

ECHOES OF HEAVEN

Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons Player's Handbook, Third Edition, published by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. This product utilizes updated material from the v.3.5 revision.



Darkness grows in the city of Felric's Redoubt.

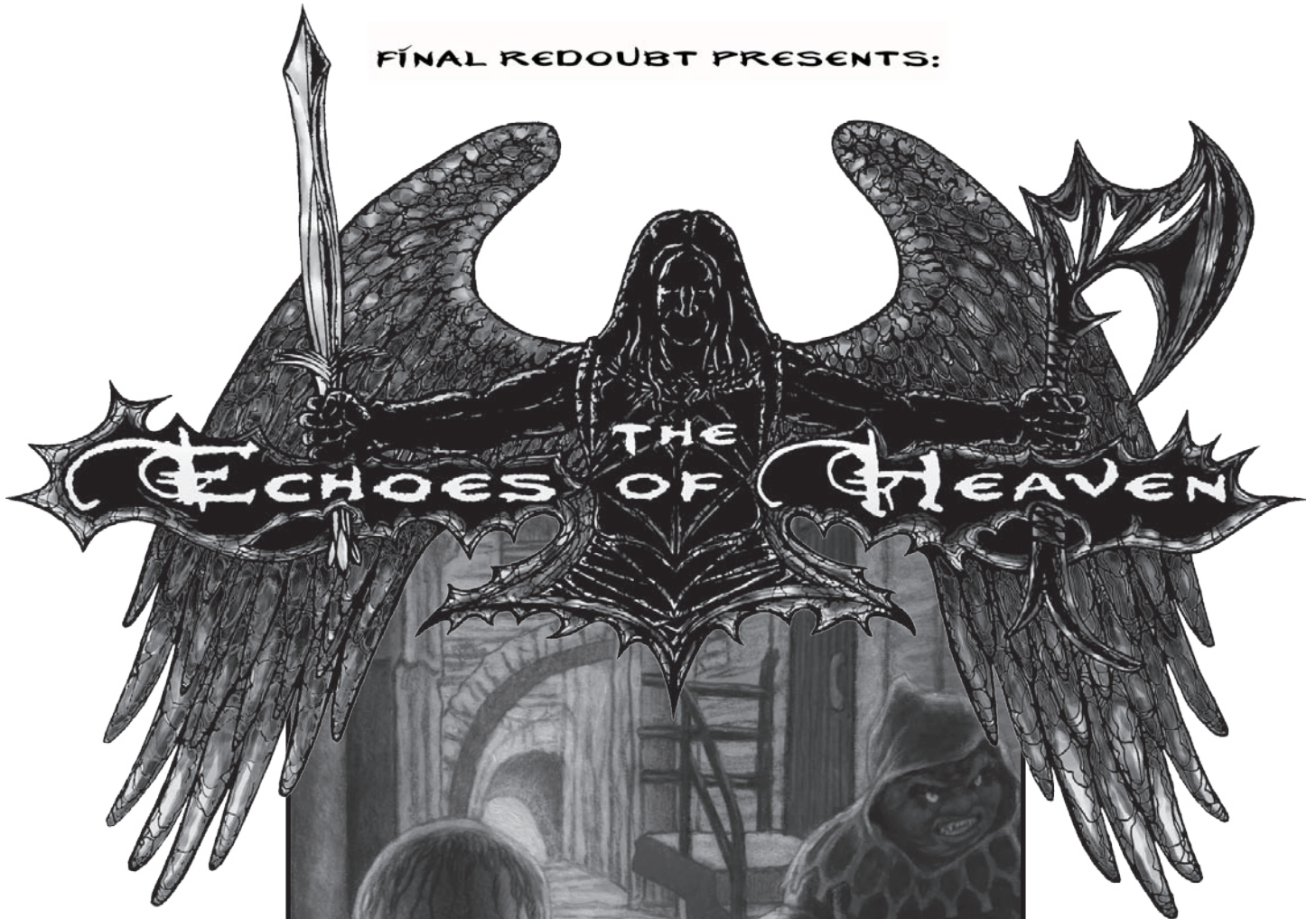
Part Two in the Epic Campaign *The Moving Shadow*.

For 4th level characters.

The Festering Earth

by Robert J Defendi

FINAL REDOUBT PRESENTS:



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*The earth is the oldest and most Hallowed creation of God.
Through it, we may touch the bones of Heaven.
— The Dulsandak*

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Special Support: Heike A. Kubasch, Bruce Neidlinger; Tim Dugger, and Steve Long.

We'd also like to thank all the fans on the Iron Crown Forums who have shown so much support
and enthusiasm, especially Allenmaher, Buddha, Cormac Doyle, Grafton, Ictus, Ironmaul, Lichemaster,
Lorenen, Maelstrom, Markc, Norin, Pendragon, Quasar, Smiling DM, Wolfram Riegler (our first cus-
tomer), and Yammahoper.

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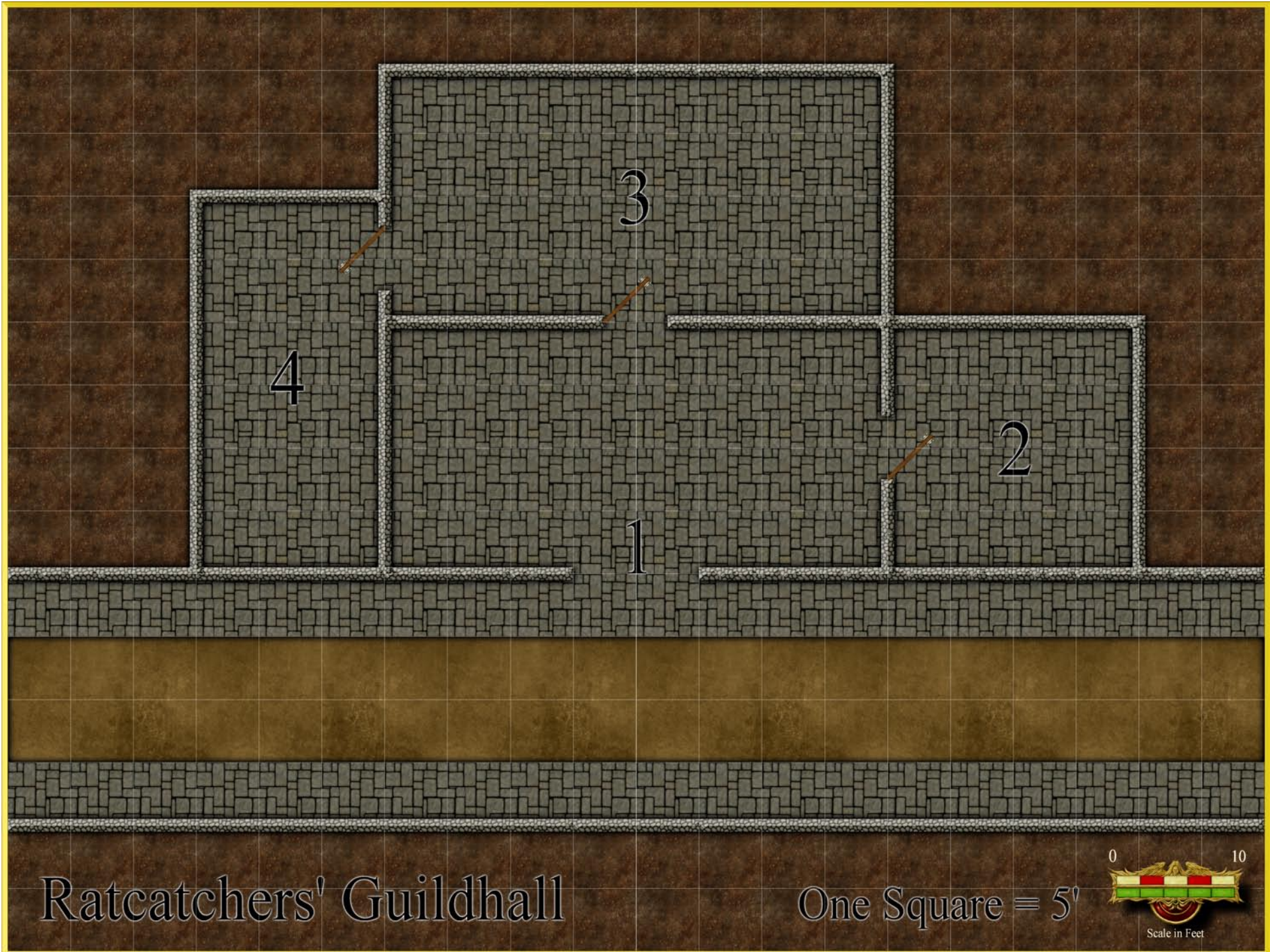
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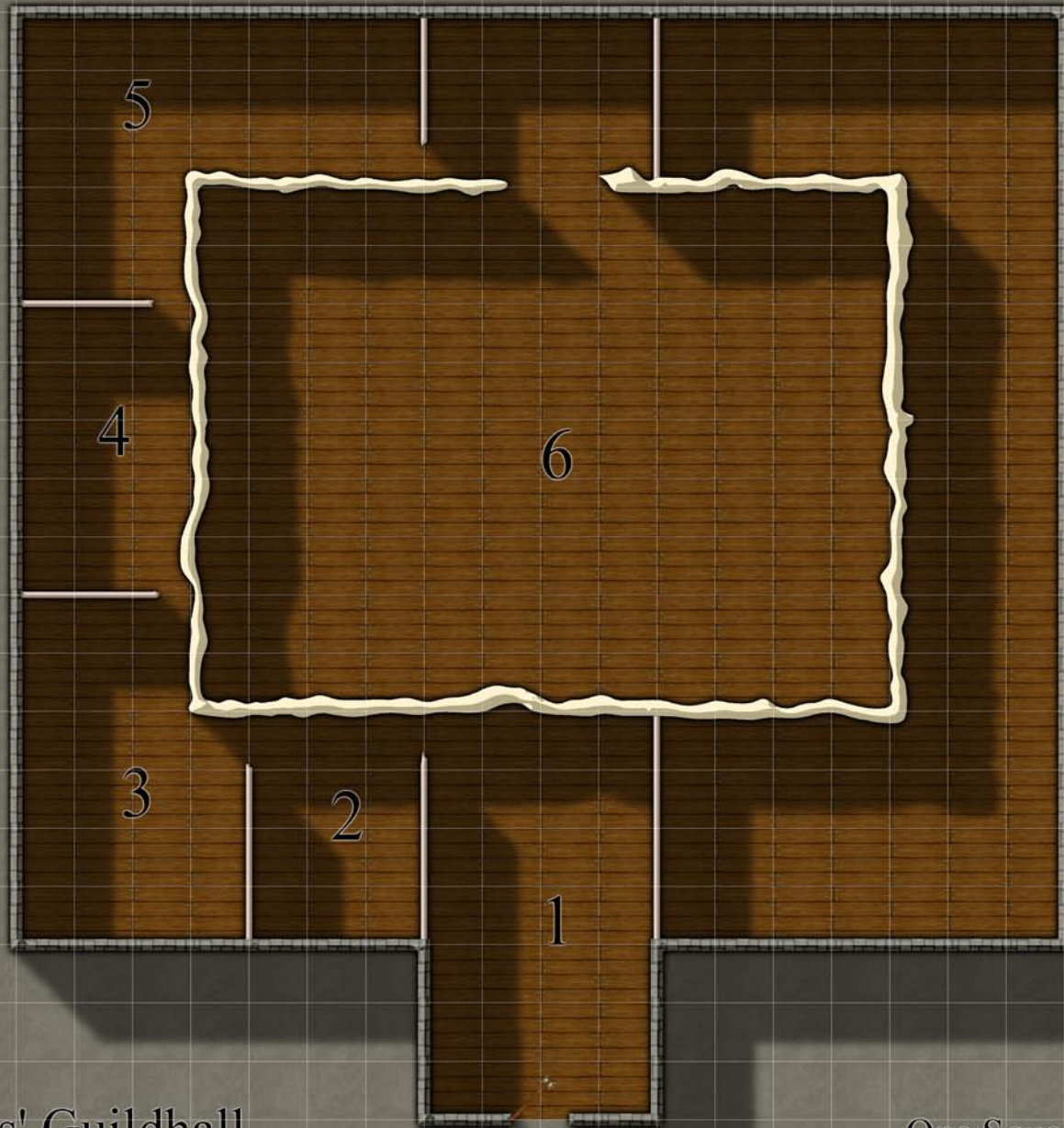
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Ratcatchers' Guildhall

