

RED RUIN PUBLISHING

THE ADVENTURES
OF
CEDRIC AND FULK

WHO ENCOUNTER
THE WICKEDEST MAN
IN BANLET

YOU CAN VISIT
THE WITCH OAK
AND MEET
A REAL LIVE BOY

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SKULL BOOK IMAGE BY BROCK, OGRE IMAGE FROM CoF #1

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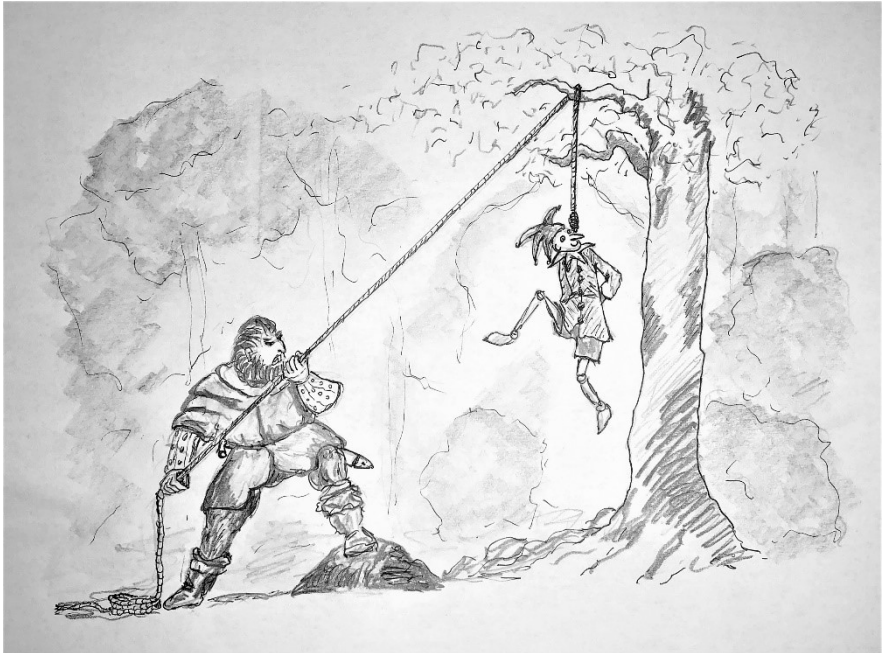
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A REAL LIVE BOY

Travelling along the old Forest Road, the party hears indistinct, but clearly angry, voices along with a child's high-pitched pleading up ahead. Around the bend in the road a disturbing scene confronts the party. Four rough looking men, undoubtedly robbers and cutthroats, lynching a small colourfully dressed boy. Two of the men hold a rope slung over a low oak branch, the other end tied in a noose around the child's neck. As the characters arrive, they are preparing to haul the boy up, again it seems, perhaps torture rather than murder may be the plan. One of the other two men holds a notched falchion, whilst the last is bald and dressed in the rough homespun cassock of a monk!



All is not what it seems. Really the ‘boy’ is a magical simulacrum, a four-foot tall, brightly painted wooden manikin, dressed in colourful fool’s motley. The doll was carved by a famed Ferromani toy maker, Golpetito (whose mark is carved into the sole of one of its feet) but was given ‘life’ when the sorcerer Ulric confined a mischievous sprite within the wood. Some say Ulric did this as a gift for his daughter – a companion for her as she was an only child living in his strange otherworldly tower. This may be but one of the dozens of fanciful tales attached to the reclusive wizard.

The ‘brigands’, whilst dressed as desperate men, are in fact well-armed and equipped (ring jackets and mail vests for AF 2), their belt purses filled with 5d6 florins each. They are mercenaries in the pay of Cynewulf Magister who has heard tales of the “wee Fool in the woods” and sent men to investigate and retrieve the manikin. If it is the rumoured companion to Ulric’s child, so much the better.



