”
- “Hewing the face that looked at Pilcrest damaged the elemental power governing that direction, and the result was elemental confusion. This may be one reason why rice plants, which were probably washed ashore from a shipwreck and carried here by birds, now grow there in profusion. Whether Peraine had anything to do with it, I couldn't say.”
- “I believe a goblin sorceress removed the face as revenge against the Theater Knights. This fits the things I learned from my preliminary analysis of the Two-Head statue in Pilcrest.”
- “The Four-Head was originally created only as an energy source for the stone ram's horn. The path spell was cast on the Four-Head decades after its creation, probably to disguise its true purpose.”

The Stone Ram's Horn

- “The arcane structure of the stone horn hints that a powerful creature is sealed within it. Analysis points to a bound soul, but one that is much more powerful than a common ghost.”
- “The spell has aspects of Anti-Magic, Clairvoyance, Sphere, and Temporal properties. Its arcane structure is woven so perfectly that it must have been created by a truly powerful spellcaster, probably Kunga Suula herself. But before I can publish that, I must decipher its structure.”
- “The stone horn started to bleed a few years ago. I locked it away to keep people from worrying.”
- “The blood indicates that power is once again building up in the horn—its shifting arcane emanations resemble others I have recorded that are currently happening all across Bornland. This ‘awakening’ actually renders the arcane structure of the horn easier to study.”
- “The so-called ram's horn is actually a cornucopia that represents fertility. This would seem to point to certain conclusions about the creature bound inside—however, to goblins, procreation is a purely religious act. They see no connection between sex and conception. The cornucopia symbol, as it applies here, does not have any meaning in their culture.”

Wippwinger's Review

- “I was disappointed that Wippwinger had so little will to look beyond the methods and strictures of the guild.”
- “But he will see. The Two-Head I discovered in a cellar in Pilcrest seems to prove my theory about the goblins' magical pathways. I will be vindicated once I prove the existence of an arcane connection.”

On the Nature of Ghosts

Ghosts are the restless spirits of the dead, and as such do not have bodies of their own. They sometimes possess the bodies of the living, but killing or destroying a host body does not also destroy the ghost. The following general rules apply to ghosts.

- Ghosts suffer the conditions *Confusion*, *Fear*, and *Pain* only. ◉
- Ghosts do NOT suffer the condition *Pain* due to low LP (see *Core Rules*, page 33).
- Ghosts are incorporeal and can walk through solid matter, float in the air, or sink into the ground, but some do not do so, for reasons of habit.
- “Slain” ghosts do not leave behind physical remains of any kind.
- Attacks with mundane weapons cause no damage.
- Attacks with blessed weapons of gods of death (such as Boron) cause normal damage.
- Attacks with magical weapons or weapons blessed by other gods, as well as spells and liturgical chants, do half damage. Roll damage as usual, halve the result, and *then* apply PRO, if any.
- Ghosts are immune to spells with the properties Healing, Illusion, Telekinesis, and Transformation.
- Ghosts are immune to poisons and diseases.
- Ghosts normally cannot benefit from liturgical chants, although there are exceptions.
- Ghosts perceive their surroundings with magical senses and do not need light or sensory organs such as eyes to see. Their senses have a range of about 200 yards.
- Ghosts regain LP with regeneration phases, even though they do not actually need to sleep.

Audience with a Ghost

Gerbald’s Agenda: After a few hundred years of aimless wandering, Gerbald realized that he would only find rest if he repented of his crimes against the Twelve. Since then, he has tried to convince the living people he meets in the Mosse to give his remains a burial pleasing unto Boron. At an appropriate time, he asks the heroes to follow him to the place where he drowned. He wants someone to dive down, retrieve his skull, and bury him in the Mosse with an appropriate prayer.

• For example, ghosts can suffer *Fear* or *Pain* when confronted with certain holy objects. Mental anguish or certain spells and liturgical chants can also cause these conditions. Even though ghosts can sometimes feel pain, they have no physical body and do not fear death, as they are already dead.

As a reward, he offers information and gold from the marsh. If, after repeated offers, the heroes refuse, he wanders off and disappears at dawn.

Portrayal Tips: At this point, Gerbald answers questions vaguely, and gives real information only as a reward for doing what he asks. His long existence as a ghost has unhinged his mind; he acts erratically, tends to repeat formal, empty phrases, and often drifts into other topics or launches on long rants. Show this by giving the following replies to questions.

- His mission/request: “*Follow me to my watery grave, retrieve my fleshless skull, and bury it under the sign of the Twelve in the proper fashion. This will give me peace.*”
- I have a question...: “*You’re a smart man/woman. Simply ask.*”
- When urged to reveal information: “*Help me, and I will help you.*”
- If asked for gold: “*What I carried with me shall be yours.*”



- When presented with counter-arguments: *"Your wit is impressive, but I have already considered that."*
- About the Theater Knights: *"We are Rondra's most powerful Order. Nobody can defeat us."*
- About Pilcrest: *"Defeated by sand and grain. But the land is ours, and a new fortress will proclaim our power."*
- About his burial: *"Bury me in the Mosse, where my country let me die."*
- About the Blue Tome: *"A book about the Theater Knights? Does it mention me?"*

The heroes' conversation with Gerbald is sometimes interrupted by his adjutants. They speak only in monotonous, repeated sentences, as follows.

Istvan of Ilmenstone embodies the decadence and ruthless greed that the legends attribute to Gerbald.

- About the mission: *"Shall we really seek the help of these fools, lord? They do not know how to bury a marshal with honors."*
- When asked for gold: *"The gold is yours, lord. Do not waste it to gain the blessing of gods who cursed your palace."*
- About the burial: *"The marshal deserves a funeral with military honors and a worthy mausoleum. Not a grave in the mud. Not pious babbling from curs."*

Bogumil of Berlinghan became Gerbald's adjutant shortly before his death and embodies the rigid ideals of the Theater Knights. He sought glory and honor in a time when the most important battles had already been fought.

- About the Theater Knights: *"Whosoever is brave has nothing to fear. We will protect Bornian soil forever."*

These interruptions are intended to give the heroes clues about how to properly bury Gerbald's skull, namely, in a place where Peraine's rice is growing.

- About the burial: *"Let us go to Pilcrest. What grows there proves that good ground makes a soft bed."*

- When asked for gold/information: *"Do not expect gold or secrets. Honor is the true reward for service to the Order."*

Turonia of Beilunk was formerly a mage of the Academy of Sword and Staff. Now she mainly complains about the adversities of her existence. She is one of the authors of the Blue Tome.

- About the mission: *"Anything that frees me from this barren, rotting desolation is fine by me. No Netherhell can be worse than eternal death in the Great Mosse."*
- About Pilcrest: *"The gods? The land? Peraine, even? No matter what power cursed Pilcrest, it will not change the course of history."*
- About the Blue Tome: *"Show it to me!"— "Ah, this brings back memories. A warm room...a full stomach...a good book. Keep it well; you might learn much."*

Gerbald's Skull

If the heroes agree to Gerbald's request, the marshal asks them to join his eerie parade. The trail leads past many whimpering and whispering ghosts to a pool covered in a very thin layer of ice, somewhere at the bottom of which lies Gerbald's skull.

The heroes must dive into the cold water and grope in darkness through the mud until they find something. Each attempt requires a *Swimming (Diving)* check and inflicts a level of *hypothermia* (see *Core Rules*, page 346). For each QL, roll once on the following chart and receive the indicated item. With QL 3+, the hero finds either the most precious item on the list, or the skull (hero's choice).

1D6	Item Found
1	Worthless metal item
2	Worthless leather item
3	A precious item (cup, amulet, ring) worth 1D20+10 batz
4	Gerbald's splendid stag catcher (24" long hunting dagger), 100 batz (duplicate rolls default to result #3)
5	Fragments of human bone, well preserved by the marsh
6	Gerbald's skull

If the heroes give up the search, Gerbald becomes so angry that he orders his ghosts to attack and fight to the death. The same thing results if the heroes only take Gerbald's skull with them...

The Marshal's Grave

The best place to bury Gerbald's skull would be any patch of rice near Pilcrest, as these rice plants are the symbol of Peraine's punishment. Gerbald's salvation also requires a simple prayer to Boron, but the ghosts cannot reveal either of these facts. Gerbald tells the heroes whether a particular place or prayer is right or wrong, but won't explain why.

Once his skull is buried properly, the ghostly company disappears. Gerbald lingers for a short while and keeps his promise to give the heroes some information. If the heroes build him a real tomb, or someone utters a prayer for him in the name of Peraine, Gerbald gives them either his sword or mace, depending on which weapon the hero is more skilled with.

To spare the heroes a long trip back to Pilcrest, mention patches of rice growing throughout the Mosse. Those patches mark suitable grave sites.

Talking with Ghosts

As a reward for loyal service, Gerbald can give the following information. His knowledge is fragmentary and his voice becomes harder to understand after the burial, but he now appears relaxed and friendlier.

Theater Knights

- “My predecessors boast of winning great battles, but it was I who defeated the goblins.”
- “The worst are restless knights and lazy servants. But I, too, am just a man.”
- “Famerlor and Kor also stand by Rondra’s side. Why aren’t Rondra’s servants allowed to worship them?”
- “Honorless mercenaries who live like wolves must be stopped!”

Pilcrest

- “My treasures left Pilcrest with the last boats. The remaining chambers are walled in and sealed. We took only the most precious items with us in our carts.”
- “Why was the harbor filled with sand? Why did the causeway break? Incompetent architects or lazy serfs, that’s why. Or perhaps Jadvige is behind it all. Well, that thing with the rice probably had something to do with it.”
- “Some frescoes show great battles of the Theater Knights: Lionsford, Korswandt, Wjassuula. One shows the divine service for the Lady of the Storms and her servants. And one depicts the Goblin Timbal.”

- “The Goblin Timbal was a powerful weapon we obtained in Wjassuula. It brought victory. I ordered it hidden in the darkest vaults of the castle. Where, exactly? Ah, I can’t remember.”

Four-Head

- “That thing in Hinterbruch? It’s a goblin statue, captured at the Battle of Korswandt and erected as a sign of victory. Not very tasteful.”
- “Turonia occasionally had servants bring the ram’s horn to Pilcrest, though I do not know why.”

Goblins

- “Honorless creatures. Devious sorceresses and powerful war chieftains who draw their power from pig idols.”
- “We drove them to the Iron Edge, where they began to fight each other. Brilliant, wasn’t it?”
- “Goblin magic is powerful. Our scholars brought some useful knowledge home from Wjassuula.”
- “I have killed goblins myself! Why are we even discussing them?”

The Blue Tome

- “It was written by my adjutant, Turonia... Well, not all of it, but parts of it.”
- “Originally, it was a war diary that included a description of the Sword Miracle of Lionsford.”
- “Turonia mainly recorded mystical facts about the land. Legends, magic, religion... She was always interested in natural forces and the achievements of the goblins.”

Blood on the Four-Head

When the heroes return to Hinterbruch, they discover that the village has been the scene of a brutal massacre. The survivors say they were attacked by black-clad warriors, but

they imply that Anshag of Rodebrannt-Ask (the Blessed One of Rondra) and Norbards by the name of Jantareff were somehow involved as well.



The Massacre at Hinterbruch

Anshag set his plan in motion the night after the heroes left town. After quietly setting fire to several homes, he entered the *Red Ram's Horn* with some warriors of the Alliance of Kor's Sign and had Olko bound and gagged. His men then dragged the tavern's remaining occupants to the Four-Head where they were killed along with the village bailiff in the light of the burning huts. Then the warriors burned the tavern and its precious library to the ground before leaving town with the stone ram's horn (and, secretly, Olko).

Alatzer and the heroes likely arrive at the village two days after the evil deed. The dead are already buried, and the burned huts have been salvaged for firewood, but the magnitude of the crime still echoes in the remains of the badly damaged tavern and the blood-smeared Four-Head.

A New Assignment

Alatzer is in shock. His library is a grievous personal loss, but the death of his subjects weighs much heavier, as they were under his protection and he knew most of them from birth. He asks the heroes to find those responsible for his subjects' death and punish them, and it is clear that only one punishment is sufficient in his eyes. He offers the heroes 100 batz to undertake this task.

Questionings

Four serfs from Hinterbruch are the only witnesses, though they hid when they heard screams and saw little or nothing. All of them knew the victims—more than a dozen villagers whom the heroes had met only a short while ago: the innkeeper Tsarina, the serving girl Brinja, the old singer Travin, strong Grimje, the happy widower Verosja, the young amber cutter Karenjan, and argumentative Gorwinja.

The villagers reveal what they can, but some rumors have already diluted their memories. The serfs all have the same information; feel free to spread it out among them. Their names are *Natasa* (21; submissive), *Paisuma* (43; thoughtful), *Joost* (17; brave), and *Dabbert* (33; terrified), and they know the following.

- The five to eight attackers wore black armor (+) and had shaved heads (+/-; only three of them were bald).
- One attacker had inhumanly sharp teeth (+).
- One attacker ignited the huts with magic fire (-).
- They performed an unholy ritual over the Four-Head with the blood of their victims (-; a magical analysis of the Four-Head confirms that no ritual was performed).
- Olko's body wasn't found (+). Maybe he got away (-).
- The warriors left Hinterbruch and went north (+), or possibly west (-).
- The Norbards left the day before the attack (+), because they probably knew something (+/-).
- Unfortunately, the Blessed One of Rondra set out for Jekdisit the day before the attack (+). He could have protected Hinterbruch (-).
- Anshag was seen with the Aunt of the Jantareffs before he left (+). Maybe he was trading with her (+/-; in fact, he told Dasha that the plan had worked and that the family had better leave now), or telling the Norbards to be honest (-).

Looking for Clues

Apart from questioning the witnesses, the heroes might want to investigate the scene of the crime or look for other clues. Paisuma, a tracker from Hinterbruch, offers to help (*Tracking* 7 (11/12/11)).

- The huts surrounding the Four-Head were burned down.
- The Four-Head was smeared with blood. The serfs didn't dare to wipe it away, fearing dark magic.
- The tavern fire started in Alatzer's library, which is mostly destroyed. Only a few books and relics with magical protection survived the fire. It is unclear whether any documents were stolen. Parts of the building's ground floor are still usable.
- The stone ram's horn is missing.
- The attackers appear to have stolen some valuables, but nothing of importance.

Check using *Tracking (Animal Tracks)* +3

QL 1: Several riders entered Hinterbruch from the north, lingered here a while, and then rode back the way they came. Their tracks blend with those of the Jantareffs, who also traveled north.

QL 2: There were four riders. Their outgoing tracks are deeper, indicating that they were carrying a heavier load than when they arrived. The Jantareffs left Hinterbruch before the riders arrived.

QL 3+: One of the riders was in Hinterbruch earlier that day, rode north, and then returned that night, accompanied by the other three.

The Camp of the Cultists of Kor's Sign

The tracks made by the riders and the Jantareffs diverge about a mile north. With another *Tracking (Animal Tracks)* +3 check, the heroes find tracks two miles from Hinterbruch that lead into a small grove of fir trees. With QL 2, they see that one of the four riders made the journey twice. At the end of the tracks, the heroes find the foundations of a building that collapsed long ago, and within it, a well-concealed campsite, where they gather the following clues.

- The fireplace has been used almost daily over the course of the past week.
- The campsite shows signs of having housed five to six people.
- 45' from the campsite, deeper in the grove, considerable heat was applied to a large area (about 90' x 90'). The snow is melted, the earth is dry and covered with ash in some places, and the tree trunks are charred.

Check using *Tracking (Animal Tracks)* +3

QL 1: A dragon was here.

QL 2+: The camp also housed three horses for several days. The fire evidence and certain tracks indicate that the beast was likely a pearl dragon.

Check using *Tracking (Humanoid Tracks)* +3

QL 1: Dents in the ground and small holes show where a tent was pitched.

QL 2: Several humanoids stayed here for several days. There are burned remains of weapon oil and blood, as well

• The “burden” carried off by the dragon was Olko, who had been kidnapped and tied up. If the heroes defeated Gerwulf, the cultists abduct Olko and pass him on to their allies in Sirmgalvis.

as some burned scraps of white linen, the material commonly used for the tabbards of the Blessed Ones of Rondra (if they scrutinize the fireplace closely, the heroes automatically find the cloth scraps). After their return, the riders quickly headed north, following the Jantareffs.

QL 3: Four humans camped here, but the rider who twice visited Hinterbruch had mounted and dismounted the dragon at least twice and probably flew away with it.

QL 4+: During their last hours here, two riders dragged something very heavy from the horses to the dragon, which then flew away with it. •

Follow the Norbards!

The villains’ tracks lead north. If the heroes think that the Jantareffs are in cahoots with them, Alatzer mentions that he advised Fetanka to travel north to Korswandt. He cannot tell whether she did so willingly, but for the moment, all tracks

lead north. Alatzer would love to accompany the heroes, but he doesn’t have the strength. Also, he must return to care for his tavern and his subjects.

Fetanka’s Poem

One day after the Norbard family arrived in Hinterbruch, Fetanka learned of Dasha’s plan to lure Alatzer out of town but did nothing to prevent it. A short time earlier, she spoke with Olko and Alatzer about a poem she found in her Seffer Manich that contradicted everything she thought she knew about goblins (see *Four Verses about the Goblins*, on page 44). Olko confirmed the contradictions but had nothing to add.

As the poem was written somewhere in the area of Korswandt, Alatzer advised the zibilja to begin by looking there. If the heroes have problems finding the Jantareffs later, this information should prove useful to get them to Korswandt. Maybe Alatzer remembers it at this point, or else sends the information via an Elemental Servant later.

From Hinterbruch to Korswandt

The heroes’ investigations lead them through the Festenland to Korswandt. Assuming average travel delays, the journey takes around four days. The way through Jekdisit to Plötzingen uses the Crown Road, but the road from Plötzingen on is much worse. Nevertheless, they reach Uspiaunen, and later Sirmgalvis and Korswandt, within a day each. The Jantareffs’ kaleshkas are slower, and the heroes probably catch up to them before they reach Uspiaunen. The cultists should have a lead of two days, and the heroes won’t see the villains until the ambush near Plötzingen. The following days see regular snowfall and strong winds that hide new tracks within a few hours. Remember to apply the rules for weather as described on page 10.

Jekdisit

The heroes travel along a cottonwood-lined road and reach Jekdisit (approximately 200 inhabitants; County of Hinterbruch; Temple of Peraine; Oak Grove Tavern (Q3/P3/B8); Special: Dream Grove (supposedly cursed circle of stone oaks rumored to be haunted by a farmer named Toshkow who was cursed by the Nameless God—unimportant for this adventure)). With *Streetwise (Gather Information)* +3 the heroes learn that four warriors in black armor came to the village with a captive two days ago, and traveled north towards Plötzingen. Nobody spoke to them or dealt with them in any way.

Plötzingen

In Plötzingen (500 inhabitants; County of Plötzingen; Temples of Peraine and Rondra; shrine to Mokosha; *Count’s Jug* (Q3/P3/B12); *The Ax* (Q1/P2/B44); flourishing

lumber trade), in the *Count’s Jug* tavern, the heroes meet the composer **Reijkad Wheelwright** (44; chubby; narrow nose; bright-red vest; monocle; *Streetwise* 8 (13/15/14)), a man whom they might have met in *Theater Knights 1: The White Lake* (he conducts the goblin choir in Festum). As they enter, he is trying to convince the guests of the *Count’s Jug* to join in a circular canon. If the heroes join in and make a check using *Singing (Choral Singing)* +1, he reacts very favorably to them and promises to compose a song about their battle with the pearl dragon.



