

## BOND OF DELCHARD

### A Scenario for Godbound (an RPG by Sine Nominee Publishing) By Luke Walker

This scenario was generated using the Court random generators in the Godbound Beta 1.0. Words that are italicised and bolded are the first instance of important elements.

#### HOOK

The duchy of *Delchard* stands inside the borders of *Ancalia*, at the junction with the *Atheocracy of Lom* and the *Oasis States*. Like much of Ancalia, it is much diminished from its former glory. However, the duchy continues to survive, even though its twin sovereigns, the *Duke and Duchess*, fall to ever increasing decadence and decay.

Despite the proximity of the other two nations, it has managed to maintain its sovereignty due to a powerful magical ward called the *Bond of Delchard*. Though the origin of the ward is now lost, the legends say that it enables the Duke and Duchess to retaliate against a single invading foreign state with devastating impact.

From the safety of the Bond's threat, the duchy has borrowed much from its neighbours. So much so that it has now defaulted on its payments and the Oasis States have foreclosed and taken control of Delchard's treasury. Everyone holds their breath waiting to see whether the Duke and Duchess will use the Bond in retaliation.

There are a number of ways that the PCs can become involved in this scenario. The default assumption is that the PCs are invested in Delchard in some manner. In this case, the PCs will want to stop with the foreclosure action, and more importantly restore the capability of the Bond. However, doing so may well tear the duchy apart, or at the very least cause a change of the guard.

Alternatively, the PCs could be aligned to the foreign power who has taken foreclosure action. This is assumed to be the Oasis States, but it could be whatever foreign power that suits your campaign. The PCs goal is to ensure that the Bond of Delchard isn't deployed.

#### BACKGROUND

The duchy of Delchard is ruled by twin sovereigns entitled the Duke and Duchess. They are elected by the *Guada and Insuloso families* from their members on a regular basis. Most decisions can be made by one of the sovereigns, and often they spend much of their effort unwinding what the other has done. However, major decisions, such as those that have effect beyond the duchy's borders require the unanimous decision of both.

The foundation of the sovereigns' power is the Bond of Delchard. The origins of the Bond are lost in myth, but it is a single use magical ritual that can lay waste to significant portion of any neighbouring state. To activate the Bond requires the combined use of a crown and a sceptre, which are held by the Duke and Duchess respectively. Since the Ancalia's fall, the Duke and Duchess have become ineffectual rulers, relying on the Bond's threat to borrow heavily from neighbouring states with little concern of repayment.

Though this has seen a rise of corruption and racketeering in the duchy, this has also seen the local criminal guild come together under the direction of *Rozario the Father*. Ever the opportunist, Rozario has used his newfound support to make a bid for power. He has set the Duchess up as being responsible for the terrible scandal of losing the sceptre, and is now blackmailing her into marrying him. From there, he is viable to become the next Duke.

Unfortunately, Rozario's attempts have coincided with two other events that have set Delchard at crisis point. The first is that the crown was stolen from the Duke by the Godbound, *New Moon*, who abhors the devastation that it can bring and has vowed to prevent it from ever being used. Also, the Oasis States have decided to call Desharn's bluff and foreclose on its unpaid loans. By the terms of the agreement, the Oasis States have sent their agent, *Ambassador Sabheem*, to take control over Delchard's treasury.

Delchard is frozen and what little stability it had has begun to crack under the pressure. Many plans are afoot to deal with the deadlock, but with the devastation of the Bond threatened, the stakes are high.

#### **BOND OF DELCHARD**

So what is the Bond of Delchard? It is analogous to a nuclear weapon system, capable of delivering one instance of devastation and controlled by two “keys”. However, it is essentially just a MacGuffin and as such the specific details have been kept vague. If the GM decides it best, the Bond could even prove to be nothing but a myth and no longer operational.

#### **ENTER THE PCS**

Given the open nature of this scenario, the first scene will depend on the way PCs have become involved in the situation. Of all the people in the scenario, *Lady Portia* is likely to be the one who contacts the PCs or has previously been in their employ. As spy master and favoured courtier, she can quickly bring the PCs up to speed and present options should they be needed.

Lady Portia is clever and will seek to take advantage of the PCs and her association with them. To this end, she will organise a ball in which most of the notable individuals will likely attend, including Ambassador Sabheem and Rozario the Father. This may make it difficult for the PCs to enter the duchy unnoticed, but it should allow them to hit the ground running.