Many outcomes are possible. The men will fight if attacked but will withdraw if clearly outmatched and return south to report their findings to their master. If able to do so, they will take Panko with them. Whilst this happens the manikin will beg, plead, wheedle, and cajole the PCs to ‘save Panko from the bad men’. The wooden manikin calls itself ‘Panko’, can speak (though its painted lips do not move) and has wonderfully articulated, dexterous wooden hands. Panko has a squeaky childlike voice and refers to itself in the third person. Whilst the sprite trapped within the wood is not malevolent, it has a mischievous perspective and delights in games and tricks, even those with dangerous or fatal consequences. Panko

has a tendency to pilfer small items, and simply forget them when it spots the next interesting thing. For its own amusement Panko will often leave pilfered items with someone to whom they don't belong, with potentially dangerous consequences. Concepts like ownership, money and value are meaningless to Panko.

PANKO

ATT 6 DEF 15 (as per weapon but -1 ABR and Damage due to low STR)

STR 5, INT 13, REF 17, PSY 13, LKS N/A

AC 2, HP 5, Magical Defence 13, Stealth 20, Perception 14, EV 9, Move 15m, Panoptical vision.

Pious PCs may see Panko as the devil's work. Opportunistic ones may instead see potential for mischief and profit. Panko is whimsical, sulky, and petulant if not indulged. It has the spellcasting ability to cause petty annoyances such as itching, uncontrollable sneezing, or hiccups, boils, trips and falls, and dropped weapons. Panko's high DEF is due to an almost otherworldly agility at dodging blows and it climbs as an 8th rank Assassin with Climb skill chosen twice.

Panko will be reticent about its past and how it got where the PCs found it but it is ancient and can speak (but not read) Lughwyd and Bacchile, perhaps giving some hint as to the origin of the inhabiting spirit. If treated well Panko will tell the PCs it has "two fathers" perhaps a reference to the toymaker and the sorcerer. Dealing with Panko could be a source of great adventure.



THE WICKEDEST MAN IN BANLET

TYRSDAE 21ST BAEL MONATH, 997 ANNO SANCTO

My Lord Abbot,

I hope this missive finds you in good spirits and fully recovered from the gout, which I understand has recently afflicted your most reverend person. My travels in your service have led Brother Fulk and I to the hamlet of Banlet, about 2 days' ride north of Ongus. It is without a word of exaggeration that I most humbly provide you with this report for your consideration. Whilst it will appear mendacious and fantastical, I give my most solemn oath on our Saviour's glorious deliverance that every word is the Lord's truth as related to me. I pray you will find this tale worthy of inclusion in your most magnificent work, Codex Maleficus Et Ellesland.

The good folk of Banlet related to me the tale of their former lord, Sir Rickard Cadel, a knight of dark reputation. They say he was a most puissant huntsman, but over time his quarry extended further than deer and boar, to the hunting of men and maidens for sport. The villagers tell that they appealed to the Baron, yet Sir Rickard was cunning and would only hunt those he had first accused and found guilty of trumped up charges. Sir Rickard was distant kin to the Baron who thus turned a blind eye to Rickard's excesses as long as Banlet's taxes and levies were bountiful and punctual.

The tale, so it goes, is that Sir Rickard sold his soul to the Devil in exchange for preternatural skill at the hunt, and unnatural vigour long into his dotage. One may of course question the veracity of this claim, but it appears beyond question that he proved a cruel and immoral overlord who treated his serfs most brutally. A further rumour also told that Sir Rickard

murdered his wife, though my perusal of Parish and manorial records, such as they are, suggest a more mundane demise from an imbalance of the humours.

The locals say that Sir Rickard terrorised his people for many years until he finally expired on a hunt, breaking his neck after being thrown from his horse. One venerable matron, who claimed she was the object of Sir Rickard's final hunt across the moors, deposed that the horse shied at a stick the poor woman had snatched up to defend herself. The matron swore upon my Bible under fear of eternal damnation that the stick turned into an adder in her very hands as she held it up in her defence. You may be scandalised to learn that opinion was evenly divided as to whether this was a case of divine intervention or Old Nick sick of waiting to collect the soul he was promised.