Rumors

Along the way, the heroes may learn the following rumors from the many locals who like to idle away their time during the long winter by exchanging gossip, such as the following.

Castle Korswandt and Blood Cliff

- “The Abbot-Baron of Korswandt is a good servant of Praios and a brave bronnjar (+), but he has no voice in the Gathering of Nobles (+). No matter, he never leaves the monastery anyway (-).”
- “The Blood Cliff lies deep in Kor’s Forest (+). Seeking it is very dangerous (+), and only chosen ones are able to find it (-).”
- “Korswandt is a base for spies of the Church of Praios and the Middenrealm (-).”
- “Saint Ghorio journeyed from the Lands of the Tulamydes to Korswandt (+) to be closer to Kor, the Lord of Battlefields (+/-). Here he received Kor’s Holy Codex (-).”

Awakening

- “Elkhard and Hitta got into a fight over a bent horseshoe nail yesterday. Don’t know what started it, but they tore into each other something awful (+).”
- “Swampreeks have taken up residence in the old watchtower in the marsh (+/-).”
- “A maiden from Nivesel dreamed that her bronnjar wanted to sleep with her, and the next day, the bronnjar awoke covered in blood. The maiden was burned right away as a demon worshiper (-).”

- “Thirteen fir trees fell over in the forest a few nights ago, to the east of Swordhills. The locals burned them, with Peraine’s blessing, but the smoke was black (+/-).”

Dragons

- “I’ve heard of that dragon. It comes from over the Weal Mountains (-). The Order of the Ram must do something (+/-).”

Goblins

- “Among goblins, women hold all the power (+), just like with the Norbards (+) and old Fietje (+).”
- “Goblins are cheeky but cowardly. Hit them where it hurts!” (+/-)
- “Goblins breed quickly and are very agile (+). Folk in Festum are smart to employ them as workers in their city.”
- “Goblins do not bury their dead. Instead, they feed them to their pigs (+). It’s horrible!”

Norbards

- “Some Norbards are true rogues (+), but their bees produce the best honey in the land (+/-).”
- “Trade is trade, nothing bad about that. And their men are very handsome (+/-).”
- “They are creepy. They worship serpents and bees as gods (-). It’s not right.”
- “They are too lazy to work (-), and they cheat. I always use my own scales when I trade with them.”
- “They don’t belong here. They should pack up their carts and go back to Tobrien, or wherever it is they come from.”

Check using *Streetwise* (Gather Information) +3

QL 1: Four riders were seen in Plötzingen. They headed towards Rivilauken (north-east) shortly after dusk.

QL 2: They stopped at an inn called *The Ax* to buy supplies.

QL 3+: One of the warriors visited the cloth merchant in the side-alley.

Birta (64; large; grumpy; loud laugh; *Willpower* 5 (13/14/13), *SPI* 2) the innkeeper of *The Ax*, only knows things that the heroes already know:

“All big ones, strong ones, in black armor, yes. One of them came in, wanted 20 rations. Packed them, she paid, done.”

Helmjew Trunkow (64; cloth merchant; one-eyed; bushy beard; burps a lot; *Willpower* 3 (11/12/13), *SPI* 1) can be made to talk with a successful check on *Fast-Talk* (*Manipulate*), *Intimidation* (*Threats* or *Interrogation*) +1, or a bribe of 2 batz. He mentions a man fitting the description of Anshag who purchased a dark-green cloak from him. He saw the man talking with a woman the next morning. The two of them rode towards Uspiaunen (north-west).•

Ambush on the Crown Road

The ambush occurs in a ravine with snow-covered slopes, from which the cultists trigger a small avalanche to block the way. Three knights of the Alliance (see page 60) then ambush the heroes (see the *Core Rules*, page 237). The Alliance knights receive a bonus of 2 to their *Stealth* checks for the ambush. Make this fight challenging for the heroes, to give them a taste of things to come.

The cultists fight to the death. If any survive, they resist discussing the events in Hinterbruch, but mention that Anshag should be arriving in Uspiaunen soon, if he isn’t already there. They do not know why he wanted the stone ram’s horn. Also, they are unaware of the ritual to be held in Kor’s Forest and do not know what the other leaders of the Alliance are planning.

The cultists receive reinforcements in Plötzingen or Hinterbruch, and start the battle with ranged attacks.

• Anshag suspects that he is being followed. He learned of the events at Pilcrest from Gerwulf (if Gerwulf survived). To weaken or kill the heroes, Anshag ordered his companions to Rivilauken to ambush the heroes. He then rode back to Plötzingen with the stone ram’s horn and spent the night before riding on to Uspiaunen via the path to Korswandt.



Instead of Knights of the Alliance, the ambushers are Squires. If Squires prove too much for the heroes to handle, two knights of the Order of the Ram arrive from Rivilauken by chance and assist the heroes.

The Wagon Fort

The heroes catch up to the Jantareffs a short distance before Uspiaunen. They are suspicious of the sudden appearance of the heroes and remain wary at first. The initial conversation takes place from behind tower shields with weapons drawn. A report of the events in Hinterbruch changes the situation and they allow the heroes to enter the wagon fort. Here they learn the following.

- Dasha made a deal with Anshag and lied to lure Alatzer into the Mosse for a few days. Nobody was supposed to get hurt.
- Dasha was promised a great reward, which she is supposed to receive in a clearing near Korswandt in about three days.

Fetanka is shocked about the bloody deed and believes that the Jantareffs are somehow also to blame. She cannot reconcile her conscience with the blood on her family's hands, so she offers to act as a decoy so the heroes can ambush Anshag when she goes to collect her reward. Dasha rejects this plan at first, since the family needs the money from the reward to

survive the winter—and as the family's Aunt, she has the final say. Convincing the majority of the family to do otherwise requires a competitive check using *Persuasion (Discussion)* against Dasha. Depending on the heroes' behaviour toward the family in recent days, this check may have one or more modifiers, as follows. All modifiers are cumulative.

Deed	Modifier
They did not assist Fetanka and Alriksej in the <i>Red Ram's Horn</i>	-1
They sneaked up to the wagon fort	-1
They threatened the Jantareffs or made demands	-1
They mention the pearl dragon	-1
A Blessed One of Rondra or Praios is among them	-1
The negotiator speaks Alaani III	+1
They bought something from the Jantareffs	+1
A Norbard or a Blessed One of Hesinde is among them	+1
They offer at least 30 batz as a reward	+1
They mention the names of some of the Norbards from <i>The White Lake</i>	+1



Use a cumulative check instead. Fetanka (*Persuasion* 8 (14/16/15)) is on the heroes' side. The other side has an equal number of Norbards making their arguments (SR 2 (11/12/13)).



Do not use the positive modifiers.

Uspiaunen

The path to Uspiaunen (200 inhabitants; County of Plötzingen; shrine to Urnislav (supposedly Hesinde), Ash Court Inn (Q3, P4, B22); Urnislav ash tree grows in a settlement called Roedepirke, north of the village; Nivese winter camp at the edge of Lake Shimochskinnje) winds through dense forests and groves, and another ambush could wait behind every corner.

• **Ulmje** (44; sleight; black curls; good cook; *Prepare Food* 10 (13/14/14), *Willpower* 3 (13/13/13), SPI 2), the Innkeeper of the Ash Court, reveals that a dark warrior wearing a green cloak spent the night here. He had roast meat and bread brought to his room and was already gone when the staff arrived to wake him in the morning.



• **Gritten Raudups** (54; wiry; energetic; stoutly believes in teaching harmony; good friend of Cirrusil (see page 9); *Myths & Legends* 10 (16/16/15), *Willpower* 10 (15/15/16), SPI 4), the dean of the Neersand School of Domination, also took a room in the Ash Court this evening. Gritten is an open-minded conversationalist, but she knows more about the human mind than she does about goblins, Theater Knights, or the so-called



awakening. She has visited nearby Roedepirks with her brightest novice, *Orshin Hirksjen* (15; chubby; precocious; likes to drink; *Willpower* 3 (12/12/12), *Carousing* 5 (12/12/12), SPI 1).

According to legend, Uspiaunen is where Saint Urnislav rammed his staff into the ground, thus planting the famous *Urnislav Oak*, which has grown there ever since. As top of his class, Orshin was allowed to cut his mage's staff from that tree, and now he proudly displays it to everybody in the tavern in the hopes of getting a free sip of meskinnes. This mage staff is inhabited by a minor elemental spirit of Humus that unintentionally creates the following minor elemental

effects.

- The chimney fire hisses loudly.
- A guest (or hero's) trousers suddenly freeze solid.
- A guest complains that his stew tastes sour. He gets a new portion.
- Another guest mentions that his beer tastes unusually sweet.

Minor spirits are spontaneous, temporarily-animated sparks of elemental power with little will. Such creatures dissipate soon after coming into existence, and form only when someone casts strong (usually elemental) magic, when elements merge, or when strong forces of nature are at work.

At night, a knocking is heard coming from the taproom. If the heroes investigate, they discover the mage's staff dancing about the room. If they get too close, it attacks them three times (INI 12+1D6, MOV 12, AT 10 DP 1D6+3) and then falls to the ground (the minor spirit is tired).

If the heroes identify the minor spirit, Grittel rewards them with a healing potion (QL 2).

Check with *Magical Analysis*

- QL 1: A magical creature inhabits the staff.
- QL 2: It is a minor elemental spirit of Humus; it should only linger for a few days before moving on.
- QL 3+: It is a spirit called a *flakewoodcreak*, which is created by the merging of Humus and Ice.

Sirmgalvis

The impoverished counts of Sirmgalvis (600 inhabitants; County of Sirmgalvis; Temple of Rondra; *Sword and Shield* (tavern) (Q3, P3, B14); *Pig Hill* (tavern) (Q2, P2, B20); military barracks of the Festenland Militia, at Castle Cosbrietzki) have venerated Rondra for 800 years. They were first commissioned as colonels of the militia barracks of Festenland. An increasing number of impoverished shetztes have been traveling here to join the informal Festenland Order of Defense, also known as the Festenland Order of Sirmgalvis, which is organized and led by the count.

Check with *Streetwise (Gather Information)* +3

- QL 1: The dark knight passed through here as well.
- QL 2: He visited the Temple of Rondra.
- QL 3+: Later, he rode west to Korswandt or Birkholt.

The Temple of Rondra includes shrines to Saint Ghorio, who is the author of the *Khunchomer Codex*, and Arannja of Rucken (see *Harbor Theology* on page 9), the rebellious farm woman who is worshiped by locals as the Mistress of Nine Scythes, which is very unusual. Blessed One of Rondra **V** *Vanjesha Nach'Rassandra of Sirmgalvis* (51; fat, yet strong; red-faced; composed; *Willpower* 10 (15/15/15), SPI 3) blessed the shrine two years ago, at the request of several recruits. The shrine itself includes a stone table with the image of a scowling woman and a rack of nine scythe blades, which is surrounded by a dozen candles on tall stands.

Vanjesha knows Anshag, who often prays at the various shrines of Kor. This time, she saw him only briefly before he continued on his way west. While some shetztes and recruits are secretly allied with the Alliance of Kor's Sign, Vanjesha is not one of them.

An investigation of the shrine (*Perception (Search)* +1) reveals small symbols—a slanting, dotted line with a point, an elongated T, a small triangle, a large square, a large triangle, and a thick arrow—scratched onto the back of a sacrificial candle. Anshag left these symbols on the candle as a message for other members of the Alliance. The symbols tell them to gather for the upcoming ritual when they see a beacon on the keep of Castle Korswandt (see *Looking for the Artifacts* on page 40). The symbols mean: *Watch* (line with dot) *the keep* (elongated T). *Torch* (little triangle) *means wait* (large square). *Beacon* (large triangle) *means departure* (arrow).

This clue should help build tension, but it should not result in a lengthy investigation. It is only intended to show that the heroes' enemies are more than just a common band of criminals, and also that they might have many supporters. If the heroes get too distracted pursuing this clue, have the Jantareffs lead them to Korswandt.



Korswandt




“He seduced the trolls. He seduces the elves. He will not seduce us, as your sacrifice will put an end to his power over us. The Suulak might forget you tomorrow, but I am eternally grateful to you.”

— Kunga Suula to her people’s four greatest heroes, around 80 FB

This chapter presents many opportunities for investigation, some of which you can arrange according to the heroes’ progress, interests, and capabilities. GM-specific information starts on page 39, and the section titled *Castle Korswandt* (page 40) contains descriptions of locations, characters, and rumors, in addition to a variety of optional and mandatory scenes (page 50).

During this leg of the adventure, the heroes encounter the following.

- Witness Fetanka’s unjust arrest by the abbot-baron of Korswandt, and they travel to the monastery of Korswandt to secure her release
- Unmask agents of the Alliance of Kor’s Sign who secretly infiltrated Korswandt
- Learn about the cult’s plans for a bloody rite in time to take countermeasures (they probably can’t prevent the ritual, but they might be able to lessen its effect)
-  If they are lucky, the heroes get to speak with the ghosts of long-dead goblin heroes and learn about a powerful spell cast nearly 1,000 years ago by Kunga Suula, the legendary goblin shaman.

Yet Another Assignment?

At the beginning of this scene, Abbot-Baron Jelomir arrests Fetanka while she and the heroes are trying to ambush Anshag (see *Fetanka’s Arrest*, on page 50). Jelomir accuses the zibilja of causing the monastery inmates’ strange behavior, and her arrest gives the heroes a compelling reason to stay at Castle Korswandt. Their efforts to exonerate Fetanka distract them from finding their true enemies. If the heroes don’t want to travel to Korswandt, try convincing them with the following arguments.

- They can’t protect Fetanka if they sleep in the Jantareffs’ camp instead of at the monastery.
- During their time in Kor’s Forest, the heroes face numerous attacks by wild beasts and perhaps even cultists. They could use a safe place to sleep.
- A hero becomes possessed by a malignant spirit, and the temple and sanatorium might be their only hope for a cure.
- When the party arrives at the castle, they witness a ghostly apparition that reminds them of their meeting with Gerbald (see *Gerbald? Is that You in There?* on page 50). This ghost warns that something dark is stirring in the monastery.
- The heroes find suspicious tracks in the snow, and later capture a cultist who has been keeping an eye on the castle (see *The Scout*, on page 52).



GM Information



The Alliance of Kor's Sign wants to seize control of Bornland and restore the worst traditions of the Theater Knights in the name of the false Alveranian, Graqualo, and they are gearing up to make their first major move. The cultists perform a bloody rite at the appropriately-named Blood Cliff in Kor's Forest, to indoctrinate new believers into the deeper mysteries of their faith and baptize them in the name of Graqualo. The rite makes use of the stone ram's horn from Hinterbruch and involves human sacrifice. At the conclusion of the rite, Anshag and the dragon rider, Gerwulf, plan to unseal the Blue Tome and release its power.

Preparation for the rite has been underway for many months, and while the cult leaders saw to the details, the cultists passed their time infiltrating and spying on the surrounding lands. Some served as guest lecturers in Birkholt, and the Festenland Order of Sirmgalvis unexpectedly attracted a host of new recruits this winter... Many cultists are camped in and around Kor's Forest, where they have been fighting off wolves and robber gangs, which ironically has made the road safer than it has been in decades.

Ram's Horn and Goblin Ghosts

When the Theater Knights defeated Kunga Suula, they gained fragmentary knowledge about four powerful artifacts that she had created during the war. Gerwulf the Dragon Rider provided the Alliance with evidence that the Theater Knights captured these objects during the Battle of Kor's Forest, and three of them are likely hidden in the cellars under Castle Korswandt. Today, Korswandt is a monastery of Praios and a hospital where nobles lock away family members who are insane.

The Alliance quickly realized that the stone ram's horn described in Alatzer's publication was actually one of the goblin artifacts, and suspected that it would lend great power to their rite. Two cultists—*Emjan of Hursakoje* and *Travine Cosbrietzki of Sirmgalvis*—had themselves committed to the sanatorium of Korswandt so they could search for the other three goblin artifacts. They intend to use innocent inmates as blood sacrifices during their mass baptism, and also capture the castle for the Alliance, if possible.

The cultists do not know that the four goblin artifacts serve as vessels for the spirits of the *Last Heroes of the Suulak*. Each spirit is concealed and protected by a powerful spell cast by Kunga Suula nearly a thousand years ago. Each artifact was originally placed with one of the four Four-Head statues erected in the goblin ritual site, at the base of Blood Cliff. Only three of these statues remain standing there today. Kunga Suula's protective spells were weakened by the priests of Praios when they conquered Korswandt 700 years ago. The awakening of the land has somewhat weakened the goblin spirits, which began haunting the area when Anshag brought the stone ram's horn to the Temple of Rondra in Sirmgalvis. The spirits seek to possess the bodies of inmates and other inhabitants of the monastery and speak through their hosts' mouths (entries

in the Jantareff family's *Seffer Manich* describe similar occurrences). The heroes could gain a better understanding of the scope of events and perhaps even help prevent another massacre by asking the Jantareffs for help.

The Last Heroes of the Suulak

Before the goblins went to war with the Theater Knights, they fought another enemy, one whose words corrupted many of Kunga Suula's warriors. The goblins' natural bravery, pride, ambition, and strict adherence to family tradition all proved to be weakpoints for the enemy's dark whisperings, and the race soon faced extinction. Desperate to save her people, Kunga Suula chose a strategy nobody had dared use before: in what was probably the most powerful display of magic at that time, she identified the traits that the enemy was using against her people...and erased them.

The ritual site in Kor's Forest already existed long before Kunga Suula established her empire, having been created by a race far older than the goblins. This was where she gathered her people's four greatest heroes, who represented the best qualities of the Warrior, the Lord, the Scholar, and the Father. They willingly gave their lives for Kunga Suula's greatest spell, and their virtues, along with the memory of their sacrifice, vanished from goblin culture.



Those lost goblin virtues were soon replaced by other principles, ones which define most goblins today: the importance of family over the individual; the concept of survival at any cost; the institution of a matriarchal society, where all women receive the veneration due to mothers, and nothing is inherited; the inability to see the connection between sex and procreation; the utter absence of ancestor worship (which is why goblin sorceresses do not summon ancestor spirits and do not bury the dead); the tendency to live from hand to mouth...in short, the casual shamelessness of *sul unvingul*, of being a pig.

Only Kunga Suula remembers this ritual—but the Jantareff family's Seffer Manich contains an old poem written by one of Fetanka's ancestors, who was inspired to compose it after witnessing the great change that had come over the goblins (see page 44).

The History of the Four-Heads

The memory of the former goblin virtues was meant to survive in the ghosts of the Last Heroes. The four artifacts were placed on the four Four-Head statues on Blood Cliff in Kor's Forest to serve as the Last Heroes' anchors to the mortal

world. • This was why the Kunga Suula defended Blood Cliff so vehemently when the Theater Knights attacked. She could not have foreseen Kor's personal intervention on behalf of

the humans, and their ultimate victory. The Theater Knights seized the artifacts from the four statues, uprooted the Four-Head statue of the *Fertile Father* from the ground, and erected it as a trophy (sans its artifact, the stone ram's horn) in Hinterbruch, where today it is known as the Four-Head of Hinterbruch.