One Square = 5'





Bucklemakers' Guildhall

One Square = 5'



Teaser

Introduction

Welcome to the second adventure in the *Moving Shadow* campaign. This adventure, *The Festering Earth*, is the second of a ten-part series that will take a group of characters through the Mortal Realm. Starting at 2nd level and taking the party to 20th, these adventures are a part of a campaign that will take the world to the brink of destruction. The actions of a few may save the many, and a band of heroes will stand between civilization and apocalypse.

This adventure is for 4th level characters. The Teaser uses 1st level characters, see the boxed text below.

Each adventure in the *Moving Shadow* campaign comes with a sourcebook. Included with *The Festering Earth* is *The Last Free City*, wherein the reader can explore the city of *Felric's Redoubt*, the most influential city-state in the world.

These adventures are statted with versions for four different games: the **D20 System** game, **HARP**, **HERO System**, and **Rolemaster**. This version of *The Festering Earth* is statted for the **D20 System** game.

To continue, you must first decide whether to run these adventures in the Mortal Realm or in another game world entirely. If you intend to run in the Mortal Realm, you should begin by reading *The Echoes of Heaven Campaign Setting*, paying special attention to the sections on culture and the Church, as well as Felric's Redoubt. Then you should read this adventure and carefully note the power level of the encounters. Some of these are meant to be difficult—nearly fatal—and you should be careful to make sure they are not too tough nor too easy

for your game table. Even in two groups who use identical rules the level of powers in the respective characters will vary, if only because of the way the GM adjudicates rule calls.

This adventure is the second in a series, but it's intended for characters at the 4th level of play. If you intend to run the Teaser, then you should have each player bring out the 1st level version of their character you have from the last adventure. These will be used in this Teaser.

One final note. We've written these adventures with the novice GM in mind. Because of this, we take a bit of time to explain how to handle certain in-game issues, such as story construction and player free will. If you are not a novice GM, feel free to skip these sections.

Adventure Background

More than forty days ago, the characters (or another group like them) attacked an Ulcer in Stanor Monastery in Ludremon, near the city of Belm. During this adventure, they threw what they thought was a Holy Relic into the maw of the Ulcer in an attempt to close it. The Ulcer grew and surged out of control. Only through heart and perseverance did they manage to defeat the Demon and close the Ulcer.

The "Holy Relic" was actually an Unholy Relic, switched earlier in a plot to bring the Ulcer to fruition. It's a splinter of diamond and it disappeared with the Ulcer.

Forty days ago, it reemerged in Felric's Redoubt when a Demon named Azgúk created an Ulcer in the middle of the Bucklemaker's Guildhall. The Demon

Characters

In *The Throne of God*, you made 2nd level **D20 System** game characters but kept 1st level versions. You'll use those versions in this teaser, which flashes back to how the characters met and show the first steps in their adventure together.

The players will probably think this is a wonderful idea until the novelty wears off. During the next adventure, dropping back down to first level versions will probably be more of a bother than a point of interest. That won't be a problem, however. The characters *think* that they were 1st level during their adventures before the fall of Heaven. They *think* they remember everything that happened.

They are wrong.

Teaser

mind-controlled many of the major Bucklemaker's and sent them away with the drive not to return, but the Demon captured and consumed the mind of the Guildmaster Cædmon Hædéoring, who was living at the guildhall while renovating his home, leaving him his intelligence, but giving him drives and pains to push him into the crimes to come.

Cædmon is driven by a tremendous hunger and he cannot find sustenance from any food unless he kills first. Twelve days into his starvation, he took his first life. Four days after that, driven buy guilt, he went to the Bishop of Felric's Redoubt in an attempt to find absolution and the help of God. The Bishop couldn't help him and in a fit of madness and hunger, Cædmon killed the Bishop as well.

Since then, he continued to kill, and his methods became increasingly sloppy as the hunger drove him mad. The Church, interested in avenging these killings, dispatched a member of the Order of the Knights Equenis to investigate. However the Bishop was something of a heretic and the Order of Sepinus dispatched an agent as well, to make certain the investigation wouldn't turn the Bishop into a martyr. . . .

Adventure Summary

The following is an overview of how an average adventuring party might move through this adventure. We've broken the adventure into a Teaser and three Acts, and each is listed below.

TEASER

It's the last days of the War in Heaven. The characters are all new recruits into the armies of God and they converge separately on a keep at the borders between the lands of the Faithful and the lands of the Fallen.

They find the keep in ruins and overrun with Undead. They fight these vile creatures and manage to survive, only to have the Archangel Areniel arrive afterward. Areniel, the leader of all the armies of the Faithful, gives them their mission. There's a Fallen Angel deep in the lands of Hell who has risen of late. The armies of the Fallen are broken, but this



creature seems to grow in support and power. He doesn't seem bent on conquering Heaven. He seems driven to *destroy* it.

The Teaser ends with the characters undertaking this first mission.

ACT ONE

The party is called upon by the Cardinal Gleann in Belm. He tells them that Bishop Belfric in Felric's Redoubt has been murdered. Belfric had controversial views on the reading of scripture and Gleann is afraid those investigating his murder will attempt to turn him into a heretic now that he's dead. Gleann wants the party to find out what happened and preserve the man's reputation.