Despite these events being a scant three score years past, recollections differed as to the circumstances of Sir Rickard's internment. On the one hand the villagers say their forebears were concerned to ensure Rickard was securely buried so that the spirit of such an evil man would not rise up to continue to plague them in death as he had in life. Yet on the other hand it was contended that Rickard left his retainers precise instructions upon his demise to inter him in such a way as to confound the Devil and keep his soul from being dragged to the depths of Hell where it belonged.

Whatever may be the right of it, what is certain is that Sir Rickard's broken body was not interred in the family tomb but instead was buried outside the south door of the village church. It was related by those greybeards who claimed to have been present that Sir Rickard was first buried deeply in the earth, and then a heavy stone was placed upon his head. Once the grave had been filled the entire altar stone from the church was, in a most heinous desecration, placed atop the grave. The view being either that the consecrated stone would keep Sir Rickard in or keep the Devil out. A squat stone crypt was subsequently constructed over the grave. It is most solidly built, but curiously has a wide iron grill on the side facing the church. On

the opposite side is a strong wooden door with a locked keyhole. I am told the key was thrown inside once the door was locked.

The good folk of Banlet were most insistent that we remain in the village for another two days to witness certain weird occurrences which are said to take place on the anniversary of Sir Rickard's demise. Several men vowed and declared to me that two glowing red eyes have been seen behind the bars inside the structure. Others have said that on the date of his death each year, demons come scrabbling at the tomb in a vain attempt to retrieve the soul of the knight for their diabolical master to satisfy the debt long overdue.

I was also told an amusing tale that it has become something of a dare for the children of Banlet to walk widdershins around the tomb thirteen times before inserting a finger into the keyhole of the wooden door. The challenge being to leave their finger in for the longest time at risk of Sir Rickard gnawing at the tip.

Brother Fulk and I will remain to observe the anniversary of Sir Rickard's death at the insistence of the folk of Banlet and I will provide you with such further updates as circumstances may require.

Your humble servant

Brother Cedric of Osterlin

24TH FREYASDAE, BAE L MONATH 997 ANNO SANCTO

My Lord Abbot,

I write this from my sickbed but wish to record the events of last night whilst they remain fresh in my mind.

As requested by the villagers of Banlet, we sat a vigil outside Sir Rickard's tomb to try to observe the uncanny happenings. The night was cool but clear and something of a festive atmosphere had settled over the assembled folk with even a little Banlet cider flowing.

One of the village lads, Cena the blacksmith's boy, emboldened by drink, skipped widdershins around the tomb thirteen times, and stuck his finger in the lock. After a few moments he gave vent to a great hue and cry, snatched his hand away and ran around the horrified group clasping it and wailing. The cheeky lad declared it all a great jape and held up his hand whole, much to the amusement of all. Whilst all congratulated Cena on his jest, our merriment was suddenly broken by an unearthly howl. I must say it froze the very blood in our veins and left me feeling weak at the knees. Even steadfast Brother Fulk looked most perturbed. We then heard a scrabbling of claws on the wooden door from the far side of the crypt.

Moments later, to our horror a ghastly hound, larger than a wolf, stalked around the corner of the crypt towards the assembly. Whilst it was hard to judge in the light of our bonfire and lanterns, its fur appeared a greenish black, and its eyes glowed with an unearthly green light. The jaws of the beast slavered with a luminous spittle, which smoked when it dripped to the ground. Most curiously I expected the assembled villagers to flee

screaming from the sight of this demonic hound but instead they all seemed transfixed by its murderous glare.

