What Evil Lurks
Domain of Hawkmoon Expansion
by Lance Hawvermale

*Welcome to a Web enhancement for the **Domain of Hawkmoon,** a campaign setting introduced in **Necromancer Games** module G2, **What Evil Lurks** and to be explored again in 2003 with the release of **A Lamentation of Thieves** and **The Bonegarden**. But even if you've never played in the Domain, you may still readily use this material, as it's been designed to be inserted seamlessly into any fantasy campaign.*

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Domain of Hawkmoon Expansion
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But even if you've never played in the Domain, you may still readily use this material, as it's been designed to be inserted seamlessly into any fantasy campaign.

The information herein consists of two parts.

First we meet one of the denizens of the city of Hawkmoon, an adept named Yevgenni Noro. Designed to be used as a personal villain for a wizard or sorcerer PC, Yevgenni represents the type of scoundrel typical to the Domain-secretive, charismatic, and driven by a complex motive. Secondly we discover one of the Domain's unique wondrous items-but only if your PCs can unlock the puzzle-box that contains it. . . .

Part One: Yevgenni Noro

Yevgenni's Story:

The day Yevgenni was born, he was robbed, and he has spent every day since then plotting revenge.

Yevgenni has always yearned to be a spellcaster, one of the true greats, a wizard whose name will resonate throughout the annals of history long after he's departed this mortal coil. Yet he was born inadequate. Flawed. Whatever flame resides within a wizard's heart, Yevgenni has only a spark. While wizards have a natural affinity for magic, and sorcerers have a casual kinship with it, Yevgenni can barely touch its power. He grew up as an adept, and is doomed to a life of inadequacy, playing with parlor tricks while true power lies just beyond his grasp. He has always felt as if fate stole his true heritage from him at birth.

Yevgenni is a talismonger, one who buys, creates, and purveys magical wares. He sells material components, potions, scrolls, and other lesser magic items. He owns a shop in the city of Hawkmoon that is jammed with all manner of fetishes, ritual items, enchanting gear, exotic spices, bones, books, herbs, and artifacts of the occult. He is well versed in soothsaying, physics, astrology, parapsychology, and other fields of esoterica. He dresses in somewhat frumpy layers of robes, festooned with innumerable talismans, beads, crystals, amulets, feathers, and other trinkets of dubious magical power. When traveling, he wears a wide-brimmed hat, from the brim of which dangle a variety of curios. Clearly, Yevgenni compensates for his lack of innate talent by surrounding himself with an array of magically charged devices.

Using Yevgenni:

Yevgenni is the perfect foil for a PC wizard. His lust for magic, coupled with an intense and driving jealously, makes him a formidable antagonist, despite his relatively unimpressive wizardly skills. Yevgenni begins play as a contact for a PC wizard, a man who is always able to scrounge up the rare spell component and track down the information on the lost relic the PC seeks. As time goes by, Yevgenni becomes more companionable with the PC, while secretly stoking the flames of his obsession. His ultimate goal is to strip the PC of his or her power, for what began as an abiding jealously has transformed into a retaliatory desire to destroy that which he cannot possess. Thus Yevgenni both loves and despises all wizards he meets. The longer he knows a PC spellcaster, the harder it becomes for him to contain his anger. His anger eventually becomes full-fledged enmity, and he commences to plot the PC's undoing.

His methods are entirely indirect. He has a brutish talent for intimidating those less powerful than he, and he uses this ability to cow other NPCs into doing his will, namely acting against the PC wizard. It may take quite some time for the PC to figure out what's going on. Why do things keep going bad? Why are the local thieves targeting him? Why was his contact down at the docks attacked by thugs? Who murdered the barmaid at his favorite tavern? These questions, if answered, lead to Yevgenni's doorstep. Yevgenni knows he's not potent enough to face the PC head-on, so he spins his web in the shadows, a covetous spider plucking

the strands that will make the PC's life a miserable one.

Yevgenni is quite a likable fellow, at least when he wants to be. He appears congenial, if somewhat eccentric, and he gets along well with all spellcasters who visit his shop. In truth, Yevgenni is a master of artifice, every word a calculation, every smile a trap.

Yevgenni, Male Human Adp12: CR 11; SZ M; HD 12d6+24; hp 61; Init +3 (-1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (-1 Dex, +5 ring); Atk +5/+0 melee (1d4, dagger); SA spells; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +12; Str 8, Dex 9, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 19, Cha 16.

Languages Spoken: Common, Draconic.

Skills: Bluff +10, Concentration +8, Craft +8, Intimidate +15, Hide -1, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Listen +6, Move silently -1, Spot +4, Tumble +1; *Feats:* Brew potion, Craft wand, Craft wondrous item, Forge ring, Improved initiative, Scribe scroll.