The winds and the currents make land travel quicker than sea travel, and so the characters walk around the gulf to the city. In Mab they encounter the fallout from a clan feud when one clan locks another in a building and sets it on fire. The party likely gets involved, although clan conflicts are rarely simple.

Closer to Felric's Redoubt, a group of elves accost the party, believing them to be a group of bandits who've been raiding into Ingrast. The party talks their way out of it and only then manages to make it to the city itself.

ACT TWO

The party arrives to find the Bishop was the second victim of a serial killer. The killer, known as the Fat Man, has killed four times so far, and each time he devours all the food on the scene.

The Knight Equenis MacFlin has already arrived and begun investigating, but in the Mortal Realm detectives know almost nothing of investigating a crime scene. There is no real evidence, and no eyewitness testimony. Worse, the killer is protected

Teaser

against divination. The party is at a standstill until he kills again.

Unfortunately, this is when the copycat killings begin.

It starts with the arrival of Pacle of the Order of Sinnius. Pacle investigates and discovers there are five priests who will be instrumental in turning Bel-*fric* into a martyr. If he kills them, the martyrdom will never get off the ground.

At the same time the Ratcatcher's Guild decides to convince the city the Fat Man works out of the sewers, where they work. They feel this will allow them to bargain with the city for more money (their work is obviously dangerous).

The Rat Catchers dig a fresh body out of the cemetery and mutilate it to look like the Fat Man's doing. They then set it loose in the sewers. The party, thinking *someone* was killed, investigate and find and defeat the Rat Catchers in their sewer-based guildhall. Only then do they learn that not only is the guild innocent of the greater killing, but they didn't even kill *this* victim.

The next day Pacle strikes, but the party is smart enough to spot the death of the priest as a copycat as well. Unfortunately, Pacle is good at covering up his work.

Now there's a clock over the party's head. If the Fat Man doesn't strike soon, they will have no leads to stop any of this.

Luckily, the Fat Man strikes the same day.

This time he kills a street urchin who hoarded food. The party is able to find a clue on this site, an empty bottle of medicine. Tracking it to the apothecary that sold it, they find it's a rare extract of the poppy, a medicine imported from beyond civilized

lands. They find out the man who bought the extract had a distinctive brooch.

The brooch should lead them to question bucklemakers, one of them had to have made it. The first bucklemaker they find recognizes it. It was owned by their guildmaster.

Which brings them to the Bucklemaker's Guildhall, a building that no bucklemaker will now enter.

ACT THREE

The party enters the Bucklemaker's Guildhall, only to discover that this is another Ulcer. They manage to work their way through ruined room after ruined room, along a wall of bones. They fight the various aspects of the Ulcer until they make it to the central room, where the Demon and the Guildmaster wait for the final battle.

Troubleshooting

The most important element in any adventure is free will. You cannot railroad a party into doing what you want and still produce an ideal adventure. Therefore it's important that you never try to force the party along the adventure path described above.

So what do you do if they strike off on their own?

It takes a gentle hand to keep a party and a story line on the same path. The primary thing to remember is not to try to force them back along the way, that is the intention of the Dramatic Purpose descriptions, outlined below.

If a party decides to go the wrong way, the easiest way to kick them back on path is to have someone talk to them. Perhaps they've chosen so wrongly that MacFlin meets them and gives them the ideas that put them back on the right path. Perhaps they've gotten lost and they meet a local who can tell them how to get where they are going. Perhaps they've become confused and the Captain of the Guard can simply remind them what they need to know. Just because a character is an NPC doesn't mean he's stupid.



Teaser

If that doesn't work, try to entice them back. Smoke on the horizon always gets a party's attention. A destroyed caravan with the treasure carted off is an eye-opener as well.

If the party insists on doing their own thing, let them. It can take a while to get them back on track but don't let that stop you. Bring them back gently, in stages.

The worst thing you can do is say, "Because the adventure says so." If the party figures something out too early, so be it. If they miss clues but continue in the right direction, let them. Never put them in a situation where the plot of the story is more frustrating than interesting. Above all, let them have fun. If they figure out a way to discover the killer early, don't force Act Two as written. Think of this entire adventure as a guideline, not as a script.

Dramatic Purpose

Every major event in this adventure has a Dramatic Purpose. These are explained so the GM can better determine what to do if the party goes off-book. If an encounter's Dramatic Purpose is critical (like the Act Two twist) then the GM will know that it has to happen somehow. If it's less important, he'll know he can skip it.

One thing to remember about Dramatic Purposes is that they are all important, not just the big ones. If you run an adventure with no easy combats, the players will feel exhausted, maybe even desperate, and they might stop enjoying the game.

If a group diverges wildly from the written adventure, let them. Take the Dramatic Purposes of the encounters they skip and invent new encounters that serve the same ends. If the party has somehow skipped all the easy fights, or Heaven forbid messed them up so badly they weren't easy anymore, invent some new easy fights and drop them in the party's path.

Maybe the party abandons the adventure entirely and refuses to go back. If so, who are we to say they did wrong? Take the remaining dramatic events and create new ones for the party, following their path. It might not be this adventure, but it will be *an* adventure, and it will be a lot more fun than arguing about whether the party is ruining the GM's plans.

As long as all the purposes are served, you will have a workable story, probably even a good one. It doesn't matter if it isn't the story you set out to tell. Gaming is a collaborative effort, after all.

Running the Campaign

This adventure is part two in a ten-part continuing campaign. This brings up some issues one wouldn't have in a stand-alone adventure.

DOWN TIME

It's very possible that someone will want to run these adventures before the entire series has been released. It's likely that a game group may finish an adventure before the next one is available.

The Dirty Little Secret of Good Storytelling

Not many people will admit to it, but most GMs have done it. We lie. We fudge a dice roll, we influence a result. There's nothing wrong with that, as long as it makes the adventure more—and not less—enjoyable. For instance, in one of the play tests of this adventure, the GM messed up and described the murders in such a way that it seemed the Fat Man was becoming more *disciplined* in his killings. When the body appeared in the sewers, all the players knew instantly that it was a copycat. Unfortunately, they knew this due to out-of-character knowledge. They knew it from stuff they learned watching crime TV shows, not based on stuff their characters would understand. The GM could have mentioned this to them and forced them to act as if their characters thought the killing was the Fat Man, and if he had, they might have resented that entire part of the adventure (and maybe even turned away in spite). But he didn't, and the party did the right thing, pushing forward, and while this blew what was essentially the Act Two twist, he didn't try to force it, figuring that finding out the Fat Man was actually skinny would be twist enough.

Teaser

We've taken this into consideration. You can't run a ten-part adventure and not expect to take some side trips. We've built downtime into the story between each adventure. Near the end, it might be nice to run the adventures concurrently, but there's no point in this series where you must play the adventures without any break in between.

EXPERIENCE AND TABLE PACING

If you're running these adventures in a series, then the issue of experience will come into play. Some groups might want to do the adventures one after another. Others might have ten sessions between each adventure (especially if they meet often while waiting for the next release).

The thing to remember about experience is that it's all arbitrary. Many GMs ignore official experience guidelines altogether. Some have home systems. Some just assign experience by story points, some by number of sessions, regardless of session content.

The important thing to remember is that no experience system is set in stone. If you have multiple adventures in this series and you wish to run them back to back, then a party will need to gain two levels in a single adventure. If you want to run eight adventures between, then they need to average a fourth of a level each adventure. It doesn't matter how fast a group advances as long as everyone understands what to expect and why to expect it. If you tell a party you want to game every single night but the next adventure isn't out for two more weeks, they'll understand they might need to advance more slowly.



Playing in Another Game World

If you wish to run this adventure in another world, whether your own or one produced by another company, that's okay as well. It might take a touch more work, however.

Changing the name of Felric's Redoubt to be a major city in your world should be easy. As for the Church, try to find a mostly good or neutral church. A little corruption is necessary for the flavor of the adventure. The idea of a Holy Relic can't be a foreign one, and evil must be able to hide corruption from the magic of good.

The same thing is true for the Order of Sinnius. Either find a second church to fit this bill or find or build an order within the main church that would care about the martyrdom of Belfric.

Those are the hard parts, because they are what the party must interact with most often.

What would seem, at the first, to be the most difficult issue is the easiest. Ulcers are an everyday occurrence in the Mortal Realm, but in another world, they might be alien. If that's the case, all you need to do is come up with a way for the church to know about the nature of the Ulcer from the previous adventure. All that leaves is the root cause of the Ulcer.

But in the over-arching sloop of the story, the characters will come to realize that this Demon is not the one behind all this. With a Duke of Hell (or whatever plane you would like) working behind the scenes, it isn't hard to imagine the ultimate nemesis hatching a plan that would begin with this little piece of Hell on earth. Perhaps he's the only one to figure out a way to make an Ulcer. Perhaps he's even done it before, and no one has ever noticed. There is much evil in most game worlds. It might take some time to recognize an Ulcer for what it is.