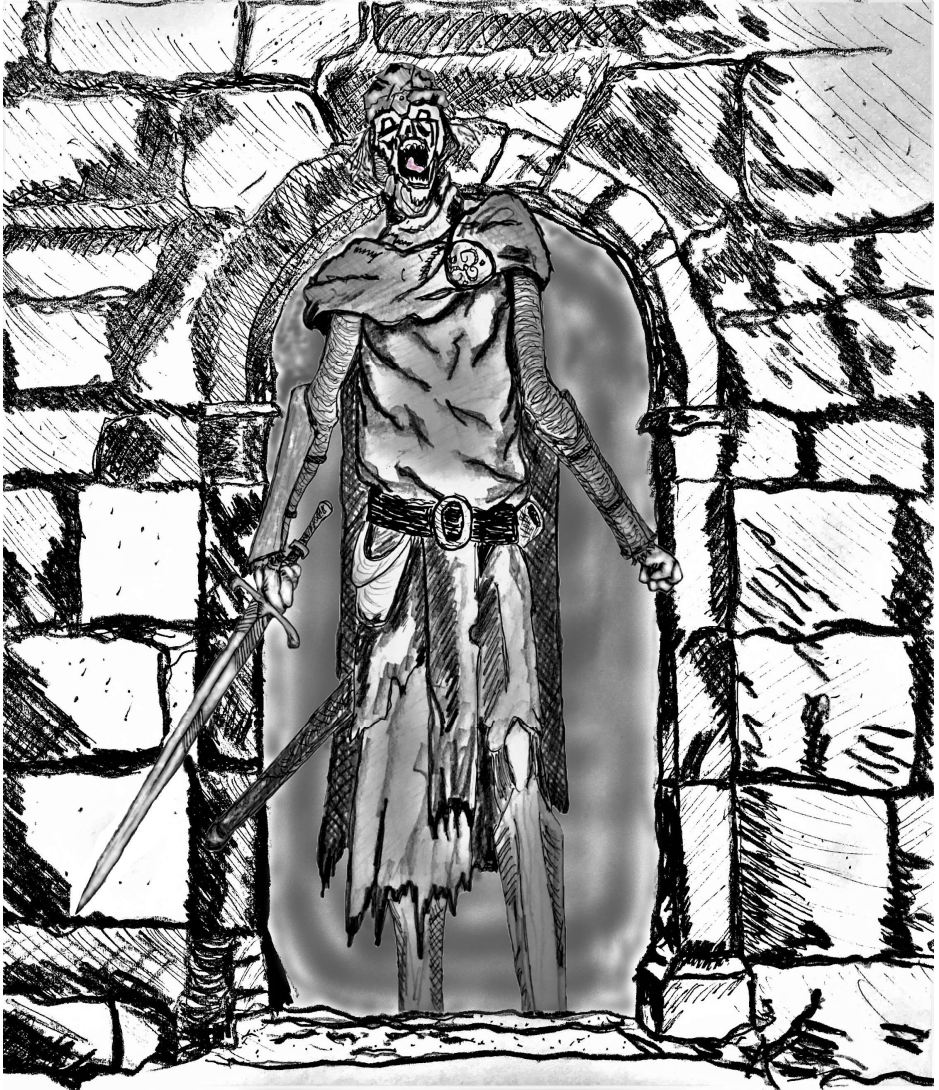
I am ashamed to say that I too stood rooted to the spot by this terrible apparition until Brother Fulk cuffed me round the ear and shouted that “the hound seeks that blaggard Rickard! Let’s give the dog a bone!” Shaken from my reverie, I followed Fulk as he raced around the far side of the crypt. I noted then that he wore his maille coat under his cassock and had drawn the ancient Selentine Gladius he



brought home from the Crusades. As we rounded the stone structure, we heard awful cries and commotion as the hound began tearing and ravaging the poor dumbstruck villagers. I felt a moment of guilty indecision at that juncture, but my resolve was hardened by Fulk muttering “We cannot save them” before with a mighty boot he kicked open the wooden tomb door.