Even though they didn't understand the significance of these statues, the Theater Knights understood that they had captured a powerful site. They built a shrine in honor of Kor near the battlefield, at the base of Blood Cliff. Upon this shrine they placed the artifacts taken from

the statues and used the half-knowledge they stole from the goblins to power new rituals, several of which were decidedly unholy. Their actions greatly angered the ghosts of the goblin heroes but did not destroy them.

The Secret of Castle Korswandt

After their victory over the Theater Knights in 337 FB, the servants of Praios seized the shrine of Kor and quickly recognized the dark power coursing through the ritual site and the goblin artifacts. They built a castle and appointed a family loyal to Praios as its steward to watch over Kor's Forest. The four artifacts were locked in the castle's sanctum sanctorum, but they unknowingly left the Four-Heads at Blood Cliff and their connection the fourth statue in Hinterbruch intact.

Attempts to exorcise the four ghosts in Korswandt failed, and the Last Heroes' anger increased along with the power of the land.

When inheritance disputes flared up after Bornland gained its independence in 755 FB, and the first Noble Marshal chased Baron Wjelko of Korswandt from his castle, Wjelko stole the *Ram's Horn of the Fertile Father* and presented it along with many writings about the history of Korswandt to the Alliance of Kor's Sign, to secure his position. He did not touch the remaining three artifacts—the *Moose Antler of the Wealthy Lord*, the *Bear Paw of the Strong Warrior*, and the *Badger Head of the Good Scholar*. His sister, a Blessed One of Praios, renewed the wards on the three artifacts and had them walled in under the foundations of the castle. In return, the Noble Marshal created the inherited title of Abbot-Baron and allowed her to convert the castle into a holy fortress.

Looking for the Artifacts

Wjelko of Korswandt's notes remain in the hands of the Alliance of Kor's Sign. These documents proved useful to the cultists for understanding how to employ the goblin artifacts at Blood Cliff. Naive *Brother Rochnow* assists Emjan and Travine with their search for the buried artifacts. Each furtively taps the walls of the dungeon as time allows, but they abandon their search whenever someone walks by or inmates are brought to the dungeon treatment room. For this reason, their search proceeds slowly.

Fire Signals

Anshag sends a scout to the castle every evening to watch for a signal on the keep. Brother Rochnow lights a small torch there nightly to indicate that they have no news. Soon after Emjan finds the remaining artifacts, the three light a large beacon and then hurry to recover the artifacts from their hiding places. An hour later, Anshag appears at the foot of the cliff with some cultists, and the agents lower the artifacts down to them from a window. Anshag's group then leaves to prepare for the rite. The next day, nine mounted cultists arrive to help Emjan escape the monastery. Emjan secures some captives to use as blood sacrifices and tries his best to free cooperative inmates. The three infiltrators capture the gate house. When they are ready to open the gate, they hang two lit torches outside. When the gate opens, the cultists ride in and try to seize the monastery by force.

Emergency Plans

If the scout sees neither a torch or a beacon, Anshag assumes something has gone wrong and sends 15 armed men and women to investigate. They arrive at noon the next day to spy on the castle from various directions. If they then see a signal from the keep, they retreat again, as the problem appears to be resolved. If they don't see a signal, they look to the gate house, waiting for two torches. These cultists are not foolhardy, though; if two torches appear at this point, they attack only if they believe their chances are good.

If they see no signal for two days, the plan is considered a failure, and the rite proceeds without the benefit of the three additional artifacts.

Castle Korswandt

Castle Korswandt was built on a cliff overlooking Kor's Forest and its mysterious rock formations, including the legendary Blood Cliff. The castle is still strong and forbidding, but it was converted into a monastery long ago and is no longer used as a fortress. It has undergone many changes since it was built, most to accommodate the comfort of the current occupants.

About Korswandt

Check with *Geography (Bornland)*

QL 1: Korswandt stands in the Bornian Festenland, between Birkholt and Sirmgalvis.

QL 2: The abbot-barons of Korswandt share Kor's Forest with the Countess of Sirmgalvis and the impoverished duke of Lionpond...

QL 3+...who is dependent on Sirmgalvis. None of these three families exercise their hunting rights in Kor's Forest, so the woods are full of wild animals.

Check with *History (Bornland)*

QL 1: The baron's title of Korswandt includes ordination as a Blessed One of Praios.

QL 2: Both are inherited, as Korswandt returned to the fold of the Church of Praios when Bornland gained its independence about 300 years ago.

QL 3+: This legal right stems from a declaration of change of succession issued by the first Noble Marshal, Gulnitz, in 755 FB.

About the Abbot-Barons of Korswandt

Check with *History (Bornland)*

QL 1: The Korswandters are an old noble family that owns small estates. The monastery survives partly on donations from pious bronnjars.

QL 2: Rumors hint that the monastery holds not just dangerous inmates here, but also the unwelcome first-born of noble families (as political prisoners). The abbot-barons are said to have connections to the powerful Gulnitz family, who have always had close ties with the Church of Praios...

QL 3: The Church of Praios sponsors the monastery. Abbot-Baron Jelomir's mentor, *Nadjesha of Gulnitz*, the highest-ranking Blessed One of Praios in Bornland, leads the Temple of Praios in Festum...

QL 4+: ...and has great respect for Jelomir. Madness seems to run in the Gulnitz family.

Check with *Myths & Legends (Bornland)*

QL 1: The Church of Praios' claim to the castle originates in an argument between Praiotic Wjelko of Korswandt and his sister, 300 years ago.

QL 2: The castle was granted to the sister by a Noble Marshal from the house of Gulnitz (a house that is said to suffer a curse that turned many members of the family into swampreeks).

QL 3: It is said that 700 years ago, a robber knight named Jadviga of Gulnitz, who had become mad, hid in Korswandt while escaping the Emperor Priests and eventually disappeared into the Blood-Eye Swamps, which she still haunts to this day.

QL 4+: The haunting seems to be verifiable, but at the Firuner Luch, not at Korswandt (Jadviga's haunting of Korswandt is doubtful, as the castle was built by the Emperor Priests).

About Blood Cliff

Check with *Myths and Legends (Bornland)*

QL 1: Legend says that the demigod Kor appeared before the Theater Knights at the battle of Blood Cliff and helped them win an important victory against the goblins.

QL 2: At that time, the knights entered a frenzy pleasing unto Kor. Some are said to have grown claws, fangs, or even wings.

QL 3: Echoes of madness linger at the site of the battle, which is why monks care for the insane at Castle Korswandt. It is said that the madness is due mostly to ghosts that still haunt the battlefield.

QL 4+: The goblins fought determinedly here due to the proximity of one of their holy sites in Kor's Forest.

Check with *History (Bornland)*

QL 1: The appearance of Kor in this place had a strong impression upon the Theater Knights.

QL 2: Most scholars think the Battle of Kor's Forest was fought sometime between the date of the Sword Miracle of Lionsford (191 FB) and the Theater Knights' victory over Kunga Suula in Wjassuula (243 FB). Today, the castle serves as a monastery and a hospital for the insane.

QL 3: The goblins fiercely defended some sort of ritual site here. The castle's hexagonal keep is atypical for structures built by the Theater Knights.

QL 4+: The castle was built by the Emperor Priests around 400 FB, when the need for a military presence in the area was no longer required. A few scholars suspect it was built to guard or contain something mystical.



Library Research

Option

As an alternative, the heroes can obtain this knowledge by researching in the monastery's library. Participating heroes must be able to read Kuslik Signs, must know at least Bosparano II, and must succeed in checks for both of the skills listed for that specific topic. This requires cumulative checks (*appropriate skill*, 2 hours, any number of attempts). Any level of success gleans only the information presented in the entry for QL 1 in the appropriate subject.

QL 5: The stone towers that peek from Kor's Forest hint at a culture far older than that of the goblins... Possibly that of trolls, or even giants.

Keep (K)

This proud, hexagonal centerpiece of the castle consists of six levels. On the *ground floor*, someone punched an opening in the wall to create a new entrance, possibly for no reason other than to shorten the previous route, which required traversing ladders and battlements. Long ago, the entry hall was converted into a reception room, where the Abbot-Baron receives supplicants and traders from his plain wooden throne, which sits in front of a simple curtain. Behind the curtain, a door leads to a storage room, and a spiral staircase leads to the upper floors and down to the cells in the basement.

The *second floor* has three treatment rooms furnished with austere wooden stools, where monks tend to the inmates' souls. These rooms can also be used for discrete conversations.

The *third floor* houses the scriptorium and the modest private rooms of the abbot-baron.

The *fourth floor* houses the sacristy and the monastery's sparse library. Within the library sits a chest lined with Kosh basalt (80 structure points, *Pick Locks (Bit Locks)* -2). The chest contains a dangerous magical object (bronze bracelet; spell storage: 2 x *Visibili* for 10 minutes, SR 9 (14/14/14); stains flesh red) and two blasphemous books (field volume of *Essentia Obscura—the Nature of the Unknown*, which discusses clairvoyance, and an inflammatory pamphlet written by the wanted demoncrat, Lenija Oljanov). The abbot-baron and the scribe always keep the keys to these rooms on their persons.

The monastery's chapel sits on the *fifth floor*, as close as possible to the lord of the gods. Climbing the stone spiral staircase is tedious, but anyone reaching the *coping* can enjoy the view from the highest point between the Dragon Stones and the Weal Mountains—if they aren't swept from this perch by the harsh winter winds, that is. A snowy falcon's nest is hidden beneath the merlons, and the monastery's threadbare flag flaps in the wind overhead.

Palace (P)

This two-story outbuilding, which the both the inmates and guards refer to as the *palace*, serves as the monastery's main residence. Its ground floor includes a small workshop with a forge (P1), a kitchen (P2), a dining room (P3) and a stable that is currently occupied by four colorful dairy cows and a Warunker riding horse named Ruprecht (P4). It has room to accommodate at most two additional horses.

Object	Structure Points
Floors and walls of rooms and cells (incl. secret rooms)	150
Castle Walls and Palace	400
Keep and Gate House	1,000
Normal doors	60
Outer gate	200

The monks (P5) and legionaries (P6) live on the second floor, which also has ten guest rooms (P7), where visitors and voluntary, non-violent inmates spend their nights.

Gate House (G)

An oblong guardroom opens onto a machicolation atop the fortress' massive oak gate. To conserve candles and firewood, the guards use it only rarely. To gain entrance, one must ring a bell and wait for a guard to come to the vision slit. Lifting the wooden beam that bars the door requires a cumulative check (single or group check) with *Feat of Strength (Lifting)* -1, 1 CR, 7 attempts.

Dungeon (D)

The spiral staircase (D3) from the keep leads down below ground level and opens upon a strongly curving corridor that runs parallel to the cliff face. The outer wall of the corridor (the one closest to the cliff face) is lined with 14 heavy wooden doors. The cells are dark and cold, but all inmates receive generous amounts of straw and blankets. Dangerous inmates stay in cells (D4–D8) with barred windows that look out from the cliff face and admit slanting shafts of light upon their lonely occupants. The most violent inmates are kept tied down and consequently spend a few hours each day in their own filth (the monks try their best to keep them clean). A faint smell of blood and urine hangs in the air. Brother Littjev, the monastery's *Infirmarius* (a healer who treats physical ailments) visits each inmate once each day and thus holds onto the cell keys, but he rarely makes his rounds alone. At one end of the corridor, double doors open upon a rarely-used

Difficulties for the Search

If the heroes decide to search through the dungeon, the following bonuses and/or penalties apply.

Darkness: Skills requiring sight suffer a penalty of 4 while in the dungeon. Sources of light negate this penalty.

Notice a Cultist: When a hero first enters the dungeon, roll 1D20. On a 1-4, that hero's player may make a check on *Perception (Spot)*. If successful, the hero notices somebody (secretly one of the cultists) furtively entering a cell. With QL 2+, the hero notices sounds of somebody trying to dig through a wall somewhere.

Find Hidden Rooms (H1-H3): Anyone carefully tapping the inner wall of the corridor at the right spot might find (check on *Perception (Spot)* -1) indications of a walled-off hollow space. The check receives a bonus of 2 if the cultists have already found the room and rebuilt the wall. Heroes may systematically search the dungeon (cumulative check on *Perception (Search)* -1, 5 minutes, any number of attempts) covering 6 square yards at a time (there is around 100 square yards of corridor to explore). Haphazard searching finds the right spot on a roll of 1-2 on 1D20.

treatment room (D1) that is more akin to a torture chamber. At the other end of the corridor is an armory (D2) with racks of weapons, armor, and banners from ages past. All doors in the dungeon have simple locks (*Pick Locks (Bit Locks) +1*).

The Locations of the Last Hero Artifacts (H)

Many centuries ago, three of the artifacts of the Last Heroes were walled into small chambers dug from the cliff's bedrock. As with the stone ram's horn, a thin trickle of blood recently began to flow from each of them, and several of the secret rooms are currently filled ankle-deep with blood. Emjan was able to put the section of wall back in place in the first room he found before the blood could spill into the corridor.

When the heroes arrive at Korswandt, the condition of the rooms and artifacts are as follows.

The *Badger Head of the Good Scholar* was buried in a roughly cube-shaped room (H1). When Emjan discovered its location, he wrapped the artifact in cloth to absorb the trickle of blood and embedded it in the wall above the opening he created, to make it harder to find (*Perception (Search) -1*) in case someone else discovered the room accidentally. When he finished rebuilding the wall, he smeared the brick with clay to conceal his work (*Perception (Search) -1*). The trickle of blood from the artifact is slowly soaking through the clay, leaving a small stain on the wall and floor in the corridor.

The *Bear Paw of the Strong Warrior* was also hidden in a roughly cube-shaped room (H2), but this room is somewhat larger than H1, and thus the blood here is only about an inch deep. Since the artifact is farther from the entrance, and Emjan doesn't want to stain his shoes and track blood into the corridor when he comes to retrieve it, he placed a fishing pole inside the room before he resealed the entrance.

The *Moose Antler of the Wealthy Lord* was hidden in the largest of the secret rooms (H3). Its six-sided footprint has the same dimensions as the keep.

Goblin Ghosts

By conversing with the inmates in the dungeon, the heroes can discover important clues for their investigation. They won't find out exactly what happened hundreds of years ago at the Battle of

• The Sun Legionaries are elite warriors of the Church of Praios; here they act as temple guards and bodyguards for the monks.

The Village

Ruler: Abbot-Baron Jelomir of Korswandt

Inhabitants: 300

Temple: Praios (in the castle), shrines of Peraine and Ifirn

Inns: The Cliff (Q2/P1/B6)

Military: Eight Sun Legionaries, •the abbot-baron ○.....

Serfs labor in the monastery's workshops to supply its daily needs. None dares speak a bad word about their bronnjar (in fact, the serfs are rather more uncommunicative than serfs from other regions of Bornland and thus appear stupid or aloof). Since Jelomir doesn't exercise his hunting rights in Kor's Forest, the serfs don't have access to furs, and many of them dress only in wool and linen on even the coldest days.

Blood Cliff, but they are free to research or even make educated guesses, and should learn at least the following points.

- The possessions are being caused by three or four different ghosts.
- The ghosts speak Goblinish.
- The ghosts were once celebrated heroes to their people. ○.....
- In life, they believed in courage, tradition, wealth, pride, and fatherhood—principles that are of no importance to modern goblins.

• These goblin heroes sacrificed themselves to protect their people from an enemy they feared more than the Theater Knights. That ancient enemy will soon strike again.

Sequence of Hauntings

Therinja III of Ilmenstone was the first to be possessed. This occurred about a week after the murders in Hinterbruch, when Anshag brought the stone ram's horn to the Temple of Rondra in Sirmgalvis. Emjan found the hiding place of the third artifact, the *Badger Head of the Good Scholar*, the day before the heroes arrived at Korswandt. The spirit within possessed Tirulf of Ask-Jarlak that evening, and Travine immediately imitated his symptoms. As each artifact was discovered, another ghost was free to haunt. The goblin ghosts aren't limited to possessing only one victim per night and may even possess the same victim more than once. Adjust the frequency of possessions to control the pace of the heroes' investigation.

Goblin Ghost (a type of Bound Soul)

COU 16 SGC 13 INT 18 CHA 14

DEX 14 AGI 18 CON 16 STR 12

LP 50 AE 30 KP - INI 14+1D6

DO 12 SPI 7 TOU 7/10 MOV 10

Unarmed: AT 16 PA 12 DP 1D6+4 RE long

PRO/ENC 0/0

Actions: 1

Special Abilities: various

Skills: various

Spells: Possess 10 (16/18/14) against SPI, 12 AP; can possess the mind of a humanoid creature. Caster temporarily suppresses the target's conscious mind, speaks using the target's mouth, and change game stats based on its nature (see *Allies for the Heroes*, on page 55).

Size Category: medium

Type: Ghost, humanoid

Summoning Difficulty: 0

Loot: none

Combat Behavior: Doesn't like to fight, disappears with a tired chortle when attacked.

Escape: When attacked.

Magical Lore (Magical Creatures)

• **QL 1:** Bound souls are spirits of the dead.

• **QL 2:** Bound souls are bound to places, items, or persons. These appear to have an extremely wide radius of movement, which indicates that they are very powerful.

• **QL 3:** These ghosts can probably be laid to rest when their tasks are fulfilled. There is no mention of bound goblin souls in magical or spiritual lore.

Special Rules: See *Ghost Rules* on page 30.



At the GM's discretion, the artifacts have not yet all been found. As each artifact is located, another ghost enters the game. The *Strong Warrior* becomes active first, followed by the *Wealthy Lord*. We suggest linking an artifact's discovery to the moment the heroes find the poem, and introduce the last ghost when the heroes begin to suspect Travine or Emjan. In this case, have each artifact's discovery trigger special scenes, too (see *Scenes*, on page 50).

Possession

The goblins' ghosts try to communicate by speaking through the people they possess. They speak in Old Goblinish, their native tongue, though sometimes they use terms from modern, broken Garethi. A typical possession follows this sequence:

Approach: The inmate becomes restless and begins to pant and groan in pain.

Possess: The inmate's body rears up and assumes a posture typical for the ghost. As a general portayal tip, avoid eye contact with the players and stare into empty space. For specific portrayal tips, do the following.

- **Wealthy Lord:** Lean back; move slowly; rub your belly
- **Strong Warrior:** Sit/stand upright; place your fist on your hips; speak snappishly
- **Good Scholar:** Hunch over; raise an index finger when you speak; take long pauses to think

Act: The ghosts suppress their victims' consciousnesses and can communicate freely. Those possessed are unaware of this and have no memory of the event later.

Departure: Each bout of possession ends with the ghost speaking its *Final Message* (see below); Fetanka's ancestor

recorded a version of these in her poem (see below). Just before the possession ends, the ghost stares briefly at the hero or heroes who spoke to him the most, and pronounces his *Final Message* directly to them.

Exit: The inmate retches and collapses to the ground, gasping and coughing.

• The Fertile Father does not appear during this adventure because his insignium is not present in the monastery (it is far away, in the hands of the Alliance of Kor's Sign).

The Messages of the Last Heroes

A ghost possessing an inmate is disoriented and assumes a reality of about 1,000 years ago. He feels an urge to convey an important message, as he senses that the land is awakening to fight an ancient enemy, and that the humans must accept their responsibility to defend the land.