To Tease or not to Tease

If you've decided to run this adventure in the Mortal Realm, you must decide whether to run the Teaser.

Teaser

The Teaser is optional. Each adventure comes with one, and through them, you will play out a ministory that maps out the characters' adventures in Heaven.

So you must decide, is the Teaser right for your group?

By running the Teaser, you have placed your characters in a different frame of reference than anyone else in the world. They will have a unique perspective on events, on customs and on the nature of the Church. They won't know anything others don't (except for irrelevant details, like the street names in the Holy City). The Teaser will not make them any more powerful.

But for those who would like this Teaser, there is a powerful element of wish fulfillment. These people are veterans of the greatest war ever fought. They've known Angels personally. They've witnessed one of the greatest eras of history.

It all boils down to that. If you think your game group would find those wish-fulfillment aspects appealing, then run the Teaser. If you think it's not their thing, then it will probably come off as a silly gimmick. Let your group be your compass.

There is one last note about the Teasers. While it's true that characters should always have the option of going off-book, there are elements of later Teasers where things will happen to the characters the players might not like. Most notably, characters will be charmed into working for the evil side at some future point. While certain players will enjoy that roleplaying experience, others will feel like they've been robbed of their free will. If playing this kind of capture, redemption, and revenge story isn't something your players will like, don't run any more Teasers.

Assorted Names

In any adventure, the party will run across people who aren't listed in the adventure. The GM might have to come up with several names in a single locale. Because of this we've provided a list of some general names from Felric's Redoubt. Feel free to use them on characters the party meets along the way.

Male names: Adwin, Althelm, Ældfric, Balm, Bellaf, Beold, Berdic, Ceolm, Ceowald, Dúnhere, Ealfred, Edgand, Edman, Eldfric, Hæddic, Imbold, Thengel, Trego.

Female Names: Æthe, Caewin, Cedwalh, Deda, Dúnhere, Elfwin, Erwalh, Eswin, Fréawane, Freca, Gothera, Osdéor, Oswine, Penda. Tine. Weah, Wear.

People of the city still use patronymics. A male patronymic is formed by taking the father's name and adding -ing to the end. A female patronymic adds -ingen. So Adwin and Æthe, the children of Edman, would be Adwin Edmaning and Æthe Edmaningen.

Adventure Difficulty

As we said before, the power level of every game table is just a little different. So although this adventure has been play-tested, it's impossible to test the difficulty of the adventure against the exact power level of every table.

It's difficult to change the challenge level of an encounter in the middle. However, a great deal can be done between battles. A GM should adjust encounters if he feels they've been too easy or too hard. As long as the game remains fair, a little adjustment on the fly can be a good thing.

One final note. It's generally best to let the final battle run once it's started. This is usually the most dangerous part of the adventure and players need to feel like they can die. So although some fast and loose play can be a good thing during most of play if they are in trouble and it's your fault. when the climax comes, the GM should probably let the chips fall where they may.



Teaser

Campaign Cartographer

All maps in this adventure were designed using Profantasy's Campaign Cartographer. You will find versions of the maps built with both Campaign Cartographer 2 and 3 included with the PDF version of this product and some on our web site (www.FinalRedoubt.com) as well. This will allow you to print these maps at any scale, including 1"=5' for miniature use. If you don't own the program, Profantasy provides printing and viewing software on their website that you can use to print these maps. Go to www.Profantasy.com.

Teaser

The teaser begins ten thousand years before the rest of the adventure. The War in Heaven has raged for a thousand years and the forces of Heaven believe they're winning. Only the Five Prophets and God Himself knows that a second Fall looms on the horizon, and when it comes, Heaven will fall with it.

This takes place before the Teaser of the former adventure and at this point the characters do not know one another. This is the beginning of their story, and in the upcoming Teasers we will learn what happened that made them into the heroes that Heaven would entrust to protect the Five Prophets during the last moments of the Sundering.

Dramatic Purpose

The Dramatic Purpose of the Teaser is to hook the players in, hopefully before even a single die is thrown. In a television show, the Teaser is the part of the episode that comes before the credits, lasting anywhere from thirty seconds (for shows like the long defunct Enterprise) to more than ten minutes (for shows like recently defunct Alias). The Teaser is (relatively) short, to the point, and usually set up to end in a cliff hanger to keep the viewer from changing channels.

Our teaser serves much the same purpose. In it the characters start in a unique environment . . . the final days of the War in Heaven. This will be a brief and violent opening that will hopefully set a tone for the rest of the campaign . . . if it's used. The Teaser of this adventure (and the upcoming adventures in the same series) create a story line, not quite told in order, of the characters and their battles in the last days. The Teaser is optional.

IN THE BEGINNING

When the players are ready to begin, read or paraphrase the following:



Teaser

It was the last days of the War in Heaven.

It was six months before the Sundering, six months before the Second Falling, before that last, desperate battle. Six months before everything you cared about turned to ashes.

You had been called from across Heaven, volunteers who had journeyed out to the edge of the lands of the faithful. You'd all traveled hard and far to meet with one of the great generals of the war, the Archangel Areniel. The light of God shone everywhere in Heaven those days, except in Hell, the lands of the Fallen. The border knew the only true twilight in Heaven.

Here.

Here the light of God shines dim. Here the Faithful stand against the heretics. Here you meet on the road to the border fortress Stands in Faith.

Give the party time to introduce themselves and pretend to meet for the first time. Allow them to roleplay this.

Make sure they understand what is going on. They are in Heaven. They are only 1st level. They have probably never been into the lands of Hell before.

One point that might throw them is the existence of Hell. Hell, as the players think of it, does not exist yet. Hell was originally a province in Heaven, the province controlled by the Archangel Lareniel, who is now known as Bamon. Hell is technically still just that one province, but more practically, all the lands of the Fallen are referred to as Hell by the Faithful. While the characters are merely bordering the Fallen lands, they think of everything outside the light of God as Hell.



Dramatic Purpose

The purpose of this scene is to let the characters roleplay a bit, perhaps allow some time for “prophetic humor” as they meet and pretend they don’t know what’s happening to them next. Try to keep it under control, though. A little humor won’t ruin the tone, but keep in mind that this was a serious time.

When the characters have met and move on to the fortress itself, begin the next encounter.

THE SLAUGHTER

When the characters continue, read or paraphrase the following:

As you come over the final hill to Stands in Faith, you know immediately that something has gone wrong. Greasy black clouds of smoke roil into the air. The great walls of the fortress have fallen to ruins, the gates shattered, the buildings cracked and crumbling.

Even from here you can see the bodies, scattered and broken on the charred ground. Shattered armor and weapons gleam in the distance. Ruined wagons and supplies lay looted and cast upon the ground.

Whatever happened here, you are too late.

The characters are a bit early, if they ask. Evidently the fortress was attacked waiting for Areniel and the party to arrive.

Allow the characters to explore the ruins a bit. There is a single large bailey and a central keep. Let the characters look around, but since there’s no map, either don’t let them explore too far or improvise the layout of the fortress.

Describe the bodies and the death to whatever level of detail is appropriate for your table. A successful Knowledge (Arcana) check (DC 15) reveals the army responsible was composed of Undead.

When the characters have explored enough, move on to the next encounter.

Teaser

Dramatic Purpose

The purpose of this scene is to set tone. The players will likely have made light of the encounter where they met. This scene is meant to sober the mood and let them know the stakes are high. Continue your descriptions until they give in to the mood.

MORE UNDEAD

When the players have surrendered to the mood, read or paraphrase the following:

As you stand amid the ruins, you hear shuffling, a slimy, sickly sound, like flesh sloughing off bone. As you turn, the bodies around you begin to twitch, to jerk, to spasm.

And then the dead rise.

The dead defenders of the fortress arise and attack the PCs. Luckily, not every body rises at this point. There are as many zombies as there are PCs.

Lesser Zombies: CR 1/3; Medium undead; HD 1d12+3; hp 10; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 9, flat-footed 11; Base Atk/Grp +0/+1; Atk +0 melee (1d6+1 slam); Full Atk +0 melee (1d6+1 slam); SA -; SQ Single actions only, damage reduction 5/



slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Toughness.

Possessions: Ruined equipment.

Dramatic Purpose

The purpose of this scene is to allow the characters to test their 1st level abilities. This is too difficult a fight to consider easy, especially if the characters split up. Try to arrange the tactics of this battle to allow the characters to shine as much as possible.

ARENIEL

When the fight ends and the characters form up, read or paraphrase the following:

As the last of the Undead fall, you hear more rustling and look around in horror. The dead around you rise, one after another, a few, a half dozen, an army.

Try to arrange this battle so the party can win, we suggest twice the party's number in foes, but make sure the party is able to form up for this battle, to present a united front. While there is a way to bail them out at the end, and while this might be one of the few situations where *deus ex machina* is appropriate, it's best if the characters can stand on their own feet.