Arcane Spells Prepared (3/4/4/3/1): 0-detect magic (x2), read magic; 1st-change self, identify, unseen servant, ventriloquism; 2nd-detect thoughts, invisibility, knock, misdirection; 3rd-nondetection, shrink item, suggestion; 4th-phantasmal killer.

Possessions: +3 dagger, brooch of shielding, ring of shooting stars, +5 ring of protection, and a *staff of power* (34 charges). Yevgenni always carries 1d6 potions of various kinds and 1d4 arcane scrolls.

Part Two: Siebkron's Vex Box

"Siebkron's Vex Box" provides supplemental material for the **Necromancer Games** module G2, *What Evil Lurks*. However, as DM, you may easily modify the specifics in order to drop this mini-encounter into any fantasy campaign. Wherever it is ultimately unearthed, the arcane device known as the *Vex Box* presents the PCs with an enciphered message, the unraveling of which leads to the discovery a new magic item exclusive to the Domain of Hawkmoon. But be warned: the encryption is complicated enough to challenge the most mathematical of players. Feel free to modify the riddle as necessary, or simply reward the PCs with the contents of the *Box* and disregard the *Vex Box* itself. Read on for details of what the *Box* contains.

For those of you who wish to insert this material into your *What Evil Lurks* gaming session, refer to Siebkron's Quarters at Area 19 in Chapter Three. The *Vex Box* is hidden in Siebkron's safe.

You may also place the *Box* anywhere you'd like in your own campaign, though it is usually found only in highly guarded treasure hordes or in the vaults of powerful NPCs.

However the PCs eventually come across the Vex Box, read the following text when they examine the object.

The box before you is a large cube eight inches on all sides, made of lightly stained beech wood and sanded so that it is quite smooth to the touch. The edges and corners have no seams. Apparently the cube has been carved from a solid block of wood. However, the object is very light in weight, as if it might be hollow. The faces of the cube are entirely smooth, devoid of engravings and ornamentation-with one exception. One of the faces has been painted white, in bright contrast to the rest of the box's surface. This side of the box also bears an inlay of words, a specific phrase written in letters of polished jade.

This is *Siebkron's Vex Box*. It cannot be opened by any means other than the utterance of a special command phrase. The *Box* is highly magical, with a hardness of 10 and 100 hit points (break DC 30). Reducing the *Box* to 0 hit points destroys the contents (see **Treasure**, below). In order to open the *Box* and keep the contents intact, the PCs must decipher the jumble of apparently senseless letters appearing on the white-painted side. A master of riddles and cryptography, Siebkron designed the *Vex Box* as a test for would-be apprentices. He also uses it to store a special wondrous item, described below.

The text on the *Box* is as follows:

POM VSITIGH SVZW MO LVBKIH

Deciphering the Key Phrase

Three solutions exist for cracking the code.

1. Lenient DMs may permit the PCs to find the key phrase by using divinatory magic such as *legend lore* or *contact other plane*.

2. Alternately, if one of the PCs is a scholar, aspiring sage, or possesses a skill such as Knowledge (cryptology) or Knowledge (mathematics), he may make an Intelligence check (DC 18) or skill check (DC 20) to puzzle out the pass phrase.

3. Finally, the solution demanding the most research and consideration on the part of the players is actually to break the code as an apprentice of Siebkron would do-by using cryptanalysis.

The scrambled message is encrypted using something called a Vigenère square. Refer to the accompanying diagram. The square is basically 26 repetitions of the alphabet, enabling any single letter to be enciphered up to 26 different ways within the same message. To decide which cipher letter to use in place of the "real" letter, a key word is required. To figure out the encrypted message, the PCs must do two things: (1) find the key word, and (2) make use of their own Vigenère square. The former is easy-the key word is the color of the oddly shaded box face (WHITE)-but the latter requires actual legwork on the part of the players themselves. Make no mistake: this encounter assumes that many players thrive on steep intellectual puzzles and will rise to the challenge by researching the topic (refer to the **Helpful Sources** section below). But if you feel that your players are not equal to this task, feel free to place a copy of the

Vigenère square within Siebkron's notebooks. With the square in their hands, the PCs should have little trouble using the key word of WHITE to reveal this message:

THE COMMAND WORD IS ENIGMA

Here's how it works. Siebkron used the word WHITE as his key, printing it consecutively across the top of the phrase he wants to encrypt, as shown in Example 1.

From here, encoding the message is child's play. The first letter he wants to encipher is T, above which is the letter W. This indicates which of the 26 cipher alphabets he'll use to encipher the letter T. So he refers to the left-hand column of Vigenère square and finds W as the beginning letter of alphabet number 22. This means he uses alphabet 22 to encipher the letter T. He finds T in the "plain" alphabet and draws his finger down the column to cipher alphabet 22, where he finds the letter P. So the first letter in his secret message is P.