At the conclusion of the adventure, the ghosts can serve as important allies by temporarily possessing the heroes, thus granting them special powers, but this requires a certain level of trust from the heroes.



However, he can only speak the lines he uttered when he was sacrificed in the role of hero.

He repeats these lines again and again in broken Garethi, sometimes adding a "yes" or "no" if someone asks him a question in a language that he understands. Only right before he leaves the host body does he pronounce his *final message*.

Pronouncements of the Wealthy Lord

"I die like a king—wealthy and respected."

"Your lords are your fathers—but you must follow your mothers."

"Be brave and just, and your wealth will make the world brighter!"

Final Message: "Give pride and glory, the strength of the tribe."

Artifact: Moose Antler

Pronouncements of the Strong Warrior

"Arise! The enemy approaches from the east!"

"My death guarantees our victory!"

"Give all for your country!"

Final Message: "We die for an empire that fights two enemies."

Artifact: Bear Paw

Pronouncements of the Good Scholar

"Honor tradition by forgetting it!"

"Life itself isn't the greatest good."

"It's not the fathers but the mothers who will prevail."

Final Message: "Your courage shall be small and your deeds empty."

Artifact: Badger's head

Four Verses about the Goblins

The spirits' *Final Messages* remind Fetanka of a poem written by an ancestor around 80 FB, in the vicinity of Korswandt, which she discussed with Olko and Alatzter. She has long mused about the meaning of this poem and thus has memorized the following verses.

"O Goblin, Friend! I see you silent today.
All my heroes went towards the cliffs.
For honor, victory, golden spoils of war?
Nothing but death by your own hand waits there.

O Goblin, Friend! I see you afraid today.
I do not know my father's name.
See your family, all good people.
They die for an empire that is fighting two battles.

O Goblin, Friend! I see you crying today.
Your courage was small and your deeds were empty.
Do you not have pride and glory, the strength of the tribe?
What is that to me? I cannot find myself.

O Goblin, Friend! I see you rage today.
My wife, she leads me on but turns me away all the time
Did your wife not give you children—and did you not enjoy her?
The two are one. Of what do you speak?"

As far as the heroes know, this poem might be the only surviving written clue about the change enacted by the Last Heroes' sacrifice. The heroes are supposed to learn more about modern goblin society during this adventure, and should thus recognize several important contradictions to this knowledge, as revealed in this poem (when in doubt, Fetanka can help point them out).

- Modern goblin society is matriarchal. They have male war chieftains, but the sorceresses usually wield all political power. Male spellcasters are unknown in goblin culture. Goblins do not know how procreation works. They believe that pregnancy arises from a blessing of their mother goddess, Mailam Redkai, and the concept of fatherhood is alien to them. This is one reason why goblins do not practice or even understand ancestor worship. They do not believe that the ghosts of the dead live on. Instead, the dead get buried in what goblins refer to as the "Great Pile," which symbolizes the world. No records exist of anyone successfully summoning the spirit of a dead goblin.
- Pride, strength, and courage are not important to goblin warriors. According to modern goblins' concept of honor, the "winner" is the one who survives at any cost. Thus there are no goblin heroes, and especially none who fight for honor. Goblins cannot imagine killing themselves for selfish reasons, though they sometimes sacrifice themselves in battle for the good of the tribe.
- According to commonly accepted history, the goblin empire that existed at the time Fetanka's old poem was written wasn't fighting two different enemies at the same time. Scholars know only of its battles with the Theater Knights. If there was another enemy, its identity remains a mystery.
- Fetanka can fill in any gaps in the heroes' knowledge. In her experience, goblins are both cunning thieves and wise negotiators. They are less easily impressed by gold and status than are humans, and judge the value of wares mainly on their practicality. Fetanka believes that female leaders are more prudent and more willing to compromise than men, and this holds for both Norbards and goblins. Goblins are less interested in personal glory and more in the common good; perhaps, Fetanka thinks, because the miracle of birth teaches them greater respect for life.

Reactions

Give the heroes the chance to interact with at least two possessed inmates. A systematical investigation requires the approval of the abbot-baron and causes various reactions, as follows.

When **Fetanka** makes the connection between events and the fragment of poem in her *Seffer Manich*, she becomes eager to solve the situation, if permitted.

Abbot-Baron Jelomir is mainly interested in arguments that blame Fetanka and the heroes and which exonerate the Korswandters. It is possible to convince him to grant more time for further investigations, but he authorizes only a few days at most.

The **Cultists of the Alliance of Kor's Sign** are also interested in learning about the ghosts. They didn't expect the ghosts to appear and fear that they might disturb the planned rite. Thus, they assist the heroes when they can, but stop helping if they risk revealing their true identities.

The **other inhabitants of the monastery** believe that the inmates conspire to deceive their caretakers, as things like this happen all the time. If any do accept the spirit possessions as fact, they become curious, but most share Jelomir's opinions.

NPCs

Besides the abbot-baron, who is the only Blessed One in the monastery, the staff include eleven laypeople, three novices, and eight Sun Legionaries. These serious, often silent boys and men pursue quiet lives of asceticism here. Between divine services and simple meals, they tend to the two dozen (primarily noble) inmates, some of whom were committed by their families while others confined themselves voluntarily in the hopes of curing some ailment of the soul. Staff duties leave little time for studying religious texts.



👤 Jelomir of Korswandt, Abbot-Baron

Brief Description: 40; skilled Blessed One of Praios; experienced spiritual healer; ascetic; clean-shaven; half-bald head with a formerly reddish blond tonsure; steely blue eyes; exceptionally clear gaze; deep worry lines on the brow; wears a heavy bearskin cloak over his vestments.

Motivation: Wants to be a good abbot to his monks, a good healer to the inmates, and a just bronnjär to his serfs—all in accordance with the laws of Praios, which he interprets rather sternly (especially regarding his own actions).

Agenda: Diverts himself from unresolved conflicts in the monastery by spending more time with the inmates. Their unexplained fits unsettle him, but Jelomir has trouble



accepting outside help because he fears losing his authority; he rebuffs accusations against his monks as long as possible.

Function: Cooperative and knowledgeable ruler who is overwhelmed by the situation but won't admit it; enforces decisions with determination, which can save or worsen the situation.

Background: Jelomir grew up under the corrupt regime supported by his father Lujkow, but Jelomir disapproved of it from an early age. During his noviciate in Festum, his disapproval only grew stronger. A few years ago, he returned to Korswandt to accept his Lujkow family inheritance and put an end to the corruption. His initial successes made enemies of many neighboring nobles—mainly those whose sympathies lay with the Alliance of Kor's Sign. At first, Jelomir made various compromises, partly out of consideration for his fellow monks, with whom he had been raised, and partly to abide by old contracts sworn in the name of Praios. The Korswandters have grown quite used to him.

Animosities: Corruption, irresponsibility, factiousness

Portrayal Tips: Listen with a furrowed brow and speak with a calm voice. Occasionally cross your arms.

Fate: If Jelomir survives the adventure, he fights against the Alliance of Kor's Sign with determination, but he dies in Seweria (see *Theater Knights 4: The Green Platoon*). For now, he can be an influential ally whose voice is heard in higher circles by people whom he trusts.

"Kor's Forest is a place of the dead. Our concern is the living. If there are ghosts in the forest, they deserve it, whether they be godless goblins or killers serving Kor."

"Superstition is of no use here. 'Tis better that you should pray for the well-being of the sick."

"Silence! You are merely guests!"

Rumors about Jelomir

"I deeply respect His Grace! As Praios wills!"

"Father Lujkow wasn't as stern. There were fewer troubles with the neighbors back then." (+)

"A pious man..." "a smart man..." "a just man..." (overheard as whispers)

"Serving here isn't always easy." (+)

Baron Emjan of Hursakoje



Brief Description: Late 30s; masterful warrior, inexperienced cultist; slender; shoulder-length, reddish blonde hair; full but patchy beard, due to scarring.

Motivation: Wants to advance within the Alliance of Kor's Sign and occupy a leadership position in the new Bornland.

Agenda: find the hidden artifacts with the aid of Travine and Brother Rochnow; maintaining his disguise is of the utmost importance; tries to recruit other inmates to his side.

Function: Skilled servant of the real villain, who wants to remain unnoticed as long as possible.



Jelomir of Korswandt

COU 16 SGC 14 INT 13 CHA 14

DEX 10 AGI 11 CON 12 STR 11

LP 29 AE - KP 36 INI 13+1D6

SPI 2 TOU 1 DO 6 MOV 7

Unarmed: AT 12 PA 6 DP 1D6 RE short

Sun-scepter: AT 14 PA 6 DP 1D6+3 RE medium

PRO/ENC 1/0 (winter clothes) (includes armor modifiers)

Advantages/Disadvantages: Noble II, Blessed One, Principles II (Church of Praios), Trustworthy

Special Abilities: Grapple, Tradition (Church of Praios), Defensive Posture

Skills: Body Control 6, Empathy 11, Etiquette 9, Feat of Strength 6, History 10, Law 10, Magical Lore 5, Perception 7, Persuasion 11, Religions 11, Self-Control 9, Stealth 1, Treat Soul 12, Willpower 8

Blessings: *The Twelve Blessings*

Liturgical Chants: *Banish Darkness 7, Bless Object 5, Blinding Ray 7, Protection from Magic 9, See Magic 5, Truth 9*

Ceremonies: *Exorcism 10, Purgation 8*

Combat Behavior: Jelomir is no warrior. In combat, he tries to hold his ground until help arrives.

Escape: If no help seems forthcoming, or if Jelomir loses more than half of his LP, he makes an orderly retreat.

Pain +1 with: 22 LP, 15 LP, 7 LP, and 5 LP or less.

Emjan of Hursakoje

COU 13 SGC 11 INT 13 CHA 11

DEX 12 AGI 13 CON 15 STR 16

LP 35 AE - KP - INI 14+1D6

SPI 1 TOU 3 DO 7 MOV 8

Bastard Sword: AT 16 PA 10 DP

1D6+8 RE medium

Short Sword: AT 15 PA 9 DP 1D6+3 RE short

Unarmed: AT 13 PA 8 DP 1D6+2 RE short

PRO/ENC 4/0 (chainmail) (include armor modifiers)

Advantages/Disadvantages: Noble I

Special Abilities: Blood Pledge, Combat Reflexes I, Feint I, Forceful Blow II, Inured to Encumbrance I, Mounted Combat, Onslaught, Suppress Pain, Terrain Knowledge (Forest), Tilt

Skills: Body Control 9, Empathy 7, Fast-Talk 5, Feat of Strength 11, Intimidation 7, Perception 6, Riding 10, Self-Control 9, Stealth 6, Willpower 5

Combat Behavior: Emjan fights with absolute dedication (Feint I and Forceful Blow II), using every tactical advantage. He does not give a damn about honor.

Escape: Emjan does not run away.

Pain +1 with: 26 LP, 18 LP, 9 LP, and 5 LP or less.



Background: This native of Seweria grew up in a status-conscious, violent family with long-standing sympathies to the Alliance of Kor's Sign. He gained experience in war as a low ranking officer in Uriel's Campaign, where he committed various war crimes. During this time he met Ishtan of Fountaindark, Uriel's lieutenant. Emjan supported Ishtan during the election for Noble Marshal in 1030 FB, without success. Among other things, his grief over these many failures led him to undertake this mission. Emjan needed to get himself locked in the dungeon, so he feigned fits of violent frenzy and had himself committed by his younger brother. Since this act is quite painful, he does so only when there is a risk his cover might be blown.

Animosities: Weaklings, cowards, Western Sewerians

Portrayal Tips: Speak with a low voice, stare, scratch your hair and beard, and yell and flail around if there is trouble.

Fate: Emjan does not appear in future official adventures. If he does not die during this adventure, feel free to use him again later as a mid-level opponent.

Special: Like all members of the cult, Emjan has a nine-fingered claw symbol burned onto the back of his neck. The inmates aren't shaved during winter months, as most feel that lice are more tolerable than frostbite.

Brother Rochnow

Brief Description: 23; experienced medicus, inexperienced monk; round face; sparse beard; black tonsure; naive.

Motivation: Believes that Emjan wants to help; finds it hard to be a monk and has trouble submitting to his authoritative abbot-baron; worries about his family, who live near Ouveymas.

Agenda: Help Emjan obtain the artifacts; Rochnow is unaware of the bloody deed that is planned.

Function: Naive abettor who covers for the villain until he is too deeply involved to get out.

Background: Rochnow has known Emjan since his childhood in Seweria. As the second son of the Karenow-Kreiben family, he could expect no inheritance and was forced into a monastic life. His disobedience became too disruptive for the monastery of Karenow, so he was moved to Korswandt, where he was met with suspicion. When Emjan arrived and revealed his mission, Rochnow helped keep Emjan's secret out of loyalty, but with a guilty conscience. Emjan promised the possessions (see page 44) will end when the artifacts are removed, which is true, but if it looks like Rochnow is about to reveal their secret, Emjan threatens retaliation against Rochnow's parents by the Alliance Kor's Sign. Either way, Rochnow is firmly under Emjan's control.

Portrayal Tips: Talk little, act polite but aloof. Move a bit too quickly. Chew your lower lip and crack your knuckles if the situation gets tense.

Fate: Rochnow does not appear in future official adventures.

Other Inhabitants of the Monastery

Introduce the following NPCs as desired, to flesh out the population of the monastery. For stats, use Brother Rochnow's stats. Sleeping rooms are indicated on the map. These NPCs can help the heroes during their investigation by providing useful knowledge, but acting against Jelomir's orders is risky, and anyone doing so expects something in return for their assistance.

Rochnow/Typical Monk

COU 13 SGC 14 INT 13 CHA 14

DEX 12 AGI 11 CON 12 STR 11

LP 29 AE - KP - INI 11+1D6

SPI 2 TOU 1 DO 6 MOV 7

Dagger: AT 11 PA 6 DP 1D6+1 RE short

Unarmed: AT 12 PA 7 DP 1D6 RE short

PRO/ENC 1/0 (winter clothes) (includes armor modifiers)

Advantages/Disadvantages: Principles II (Church of Praios)

Special Abilities: Grapple


Skills: Body Control 5, Empathy 5, Fast-Talk 4, Feat of Strength 6, Perception 6, Persuasion 7, Self-Control 9, Stealth 3, Treat Soul 9, Willpower 6


Combat Behavior: The monks try to grapple and hold their opponents. In a life or death situation, they attack with their daggers.

Escape: The monks always try to avoid armed conflict. They flee when they lose half their LP.

Pain +1 with: 22 LP, 15 LP, 7 LP, and 5 LP or less.


Monks


 **Brother Vitek** (60; gray tonsure; clean-shaven; red nose; beer belly; as *Thesaurar*, he is responsible for the monastery's administration; uses his position to garner harmless favors from serfs and smuggle goods from the monastery; lovable hedonist whom Jelomir has known since childhood)


 **Brother Littjev** (28; black tonsure and goatee; lanky; hooked nose; as *Infirmarius*, he is responsible for treating physical ailments; wants to prove himself to the abbot-baron; stern and adheres to the rules).

 **Brother Stane** (45; short; dark blonde tonsure and mustache; gentle face; always wears gloves; as *Scriptor*, he is responsible for the library and the archive; has grown peculiar over the years, finding it easier to deal with books than with humans; grows annoyed about minor things and evicts people from the library, which he truly regrets later).


Laymen

 **Robak of Wernski-Duderow** (15; novice; light brown tonsure; first beard growth on his cheeks; clumsy; likes Ilbin, from whom he has learned a little Goblinish; hates Littjev, whom he considers inhumane; needs somebody to teach him how to shave).

 **Ilbin Pegwood** (26; Sun Legionary; red, side-parted hair, full beard, buff; speaks Goblinish because he grew up in Uhdenberg; loves dice games; hates Stane for his unpredictability; needs somebody to deliver a letter to his sister in Uhdenberg).

 **Marissja Gemmenthaler** (24; Sun Legionary; brown ponytail; buff; loves her special role as a woman among men; hates Vitek for his corruption; wants a new book to read for entertainment).

Voluntary Inmates

 **Travine Cosbrietzki of Sirmgalvis** (22; agent of the Alliance of Kor's Sign, secretly working with Emjan; stocky; unkempt red

Inmate (Noble)

COU 14 SGC 12 INT 13 CHA 11

DEX 10 AGI 14 CON 12 STR 14

LP 29 AE - KP - INI 14+1D6

SPI 2 TOU 1 DO 7 MOV 7

Longsword AT 14 PA 8 DP 1D6+4 RE medium

Mace: AT 14 PA 7 DP 1D6+4 RE medium

Unarmed: AT 12 PA 7 DP 1D6 RE short

PRO/ENC 1/0 (winter clothes) (includes armor modifiers)

Advantages/Disadvantages: Noble / Personality Flaw (Feistiness or Unpleasant or Quixotic)

Special Abilities: Feint I, Forceful Blow I, Mounted Combat, Combat Reflexes I

Skills: *Body Control 7, Empathy 4, Fast-Talk 5, Feat of Strength 7, Intimidation 2, Perception 5, Riding 10, Self-Control 5, Stealth 6, Willpower 2*

Combat Behavior: Per individual; many of the monastery's inmates know basic combat techniques.

Escape: When LP fall to 10 or less.

Pain +1 with: 22 LP, 15 LP, 7 LP, and 5 LP or less.

curls that hide her brand; ranted against *thankless Norbard scum* and claimed to be Noble Marshal Jadvige of Hummegarben when she was committed; cannot decide on a single ailment, so she imitates symptoms she observes in other inmates).

👤 *Neesdan of Keyrock-Thornfield* (55; bald, one-eyed; thinks he is actually Marshal Gerbald and acts so convincing that even the goblin ghosts avoid him; sympathizes with the Alliance of Kor's Sign).

👤 *Rowena of Hummegarben-Ahrholt* (40; chin-length, graying hair; walks with a limp; fought on Uriel's side during the civil war and has sympathies for the Alliance of Kor's Sign; committed for extreme phobias against elves, dwarves, and felines).

👤 *Therinja III of Ilmenstone* (18; brown hair; petite; one of those people you wouldn't even notice if somebody didn't point her out to you; has been unresponsive for months; probably traumatized by an act of violence; her condition makes her an ideal medium, and the ghosts possess her often, to speak through her).

👤 *Semkin of Knightford-Wadessjotzk* (35; brown hair; average build; has the mind of a 6-year old; extremely acute senses; watches Emjan and Travine closely and appears highly suspicious of them; has difficulty communicating because he uses numbers instead of proper and common nouns).

Inmates Locked in the Dungeon

👤 *Emjan of Hursakoje* (D4; see above).

👤 *Fetanka Jantareff* (D5; see above).

👤 *Alinja of Dallenthin* (D6; 30; political prisoner; carefully braided blond hair, fine features; legitimate heiress of the Dallenthin family; suffers from regular, crippling migraines; Brother Vitek insists on keeping her here on suicide watch; secretly, her family makes regular donations to the monastery to keep her out of the way).