Our doom was then upon us. Fulk whirled, and the hound was upon him, only his maille saved him from a savage mauling. He struck repeatedly at the beast, whilst urging me in language most unbecoming of a monk, to drag Rickard’s mouldering bones out of the tomb. I dashed into the crypt and felt even greater dismay as I saw the large slab of marble which must mark the knight’s resting place. Many would have cause to now doubt my tale but as I have previously disclosed to you in times of great emergency

the Lord has often gifted me with the strength of ancient Heraklos. Indeed, the good Lord saw fit to intervene in that dreadful hour and holy power



infused my limbs and I slid the great altar stone to one side like it were made of wood. To my great horror, even in the dimly lit interior of the tomb, I saw a desiccated pair of hands burst out of the soil, and the tip of a helmet erupted from the damp earth.

I scabbled backwards in fright out the door and drew my seax to try to assist Fulk, although my skills as a warrior are somewhat lacking. Fulk had led the beast away from the tomb, but was sorely pressed, his cassock in tatters from its ravening maw. As I moved towards the melee, I glanced behind and saw what could only be the corpse of Sir Rickard staggering in a clumsy and spasmodic fashion towards us, rusted sword trailing in hand. I had no doubt that Sir Rickard was in some unholy limbo between life and death. He surveyed us with a pupil-less ivory gaze, the skin of his face a pasty white pallor. Most disturbingly, his lips were blue and though his mouth opened and closed in a rictus and deathly grimace, not a sound emerged. Perhaps proving the truth of the tales of his demise from a broken neck, his head flopped back and forth in a disturbing and unnatural manner. I held up my seax to fend off a blow, but he easily batted aside my defence and stabbed me through the flesh of my thigh.

Upon seeing Sir Rickard, the hound broke from assailing Brother Fulk, and rounded upon the dead knight. A furious fracas ensued, with Rickard slashing ever more skilfully at the hound, whilst it ripped and tore at his pallid flesh.

Eventually the hound bore Sir Rickard to the ground, and just when I felt certain it would close its terrible jaws around his neck, he thrust upwards with his sword, impaling the beast. The hound gave vent to a blood curdling howl, and a green sulphurous mist rose from its corpse, enveloping both it and Sir Rickard. When the mist cleared, we were greeted with the sight of Sir Rickard kneeling in a stagnant pool, his sword stuck in the mud. Brother Fulk seized the moment, declared “Be off to Hell with you!” and rushed forward, delivering a final blow to the undead knight. Immediately after Fulk struck the death blow, Rickard’s corpse

began to age rapidly before our eyes, leaving it a leering armoured skeleton in mere heartbeats.

We buried unlucky Cena and his father this morning, both victims of the hound's fury, as well as Father Bodram – whom I am told dropped dead of fright when the creature cast its baleful gaze upon him. I said the prayers propped up on a stool in his place. I remain unsure whether we did the Lord's work last night or were the Devil's unwitting accomplices, but I am most certain that we rid the village of Banlet of a great evil.

I remain your humble servant.



Brother Cedric of Osterlin

STATISTICS

Sir Rickard – Cadaver and 10th rank knight – see p76 Bestiary

Attack 24, (d8+1, 5) Armour

Factor 4

Defence 17

Movement: 10m (18m)

Magical Defence 12 Evasion 6

Health Points 26 Stealth 16

Perception 15 (panoptical)

The Barghest – see p50 Bestiary

Attack 20, Fangs (d8, 6 and special venom)

Armour Factor 2 (and takes half damage unless silver or magical weapon)

Defence 6 Movement: 15m (30m)

Magical Defence 15 Evasion 6

Health Points 17 Stealth 24

Rank-equivalent: 7th

Perception 17 (panoptical)



“Aye, the Witch Oak, folk round ‘ere call it” the innkeeper answered as he poured a large mug of ale for the impeccably groomed man standing before him.