The second letter in "the" is H, above which is the letter H in the key word. This means you are to use the cipher alphabet beginning with the letter H (alphabet 7) to encode the letter H, which becomes O.

To decrypt the message, the PCs perform this operation in reverse, by writing the word WHITE above the encrypted message, as shown in Example 2.

By referring to the key word, we know exactly which of the 26 alphabets was used to encode each letter. For example, the first letter in the encryption is P, which we know was enciphered with the W alphabet, or alphabet 22. We scan across until we come to P, then refer up to the "plain" alphabet to find the true letter. The first letter in the real message is T.

If the players themselves locate a Vigenère square, assume that their PCs have consulted a sage or other such expert. In this case the game world mimics the real world. Though it's incumbent upon the players actually to research the subject, their actions are mirrored by their characters, who receive the information not from the Internet or a library, but rather by paying a sage or contact a certain number of gold pieces in exchange for the Vigenère square (which you should rename to fit your own campaign).

Again, this puzzle is intricate and requires research on the part of the players. Their characters might tote the *Vex Box* around for several weeks of game time before they discover the secret of solving it. *Once more, if you deem this too daunting a task for your players, permit them to use spells or skill checks to crack the code.*

Once the PCs utter the word "Enigma," they hear a distant chime, and *Siebkron's Vex Box* raises one of its sides to reveal the treasure. . . .

Example 1

W H I T E W H I T E W H I T E W H I T E W H
t h e c o m m a n d w o r d i s e n i g m a

Example 2

W H I T E W H I T E W H I T E W H I T E W H
p o m v s i t i g h s v z w m o l v b k i h

Treasure

Whether they use spells, skills, or cryptanalysis, PCs who pronounce the proper command word acquire a special wondrous item known as the *quail in a box*.

Quail in a Box

The *quail in a box* is a magical bird that may be kept in any basket, sack, coffer or other container. The *quail* is inanimate until the time when the container's lid is opened, at which moment the bird comes to life and immediately takes to flight. The *quail*'s sole intention is to fly toward clean, open air. It automatically senses the fastest route to reach such an atmosphere and flies there unerringly. For example, if the box is opened in a deep subterranean chamber, the *quail* flies from the room's exit and takes the most expedient course to surface. The primary use of the *quail* is to find an escape route or to bring home lost miners or cave-explorers. If the box is opened in a warehouse, the *quail* flies from the nearest window. In a ship's cargo hold, the *quail* flies through an open porthole or up the companionway to the deck. Once it reaches open air (anywhere under the sky that is free of smoke, gas, or other toxins), the *quail* alights on a branch or other convenient perch and awaits its owner, who may then pick it up and return it to its quiescent status in its container. The *quail in a box* may be used once per 24 hours.

The *quail*'s maximum flying speed is 40, permitting most characters to keep it in sight as long as they move swiftly. Though the *quail* is magical and very resilient, it cannot pass through walls or perform any other physical maneuver beyond the capability of a normal bird. In other words, the *quail* cannot fly through waterfalls or lava flows, or fit its body into tiny crevices. Other than its high hit points, it is for all intents and purposes a real bird. If the *quail* is ever reduced to 0 hit points, it falls inert and must be returned to its container for 24 hours to rejuvenate. If reduced to -10 hit points, the *quail* is destroyed.

Quail: CR 1/3; Tiny Animal; HD 1d8; hp 20*; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); AC 17 (+2 size, +3 Dex, +2 natural) l); Atk -; Face/Reach: 2 ½ ft. by 2 ½ ft./0 ft.; SA -; SQ -; AL N; Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 6, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills: Listen +6, Spot +6.

* Bonus hit points granted as a magical property of the *quail in a box*.

Caster Level: 12th

Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, *find the path*

Market Price: 15,000 gp

Weight: 2 lbs.

Helpful Sources

If the players are having trouble researching cryptography on their own, refer them to the following sources.

On the Web: http://www.iponicsbd.com/test/simon/v_square.html

This invaluable site fully explains the Vigenère square and even uses WHITE as an example key word!

In print: *The Code Book: The Science of Secrecy from Ancient Egypt to Quantum Cryptography*, by Simon Singh; Anchor Books; ISBN: 0385495323

The definitive layman's book on cryptography through the ages.

The Vigenère Square

Plain	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z
1	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A
2	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B
3	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C
4	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D
5	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E
6	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F
7	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
8	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
9	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
10	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
11	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
12	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
13	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
14	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
15	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
16	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
17	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
18	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
19	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S
20	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
21	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
22	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V
23	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W
24	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X
25	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y
26	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

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