Sun Legionary

COU 15 SGC 11 INT 13 CHA 10

DEX 11 AGI 14 CON 15 STR 14

LP 35 AE - KP - INI 15+1D6

SPI 2 TOU 3 DO 7 MOV 7

Halberd: AT 15 PA 7 DP 1D6+6 RE long

Mace: AT 15 PA 8 DP 1D6+4 RE medium

Mace and Wooden Shield (passive): AT 15 PA 9

DP 1D6+4 RE medium

Unarmed: AT 12 PA 7 DP 1D6 RE short

PRO/ENC 4/0 (chainmail) (includes armor modifiers)

Advantages/Disadvantages: Increased Toughness / Negative Trait (Submissive to Authorities)

Special Abilities: Defensive Posture, Feint I, Forceful Blow I, Inured to Encumbrance II, Onslaught, Suppress Pain, Takedown

Skills: *Body Control 8, Empathy 4, Fast-Talk 0, Feat of Strength 8, Intimidation 6, Perception 5, Self-Control 10, Stealth 0, Willpower 6*

Combat Behavior: With enough room, the Sun Legionaries take advantage of the length of their halberds and try to knock their opponents to the ground. Otherwise, they defend with their shields and remain calm and focused.

Escape: When heavily outnumbered; at 10 LP, they attempt an orderly retreat.

Pain +1 with: 26 LP, 18 LP, 9 LP, and 5 LP or less.

👤 *Tirulf of Ask-Jarlak* (D7; 20; political prisoner; brown mop of hair; unruly bear of a man; handsome; violent braggart; boasts knowing a dark family secret, but the details change every time he tells about it; Jeromir keeps him here by order of the Church, though his conscience suffers for it).

👤 *Paale of Grotzkin-Beyondsevenduncumbers* (D8; 25; rugged; bushy eyebrows; black hair torn out in clumps; missing two fingers; committed for mood swings; growing worse despite careful treatment; tries to kill himself when left alone).

Typical Daily Routine in the Monastery

As guests, the heroes aren't obliged to attend services, but they are expected to make themselves useful and politely reciprocate the hospitality they enjoy.

6:30 am	Morning prayer
7:00 am	Breakfast
8:00 am	Work and Tending the Sick
12:00 pm	Noon prayer
1:00 pm	Lunch
2:00 pm	Work and Tending the Sick
6:00 pm	Evening prayer
7:00 pm	Dinner
10:00 pm	Bedtime

Rumors about the Confusion

This strange new affliction is the main topic of conversation among the monks. Make use of the following NPCs and situations to either confirm the heroes' suspicions or steer them in the wrong direction.

Some villagers and inmates like to weave tall tales. Rochnow, Emjan, and Travine are especially interested in leading the heroes astray during their investigation. In general, if the heroes want to receive something more useful than a frown and an admonishment, they should try to earn the trust of some of the legionaries and monks.

About the Fits

- ☞ "They put up a fuss, roll around on the floor, and calm down again. Then they stare off into space and babble. And then suddenly it's all over." (+)
- ☞ "Possession? Many here suspect something like that. But it is true that these incidents have become more numerous recently." (+)
- ☞ "Those afflicted speak in tongues. It can be quite scary. (+) No such language exists." (-)
- ☞ "It mainly affects Therinja of Ilmenstone, but other inmates have suffered such fits. There must be more to it." (+)
- ☞ "It doesn't make sense that all show exactly the same symptoms. And none of them remember their episodes." (+)

Inmate Records

The heroes can petition Infirmarius Littjev to let them see the inmate records. If he agrees, he allows them 2 hours per day to examine the files, which he keeps in the scriptorium. During this time, the players may make a check using *Treat Soul*. If successful, each QL grants one level of the following information.

- I Inmates have spoken in tongues several times in recent weeks. Most incidents seem to have involved Therinja III of Ilmenstone.
- II The incidents didn't start until Therinja was admitted. Since then, many more people are exhibiting these symptoms.
- III The diagnosis often does not sufficiently differentiate between possession and a sickness of the soul. Some of the monks might be neglecting their recordkeeping duties.
- IV Some inmates remain here even though it doesn't seem necessary. Among the new inmates, there are an unusually large number of voluntary admissions.
- V It seems that Vitek and Rochnow in particular have been neglecting their recordkeeping duties and taking only the most superficial notes. Littjev and Stane, on the other hand, take very precise, detailed notes. Jelomir's note-taking quality varies.
- VI Rochnow is given difficult cases despite his inexperience. Jelomir's notes are suspiciously vague regarding inmates who are held here seemingly without reason and who come from influential families.
- VII Emjan's and Travide's records are almost empty, even though their diseases caused quite a ruckus when they were admitted.



As an alternative, the heroes can try researching specific inmates. Each QL from a successful *Treat Souls* check grants one line from the following chart.

Name	Length of Stay	Ailment	Healer	Notes
Travine Cosbrietzki of of Sirmgawlvvis	1 month	Delusions	Rochnow	Here voluntarily; no peculiarities
Thornfield	24.5 months	Delusions	Littjev	No peculiarities
Hummegarben-Ahrholt	30 months	Fear	Jelomir	Here voluntarily; Phobias: Isdirii, Rogolae, Felidae; probable war criminal. See Rupprecht: Justice in the Face of Horror, RsN-2.016
Therinja III. von Ilmenstein	2 weeks	Stane	Stane	Periods of apparent POSSESSION!!! OBLIGATORY consultation of signature AfG-3.085 and DmK-7.402! Needs a specialist!
Semkin of Knightford-Wadessjotzk	41 months	Cretinism	Vitek	No peculiarities
Emjan of Hursakoje	2 months	Frenzy	Rochnow	self-commitment; dungeon; no peculiarities
Alinja of Dallenthin	11 months	Possession	Vitek	Dungeon; no signs of improvement
Tirulf of Ask-Jarlak	26 months	Frenzy	Jelomir	Dungeon; vivid imagination; no signs of improvement Paale of Grotzkin-
Beyondsevincucumbers	18.25 months	Death wish	Littjev	Dungeon; 5 suicide attempts, immobilization recommended; initial diagnosis: mood swings; no therapeutic success

About the Cause of the New Affliction (the Possessions)

- “It’s a Norbard witch’s curse (–). It’s logical, as the Norbards hate all nobles. Good thing we caught this zibilja. Now we must find her accomplice.”
- “All simulants! They only want to confuse us with their babbling.” (–)
- “The land itself is awakening and wants to kill the humans. And there is something foul in Kor’s Forest (+/–). A holy place like the monastery protects us, but its presence also provokes the evil” (–)
- “Bad dreams or delusions, I presume (–). Anyway, His Grace never found signs of a possession (+). We should consult a Blessed One of Boron” (+/–).
- “Thesia of Ilmenstone is dead, but she still has something to contribute to Bornland. That is why she speaks through the mouth of her cousin, Therinja. Perhaps it is not so easy to shout all the way from Rondra’s halls.” (–)
- “Legionary Merissja has been the fairest person in the castle for quite some time, but Therinja envies her. (+) Therinja feigns suffering fits and has convinced other inmates to follow suit so her deception will not be so obvious” (–).

About Countermeasures

- “Ice water treatments, flagellation, confinement in a darkened cell; we tried everything, but nothing worked (+). Well, we should continue trying” (–).
- “Lady Ilmenstone would be cured of her fits if she would just spend a night in the chapel (+/–). But she is afraid of heights and doesn’t want to climb to the top of the keep” (+).
- “Prayers and listening. Force will never work” (+).
- “Lock them away. Just lock them away and hope things improve in spring. Many problems go away in spring” (–).

About Newcomers

- “Yes, we have received many newcomers in recent weeks. But things always happen in waves. We saw a similar increase, two years ago. And before that, as a result of Uriel’s campaign” (+).
- “Few people commit themselves to a sanatorium. Usually, family members are behind it. Ask Littjev for the inmate files.” (+)

Incorrect Suspicions

- “Vitek is an old rake. He certainly hasn’t taken a vow of chastity, and pretty Firunja from the village always spends a suspiciously long time with him when she brings eggs and milk to the monastery...” (+).
- “Vitek decides what the inmates eat (+). Maybe something is wrong with the food?” (–)
- “Littjev is a tough man. Before Therinja’s fits began, he was her medicus. Stane took over because he is more experienced (+). Maybe Lady Ilmenstone only wanted a different doctor?” (–)
- “Littjev does everything Jelomir tells him, and he knows some secrets. For example, he knows who has been making all those large donations to the monastery” (–).
- “Stane has spent much time studying the Ilmenstone woman and a few of the other inmates that suffered fits. He usually doesn’t do that. Has brought a lot of books (+). Maybe a cursed one from the poison chest was among them?” (–)
- “Jelomir is keeping some perfectly healthy people here against their will, at the behest of their families, people say. Political prisoners, if you ask me. But why, exactly, I don’t know.” (+)

Scenes

The following scenes serve to divert the heroes’ attention and add intrigue to the adventure. Goblin ghosts and Norbards serve the dramaturgical function of delaying the heroes’ discovery of the cultists by keeping them entangled in conflicts. Depending on the course of these events, the heroes may gain knowledge and allies that prove advantageous against the Alliance of Kor’s Sign at the conclusion of the adventure. Insert Optional Scenes wherever you wish, but use the others in the order in which they are presented.

Fetanka’s Arrest

Trigger: Fetanka and the heroes arrive at Kor’s Forest.

Function: Get the heroes to Castle Korswandt and keep them there.

Scene: The Jantareffs have an appointment to meet Anshag at a crooked, hollow elm tree. The agreed upon signal is four blows with a branch against the trunk, repeated after twenty breaths. Surprisingly, Abbot-Baron Jelomir appears along with four Sun Legionaries. He accuses Fetanka of illegal magic and has her arrested. He listens patiently to the heroes’ objections, but insists on his bronnjär’s privilege of jurisdiction. Since Fetanka might attempt to flee, Jelomir insists she must be thrown into the dungeon, but he allows the highest-ranking hero to act as Fetanka’s lawyer and invites them to stay at Castle Korswandt.

Background: Jelomir has never been present to witness a possession or exorcise one of the goblin ghosts. His serfs informed him of the arrival of Norbards in the area—which is reason enough to ride out with some armed men and check that everything is in order. Jelomir hears the knocking signal by accident, and he knows enough about Norbards to recognize a zibilja.

Other Solutions: Any hero who tries to prevent Fetanka’s arrest is breaking the law. If the party hides Fetanka in the Jantareff wagon fort, Jelomir insists that they surrender her or risk attack. Jelomir accepts the word of honor of a respected hero (maybe when he learns that the heroes are here at Alatzter’s request) who is willing to be taken to Korswandt in place of Fetanka, as long as Fetanka swears to use no more magic while in the county (although this might prove troublesome when the next possession occurs...). If the scene devolves into an armed confrontation, Jelomir tries to arrest the heroes, but his men do not try to kill them.

Gerbald? Is that You in There?

Trigger: The heroes enter the monastery.

Function: Encourage the heroes to stay at the monastery and investigate the mysterious happenings.

Scene: Shortly after the heroes arrive, Neesdan of Keyrock-Thornfield asks if they have come to deliver his treasure from the Mosse. Brother Littjev soon appears and hustles Neesdan back to the palace rather curtly. Portray Neesdan just as you did Gerbald’s ghost, and use the same terms and phrases, but try not to give the heroes a strong reason to analyze him right away. Have Littjev act suspiciously enough to make them curious, but nothing more.

Background: Neesdan's appearance is coincidental, but he has learned much about Marshal Gerbald and plays his role very convincingly. If the heroes spend sufficient time talking to Neesdan (cumulative check *Treat Soul*, 3 hours, 7 attempts) they learn that he once encountered Gerbald's ghost and lost his mind as a result.

Other Solutions: Other characters can ask for the heroes' help, thus giving them a reason to stay in Korswandt. For example, Legionary Pegwood might mention finding the tracks of riders and asks for assistance in case bandits attack. While tending to the heroes, Novice Robak could mention the recent spirit possessions and let slip that monks don't know how to proceed. If the heroes then try to leave, Jelomir repeats his offer of housing them in the castle. Fetanka's possession by a ghost should be sufficiently interesting to keep them at the castle. Orchestrate other scenes of possession, if needed, to convince the heroes to stay.

Sickbed Visits

The monks and soldiers who live at the monastery all believe in Praios and want to see the problem resolved, but this does not mean they are willing to leave the heroes alone with dangerous inmates. Initially the heroes have permission to visit Fetanka, but only with supervision. After darkness falls, however, and each new possession causes a noticeable ruckus, anything the heroes can do to calm the inmates helps build trust with the monks.



On the Trail of the Conspirators

Optional Content

Function: Help the heroes identify the conspirators.

Scenes: Individual heroes notice the following scenes with a successful check using *Perception (Spot)*. When questioned about these incidents directly, the conspirators answer with one of the indicated *misdirections* to throw off suspicion and then try harder to remain unnoticed. Each use of a *misdirection* imposes a cumulative penalty of 1 to the heroes' *Perception* checks for noticing these scenes.

- Rochnow asks Emjan if he has found "the second or third one already."
- *Misdirection:* One of the goals of Emjan's therapy is to expose and discuss three of his greatest weaknesses.
- Travine explains to Rowena of Hummegarben the power she has been promised when "His kingdom comes."
- *Misdirection:* By "His," Rowena means Praios, whom she says will put an end to the eerie events in the monastery.
- Emjan admonishes Rochnow for not preventing a search of his cell.
- *Misdirection:* Emjan is insane and believes that Rochnow is his serf. The door to Emjan's cell isn't locked, and his cell gets searched again.
- *Misdirection:* Rochnow doesn't know his duties well enough and forgets to lock the door.
- Emjan vies for the favor of Tirulf of Ask-Jarlak in the dungeon and promises him great power in the "New Realm."

- *Misdirection:* When the two escape the castle, they try to start a new life in the Middenrealm.
- Travine creates a duplicate key for a dungeon cell by using the forge (she pressed the key into some wet clay, to make a template for a new key). If confronted with overwhelming evidence, she admits that the key opens Emjan's cell.
- *Misdirection 1:* She is in love with Tirulf of Ask-Jarlak and wants to spend the night in his cell. *Misdirection 2:* She is actually in love with Emjan, but he is much uglier than Tirulf, so she thought nobody would believe her.
- Alinja of Dallenthin warms to the heroes and claims that Rochnow regularly frees someone who then taps on the walls for hours. She thinks this person resides in a cell around 30 feet from hers, but she has never been able to see the door.
- *Misdirection:* When confronted with this, Rochnow mentions that Alinja is a political prisoner, a fact that Vitek confirms if bribed. Both feel that the family of Dallenthin is untrustworthy, and that Alinja's uncle, Jucho, a former Noble Marshal, is living proof: He was always close to the free-minded rich and even established the impotent Order of the Ram near the Walsach River to trick bronnjars into placing more faith in Rondra.

Scenes with the Jantareffs

Optional Content

Function: Distract the heroes and slow down their investigation if they seem to be figuring things out too quickly.

Scenes: The Norbards camp outside the village. If the heroes do not visit the camp directly, they can use serfs as go-betweens, or, in urgent cases, summon them to appear at the gate house.

- Either way, Fetanka asks the heroes to retrieve her Seffer Manich from the wagon fort so she can cast her *Dreamwalker* ritual and help investigate the spirit possessions. Jelomir does not give her permission to do this. *Consequences:* If the heroes try to retrieve the chronicle in secret and get caught, they damage their credibility with Jelomir and he confiscates the Seffer Manich. Brother Vitek's secret smuggling connections might prove useful here.
- Dasha tries to negotiate Fetanka's release with the abbot-baron. *Consequences:* After some discussion, Jelomir agrees to hold a trial soon and permits Norbards to testify in favor of the zibilja. The heroes must participate, shortening the time they have to conduct their investigation.
- Alriksej informs the heroes that Dasha received an offer from the Ragashoffs. Dasha is supposed to pick up a weapons shipment from the Ragashoffs in Hamkeln and deliver it to Sirmgalvis. Alriksej fears that the meshpocha might be involved in risky dealings again and that they might abandon their zibilja if caught. *Consequences:* It is possible to keep Dasha from carrying out her plans, but only by promising her a favor she can claim at any time. The Aunt thinks that there is no point in waiting for Fetanka's release when the family stands to make a good profit.

The Scout

Optional Content

Function: Give the heroes a sense of achievement when they draw the right conclusions, or else help them if they are stuck.

Scene: The heroes find some tracks in the snow that indicate somebody has been watching the monastery at night (*Tracking (Humanoid Tracks)* +2). If they follow the tracks, they find a spot where the scout met several riders who came from Kor's Forest. If they follow the tracks into the forest, they find either a small campsite of six cultists or walk into an *ambush* (competitive check *Perception (Spot)* vs. *Stealth (Hide)*). If needed, the scout has the stats of a Squire of the Alliance (see page 60).

Other Solutions: The heroes spot the scout at night from the castle (*Perception (Spot)* -3), and can then ambush him the next night. If they capture the cultist/scout, Rochnow tries to isolate him at Emjan's behest. The Jantareffs tell the heroes about seeing many armed men and women on the road. Alternatively, the Jantareffs steal a message from a careless messenger from Sirmgalvis. It reads simply: *How is the plan proceeding? We are still awaiting the dragon!*

Bloody Ground

Trigger: Emjan finds the third artifact.

Function: Spread terror; give the heroes a good reason to investigate the dungeon and remind them that time is running out.

Scene: The Heroes wake to the sound of Rochnow yelling in alarm. The whole dungeon is full of bloody footprints, and bloody handprints and spatters cover many cell doors. Blood is pooling under the cell doors of Alinja, Emjan, Fetanka, and Tirulf, and the clothes of all four inmates are covered in blood as well. Rochnow left more traces of blood as he ran through the dungeon opening cells to check if all was in order. If questioned, the inmates mention hearing sounds of iron hitting stone, and also a spooky moaning that chilled their blood.

Competitive check: *Tracking (Humanoid Tracks)* vs. *Tracking (Hide Tracks)*

QL 1: Another person besides Rochnow left tracks here. It was probably a man wearing the same kind of sandals worn by monks and inmates in the castle.

QL 2: Strangely, the blood does not coagulate and dry up. The footprints seem clustered around the four cells and three spots on the bare wall (in front of the secret rooms).

QL 3: Rochnow left more tracks than he claims. Small pebbles and traces of dust are found on the floor near the secret doors on the bare wall. •

• Anyone tapping the wall in the right place (or making a successful cumulative check on *Perception (Search)* +2, 10 minutes, 7 attempts) finds one of the walled-in hollow spaces that formerly contained a goblin artifact (see *The Dungeon* on page 42). The blood that flowed from the artifacts is slightly magical and carries strong elemental energy (Humus), but it exhibits no fixed magical structure.

Background: Yesterday, Emjan located the third artifact and made arrangements with Rochnow to remove the three items from their hiding places that evening. To hide their activities, both of them waded through the blood and spread it around. They placed all three artifacts in a large sack and hung it from a rope underneath the ledge

outside Emjan's cell window, which is cut into the cliffside. While they worked to repair the holes they had made in the walls, they made moaning noises in the corridor and struck cell doors with their hammers to terrify the inmates. ••

Consequences: Fear spreads throughout the monastery, especially the next night, when all the ghosts are now active. If the heroes cannot somehow prove Fetanka's innocence—and footprints which only they can interpret do not count as evidence—Abbot-Baron Jelomir decides something to be done. Since no guilty party can be found, he announces that he will burn out her magical power the next day to prevent her from causing more harm (see *The Purgation* on page 53).



Instead of Fetanka, Jelomir decides to focus on a magically gifted hero.



Jelomir becomes convinced that Fetanka has nothing to do with the possessions. He decides to perform an exorcism on her, instead of the purgation, and asks the heroes to pray by his side.