If the alternative entrance is chosen, in which the PCs are aligned with the Oasis States or whichever foreign nation is seeking foreclosure, then the GM will need to consider how advanced that action is before the PCs enter. It is possible for the PCs to accompany Ambassador Sabheem when he arrives and the first scene will be taking control of the treasury. This will be initially resisted by *General Avanfeld* and *Advocate Turiel*. The PCs will need to be forceful but also be careful not to escalate the situation too early into an all-out war. At this stage, the PCs will not be aware that the Bond of Delchard is currently unable to be deployed.

If Ambassador Sabheem has already taken control of the treasury, he will be in a somewhat besieged state, both physically and bureaucratically. He will be much relieved for

the PCs’ support and will seek to make their arrival as public as possible, using the treasury to hold a gala that serves a similar purpose to the ball hosted by Lady Portia above.

#### **THE COURT OF DELCHARD**

The court of Delchard is filled with decaying opulence. The Guada or Insuloso families seem oblivious of their fate and are surprised at their ineffectualness at responding to the insolence of the Oasis States’ action. As such, they remain filled with self-importance, but with sense of bewilderment at dealing with people that it never expected it would need to deal with.

#### **THE GUADA AND INSULOSO FAMILIES**

The Guada family believes itself to be superior even to the Insuloso family. It is the wealthiest of the two by a slight margin and had old alliances throughout Ancalia. It is truly on the decline, held up only by the loyalty of General Avanfeld and the ambitions of Advocate Turiel, and unable to admit its doom.

The Insuloso family has an almost equally long history. However, it is consistently referred to as the “newcomer” as it is not as old as Guada. The Insuloso family often eschews wealth for influence and is the most connected of the two families, both inside the duchy, with the seedier elements, and outside with other nations, particularly with Vissio and Nezdohva. Unfortunately, these connections have corrupted the family to the point of rot.

Though both families follow lineage to determine its members, they both accept spouses as members of the family as well.

#### ***Duke Ornsa Guada***

*Duke Ornsa* has been the Guada family’s choice for several years now. He is an insufferable ass, made worse by the fact that he is incapable of seeing any of his own flaws. He considers himself the true leader of Delchard and will not back down even in the face of undeniable evidence or irresistible force.

New Moon stole the crown from Ornsa a week ago. However, he has not yet discovered that it is missing and has no means to track down who is responsible. As such, he is likely to claim that the first person to bring its theft to his attention is the thief.

### **Duchess Gadflora Insuloso**

**Duchess Gadflora** is a newcomer to the role of Duchess. Her family saw her as being able to be manipulated, allowing it to spread the position's influence amongst the family. However, this flaw has been exploited by Rozario. Under pressure from both, Gadflora has become like a wild animal trapped in a corner, willing to do anything to survive and strike out at those who harm her.

Gadflora often frequents the **Brass Pot**, a brothel run by **Canten Oba**. There she fell in lust/love with **Upalsa**. Though a minor noble by day, his sexual addiction has brought him ruin at the design of Rozario, and he now spends his nights as a prostitute. Gadflora was ably manoeuvred by Upalsa to give him access to the sceptre. Ashamed by the betrayal and the loss of her love, she is now being blackmailed by Rozario to marry him.

### **General Avanfled**

General Avanfled is the commander of the duchy's army. Though it has had little purpose with the Bond's threat doing much of its work, it is a sizable force. Given the state of the two families, Avanfled has earned the soldiers' loyalty direct. She would be well positioned to take power for herself, but she holds an old fashioned sense of loyalty to the Guada family, and would like nothing more than to see the two families joined in marriage.

Given the recent action by the Oasis States, Avanfled is livid. She understands the reluctance of the two families to deploy something as devastating as the Bond. This is her time for action to unite the duchy against the foreign enemy. She plans a pre-emptive strike against the smaller Oasis States force in Delchard, regardless of the declaration of war it will make.

### **Advocate Turiel**

Advocate Turiel is an advisor to the twin sovereigns. It is a position that has been around for generations and, as the two sovereigns are often at odds, it holds considerable power. Advocate Turiel is a very intelligent man. He is loyal to the duchy purely as it provides him with his own power, and perversely he is now the one person that both the Duke and Duchess trust to any extent.

He has recently been in talks with the Atheocracy of Lum to cede the duchy to them in exchange for making him its governor.

Converting to **True Reason** proves no issue to him given the madness he is presented with. He is waiting for the opportune time, to present an "alliance" with the Atheocracy as an alternative solution to the current crisis. Turiel may also have access to both Mundus and Empyrean Wards as desired by the GM to impede the PCs in resolving the situation too swiftly.