Lesser Zombies: CR 1/3; Medium undead; HD 1d12+3; hp 10; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 9, flat-footed 11; Base Atk/Grp +0/+1; Atk +0 melee (1d6+1 slam); Full Atk +0 melee (1d6+1 slam);

Death in the Teasers

There is a logic problem with the characters dying during the Teasers, and the player's know this. Try not to make the players feel like you are threatening them pointlessly, they won't take it seriously. In fact, they *can* die, but they don't know this yet, so it's best that all the fights are challenging but not life-threatening. At this point don't kill any characters. Merely put them down and allow magical healing to bring them back.

This will all change later, but don't tell the players that.

Teaser

SA —; SQ Single actions only, damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

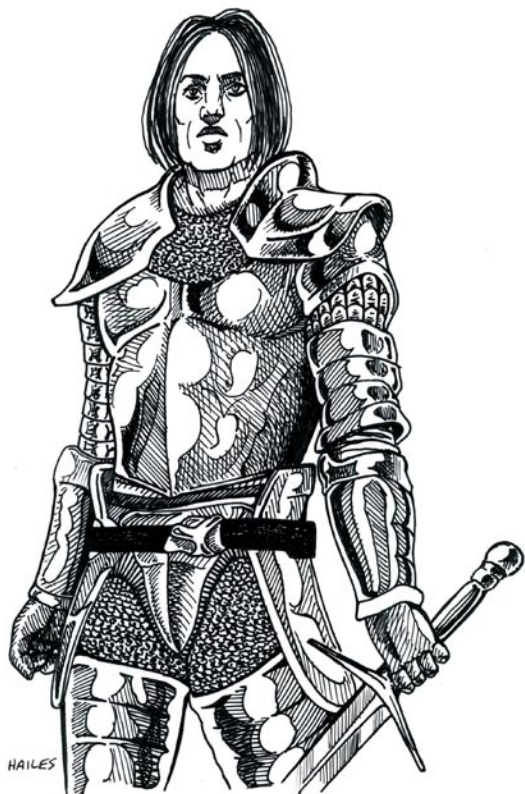
Skills and Feats: Toughness.

Possessions: Ruined equipment.

When the fight is down to just a zombie or two or things get out of hand, read or paraphrase the following:

A brilliant light blazes in the heavens. A shining creature appears over the fortress, magnificent in his armor, shining in his glory. Great wings beat as he circles, descending, swooping in.

Areniel destroys the remaining Undead with Turn Undead. He then aids them in any remaining details of mop up, helping to heal fallen party members.



Dramatic Purpose

The purpose of this scene is to allow the characters a challenging fight and impress on them how humble their beginnings were.

A NEW DIRECTION

When the fight dies down and the characters and Areniel have exchanged pleasantries, read or paraphrase the following:

The Archangel stares around the carnage of the fortress, a great look of sadness on his face. With a great sigh, he turns to you.

“It’s the final days,” he says. “The enemy has broken, their troops are in disarray. They are desperate and they are looking for any chance to win. I’m not sure what they are going to try next, but they couldn’t maintain this probe, couldn’t hold what they took. They’re trying to cause chaos, wreak havoc, anything. They don’t know what to do.”

He surveys the slaughter again. “Except one. There is a new Fallen Angel rising among the enemy. I know little about him, but he doesn’t seem to be oriented on warfare, on strategy. He’s engaged in slaughter, mayhem. He seems more interested in destroying Heaven than controlling it.

“I need someone to investigate. I need someone to find out who he is, what he’s planning, and I need someone to tell us, so we can stop him.

“His Fallen name is Mathos.”

Let the party speak with Areniel and ask him questions. If they need to know, Mathos’ Angelic name was Gariel. Areniel doesn’t know what Mathos is doing, but he *does* know the Fallen Angel has allied himself strongly with the Nopheratus.

When the party is ready to leave, read or paraphrase the following:

Teaser

You leave the remains of Stands in Faith and begin walking into the south, away from the lands of God and into the Fallen lands. Hell. In the distance behind you, the light of God to fades and darkness settles around you. These are the lands of evil, of spite, and they lie before you, a great expanse of corruption and sin. Behind you, everything you know and everything you love.

But before, you now lie all the secrets of the Fallen. Somehow you know that Heaven is still in danger, and the key to saving it, to saving *everything*, lies ahead.

Dramatic Purpose

The purpose of this scene is to give the character's their quest, to set them on the road that will unlock the future of Heaven. This scene serves the added purpose of giving the players a goal so big that they can't turn away from it, a goal big enough to make them look forward, hopefully, to the next Teaser.



Act One

Act One

Ten thousand years have come and gone. The Prophets split Heaven into three realms, Heaven, Hell, and Meridrin. Now the endless march of time has wrought a world laboring under the myopic guidance of monolithic racial churches and feudal brutality. Mortals have fallen a long way since the days when they rubbed elbow-to-knee with the greatest Angels in Heaven.

How Act One begins depends on whether you've run the last adventure, but the events after that are mostly the same. The real difference lies in the opening and in the role-playing of certain scenes.

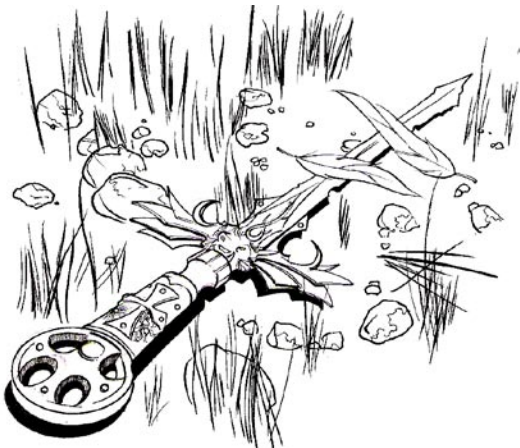
Dramatic Purpose

The dramatic purpose of the first act is to introduce all the major characters, plot, and setting elements. Act One can be difficult to handle because it often gets a bit ho-hum if the GM isn't careful. The act should end with the character's entering a "new world," meaning that they are going out to take care of some problem or to fulfill some new role.

This is an adventure, though, not a movie. A GM should make sure that they don't use this idea of movie structure to railroad characters.

IF THE PARTY DID NOT PLAY THE LAST ADVENTURE

Take a break after the Teaser if you ran it. Let people smoke and get drinks. This is a good time to go to the



bathroom or restock snacks. If the Teaser went well, the players should be able to handle a break here without any loss of momentum.

When things are ready to continue or begin, read or paraphrase the following:

You've been living in the country of Ludremon for many weeks now without work or financial gain, aside from the odd job or two you've done for the Cardinal of the city of Belm. The grind of day-to-day living has begun to wear on your purses and you find yourself seeking humbler accommodations with each passing week. Things have to change, and they have to change soon. It's time to move on.

You are sitting in the common room of a local inn when a young priest comes looking for you. He looks apologetic, but insistent.

"The cardinal needs to see you."

The party should find this compelling enough to follow. If they hesitate, let them know the Cardinal has given them one or two small jobs in the past, and perhaps this will give them enough pocket money to seek out gainful employment in the next city.

Dramatic Purpose

The purpose of this scene is to set up the adventure to come and give the players the excuse they need to accept the Cardinal's request for aid.

IF THE PARTY PLAYED THE LAST ADVENTURE

Take a break after the Teaser if you ran it. Let people smoke and get drinks. This is a good time to go to the bathroom or replenish snacks. If the Teaser went well, the players should be able to handle a break here without any loss of momentum.

This opening is to be played if the party played the last adventure. It is designed assuming the characters already know one another. If you wish to run some intervening adventures, do so, but keep the party within reach of the Cardinal's agents, so they can be found when the time is necessary.

Act One

The following encounters assume the party is still in Belm, living on the Cardinal's hospitality. If they aren't, adjust the descriptions of the opening encounters accordingly. If the party is far away, have the Cardinal's assistant Lanie track them down and give them the Cardinal's dialog.

Read or paraphrase the following:

The City of Belm is a vast, expansive city, the heart of the kingdom of Ludremon. You've lived here for weeks now, on the hospitality of the Cardinal. These have been good times, peaceful times, but the impatience has begun to settle over you again. You've been idle too long. It's time to move on.

You are sitting in your rooms in the Cardinal's manor when a young priest comes looking for you. He looks apologetic, but insistent.

"The Cardinal needs to see you."

Dramatic Purpose

The purpose of this scene is to set up the adventure to come and give the players the excuse they need to accept the Cardinal's request for aid.

THE CARDINAL

They will find the Cardinal in his cloister. If they are not within an easy walk of Belm, have Lanie, the messenger, explain their job instead.

Read or paraphrase the following:



The Cardinal awaits you in his cloister, an aged and distinguished man standing amid flowers and marble benches and the statues of saints.