•• If the heroes search Emjan's room and look in the right place (or make a cumulative check on *Perception (Search)* -3, 10 minutes, 5 attempts), they find the rope tied to the sack with the artifacts. The sack cannot be seen from the castle wall, as the cliff protrudes slightly at the top.

Investigative Success

If the heroes produce iron-clad evidence pointing to one of the three conspirators—and the Abbot-Baron takes this very seriously—the suspect is locked in the dungeon and questioned for a day. The next day, the suspect is taken to the room that contains the old torture implements. If the heroes don't interfere, the monks use torture (*Intimidate*) to question the suspect. Whether the interrogators learn anything useful depends on the conspirator's Willpower (or you can use GM's discretion). The abbot-baron does not use the liturgical chant *Truth* (see the *Core Rules*, page 331) until the third day, whereupon he learns the true scope of the conspiracy.

Theft

Optional Content

Trigger: The scene “Bloody Ground” (the next day, or even that same day)

Function: Allow the Alliance of Kor’s Sign to obtain the Blue Tome, OR allow the heroes to catch Brother Rochnow. The heroes must be in possession of the Blue Tome to use this scene.

Scene: Rochnow sneaks into the heroes’ living quarters when he thinks he is alone and tries to steal the Blue Tome. If the heroes do not often check on the tome, they notice that it is missing only with a check on *Perception (Spot)* -1. Rochnow hides the tome under Travine’s bed but is seen entering her room by Legionary Pegwood. The Legionary doesn’t think much of it and keeps quiet, but only because he wants to confront Rochnow with the supposed hanky-panky when he sees an opportunity to throw it back in the monk’s face.

Consequences: If Rochnow’s plan succeeds, he delivers the tome to the cultists along with the artifacts.

Beacon

Optional Content

Trigger: The night of the day after “Bloody Ground” (alternatively, triggered with *Perception (Spot)* -5).

Function: Give the heroes one last chance to avert disaster.

Scene: A hero awakens to the sound of footsteps. Half an hour later, a ghostly light appears on top of the keep and burns for about a quarter of an hour.

Background: Travine secretly climbs the stairs to the top of the keep and lights the beacon for Anshag’s scouts. It is possible to catch her on her way back down, but she taking care to avoid being seen (make a *Stealth (Hide)* check for her).

Consequences: At dawn, three riders appear at the foot of the cliff below the castle, whereupon Emjan lowers the sack containing the artifacts.

Purgation

Trigger: The heroes still do not have any compelling evidence pointing to a cultist one day after “Bloody Ground” occurs.

Function: Sow confusion; keep the heroes and the inhabitants of the monastery busy so that the cultists can attempt to escape. The purgation is not actually meant to take place, as Fetanka is supposed to survive this scene.

Scene: Fetanka is placed in chains by four Sun Legionaries, two monks, and Jelomir has them drag her from the dungeon to the chapel. Jelomir plans to subject the zibilja to torches, branding irons, and scourges, accompanied by long prayers to Praios, until the magic has been burned from her body. Whether she can survive the procedure is unclear. The purgation starts at noon and lasts until 4 PM if nothing interrupts them.

Background: Jelomir doesn’t know how to proceed, but the hauntings have increased, and he feels forced to act. He believes in grabbing a problem by the root, and thus intends to render Fetanka harmless.

Outbreak

Trigger: When the greatest number of heroes and Sun Legionaries are distracted during the Purgation.

Function: Create a demand for action; show the heroes that they weren’t fast enough during their investigation and that they must search Kor’s Forest to prevent matters from getting even worse.

Scene: Suddenly, sounds of battle echo from the castle courtyard. The heroes and four Sun Legionaries rush to investigate, and discover a massacre. Apparently, several dangerous inmates escaped and armed themselves. Three legionaries are dead or badly injured and another seems to be missing. The escapees seemingly took four monks and inmates hostage and headed for the gate house.

Background: While Emjan unlocks the armory, Tirulf of Ask-Jarlak and Alinja of Dallenthin, and two other inmates lure yet another inmate into the dungeon to assassinate him. Meanwhile, Travine, Rowena of Hummegarben, the confused-but-combative Neesdan of Keyrock-Thornfield, and four other inmates attack the residence, where they capture four hostages, having armed themselves with knives and hatchets they found in the workshop. The hostages’ cries for help draw the Legionaries away from their posts into the courtyard, where they are ambushed by superior numbers. The escaped inmates defeat the Legionaries and take their weapons. This is when the heroes come onto the scene.

The Villains’ Strategy: Twelve escaped inmates hustle their four hostages to the gate house. The fastest inmate reaches it in 1D6+2 CR, but the guardroom isn’t large enough to hold all of them. From this well-defended location, they shoot arrows at anyone in the inner courtyard. They hang two lit torches on the gate tower and wait for reinforcements. Nine cultists on horseback (for stats, see page 57) arrive in ten minutes. The inmates/cultists open the gate for the mounted cultists, even if they must put themselves at great risk to do so. Once the riders have access to the castle courtyard, they attempt to take over the castle. If they fail, they try to take more captives (avoiding the heroes) and warn off any potential pursuers with threats. If things go badly, the riders cover the escapees’ retreat. In either case, when they ride off, one of them shouts, “Do not follow us. We are many, and Kor is on our side.” They take a twisting route to confuse pursuers as they head towards the location of the rite, which they reach later that evening.



Abbot-Baron Jelomir has little experience as a commander and fears losing everyone and everything he knows in this attack. Thus, he is willing to risk the lives of his Sun Legionaries and himself to stop the villains. He might even mistakenly hinder a proper course of action and turn it into a disaster.



Jelomir makes good decisions and has taken security measures the escapees do not know about. Examples include an escape tunnel beneath the castle wall, parts of a small, easily-assembled catapult stored above the stables, or an explosive object in the poison chest that he can be persuaded to use. He also has some healing potions that prove useful during the aftermath.

The heroes and Fetanka should survive this attack, so give them the chance to bluff, distract, hide, and otherwise think their way through the situation. The more skillful they are, the more lives they can save, and the more supporters they have for the conclusion. Use the heroes' investigative successes to gauge how quickly and how well the inhabitants of the monastery react to the attack. They might not all survive, but even if only a few of them are already armed or watching for an attack, they could delay the cultists long enough to give the heroes an advantage.



We're Even

Optional Content






When the heroes' situation seems hopeless, the leader of the mounted fighters signals for his forces to cease the attack. Victorious, he walks towards the heroes, removes his pot helm, and grins at them. He is Anshag, an old enemy who now openly displays his ties to the Alliance of Kor's Sign, as do Jaruslav of Cherrydell-Krabbwitzkoje and Rudjev of Arauken.

"Do not worry, my friends. You will not die today," Anshag says. "With the Thorwal Drum, you did us a great service. Go on your way. Leave this land. But be warned: any debt between us is now settled."

The Mass Baptism Ceremony

In this section, the heroes witness the start of the Alliance of Kor's Sign's effort to seize control of Bornland. The cult first performs a mass baptism ceremony at Blood Cliff, which they treat as a Sanctum of Kor. Blood sacrifices and intoxicating substances called Kor's Seeds help initiate the cult's latest recruits and make them especially skilled fighters. The newly inducted cultists receive a revelation of Graqualos and (if the rite proceeds far enough) they even gain special powers via the ceremony *Receive Kor's Sign* (see page 54). The heroes probably won't be able to prevent this, but they might still achieve a partial victory. By the end of the scene, the heroes should achieve the following goals.

- If the Blue Tome was taken from the heroes earlier, they still have a chance to recover it. At this point, if you are running this as a stand-alone adventure, the tome remains sealed and the heroes can take it to a safe place. The tome is not mentioned again in official adventures after the Theater Knights campaign ends.
-  They recover the Blue Tome after it has been opened (see *Appendix*).
-  They get an idea of the number of cultists in the Alliance of Kor's Sign and therefore understand the danger it poses.
-  If you are running this as a stand-alone adventure, reduce the number of cultists attending the rite to give the heroes a chance to defeat the Alliance. Besides Anshag and Gerwulf, the only cultists present are those who assisted in the escape from the monastery. When the campaign ends, the Alliance's power declines sharply, and any survivors retreat to their homes in fear.

Receive Kor's Sign



Receive Kor's Sign is a mass-baptism ceremony that grants recipients a portion of the divine power of Kor for use in battle. This ceremony does not affect Blessed Ones.

Check: COU/INT/CON

Effect: This ceremony allows the caster to baptize (QL x 50) people in the name of Kor. Anyone thus baptized may draw karmic power from a special substance called Kor's Seeds, which they ingest as part of the ceremony, for a period of 9 years. They also receive the special ability **Blood Pledge**. Activating this special ability requires 1 action, after which the user gains the state *bloodlust* (see the *Core Rules*, page 34). By sacrificing 1D6 of their own LP, cultists receive an additional bonus of +2 AT when fighting two or more opponents at the same time. • They also gain the special abilities Charge, Forceful Blows, and Sweep II (see *Core Rules*) even if they don't meet the prerequisites. Note that *bloodlust* does not prevent them from using these special abilities. *Bloodlust* lasts the normal 2D20 CR, after which all bonuses end. The effect can be triggered only once every 24 hours. To continue to receive these benefits, the recipient must be a worshiper of Kor. Those who are baptized grow increasingly aggressive, wilder, and more unpredictable as time goes by. They eventually develop a death wish and eagerly throw themselves into battle.

Ceremonial Time: 2 hours (you cannot use modifications on this ceremony's time)

KP Cost: 32 KP (you cannot use modifications on this ceremony's cost)

Range: 32 yards

Duration: 9 years

Target Category: Intelligent Creatures

Tradition: Kor*

Improvement Cost: D

Variants

- *Graqualos' Mediation* (SR 8, 10 AP): Only Theater Knights from the Weal Mountains knew this special ability, which they used to make a Blood Pledge to the Nameless God (instead of Kor).

• These opponents must be within attack distance (or within range, if the cultist is using a ranged weapon).

Anyone baptized with *Graqualos' Mediation* gains access to the karmic energy of the Nameless God. The duration of the ceremony is 13 years, not 9, and instead of developing a death wish, the recipient grows more susceptible to the influence of the Nameless God. All checks to influence the recipient in this way receive a bonus of 1. As time goes on, they experience visions and dreams that draw them closer to the Nameless God.

- The *Graqualos' Mediation* variant is also from Tradition (Kor). The Nameless One perverted the *Receive Kor's Sign* ceremony to create this variant.

Ceremony Variants

To learn a ceremony variant, a Blessed One must possess the prerequisite SR, and pay the listed AP. Also, as with trade secrets, learning a ceremony variant requires a teacher or a book. Once learned, the new variant is available when performing the associated ceremony.



Allies for the Heroes

Alone, the heroes stand no chance against hundreds of cultists, but they don't have time to summon reinforcements before the mass baptism rite takes place. At the GM's discretion, the heroes may receive assistance from the following groups, even if they are only able to make a minor contribution.

Warriors from Korswandt: Jelomir and a few Sun Legionaries who survived the attack on the castle gladly join the heroes and help with any good plan, but Jelomir does not surrender his command. They believe in facing the enemy directly, so convincing them to agree to a plan that involves stealth requires a competitive check with *Fast-Talk (Manipulate)* -2 versus *Willpower (Resist Fast-Talk)* for each fighter. These checks must be passed again if stealth is required while near the enemy.

Jeromir's Serfs: Much hinges on the heroes' success, and Jelomir suggests arming up to two dozen serfs. He knows that even armed serfs are highly unlikely to survive a battle, so it is easy to convince him to arm inmates instead.

The Jantereffs: The Norbards aren't particularly skilled at fighting and hesitate to get involved. The heroes have an influential advocate in the form of Fetanka, though, so they receive a bonus of +2 on their checks using *Persuasion (Public Speaking)* vs. *Willpower (Resist Persuasion)* to convince the Norbards to join them.

The Heroic Ghosts: the ghosts might help during the battle against their old enemy by possessing the heroes to give them strength. A ghost can possess a hero's body for no more than 3D6 CR, but it can repeat the process up to three times per day. When the ghost leaves the body, all bonuses end. Each ghost grants different bonuses, as follows.

- Wealthy Lord: +2 RC, +8 Riding, +8 Warfare, +4 Willpower
- Strong Warrior: Main weapon +3 AT, +3 DP, +4 Body Control, +4 Climbing
- Good Scholar: Halve all environmental penalties (visibility, terrain, enclosed space), +4 Willpower
- Fertile Father: +2 defense, +4 INI, +8 Self-Control

- Norbards or serfs enter battle bravely but soon grow fearful or flee when faced with superior numbers.

- Any or all of these potential allies volunteer to help—alternatively, they appear unexpectedly when the heroes need them the most.

Being possessed by a goblin ghost can be troublesome, even for heroes. This might manifest as dark visions and nightmares. The hero might develop Negative Traits such as Greed, Submissive to Authorities, Superstition, or Wastefulness, or Disadvantages such as Wild Magic. Any such development should be balanced with Advantages of equal AP value, such as Darksight, Exceptional Sense, Nimble, or Resistant to Cold. In any case, this should lessen any prejudices against goblins in the heroes as the heroes were goblins themselves for a while.



Kor's Forest and Blood Cliff

Before the goblins arrived, long-forgotten cultures carved out circular glades here and built mysterious rock towers to perform their magical rituals. Legends speak of ghosts, bandits, and animated trees in Kor's Forest, and with good reason. Deep-running streams and steep cliffs only add to the woods' threatening atmosphere. Blood Cliff rises up to the sky in the center of the forest, towering over everything. The mass baptism ceremony takes place at the foot of Blood Cliff. At night, the forest is pitch black (Level 4 visibility).

The route from Korswandt to Blood Cliff passes through the snow-covered forest. Tracks here are easier to follow (*Tracking (Humanoid Tracks)* +2), and horses have no trouble keeping their footing.

Vignettes

Use the following short scenes to enhance the heroes' journey through the dark forest and provide subtle hints regarding the awakening of the land. Periodically, the heroes find tracks of cultists who arrived recently or just in time for the rite.

Glade: A circular clearing suddenly opens up amid the trees. A single, weathered rock with strange runes cut into its surface rises in the center of the clearing.

Rock Tower: Man-sized stone blocks, heaped in piles of four or seven, rise above the treetops. They creak under the weight of the snow and sway disturbingly in the wind.

Stream: A frozen brook, one or two yards wide, runs a surprisingly convoluted course through the trees. Arm-thick tree roots seem to have recently and violently broken free of the ice. The banks of the brook drop steeply on both sides, as if they were cut into the ground with a knife.

Old Bandit's Campsite: The remains of a simple lean-to, with room for perhaps six people, is visible under the snow. A storm

or lightning strike seems to have damaged it. Two weathered Boron wheels sitting nearby, partly overgrown by roots, speak of the deaths of the former inhabitants. The partially cleared snow indicates that somebody camped here recently. From the tracks, it appears that they took flight suddenly.

Statue: A two-headed idol, reminiscent of the Four-Head of Hinterbruch, seems to stand guard over a strange rock formation. Maybe this was a cult site. The unmarked statue is missing a few limbs, but the weathered rock does not reveal how the limbs were lost.

Runes of the Alliance of Kor's Sign: Anshag's men painted red runes on the trees and carved claw symbols into the bark as signposts for cultists from distant lands.

Ghostly Apparition: The bound soul of an unfortunate poacher or robber haunts the gnarled trees after dusk, wailing about the terrors he experienced in the forest when he came here to hunt. Other ghosts, typically badly mauled Theater Knights who fought in the Battle of Kor's Forest, sometimes wander here at night as well, whimpering monotonously.

Creepy Doll: The heroes seek the source of a child's bloodcurdling scream, which echoes through the forest. In a circle of ancient, weathered, but skillfully-carved stone blocks, the heroes find a child's straw doll nailed to a post. It still bears traces of an old spell. A closer investigation reveals that it was a Satuarian illusion spell, probably cast here to intimidate the curious and keep them away from an isolated witch's house.

The Location of the Rite

A glade covering an area of about 300 square yards lies at the base of the snow-covered Blood Cliff. Someone has cleared the snow from four large stone platforms at the glade's center. Three of these platforms hold a statue similar to the Four-Head statue in Hinterbruch, and from their appearance, it seems obvious that the statue in Hinterbruch (the Fertile Father) once stood here as well. The glade is surrounded by towers made of piles of giant stone blocks. The blocks seem

extremely heavy and give the impression of having been piled up by trolls, or something even larger. A group of people (the blood sacrifices) is tied up near an altar that Anshag constructed several days ago.

Most cultists had to travel to be here, and their horses and baggage are stored a short distance away. A minimum of two experienced knights stand guard at each horse paddock, and squires walk the perimeter of the glade, ready to raise the alarm. The exact number of knights and squires on duty depends upon the success of the cultists' raid on Castle Korswandt (the safer the cultists feel, the less attention they pay to keeping watch).

- **Castle Seized:** one knight at each paddock, two squires patrolling
- **Many inmates escaped, few losses, four blood sacrifices obtained:** two knights at each paddock, two squires patrolling
- **Emjan free, average losses, at least two blood sacrifices obtained:** three knights at each paddock, three squires patrolling
- **Heavy losses, only one blood sacrifice obtained, more losses on the run:** four knights at each paddock, three knights patrolling
- **Castle gate remained shut, no undercover agents escaped, mounted cultists were followed and attacked on the run:** five knights at each paddock, five knights patrolling

Damn, They're Quick!

If the heroes enter Kor's Forest too soon, you can keep them from finding the cultists too quickly by tossing them a red herring or two. These could take the form of poachers, robbers, or even a startled goblin sorceress or witch who is trying to perform a ritual to lower her susceptibility to cold. All of these people know that they are trespassing in the jurisdiction of the abbot-baron and that they risk being arrested and handed over to him without delay. Thus, they attempt to flee anyone who spots them.



The Cultists

The heroes face at most 99 cultists plus a pearl dragon. If all cultists survived to this point and managed to reach the location of the rite, their disposition is as follows.

- 12 escaped prisoners (among them Emjan, Travine, and sympathetic ex-inmates)
- If the cultists captured the castle, nine cultists from the raid stayed there as guards
- 2 leaders (Anshag and Gerwulf with his pearl dragon)
- 20 cult recruits (*Inexperienced* and probably dazed)
- 56 other cultists, among them Squires (*Inexperienced*) and Pages (practically children)

These are mainly heirs from old bronnjar families. Each was inducted into the Alliance of Kor's Sign by a mentor (usually a parent or older relative). Mercenaries who serve the cultists are called *Squires of the Alliance*.

Most dress in leather or chainmail, but some wear splendid, silver-plated plate armor. Their tabbards or shields bear the device of a black, nine-fingered claw on a silver field. In addition to typical weaponry, some carry old, artfully etched Rondra's crests. Many wear their finest livery, with touches of centuries-old badges, sashes, cloaks, and even some helmet plumes (*panaches*) in white and red.

If the heroes get close enough, they see that the cultists have brands in the shape of a nine-fingered claw on the backs of their heads or necks. These brands, which show their allegiance to the cult, are often obscured beneath their hair. Some cult recruits tattooed their chests with mysterious runes that remind the heroes of Rondranian images or the rough goblin statues and grotesque gargoyles that are so common in Pilcrest. These tattoos use reddish brown ink that resembles the color of dried blood.