### **Ambassador Sabheem**

An agent of the Oasis States, Sabheem is a capable man and loyal subject of the God-Sovereigns. However, he is also a pragmatist and knows that he needs to protect himself where possible.

The Ambassador has been gifted with magic and should be treated as a **Lesser Eldritch**, unless the PCs are also agents of the Oasis States. In this case, treat Advocate Turiel as a Lesser Eldritch instead.

### **Lady Portia**

Lady Portia has a mixed heritage with potential connections to both of the twin families. Due to these connections and her own wit and resource, she has developed the only functional spy network in the duchy.

She is concerned with the rise of the crime guilds and in particular Rozario's plan to sovereignty. However, Rozario has already made moves to undermine her by offering her most trusted agent, Batra, a position in his new regime.

### **OTHER COURTIERERS**

- **Tronan**, Duke Ornsa's plaything who saw New Moon take the crown. He has kept this secret as revenge against his master.
- **Joquil** is the court musician and, despite all the ugliness in the duchy, is capable of great beauty with his song. Though not Godbound, his gifted with limited access to the Passion Word and will seek to capture the heart of the one person he deems most suitable.
- **Batra**, a servant in the employ of Lady Portia, but considering offering her services to Rozario or other highest bidder.

## THE ROZARIO FAMILY

### *Rozario The Father*

Rozario is a formidable man with a lean build and intense eyes. He has the knack of seeing into the heart of others and situations with scalpel like precision. He holds together a fragile alliance of criminal guilds, which effectively run the duchy from the ground up.

Despite his power, Rozario wants more. He has convinced his supporters that unless he is elevated to one of the twin sovereigns, their hard work will be for nothing. Whilst there is some truth in that, he also does it to cement his power. Rozario is able to bring several large groups of thugs to bear on his enemies if required, including any intrusion by the PCs.

### *Canten Oba, the Brothel Owner*

Canten Oba is a kindly old woman who runs the most successful brothel in the duchy. Though she is aware of the machinations of Rozario and others, she has no issue with them provide that her prostitutes come out on top. She has taken a liking to Gadflora and would like to see her happy after hearing Upalsa's confession of love for her and may seek to hide her from harm.

### OTHER CRIMINALS

- **Upalsa**, a minor noble who satisfies his sexual addiction as a prostitute at the Brass Pot. Despite betraying Gadflora, he is now madly in love with her.
- **Lana**, a roving pickpocket, who has her ear on the streets and is willing to tell for a little coin.

### NEW MOON

New Moon is a newly ascended Godbound. She has access to the Deception, Fertility and Time Words. Born a peasant, she developed her skills to become a midwife of such reputation that the Guada family employed her exclusively. There she befriended Tronan.

However, shortly after ascending, she received a vision of the future, showing her the Bond in action and the devastation it would cause, not only in people bit also in nature. Vowing to prevent this disaster regardless of the cost, she went about locating the crown and stealing it from Duke Ornsa.

New Moon is aware of the impact of her actions on the current situation and sees this as the start of her visions and justification for what she has done. However, Lady Portia is on her trail and is close to uncovering her identity. Once done, it will not be long before Portia will track down New Moon's family and be able to exert considerable personal pressure on her.

New Moon will prove elusive prey for the PCs, thanks to her access to Deception and Time Words, and will need to be goaded into coming forward. She is even able to subtly strike back at anyone hunting her with the Gifts of Fertility. If she feels she is not suspected, she may make a move for the crown in Rozario's possession.

### OUTCOMES

How this scenario ends is open and as is typical for Godbound. Here are some suggestions for how to wrap things up and further adventures this may lead to.

If the Bond of Delchard is restored it can be used to force others to agree to terms. However, given the current situation, the truth of the Bond may not be believed unless used.

If Advocate Turiel survives, he will seek to move the duchy under the sway of the Atheocracy of Lom in time.

If Rozario becomes the Duke, then the duchy will become stable once more for the near future. Over time though, it will devolve into a cesspit of corruption and racketeering, a centre of black market trade between various nations.

If the Duke and Duchess are restored, then the immediate crisis will be averted, though things may end up back where they started, unless the PCs shift the blame for the events onto themselves by earning the ire of the foreign nations who are owed money.

If the Oasis States take control of the duchy, the mad God-Sovereigns will now have access to the Bond, which may be brought to bear on any number of conflicts.

Finally, if the PCs take control of the Bond, this will garner them much attention. Though it only has a single use, the power will put great responsibility in their hands.