The man looked at the mug, his lips tightening in barely concealed disdain, and then reached and took a long drink from it.

“The Witch Oak, you say”, said the man, placing the mug precisely in front of him on the worn timber bar. “Is it far?”

“About five mile up the North road” slurred one of the half-pickled greybeards propping up the far end of the bar. “Ye can’t miss it. Great big branches, covered in moss, but they grow sideways like. Not up like a proper oak!”

“Sideways, you say? Like this?” The man held up his left hand, palm facing the low ceiling, with fingers and thumb hooked into a claw.

“That be right” nodded the innkeeper. He leaned across the bar and continued in a low conspiratorial whisper.

“They say, at midnight when the moon is full, witches and vile devil-spawn dance along the branches. Foul rituals and such stunted the tree’s growth and warped its shape. The tree be too ashamed to grow upwards to reach the light o’ heaven so it grew outward instead.”

He leaned back and poured himself a draught. “Leastways that’s what they say.”

The greybeard piped up again. “An’ the fornicating!”

A loud snort at the far end of the taproom broke the mood.

“And what would a shrivelled up old prune like you know about fornicating, Oswinn Webb?” pronounced a formidable looking matron, as she heaved herself to her feet near the hearth and dusted her hands on a patched apron.

“You’ll keep a civil tongue and stay out of men’s business – woman!” the innkeep rounded on the woman as she approached the bar.

“Husband” the woman said dismissively as she brushed past to approach the stranger “You’ll keep your tongue still and your lips closed, or I’ll take that poker from the fire and shove it up your bung-hole!”

Turning to the stranger, with more civility, she greeted him. “Good sir, I’m Leona. My fool of a husband and I keep this good house. Who might you be, and what brings you to our simple village?”

The stranger looked impassively at the large woman for longer than comfortable before he broke the silence with a cold smile.

“Sir Aldis of Balstaple, serving his Grace, the Bishop of Netherford. It is my honour to lead his Grace’s Episcopal Guard.”

Sir Aldis paused, before raising his voice so that he addressed the far corners of the taproom. A hushed sense of menace settled over the room.

“My business in Moyston is his Grace’s business.” The cold smile appeared again.

“For God-fearing men, and women, you seem over well acquainted with the diabolical misdeeds and blasphemous rituals of witches.”

The colour drained from the innkeep’s ruddy cheeks, and he spluttered in protest. “We are righteous folk and obey the laws of God and the King! Father Hereward leads us in our prayers!”

“Indeed.” observed Aldis. “Hereward has been summoned to Netherford. Two of my men escort him there.”

He turned away from the innkeep and addressed Leona again.

“Prepare my lodgings and billet my men. We ride tomorrow for this ‘Witch Oak’ of yours with fire and axe. We’ll see who comes to challenge the Lord’s work come the witching hour.”

“Of course, my Lord. Boy, make yourself useful and show Sir Aldis to his room.”

As the knight ascended the narrow creaking stairs to the inn’s private rooms, Leona beckoned to her youngest daughter, who had been watching proceedings wide-eyed from under a table.

“Fritha, my poppet, be a dear and run along to Nanny Brida and tell her I’m making soup for the Bishop’s man, so I’ll be needing her herbs. Oh, and tell her we’ll soon need to be a-dancing again”.

The little girl grinned as she skipped out the door into the dull evening light, calling back to her mother “I love dancin!”

“So do I my love, so do I”, whispered Leona, as she watched her daughter fade into the gloom.



SIR ALDIS OF BALSTAPLE

Male, 4th rank Episcopal Knight
& Witchfinder

Attack 17, sword (d8,4)

Defence 12

Magical Defence 8

Hit Points 13

*Armour Factor 4 (Maille
Hauberk)*

Movement 10m (20m)

Stealth 13

Evasion 5

Perception 5 (Normal)



(Strength 12; Reflexes 12; Intelligence 15; Psychic Talent 15; Looks 13)

Special Abilities: Ride warhorse, Torture & Interrogation, Knowledge of Infernal magic & creatures

Treasure: Aldis wears the finest clothes and has an almost uncanny ability to avoid mud and muck. He carries an iron dagger, and a silver dagger for use against faerie and infernal creatures. Silver bound holy book. Badge of office. 24 florins and a spare set of expertly tailored clothes.