High-ranking cultists have shaven heads, and some have filed their teeth to points. In addition to the tattoos mentioned above, they wear arabesque ornamental scars that make their tattoos stand out in relief, like carvings. Members of the Cult of Kor commonly sacrifice a finger to their lord, and many bear other ritualistic mutilations as well, such as a missing ear, tongue, or eye.

The Rite Timetable

The following timetable depicts the rite as planned by the cultists. Omit any events the heroes prevented. Events that cannot be omitted without ruining the rite are marked with a (!). If Anshag or Gerwulf are unavailable to officiate for any reason, other cultists fill in for them as best they can. Use Emjan's arrival around 8:00 PM to estimate when the heroes arrive (at best, the heroes arrive around 10 PM).

01:00 pm: A pile of stones forms an altar at the center of the glade. The altar includes manacles to restrain uncooperative blood sacrifices. The stone ram's horn rests on a rack in the middle of the altar. The altar is surrounded by white banners that bear the symbol of the nine-fingered claw. (!)

03:00 PM: Anshag prepares the ritual site according to the instructions of the dragon rider Gerwulf. He sets the other artifacts on the remains of the three goblin hero statues. He also prepares the manacles to hold the blood sacrifices.

07:00 PM: The other cultists (99 at most) start arriving. The number of guards walking the perimeter decreases as the number of attendees increases. Anshag paints his face red and black, and the cultists now refer to him as the *Herald*. (!)

08:00 PM: Emjan arrives with his prisoners in tow. If he is delayed, Anshag waits at most one hour before starting the rite.

09:00 PM: Anshag gives a speech praising Kor's power and mercilessness, rants about *goblin scum*, *moneybags*, and *Norbard vermin*, and announces that the time of the great baptism has arrived with the help of "our brothers and sisters from the Iron Edge."

09:15 PM: Cultists gag the four blood sacrifices and tie them to statues on the altar; Anshag continues preaching.

09:30 PM: Gerwulf arrives, carried by his pearl dragon. He is hailed as *Grandmaster of the Fourth Vestment*, whereupon he gives a speech in old-fashioned language, greets the initiates, praises Graqualos as an Alveranian of Kor, and announces "Today, our conquest of Bornland begins!" He then praises Famerlor's strength, Mythrael's courage, Gerbald of Pilcrest's prudence, and Jadvige of Hummegarben's toughness. He goes on to decry the "Treason of the Silver Horde." He demands of the cultists: "When the abyss of Honor opens before you, jump right in! Step over sleeping giants, fight with the three-headed serpent, slaughter the thirteen Beasts of Unreason, and crush the crawling maggots of Chaos!"

10:00 PM: The ritual begins. Together, Anshag and Gerwulf utter dark prayers while opening the Blue Tome by pouring a corrosive liquid on the seal. The seal dissolves with a hiss. When the book opens, thunder rolls across the sky. Blood pours from their forearms and both lose 2D6 LP.

10:15 PM: There is more chanting, and nicked ritual daggers are blessed. Cultists place branding irons of Kor's Sign into the fires to begin heating. (!)

10:30 PM: Anshag carries the stone ram's horn through the ranks of cultists. They cut open their weapon arms and anoint the horn with their blood. Around twenty cultists disrobe and kneel down in the snow, naked. Their cleanshaven heads reveal that they have no brands. (!)

10:45 PM: The killing of the blood sacrifices begins. Gerwulf wields the dagger and deftly cuts out their hearts while Anshag catches their blood in the ram's horn. Other cultists spill the blood on the ground around the altar.

11:15 PM: Gerwulf invokes the name of Graqualos and the blood thickens into a black, sticky mass called Kor's Seeds. Red lightning crackles around the ram's horn, a sharp wind rises,

the smell and taste of the swirling snow turns sour. One by one, the recruits eat Kor's Seeds and enter a trance in which they behave like barely controllable wild beasts, but at this point they are unable to fight effectively. (!)

11:30 PM: At the leader's direction, the recruits chant the Creed of the Theater ("Know, dare, seek, be silent, rule!"), over and over again. As they chant, a cultist applies the brand of the nine-fingered claw to their necks. (!) Those who do not endure the branding in silence must sacrifice a part of their body. Afterwards, the newly minted cultists pass the ram's horn around while they chant a monotonous prayer, dip both of their hands into the horn, and smear their faces with blood.

12:00 AM: Climax of the ritual. A choral of Kor rises to a shout that makes the air tremble. A sudden downpour sweeps over the glade and snuffs out half of the torches.

12:15 AM: End of the ritual. Helpers cover the new cultists with blankets and everyone sings a final choral pleasing unto Rondra. Gerwulf says his goodbye: "Be prepared, brothers and sisters! When summer comes, we strike!" He takes the artifacts, mounts his pearl dragon, and flies away. ◯

12:30 AM: Their fervor suddenly quelled, the cultists say their goodbyes and disperse, changing their blood-stained

clothes before they leave the area. Anshag remains behind with his faithful followers to clean up after the ritual. He ignores the blood and leaves the sacrificial victims where they lie, but he does gather up the Blue Tome.

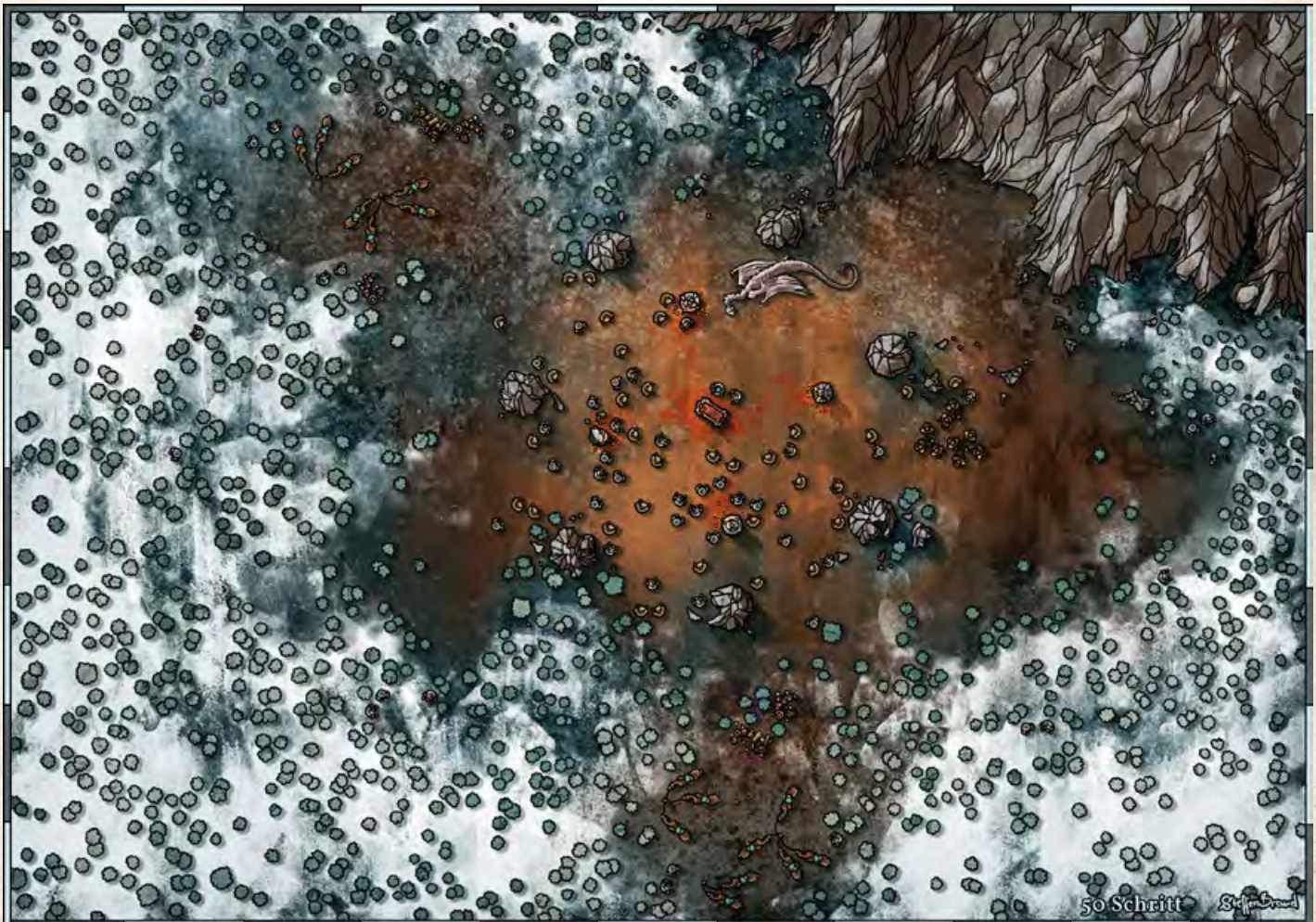
1:30 AM: Anshag leaves the glade along with the last few cultists and sets up camp nearby. They visit the site regularly during the next few days to pray before moving on to occupy Castle Korswandt.



If the situation seems likely to overwhelm the heroes or force them to take unreasonable actions, have them arrive at Blood Cliff after the rite ends, when only Anshag and a few assistants remain. After they defeat Anshag, a captured disciple of Kor tries to impress and intimidate them by revealing the events and meaning of the rite. In this case, be sure to give hints that similar ceremonies are taking place all across the Bornland.

During the ritual, all participants could suffer *stupor II* and lose 20% of their LP (see below).

• Record what happens to the artifacts. If Gerwulf makes off with them, they reappear later during the campaign. If not, the heroes obtain them.



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Opportunities for Action

The rite is highly distracting, and cultists must make *Perception* (*Spot*) checks with a penalty of 1 to notice if combat breaks out. Even if successful, they take 1D6+4 CR to react and intervene. Cultists can only notice disturbances that occur within a radius of 5 yards. Also, if the heroes approach by stealth, no more than three cultists at a time are eligible to make such a check.

A frontal attack has little chance of success, but fortunately the heroes have several options for disrupting the rite. Reward player creativity and unconventional solutions with bonuses to checks.

...And Nobody Comes On their way back from the raid on the castle, Emjan's people pass through one or more cultists' campsites and inform them that the rite is about to begin. Until the campers actually head out, though, heroes who managed to track Emjan without being noticed have approximately 15 minutes to ambush the campers and thus make sure they never arrive.

Get the Scouts! If the heroes overpower the scouts and don their clothes and helmets, they can blend in with the cultists to strike at the right moment.

Stampede the Horses! The heroes can use fire, noise, or other means to panick the cultists' horses. Up to 60 horses occupy the paddocks. Triggering a stampede requires a competitive check of *Animal Lore* (*Domesticated Animals*) with a penalty of 1 vs. the horses' *Willpower* (SR 3, 10/10/12). The horses suffer a penalty of 2 due to their unfamiliar surroundings. If successful, the horses charge off at their maximum MOV until they are rounded up, forced to stop by a natural obstacle, or stop due to exhaustion. A check takes 1 action. If the heroes plan ahead, they can use fire and noise to drive the horses toward the cultists. To resolve this quickly, roll 1D20 for each cultist in their path: on a result of 16-20, they get struck and suffer 2D6+4 DP. This probably won't kill any cultists but it will create a major distraction.

I'm Going to Ride the Dragon! Gerwulf's pearl dragon has a mind of its own, but it has been carrying its lord faithfully for many years, like a destrier. A hero can try to usurp control of the dragon by quickly jumping into its saddle (*Climbing*). If successful, the hero must avoid being thrown. This requires a check on *Ride* (*Combat Maneuvers*) -5 or *Flying* (*Combat Maneuvers*) -5. On a failure, the dragon throws and then attacks the hero. On a success, the hero may direct the dragon's movements but cannot give it commands.

Avalanche! The face of Blood Cliff and slopes towards the glade (and thus the cultists) and is covered in snow. Triggering an avalanche of snow and debris is possible...from the top, that is. Climbing the steep cliff takes 20 minutes and requires a check on *Climbing* (*Ice*) -3. Heroes who fail fall 2D6 yards. When the heroes arrive at the top, they must find the right spot (cumulative check with *Earthencraft* (*Stonecutter*) +2, 5 minutes, any number of attempts). To start the avalanche, the snow pack's 30 structure points must be reduced to 0. Bare hands inflict 1D6 per CR, while an appropriate tool, such as a shovel, inflicts 2D6+4 per CR. If the heroes succeed, approximately two thirds of the cultists get buried, suffering 4D6+8 DP. Freeing themselves requires a cumulative check using *Feat of Strength* (*Smashing & Breaking*), 10 minutes, 5 attempts.



The heroes are spotted while on the cliff and must face the pearl dragon.



The avalanche creates a noisy distraction but causes no damage.

We Will Get You All! After the ritual, the disciples of Kor's Sign, both old and new, disperse to their homes. The heroes can hunt down one or more of these small groups. If they take any prisoners, interrogation can reveal much about the mass baptism rite and the Alliance of Kor's Sign. The prisoners are unaware of any role Leudara may have played in the night's events. Regarding the planned summer uprising, they say they have been instructed to wait until the dragon rider gives the order to move. Each cultist knows the identity of only a few others, and then only those who happen to live in their neighborhood.

Away Supporters After the rite, Anshag and the other cultists who remain behind are severely weakened. Each is down 20% of their LP due to the cold, their voluntary bloodletting during the rite, and plain, old fashioned exhaustion, and also suffers 2 levels of the condition *Stupor*. This helps the heroes recover the Blue Tome.



Deus Ex Machina: if necessary, ghosts from ancient battles save the heroes' lives. When defeated, the heroes are taken to be blood sacrifices. But before the sacrificial dagger can fall, translucent shapes—ghostly Theater Knights in tattered armor, pierced by spears and arrows, with split skulls and cruelly hewn limbs—slowly rise from the ground. This sight causes the terrified cultists to freeze in their tracks. The leader of this spectral troop calls a halt to the rite with a hollow voice, saying "We were heroes because we heeded Kor's command. We were fools because we failed to understand what he wanted us to do. This ground has drunk enough blood, and you are fighting your battle in the wrong place." The cultists either black out or flee.

Anshag's End

When cornered, Anshag tears off his helmet and roars, "Marshal of Black Kor! Winged Murderer of the Silver Ones! Graqualos! Allow the victor to leave!" Then he slices off his left ear and attacks the hero that appears the most powerful. While doing so, he casts the liturgical chant *Enforce Honor*—honor in this case meaning 1) not interfering in the combat, and 2) allowing the victor to leave unhindered.

Effect of Heroic Deeds



Measure the heroes' success during this adventure by adding up points earned for various victories, as listed in the table. Each entry represents just one of the many goals that the heroes can achieve. This point total has the following in-game effect: If the heroes fail at everything on this list, 100% of the cultists they meet from now on in the campaign possess the special ability *Blood Pledge*. Each success reduces this percentage by the listed value. Note that the heroes cannot accumulate more than 100 points (100%), whereupon only the most important cultists they meet possess *Blood Pledge*.

Squire of the Alliance

COU 12 SGC 9 INT 11 CHA 9
DEX 11 AGI 12 CON 12 STR 13
LP 29 AE - KP - INI 10+1D6
SPI 0 TOU 1 DO 5 MOV 6

Unarmed: AT 11 PA 6 DP 1D6 RE short

Mace: AT 9 PA 4 DP 1D6+4 RE medium

Mace and Wooden Shield (passive): AT 9 PA 5
DP 1D6+4 RE medium

Short Sword: AT 11 PA 6 DP 1D6+2 RE short

Short Sword and Wooden Shield (passive): AT 11
PA 7 DP 1D6+2 RE short

Short Bow: RC 9 RT 1 DP 1D6+4 RA 10/50/80

PRO/ENC 3/1 (leather armor) (includes armor modifiers)

Advantages / Disadvantages: Noble I, Rugged Fighter / Negative Trait (Short Temper), Obligations II (Alliance of Kor's Sign)

Special Abilities: Forceful Blow I, Suppress Pain

Skills: *Body Control* 5, *Climbing* 4, *Empathy* 4, *Feat of Strength* 4, *Perception* 3, *Self-Control* 6, *Stealth* 2, *Warfare* 3, *Willpower* 2

Combat Behavior: Prefers Forceful Blows and sometimes uses Ranged Combat, but generally fights according to the Rondranian code of honor.

Escape: when LP fall below 12.

Pain +1 with: 22 LP, 15 LP, 7 LP, and 5 LP or less.

Knight of the Alliance

COU 14 SGC 11 INT 12 CHA 10
DEX 11 AGI 12 CON 14 STR 15
LP 33 AE - KP - INI 12+1D6
SPI 1 TOU 2 DO 5 MOV 7

Unarmed: AT 11 PA 6 DP 1D6+1 RE short

Longsword: AT 13 PA 7 DP 1D6+4 RE medium

Mace: AT 12 PA 6 DP 1D6+5 RE medium

Two-Handed Sword: AT 11 PA 3 DP 2D6+5
RE medium

War Lance: AT 10 DP 2D6+6

Light Crossbow: RC 11 RT 8 DP 1D6+6 RA 10/50/80
PRO/ENC 4/1 (chainmail) (includes armor modifiers)

Advantages/Disadvantages: Noble II, Rugged Fighter / Obligations III (Alliance of Kor's Sign)

Special Abilities: Blood Pledge, Forceful Blow II, Inured to Encumbrance I, Mounted Combat, Suppress Pain

Skills: *Body Control* 7, *Climbing* 5, *Empathy* 6, *Feat of Strength* 10, *Intimidation* 8, *Perception* 5, *Riding* 10, *Self-Control* 9, *Stealth* 3, *Willpower* 4

Combat Behavior: Knights of the Alliance use Forceful Blows and mounted attacks. Some still fight according to the Rondranian code of honor, while some fight without scruples. They use Blood Pledge when confronting superior numbers.

Escape: Usually when LP fall to 8 or lower; they do not flee if under the effects of Blood Pledge.

Pain +1 with: 25 LP, 17 LP, 8 LP, and 5 LP or less.



Anshag of Rodebrannt-Ask

COU 15 SGC 11 INT 12 CHA 12
DEX 10 AGI 13 CON 15 STR 15
LP 35 AE - KP 35 INI 13
SPI 1 TOU 3 DO 6 MOV 7

Fate Points 3

Social Standing: Noble

Languages: Native Tongue Garethi III, Bosparano II, Tulamidyia II

Scripts: Kuslik Signs, Tulamidyia

Advantages: Blessed One, Noble I, Rugged Fighter

Disadvantages: Principles II (Cult of Kor), Obligations II (Alliance of Kor's Sign), Negative Trait (Vengeance)

Special Abilities: Area Knowledge (Rodebrannt), Blood Pledge, Feint I, Forceful Blow II, Grapple, Improve Attack, Inured to Encumbrance II, Leader, Mounted Combat, Onslaught, Shield Splitter, Skill Specialization *Religions (Kor, Rondra)*, Suppress Pain, Tilt, Tradition (Church of Rondra)

Combat Techniques: Brawling 12 (14/8), Daggers 12 (14/7), Lances 14 (16), Swords 12 (14/8), Two-Handed Swords 14 (16/9), Two-Handed Impact Weapons 12 (14/8)

Unarmed: AT 13 PA 7 DP 1D6+1 RE short

Rondra's Crest: AT 13 PA 6 DP 2D6+3 RE medium

Stag Catcher: AT 13 PA 6 DP 1D6+2 RE short

PRO/ENC 6/1 (plate armor) (includes armor modifiers)
Skills:

Physical: *Body Control* 6, *Climbing* 3, *Feat of Strength* 6, *Perception* 7, *Riding* 10, *Self-Control* 9, *Swimming* 2

Social: *Empathy* 7, *Etiquette* 9, *Fast-Talk* 4, *Intimidation* 6, *Persuasion* 3, *Willpower* 5

Nature: *Orienting* 4, *Survival* 6, *Tracking* 6

Knowledge: *History* 6, *Law* 3, *Math* 3, *Myths & Legends* 3, *Religions (Kor, Rondra)* 6 (8), *Warfare* 9

Craft: *Treat Wounds* 7

Blessings: *The Twelve Blessings*

Liturgical Chants: *Bless Object* 5, *Enforce Honor* 6, *Pain Tolerance* 9, *Protect the Defenseless* 5, *Receive Kor's Sign* 8 (see page 54)

Equipment: Two-handed sword, stag catcher (a 24" long hunting dagger), plate armor, bearskin cloak, wilderness package

Combat Behavior: Anshag fights rather carefully at first, to test his enemy's skills. Then he delivers the strongest blows he can and tries to win as quickly as possible.