He turns to you as you enter, his face grim. He nods in your direction.

"You've shown me that you're discreet. I'm afraid the Church is in need of discretion again.

"The City-State of Felric's Redoubt lies to the north and east, past the country of Mab. Not being a member of a larger nation, they don't have quite the resources of Ludremon.

"Last week, the bishop of Felric's Redoubt was killed and we fear the worse. The local guard is at a dead end. The Church is rallying to investigate the matter itself and I know the Knight Equenis have dispatched a man to investigate. I'm afraid other orders might descend upon the city as well. Orders less . . . forgiving.

"I believe Bishop Belfric was murdered with a purpose. Other orders of the Church will try to find ways to discredit him, try to besmirch his name. Belfric was a visionary, but some would call him a heretic. The man is dead. I want this handled in a way that preserves his honor and the honor of our order."

Belfric believed that literate people should read and understand the scriptures themselves, which is against the official policy of the Church (that requires that priests interpret scripture). Cardinal Gleann secretly fears the man was killed *because* of these beliefs, but he won't state that outright.

What he *will* discuss is that he's afraid the party is stepping into a hotbed of religious extremism. Belfric's followers might try to turn him into a martyr, whereas his enemies will almost certainly attempt to discredit him. The Cardinal wants this settled before tempers soar out of control.

After the Cardinal has answered all their questions, he sends the party on its way. On the last adventure, if they participated, they made a good deal of money. He'd rather keep this one off the books, but he offers to compensate them if they don't find more funds during this adventure. He outfits them with any reasonable travel gear, including horses and 100 PP traveling money if they ask.

Act One

Dramatic Purpose

The purpose of this scene is to give the characters their quest.

LUDREMON

Felric's Redoubt is about six to nine days away on good horses, depending on road conditions. The currents and winds are against the party this time of year, so horse travel is almost certainly faster.

There are villages every mile or so along the road and the party can probably find someone willing to put them up the first night (they won't likely be anywhere near a real inn.) The next day, around noon, they have their first encounter in the middle of nowhere.

Read or paraphrase the following:

You are riding along the road when a cry warbles in the distance. You look around and you see a copse of trees to the left. The cries seem to be coming from that direction.

Five men have fallen into a sinkhole here. The hole is twelve feet deep and it has crumbled outward to about ten feet wide, twenty at the bottom. The sides of the hole still crumble, making climbing in and out impossible.

There is a tree close enough to the hole to lower a rope. Climbing in or pulling someone out is a DC 5.

Two of the men are injured. Both are badly injured, one 3 HP damage and the other with 6 HP damage. Both are effectively crippled by their in-

juries. Because of this they aren't fit to climb out, even with a rope.

The men will be incredibly grateful if the party saves them, more so if magical healing is involved. They will be a bit reticent about anyone discovering where the party found them.

The peasants are, of course, poachers. They were trapping in the woods illegally when three of the men fell in the sinkhole. The other two fell in trying to get them out.

Dramatic Purpose

This scene allows the characters to establish their heroism and to aid the helpless. It gives the players an opportunity to feel good about themselves and their place in the world.

MAB

As the days pass, the characters cross the border from Ludremon into Mab. On the second day in Mab, read or paraphrase the following:

You travel north, into rugged hills and twisted valleys, a lush, vibrant land, full of life and energy. Winds blow through high grasses, whistling around rocks and hills, over crags and through crevices.

As you travel, the road dwindles to little more than a trail, winding through the low valleys of jagged hillsides. Slowly, the lands rise around you until the hills almost become mountains.

Then a smear of gray appears on the horizon, a dark column of smoke that raises terrible memories. Something is burning. Or someone.

The Fate of the Relic

In the last adventure, the party was supposed to throw the Splinter into the maw of the Ulcer. If they did, then the Splinter ended up in Hell, where it was used to create the Ulcer in Felric's Redoubt. If they didn't, then you have something of a problem.

Hopefully, the characters returned the Splinter to the Church (they shouldn't know that it is corrupt if they didn't throw it in). If they did, the Splinter can simply be stolen a few days later (by Demon worshippers, presumably). If they kept it, despite the sinfulness of stealing from the Church, then you will have to work out some way for the Splinter to go missing, most likely with another theft. Either way, it ends up in Demon hands.

Act One One

The party has stumbled onto a bit of a clan dispute. There is a small fort here, wooden and with no outer wall. Members of Clan MacRinn are inside the fort. The men outside are members of clan Ergus. The fort is on fire.

The members of clan Ergus have two wagons parked in front of the door so those inside can't get out. They are ready to butcher anyone who tries, anyway.

The problem is that this is a common clan feud, meaning the animosity goes back centuries. MacRinn just butchered women and children of Clan Ergus, and that's all Ergus will offer, but this was in retaliation of Ergus poisoning MacRinn's water supply. Invent a series of alternating atrocities reaching through the history of both clans if necessary.

Clan Ergus isn't likely to relent and the party might have to kill them or incapacitate them to get the doors open. Roleplay this scene as necessary.

There is a clansman for every party member.

Clansmen: human warrior 3; CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 3d8+2; hp 20; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk/Grp +3/+5; Atk +5 melee (1d8+2/19-20, longsword); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+2/19-20, weapon); SA –; SQ –; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Balance 1, Climb 6, Escape Artist 0, Jump 6; Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Cleave.

Possessions: Buckler, Longsword, Studded Leather.

The clansmen carry nothing of real value.

Dramatic Purpose

This scene allows the characters to experience the larger world around them. Here they learn there are things going on that don't involve them, giving the world more depth and realism.

When the fight breaks out, as it likely will, it gives them a challenging fight. This allows them to stretch their abilities and feel the danger of the game.

ELVES

The party will leave Mab eventually. When they are about a day out of Felric's Redoubt, read or paraphrase the following:

You wander north out of Mab and into the borderlands. Your path takes you closer and closer to the sea and trees spring up around the surrounding lands.

As you wind through one copse of trees you can feel the vibrance of the light around you, hear the scurrying of beetles, of squirrels. The tress stir with wind and the movement of unseen wildlife and it's almost as if the forest is speaking to you.

Roll Listen checks against the Move Silently skill of the Elves below.

If the party succeeds, they sense the movement of people in the trees around them in time to come up with some sort of a defensive position. If not, they are surprised by what's to come.

Elves suddenly emerge from the trees all around them, bows trained. They will tell the party to throw down their weapons and surrender.

The Elves are out of Ingrast, looking for bandits who have been raiding the Elven borders, killing Elves. Unfortunately, the party matches the description of these bandits.

If the party denies any banditry, the Elves will listen to their story, then demand proof. The party should probably be able to come up with some evidence they just came in out of Mab. Either way, the Elves will demand to search them and their gear before letting them go. If the party agrees the Elves let them go, grudgingly. If not, the party will have to fight to avoid arrest.

Elves: elf warrior 3; CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 1d8; hp 14; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 13; Base Atk/Grp +3/+4; Atk +8 missile (1d8+1/x3, longbow); Full Atk +8 missile (1d8+1/x3, longbow); SA –; SQ –; AL CG; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Balance 1, Climb 6, Handle Animal 6; Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot.

Act One

Possessions: Arrows (50), Studded Leather, Longbow (Composite).

The Elves have 25 GP between them.