BROTHER FULK

Male, 8th rank Knight & lay brother of Osterlin Abbey

Attack 23 (26 with Gladius, 28 vs selected opponents - see below), Gladius (d8+4, 7, 10 vs Undead)

*Defence 17 (19 with Main Gauche) (20 with Gladius, 22 with Gladius and Main Gauche, 22/24 vs selected opponents, - see below)
Seax (d8+1, 4)*

Magical Defence 10

Health Points 20

*Armour Factor 1 Gambeson/ 3
Maille Hauberk*

Movement 10m (20m)



Stealth 16

Evasion 7

Perception 8 (Normal)

(Strength 17; Reflexes 16; Intelligence 13; Psychic Talent 9; Looks 13)

Special Abilities: Ride warhorse, Track, Armour expert, Main Gauche (+2 DEF or 2nd Attack at 0 DEF)

Treasures: Fulk wields an ancient Selentine gladius (shortsword +3) that contains the tooth of St Gaius, the Selentine soldier who it is said pierced the Saviour Gatanades' side, and a Seax when fighting two-weapon style. He wears a gambeson under his monk's robes, and if expecting a fight will don a maille hauberk under his robes. Otherwise, his possessions are those of a humble monk. Typically, 3d6 florins at any given time. The brothers travel on two donkeys owned by the Abbey – a long way from the fine destrier Fulk rode in his previous life.

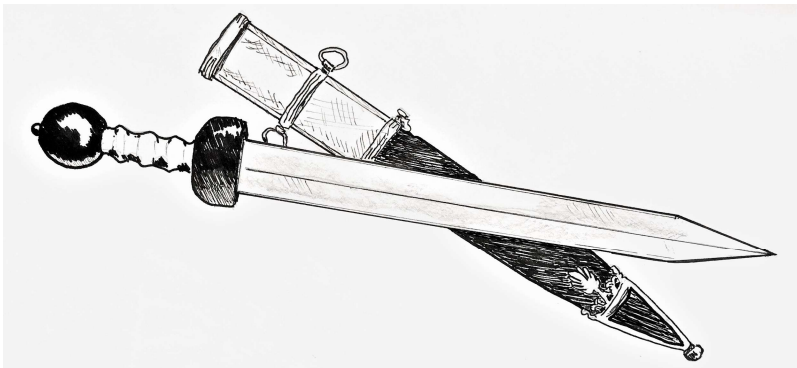
THE SWORD OF ST GAIUS

This powerful weapon and relic is an ancient Selentine gladius (shortsword +3) that contains the tooth of St Gaius, the Selentine soldier who it is said pierced the Saviour Gatanades' side. Despite being around 1,000 years old the sword and sheath show no sign of rust or deterioration, albeit its bone handle is well worn. The wooden pommel can be unscrewed to reveal a small cavity containing the tooth. Whether the sword itself is magical or the magic derives from the hidden relic is unknown.

This sword is unknown to the Church and is currently in the possession of lay brother Fulk, a former minor lord and crusader.

Neither Fulk nor his mystical companion Cedric have any idea of its true origin or power. Fulk discovered the blade when he fell down a desert crevasse pursued by Ta'ashim warriors in the Holy Lands and found himself in the hidden tomb of this early Saint, about whom extraordinarily little is recorded.

The relic confers 80% chance of sensing great evil in a person, place or object. Both +2 ATT and +2 DEF vs Boggarts, Goblins, Hobgoblins, Bugbears, Spriggans, Hags, Trolls and Undead. The sword also inflicts double damage against undead (i.e., 9 rather than 6 i.e., $3 \times 2 + 3$).