Escape: Anshag does not flee.

Pain +1 with: 26 LP, 18 LP, 9 LP, and 5 LP or less.

*Example: If, by the conclusion of the adventure, the heroes recovered (or still retain) the Blue Tome (10), obtained the Badger Head of the Good Scholar (7), killed a total of 5 cultists at the castle and at the glade (5*1 = 5), obtained the other artifacts during the ritual (3*3 = 9), interrupted the ritual but were unable to stop it (7), and prevented the sacrifice of three captives (3*3 = 9), they earn 47 points, which equates to 47%. This means that only 53% of the cultists they meet from now on know Blood Pledge (100-47 = 53). If the heroes then meet a group of 8 cultists later during the campaign, 4 of those cultists know Blood Pledge ((8/100)*53=4.24, rounded down to 4).*

Points earned for successes are cumulative, except when such successes contradict each other.

Example: If the heroes prevent 3 captives from being sacrificed, they receive 9 points, but if the heroes save all of the captives, they receive 15 points, not 24.

Bonus goals are only added as a whole.

*Example: If the ram's horn is unavailable to the cultists for use in the rite, and the heroes seize the three other artifacts during the ritual, these successes are worth 16 points (7 + (3*3)), not 15.*

Aftermath

The heroes should receive **25 to 30 adventure points** for completing the adventure, depending on their degree of success. Note that they don't receive the monetary reward they were promised (for recovering the Blue Tome or the goblin research, or both) until they report back to their employer. They likely receive a bonus for hazards faced, as well.



Much more importantly, the heroes have gathered valuable knowledge. They now know that the Alliance of Kor's Sign are dangerous and surprisingly numerous. They still don't know if and where **the Church of Rondra** has been infiltrated, but should suspect **Leudara** of being involved with the cult. Her fate remains undisclosed for now.

It is natural for the heroes to feel obliged to pursue the cult and inform the authorities. The **Blue Tome** opens many doors for them, but it also stir feelings of jealousy and greed. The Churches of Rondra and Praios wish to confiscate it, but the Temple of Efferd in Neersand, which officially owns the tome, insists that it remain with the heroes, who have proven that they can protect it. The Alliance of Kor's Sign makes additional attempts to seize it, usually by staging ambushes, but the heroes should always manage to recover it.

If **Jelomir of Korswandt** survives the adventure, he travels to Festum and reports what he learned to the Church of Praios, which then informs the other Churches and calls for military aid from the Middenrealm. However, Empress Rohaja's campaign against the Heptarch, Helm Haffax, depleted the realm's military resources. Castle Korswandt faces new challenges as well, not the least of which is arranging for much-needed repairs.

The heroes' employers—**Umerike**, **Jucho**, and **Wippwinger**—are shocked by their report and subsequently set many plans in motion. News spread slowly in winter, but they soon learn that the influence of Alliance of Kor's Sign extends to the highest circles. The heroes make many attempts to speak with the Noble Marshal, but the cult's sympathizers repeatedly manage to cancel or delay their appointments. At the very least, the heroes get to warn the burghers of Festum about the cult's presence, and mages express great interest in hearing what they learned about the cult and the goblin ghosts.

Thezmar Alatzer concentrates on the repairs to his tavern, but he remains visibly shaken over **Olko's** disappearance and the horrible massacre. He resumes studying the stone ram's horn (and the other artifacts, too, if they survived) when things settle down. The Alliance of Kor's Sign tries to steal the artifact(s) again, at some point.

The Jantareffs are happy if their casualties are low, and they hope that the heroes can intercede on their behalf to find a (somewhat safer) winter camp. Two possible sites include Castle Korswandt (which is undergoing repairs) and the already-overcrowded Norbard Meadow in Festum.

Dasha wants nothing more to do with the heroes, but **Fetanka's** fascination with the Blue Tome and the Goblin Ghosts continues to grow. She maintains contact with the heroes via regular visits and, if necessary, benign dream magic.

The cultists fail to obtain the Blue Tome for the rite	10
The heroes recover the Blue Tome during the rite	5
The cultists fail to get one of the artifacts to the rite	7 each
The cultists lose one artifact during the rite	30
The cultists lose one artifact during the rite	3 each
The cultists lose all of the artifacts during the rites	15
A cult leader other than Anshag completes the rite	5
Gerwulf of the Shield attends only a portion of the rite	7
Gerwulf of the Shield misses the rite for any reason	10
For each sacrifice who is rescued	3 each
The heroes rescue all of the sacrifices	15
For each cultist defeated during or before the rite (such as at the castle)	1 each (no more than 20, total)
The mass baptism gets interrupted but resumes	7
The mass baptism gets interrupted and does not resume	15
Karmic powers interrupt the mass baptism or affect the site of the rite	5
Instead of Kor's Seeds, some cult recruits eat another substance	1 each (no more than 7, total)
Instead of Kor's Seeds, all of the cult recruits drink another substance	12
The cult recruits receive the wrong brand on their neck	5
None of the cult recruits get branded	7

Appendix: The Blue Tome



“Only this land can the Tome preserve.”

With these enigmatic words, Thora Fataburuq bequeathed the tome to others before journeying into the east. Most considered her words a warning that the tome contained dark secrets that would cause great harm if the Blue Tome ever left the Bornland. The sentence could be read in another way, mainly that the tome contains secrets that allow it to *preserve Bornland*—no matter what Thora might have said. The tome collects lore about various aspects of the land, its power, and its awakening, and was created to allow future generations to understand this power and make use of it. It also contains much about practices, beliefs, and developments within the Order of the Theater throughout its long history, from its glorious rise to its precipitous fall.

Dimensions and Appearance

The tome is a heavy folio with a leather cover that was originally red. It keeps its deep blue discoloration until the mass baptism ceremony is completed successfully. During the adventure, it remains bound in a blueish-green cord secured with a large seal of the Church of Efferd (a complete wheel encircled by leaping dolphins).

The tome's pages exhibit several forms of handwriting. Some are clearly readable, others are only barely so, and some appear to be encrypted. Annotations appear in many of the tome's margins, and here and there segments of text are crossed out or scraped off and overwritten. Some pages are blank, others filled with too much text, and some pages



Bloody Seal

In better days, this nearly-forgotten Rondranian liturgical chant helped prevent the knowledge of the Church from falling into the wrong hands. *Bloody Seal* prevents a book from being opened, and inflicts great pain on anyone trying to do so.

Check: COU/INT/CHA

Effect: Anyone touching the sealed book suffers 1D6 DP (ignoring PRO) and receives a visible cut on the palm. Touching a sealed book a second time requires a *Self-Control (Resist Torture)* check with a penalty equal to the number of times the character tried to touch it previously. Also, the damage increases commensurately (2D6 DP the second time, 3D6 the third time, and so on). A book thus sealed cannot be opened in the usual way. The chant's protection ends when the book is opened (which is only possible by unholy means; see page 57), the duration ends, or an appropriate liturgical chant negates the seal. The sealed book can be destroyed, even if the *Bloody Seal* remains intact.

Liturgical Time: 8 Actions

KP Cost: 16 KP

Range: Touch

Duration: QL x 100 years

Target Category: Object (Book)

Tradition: Rondra (Storm)

Improvement Cost: B



contain only unknown symbols or sketches of strange occult objects. The text is rendered with Kuslik Signs and written mainly in the Bosparano tongue, although some entries are written in Garethi.

• Rumors hint that Blessed Ones of Rondra once knew a liturgical chant that safely removed the Bloody Seal.

Several quotes are written in other languages and scripts, including Tulamidya (in Tulamidya), Aureliani (in Imperial Signs), and Goblinish (in Kuslik Signs).

The Seal

The Tome is protected by an old Rondranian liturgical chant known as *Bloody Seal*. The cultists can open it only by using a special, unholy acid made for this purpose.

Excerpts from the Tome

“Rondra, roaring lioness, lady of swords!

We pledge you our courage and honor!

Kor, Rondra’s son, lord of battles! We promise you strength and will!

Famerlor, Rondra’s husband, master of battle magic!

We pledge you our power!

Mythrael, Rondra’s Valkyrie, psychopomp of dead heroes!

We pledge you our victims!

We pledge to dominate our enemies!

We pledge to rule over the land!

If our hand is taken, we strike with Mythrael’s arm!

If our eye is taken, we see with Famerlor’s gaze!

If our heart is taken, Kor’s magic preserves our life!

If our life is taken, our souls rise in Rondra’s splendor!

We hear the singing swords of the past!

We are the living shields of the future!

“Know, dare, seek, be silent, rule!”

— first page of the Blue Tome (ToB)

*“In the raging battle, when knight and knight fell,
when the Lady of the Storm was far away,
When not honor, but blood and power decided the battle,
When we lost all hopes surrounded by the Red Hordes,
You appeared to us, oh Lord of Battle
And your fury made us win.*

Since then, your claw shall be in our neck.

We give our blood for your victory.

We drink your black seed from the Red Chalice.

Your jagged spear be our weapon!

Your rage be our strength!

Your vestments of blood-fueled flames be our armor!”

— first version of the Chorale of Blood Cliff (AFS)

*“His example, his spirit touched the souls, an initiation.
His sign, cross over triangle.
The black seed communion wine for the vessels of the god.
Mass consecration?”*

— notes in the page margin near the first version of the Chorale of Blood Cliff (ToB)

*“In the raging battle, when knights fell all around,
When the Lady of the Storm was far away,
When honor failed, and blood and power decided the battle,
When we waded through the gore of the Red Hordes,
You appeared to us, o Lord,
And with you, the Alveranians of Battle,
And your hatred gave us victory.
From now on, your claw shall be at our throats.
Our arms fight for your victory.
We drink your black seed from the Purple Chalice.
Your jagged spear be our weapon!
Your rage be our strength!
Your vestments of blood-fueled flames be our armor!”*

— second version of the Chorale of Blood Cliff (GB)

“And Rondra gave us the Holy Swords at the place the goblins called Kungutzka, which we named Lionsford to honor our Mistress. And Kor appeared and defeated the goblins at the place the goblins called Paalaruuk, which we named Korswandt to honor Kor the Merciless. And [obscured] gave us [obscured] at the place the goblins called Wjassuula, which we named [obscured] to honor [obscured].”

— concerning the victory of the Theater Knights over the goblins (GB; revised by EoT)

“They tortured the war chieftain, but the translator had trouble understanding him. The goblin kept repeating the words “not forget, not forget,” and this seemed to strengthen his resistance. The old druid, who had examined the spirits of the weak goblins, began to grin. With a domination spell he commanded the goblin in his own tongue: “Forget the love of the father! Forget the power of the warrior, and forget the command of the lord!” Then he ordered the translator to ask some questions in the name of the “Good Scholar.” At that point, the goblin began to babble!”

— oral tradition of the first pioneers of Bornland (EoT)

“When we asked about the sabotage of the crossroad idol, the goblin woman fell silent. The usual methods proved unsuccessful. Only after we cut off two of her claws did we realize that her mouth had magically grown shut as if she had never had one. Whatever she knew, she took it to the grave.”

— Interrogation report from the dungeons of the Lion Castle (GB)

“I felt it my duty to inform our Lord Marshal that the use of the four-headed idol at the crossroad would not be without risk. While it might maintain the causeway to Pilcrest with its elemental magic, we haven’t yet learned all of its secrets. My latest analysis indicates that the goblin path spell hides something greater. The idol’s cornucopia is magically sealed, and I believe that something lives inside it. In the meantime, a tour of the Blood Cliff area is in order, so we can investigate the other objects. But His Highborn of Ruckenau must grant the necessary funds and give me leave to defend against the hauntings there. Preliminary conclusion: It is foolish to quit maintaining the causeway and rely exclusively on old goblin magic.”

— Excerpt from the fragmentary Chronicle of Castle Pilcrest (ToB)

“That these bold goblin scum dared to hack off a face of the Four-Head only shows their cowardice and vileness... It is said that this action resulted in the collapse of the causeway through the Mosse. I think Ruckenau was punished for his own greed and stupidity. Some believed he had sinned against Peraine, and she made rice and brush grow in the harbor. I say that Jadvige’s relocation to the Lion Castle was simply a matter of strategy and representation. Some claimed that we never really understood the magic of the goblins, and that we tampered with powers which would invariably turn against us. I say, count our victories and our wealth, and try to tell me we didn’t know what we were doing. I’ll laugh in your face!”

— Found under the header Historical Musings of a Thinker (GB)



The Authors

The true number of people who contributed to the Tome may never be known, but scholars believe there were at least four. This adventure uses abbreviations for the names of these four authors so the GM can describe which passages use the same handwriting without necessarily divulging the names of the authors.

Almin of Skullen (Afs) kept a war journal during his younger years. He grew up with his uncle, a Blessed One of Hesinde, who was probably the one who taught him to read and write. When his uncle died, the then ten-year-old boy joined the Order of the Theater and served as a drummer boy at the *Battle of Kungutzka* in 191 FB, where he witnessed the *Sword Miracle of Lionsford*. His journal forms the basis of the entire work, and most of the Tome's battle accounts and skirmish reports stem from him. As a grown man and a knight of the Order he also witnessed Kor's physical manifestation at Blood Cliff and felt the breath of Kor the Merciless. Almin's writings reveal his transformation from a zealous follower of Rondra to a dedicated servant of Kor. His last entry described his appointment as commander of a banner of troops marching to the *Battle of Wjassuula*.

Turonia of Beilunk (ToB), a mage and scholar, was very interested in the Tome's descriptions of war, even though she never participated in battle herself. She purchased Almin's journal in an auction in Pilcrest and began expanding it, adding religious and cosmological texts about Rondra, Kor, Famerlor, Levthan, and Ifirn. She also added chapters on myths and legends from the area, Nivese myths about the Sky Wolves, goblin stories about the giants of the Sickel Mountains, Alhanian traditions, and, allegedly, legends of the elves and trolls. She was especially interested in Almin's descriptions of magical and cult sites and powers attributed to the land, such as plants that swallowed entire buildings overnight, tidal waves, and blizzards. She was serving as Marshal Gerbald's adjutant when she died under mysterious circumstances in the Mosse in 263 FB.

Gari Bearblood (GB) was probably a follower of the Nameless God, if her writings are any indication. She obtained the Tome after Turonia's death and began reworking its religious passages. Somewhat paradoxically, she used Turonia's findings as the basis for combined magical-religious research that allowed her to create some new liturgical chants and even draft some ideas for new spells. It is her work that makes the Tome especially dangerous. Turonia had misunderstood some secrets and tried to devise ways to subjugate the land, but Gari had sought a means to weaken it and deliver it into the hands of the Nameless One.

Elko of Thornfield (EoT) was a Rondranian follower of Anshag of Glodencourt, who had largely succeeded in ridding the Order of the Theater of its decadence in 321 FB. Elko didn't understand many of the details, but realized that the Blue Tome contained a wealth of knowledge about the powers of the land, the magic of Kunga Suula, and the divine powers worshiped by the Theater Knights in their final days. His contributions to the Tome included a chapter called *Teachings of the Silver Horde*, which preserved the lore of a legendary sub-Order within the Theater Knights. He also tried to redact the blasphemous passages penned by other authors, but he was no scholar. Elko bequeathed the Blue Tome to Seneschal Thora Fataburuq when he joined the army that was marching off to Weiden.

The Tome in the Campaign

The Blue Tome will be the heroes' constant companion throughout the rest of the campaign. Give the heroes occasional excerpts as the remaining adventures unfold, to offer them a new perspective and help them develop a deeper understanding of Bornian secrets.

Use the tome as you would NPCs who periodically give the heroes relevant information about the Theater Knights. To control this, the structure of the Tome's verses and passages is quite chaotic, and deciphering them takes time. Distribute some of these texts at the end of each adventure, or as you see fit.

Castle Pilcrest



- Trade Yard**
- T1 Gate House
 - T2 Stables
 - T3 Brewery
 - T4 Bakery
 - T5 Grain Storage
 - T6 General Storage
 - T7 Wood Storage
 - T8 Harbor
- Fortress Yard**
- F1 Well
 - F2 High Tower
 - F3 Western Tower
 - F4 Grain Mill
 - F5 Temple
- Work Yard**
- W1 Cooper
 - W2 Carpenter
 - W3 Leatherworker
 - W4 Healer
 - W5 Tailor
 - W6 Tavern
 - W7 Weaver
 - W8 Tanner
 - W9 Bowyer
 - W10 Pilot
 - W11 Grocer
 - W12 Ship Builder
 - W13 Trade Kontor
 - W14 Potter
 - W15 Grain Trader
 - W16 Mason
 - W17 Candle Maker
 - W18 Fletcher
 - W19 Blacksmith
 - W20 Swordsmith
 - W21 Rope Maker
 - W22 Cake Baker
 - W23 Cloth Maker

The Blue Tome

Theater Knights II

by Niklas Forreiter and Daniel Heßler

The Temple of Efferd in Neersand asks the heroes to deliver the Blue Tome, a relic of the legendary Order of the Theater Knights, to a researcher in Hinterbruch. After an encounter with thieves and a brush with vicious killers, the heroes make an unexpected stop at a fortress monastery that serves as a hospital for the insane.

During their stay, the heroes discover that some of the hospital's most dangerous inmates may actually be possessed by angry spirits. While investigating, the heroes uncover a shocking plot with dire consequences for the future of Bornland.



In this second installment of the Theater Knights Campaign, the heroes gain more clues about the identity of their enemy and his dark plans. You need the *Core Rules* and the *Aventuria Almanac* to play. *The Blue Tome* may also be played as a stand-alone adventure.

Genre: Horror

Prerequisites: An interest in the future of Bornland, a good reputation, and no fanatical hatred for Norbards or Praios.

Location: The Bornian Festenland (Neersand, Hinterbruch, Pilcrest, the Great Mosse, Korswandt, and surrounding areas).

Date: Firun, 1039 FB

Complexity (Players/GM): medium/medium

Suggested Hero Experience Level: *Experienced to Competent*

Useful Skills

Social Skills



Combat



Nature Skills



Living History



To play, you also need *The Dark Eye Core Rules* and the *Aventuria Almanac*. This book contains all other supporting information, such as stats, maps, and handouts.



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