Dramatic Purpose

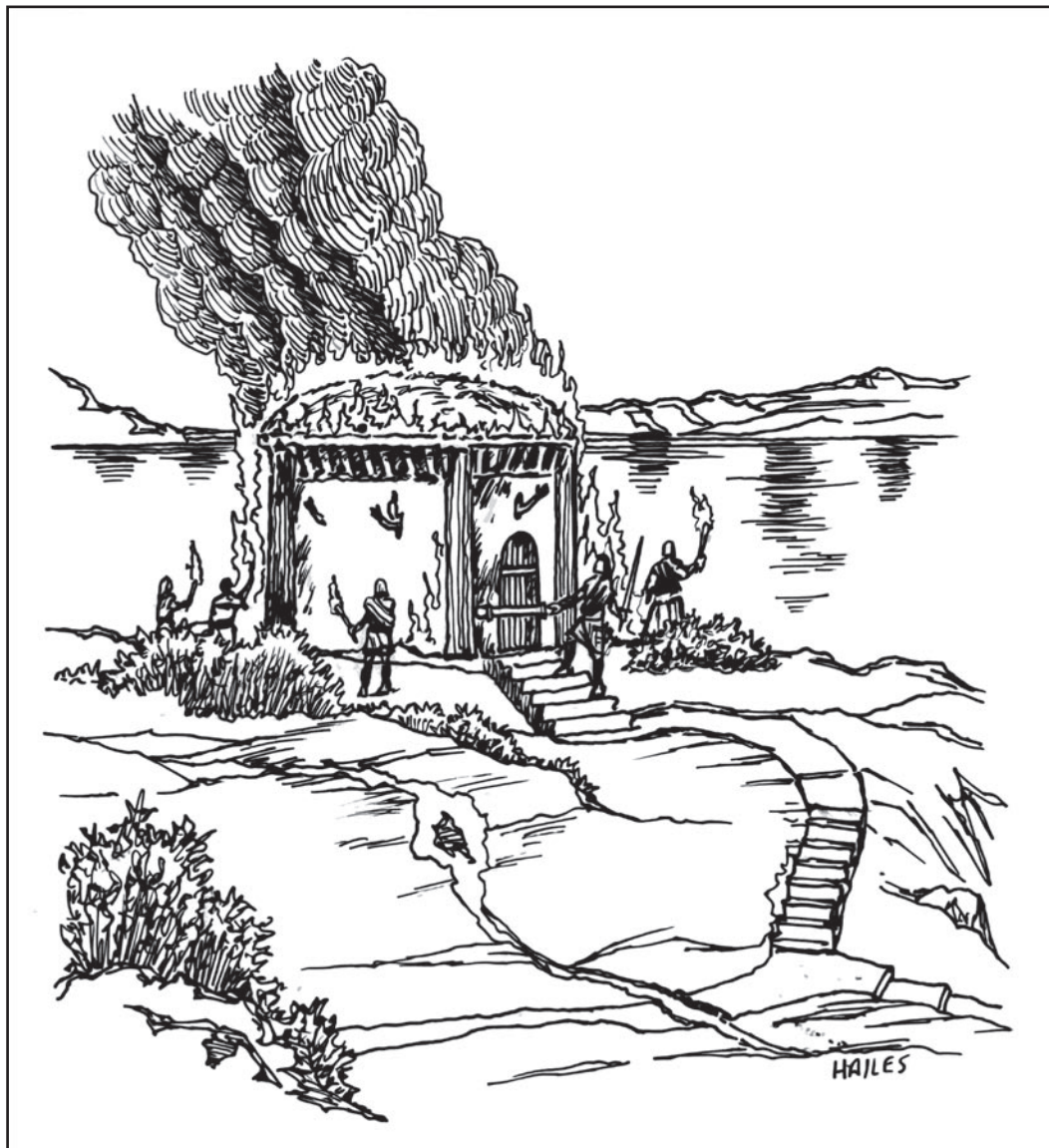
This scene heightens the threat of the world around them and allows them to sense the innate tension between races in the Mortal Realm.

You come around the final sea cliff to see the city of Felric's Redoubt ahead of you. Positioned on a bar of land on the south end of a large harbor, the city squats comfortably behind thick walls next to a teeming set of docks. A fortress on the end of the bar guards the mouth of the bay and a thousand trickles of wood smoke rise from the cook fires. It's a comfortable, prosperous-looking city, and you wish you'd come here under better circumstances.

FELRIC'S REDOUBT

When the party comes up on Felric's Redoubt, read or paraphrase the following:

When the party enters Felric's Redoubt, move on to Act Two.



Act Two

Act Two

Act Two begins the moment the characters arrive at Felric's Redoubt. This act contains everything that happens from the moment the characters begin the investigation until the last moment before they enter the Ulcer. Most of the adventure will probably take place in this act.

Dramatic Purpose

Act Two is the confrontation of the story. People have called it the "blue collar work" of storytelling. In Act Two we cover all the meat of the adventure, everything that happens from the actual beginning of the adventure until the climax. Act Two should start with a complication, early on, to make matters much worse than the characters initially thought. Typically, there's an Act Two twist at the halfway point. This carries the story in a new direction. Act Two usually ends with a disaster or a revelation, the purpose of which is to destroy the characters' carefully laid plans and take things to the edge of despair.

ADVENTURE STRUCTURE

This adventure is a murder mystery, or rather a series of murders wrapped into a mystery. Because of this it has a different structure than most adventures. The quality of any game is only as good as the GM running it, but this is doubly true of a murder mystery.

This adventure doesn't have a convenient flow-chart style structure like a dungeon crawl. Instead, the flow and structure are determined by the player's actions and the overall time line.

The GM needs to manage three different lines of information at once. There are the crime scenes and time line, the NPCs, and the information contained in "Solving the Crime," which pulls it together and fills in the holes.

It's up to the GM to keep an overall picture of all of these items, so he can keep the adventure moving forward at a steady clip. It's not necessary for him to have every bit of information memorized, but the GM should know what information this adventure contains, and roughly where to find it.

THE MURDERS

This section covers the physical locations of Act Two. It also deals with the events of the killings, in order.

Days of the Week

The days of the week are Airday, Lightday, Fireday, Waterday, Iceday, Godsdays, and Earthday. Because there are 28 days in every month, the days of the week fall the same every month. They are as follows:

Air	Light	Fire	Water	Ice	Gods	Earth
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	34	25	26	27	28

Serial Killer Stories

This adventure is at its heart a serial killer story, and like all serial killer stories, the party is not able to solve the crime immediately on arriving at the scene. In a serial killer tale, the investigator must collect information over time, building patterns from crime scene after crime scene. This means the party can't stop the killer before he kills again.

An RPG is not real life, or even normal fiction. Because of this we've fudged a little, putting multiple killings before the arrival of the party, so the characters can know enough of the patterns to put everything together after just one more killing. They won't have to watch the Fat Man kill victim after victim (unless they allow the copycat killings to pull them off target).

It is possible, however, that your group might not be able to enjoy this structure. If that's the case and you know they will simply not accept losing a single person on their watch, allow them to find the Extract of Poppy bottle at one of the previous crime scenes. It's a little difficult to rationalize it still being there, but that's better than having your players loathe the adventure.

Act Two

Investigating the Scenes

Players, knowledgeable on crime dramas and mystery novels, will most likely gravitate to the crime scenes. They are destined for something of a shock, because crime scene investigation is pretty much unheard of in the Mortal Realm. In fact, the people here find murder so unsavory, and these murders so frightening, that they clean the crime scenes as soon as possible in an attempt to erase all memory of the deed.

And they're probably justified. First, the Mortal Realm has yet to develop anything like a forensic science, and so a preserved crime scene has little purpose other than to be macabre. Also, leaving a series of horrible crime scenes around a city is just begging for an Ulcer to form. In fact, when the party asks to see the crime scene, local officials are likely to fall all over themselves assuring the PCs that no evidence of the crimes still exists. Their city is clean.

Assuming the party demands to walk through the crime scenes, the characters will likely come on each with an escort from the city guard or one of the guild patrols, depending on who saw the place when it was fresh. Likely they will see the second crime scene first, because the Captain of the Guard investigated it himself. That will give the guard the time to gather people to take them to the other scenes.

Time Line and Crime Scenes

The following is a time line of the events of the killings. After that, you will find a description of each of the events. These events deal only with the killings. Events such as political moves among the priests should arise organically out of the interaction of the PCs and the NPCs, although there are suggestions in Solving the Crime.

Date (Days into the Investigation)	Event
22 Vatelion (-40 Days)	Ulcer Forms
5 Terullius (-29 Days)	Cædmon kills 1st victim
9 Terullius (-25 Days)	Cædmon kills bishop
20 Terullius (-14 Days)	Cædmon kills 3 rd victim
24 Terullius (-10 Days)	Party leaves Belm
1 Pronus (-5 Days)	Sir MacFlin arrives
3 Pronus (-3 Days)	Cædmon kills 4 th victim
6 Pronus (0 Days)	Party <i>should</i> arrive
7 Pronus (1 Day)	Pacele Arrives
8 Pronus (2 Days)	Body appears in the sewers
9 Pronus (3 Days)	Pacele begins copycat killings
9 Pronus (3 Days)	Cædmon kills 5 th victim
14 Pronus (8 Days)	Cædmon kills 6 th victim
18 Pronus (12 Days)	7 th Victim Killed and the Ulcer completes forming

The Ulcer Forms (22 Vatelion)

The Demon Azgúk uses the Splinter, a corrupt relic bolstered by the energies of Hell. With it he creates an Ulcer inside the Bucklemaker's Guildhall in Felric's Redoubt. Unfortunately for the Demon, the Ulcer doesn't grow as quickly as he likes.

The Bucklemaker's Guild falls into panic, but the Demon of Gluttony gains certain powers from the Ulcer. He uses these powers to dominate the minds of all the bucklemakers who enter the guildhall. They forget what they see inside and gain a powerful aversion to entering in the future.

The Demon treats Guildmaster Cædmon differently. While he's afraid to have too many bucklemakers doing evil works in the city (they increase the chance of discovery, and it takes time for the evil acts to seep into the fabric of the land) he thinks one man can fulfill his goals. He uses the power of the Ulcer to take away the Guildmaster's ability to eat, except for the period after he murders. Cædmon, while not a good enough man to end his own

Describing Murders

We have tried to keep the descriptions of the murders as "clean" as possible. Our goal here is to give enough information for the party to feel compelled to catch the Fat Man, not so much as to turn this adventure into a slasher movie. Feel free to describe things as much or as little as is suitable for your table. There is little in these scenes but blood, so there's only so far you can take it, but make sure that you never make anyone at your table uncomfortable.