BROTHER CEDRIC OF OSTERLIN

Male, 5th rank Mystic & Monk of Osterlin Abbey

Attack 15, Seax (d8, 3)

Defence 9

Magical Attack 21

Magical Defence 11

Health Points 13

Armour Factor 1 Gambeson

Movement 10m (20m)

Stealth 15

Evasion 5

Perception 11 (Normal)

(Strength 9; Reflexes 12; Intelligence 16;

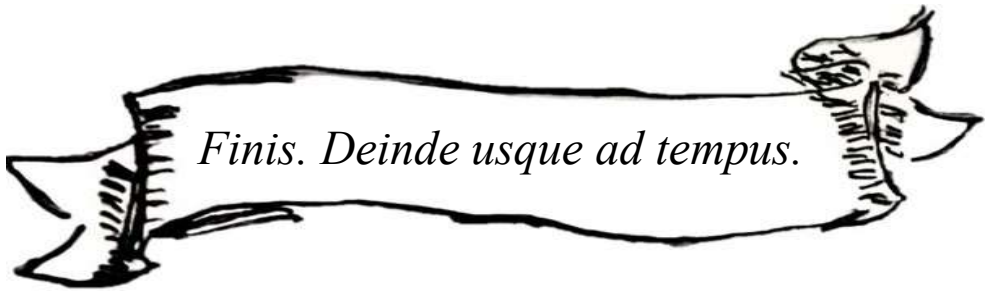
Psychic Talent 16; Looks 14)

Special Abilities: Spell casting, spell mastery “Allseeing Eye”, Premonition

(Sixth Sense) 45%, ESP (Seventh Sense) 20%, Enchantment of Arms & Armour up to +1.



Treasures: Cedric wears a large crucifix of dull gold on a chain around his neck studded with some semi-precious stones (a gift from the Abbot of Osterlin worth 250 florins). The crucifix is in fact a type of Shielding Charm. Cedric is in the habit of grasping the crucifix in prayer when attacked. This activates the charm (p.143 Rulebook) which takes the form of a translucent ‘angel wing’ that deflects blows. He wields a seax (d8,3) in battle and tends to use his mystical powers in times of great danger invoking the Saviour’s help to call them forth. He also carries a sling and a dozen smooth riverstones, a skill learned as a foundling boy at Osterlin. Otherwise, he only carries the possessions of a humble monk, with 2d6 Florins on hand at any given time.



If you've enjoyed this – why not consider checking out Casket of Fays, Red Ruin's quarterly fanzine to support the Dragon Warriors RPG. Start with our first issue, and then check out the others.



[Casket of Fays #1 – a Dragon Warriors RPG fanzine - Red Ruin Publishing | DriveThruRPG.com](#)



There's mere-trolls and hags, a Light Elementalist, and Tatzelwurms! Oh my!

It only gets better with each of the following issues. Issue four will be on the 'virtual' shelves soon after this chapbook.

Editor's Notes

Isn't having a whole page of notes, grand? I could get used to this...

Back in the depths of history (September 2020) I badgered Goodfellow Nigel Ward into doing a two-pager write-up so Red Ruin would have something suitable to drop into DriveThruRPG's Halloween extravaganza. The Witch Oak and the Real Live Boy are what made it into that.

Later on, poor Nigel made the mistake of telling me about Cedric and Fulk.

"Well" sez I, "Have you ever heard about chapbooks?"

Here we are. More badgering and poking on my part. Tears from Nigel as I overwork him again. And again. Badger, I say.

I hope you enjoy this look at the bold pair of Brothers in the first issue of their very own chapbook. I'm sure you'll also enjoy the next issue which Nigel is working on as I type – there's a few names it could go under yet – but its working title is 'Murder in Moonlight'.
Simon Barns



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