Act Two

life rather than kill, tries to resist this new compulsion.

The Demon sits back and waits. He believes that if Cædmon kills someone every week or two, the evil will build and feed into the Ulcer until it begins a major expansion.

And if that happens, the entire city will fall.

Cædmon Kills First Victim (5 Terullius)

After eleven days the hunger finally overcomes Cædmon's own morality. Fate brings him to the house of his first victim, Cenewin.

This crime scene was explored by Enred Fosenalding, a member of the Tailor's Guild and the head of his watch patrol. When he leads the party through the crime scene, read or paraphrase the following:

This manor house is found in one of the nicer, middle-class sections of town. The two-story building is clean and well kept, empty now with the death of its only occupant. Enred leads you up the stairs and to a spotless bedchamber, the bedding new, a large ornate Marnele chair in one corner, a dressing table with a copper mirror against another. There is no sign that anything untoward ever happened here.

The Fat Man seems to have walked straight in through the front door. The maid was off on the day of the crime and the elderly lady of the house, Cenewin, was upstairs, probably napping. They found her dead on her bed, her throat cut. There was no sign of a struggle in the room, but someone had opened the pantry and the buttery and ate and drank everything they could, leaving a field of crumbs and rinds and broken jugs and bottles.

If there was any other evidence, the maid long since cleaned it up before leaving to find employment elsewhere. If the party looks for more details, fill them in as needed. The house is neat and wealthy.

Cenewin never married and lived off her uncle's estate. There is nothing else of interest to be found.

No money or jewelry was missing. All such items are in the possession of the city until heirs can be found.

What Really Happened: This scene is much like it looks. The Fat Man walked in the front door, stumbled upstairs and killed the old woman in her bed, using sheets to clean up the mess. Then he gorged in the pantry and buttery, grabbed the bloody linens and fled the scene, weeping with guilt over what he'd done. She was discovered by the maid who called the watch. The maid has since left the city.

Cædmon Kills Bishop (9 Terullius)

Four days later, Cædmon decides to go to the Bishop for help. The Bishop can't help him and Cædmon kills Belfric. The Captain of the Guard came personally to investigate this crime scene. He will lead the party through the Bishop's manor. Read or paraphrase the following:

This elegant manor house is found in a middle class part of town, to be next to the cathedral. The Captain leads you through gilded doors, across fine red carpets, and upstairs. There you walk to the right and into the Bishop's personal chambers.

The bed is lavish, the wardrobe finely carved. A dressing table stands against one wall with a silver mirror. In front of the hearth sit two Marnench chairs facing slightly toward one another.

The Captain explains that they found the Bishop in his bed, but there was much blood surrounding the rightmost chair. If the party asks, there was little blood in the bed. The covers were over the Bishop's head. The pantry and buttery were a mess here as well, but there was more food there than any one man could conceivably eat in a week, so the only

Felric's Redoubt

Felric's Redoubt is crowded. This adds to the mystique of the Fat Man. There *should* be eyewitnesses, but the same effect that makes the bucklemaker's not return to the guildhall make the citizens not notice the Fat Man. This magical hiding increases the terror. Felrican's are used to people who kill after dark. To kill in broad daylight, unnoticed. . . .

Act Two

hint the Fat Man was responsible was the mess. None of the Bishop's valuables are missing.

If there was any other evidence, the staff long since cleaned it up. If the party looks for more details, fill them in as needed. The house is lavish in all things. There is nothing else of interest to be found, but there are plenty of priests next door at the Cathedral, should the characters want to interview character witnesses.

What Really Happened: The Fat Man came here privately to find relief in the aid of God. He arranged this confession in advance and Belfric gave his entire staff the day off and made sure they'd all left the mansion (this was his routine when he took confession in his home). The Bishop heard the confession and plea (the fact that he does this only for the most prominent men in the city, a clue for the attentive), but didn't have much practical help to offer. Belfric had no magical powers and he suspected the Fat Man was insane since no one else has noticed a Demon in their guildhall. When the Fat Man realized that Belfric was no help, he succumbed to his drive and killed the man. He then felt remorse and after finishing collecting most of the mess in a sheet, tried to arrange the body in bed, racked with guilt. He covered the Bishop's face in a last attempt to hide his deeds. Then he gorged and left the premises. The now-acting Bishop Held found the body.

Cædmon Kills Third Victim (20 Terullius)

After the death of Belfric, Cædmon manages to starve another eleven days before hunger finally drives him to kill a young wife named Henreca.

Théort Ceoring, of the Chandler's Guild, was the watch commander who first arrived on this scene. There isn't much to see here, but he drones on the entire time as if there is a wealth of evidence. Read or paraphrase the following:

This small room has a bed on one side and a stove on the other. A rickety table stands in one corner with two wobbly stools. Clothes and garbage cover every surface and the place smells like a privy.

The husband is at work when the party arrives. The place has gone to seed since the murder and it seems the man doesn't care. The victim here was the

young wife, Henreca. She was nowhere to be seen when the watch first came on the place. The door hung open that day. Blood covered the stove. After a thorough search, the watch found her stashed behind some loose boards, lying in a space between this house and the one behind. There was nothing here to be stolen.

If they interview the husband, Jænald Elricing, they'll find a man wooden and dead with grief. He answers all questions listlessly, but his job as a guard in the Noble Quarter takes all the energy he can muster these days. The neighbor woman found the body. She has nothing to add, but she'll drone on for hours with theory after theory, each more outlandish than the last. All of the neighbors wish to talk about it, in fact. The idea of someone walking into their tight little neighborhood unnoticed is stunning.

If there was any other evidence, the husband long since cleaned it up. If the party looks for more details, fill them in as needed. The house is filthy. After the initial clean up, the husband hasn't cleaned a single day since. There is nothing else of interest to be found.

What Really Happened: The Fat Man walked in through the door and found her cooking with her back to the street. He killed her before she knew there was an intruder and wrapped her in a sheet until she stopped bleeding. Then, overcome with guilt and fear, he pried back the loose boards of the rear wall and secreted the body there. Then he gorged on what little food they had and fled in tears. The neighbor woman saw the open door and found the blood. She called the watch.

Party leaves Belm (24 Terullius)

Four days later, unknown to those in Felric's Redoubt, the party leaves Belm on its way to solve the murders. See Act One for more details.

Sir MacFlin arrives (1 Pronus)

Five days after the party leaves, Sir MacFlin, a paladin of the Order of the Knights Equenis, arrives in Felric's Redoubt. MacFlin has come to solve the crimes, having heard about them in Mab.

The watch and guard in Felric's Redoubt, not suited to handle an investigation of this sort, wel-

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comes MacFlin. While the Captain of the Guard is still ostensibly in charge of the investigation, MacFlin leads from this point on. See the character lists, below, for more information.

Cædmon Kills Fourth Victim (3 Pronus)

Eleven days after his last killing, Cædmon kills his third victim, a suspected mage name Elfred. This is likely the last murder to take place before the party arrives at the city. The watch commander that found this one was Aefred Ænwalding of the bookbinder's guild. He is a smart, quiet man with giant hands. Read or paraphrase the following:

The house is well-to-do and you walk up three clean steps and through an unlocked door. Stairs rise in front of you and doors open to the left and right, but it's to the left where the crime took place. Here is a high, ladder-backed chair with it's back to the door. A hearth on the other side sits cold and a padded bench along the far wall gives visitors someplace to sit. A clean spot on the floor shows where a rug used to be.

Elfred was suspected of practicing magic, so no one is upset he's gone. The blood from the murder drenched the chair, and they found the Fat Man's usual destruction of the food supply, but no body or rug. Despite the man's suspected crimes against God, they searched and found his body hidden in a trash heap in an alley behind the house (still no rug). Nothing valuable was taken.

If there was any other evidence, the neighborhood has long since cleaned it up (they didn't find any proscribed books, by the way). If the party looks for more details, fill them in as needed. The house is fairly rich, but small—designed for one man. There is nothing else of interest to be found. The portable wealth has been sent to the man's heir in Mab.

What Really Happened: The Fat Man really feared the retaliation of the city when he committed this murder. He picked the person least likely to be mourned, entering in daylight and cutting his throat, using the rug to wrap the body. Then the Fat Man gorged, but afterward fear and guilt assailed him. Convinced the watch was hot on his trail now, he decided to dispose of the body, getting as far as the

back alley before losing his nerve and hiding it in the nearest garbage pile. He took the rug with him. The open door was discovered by the watch. His neighbors couldn't care less.

Party Should Arrive (6 Pronus)

The party should arrive in town three days after the third killing. What they do when they arrive is up to them.

Pacele Arrives (7 Pronus)

The next day Pacele arrives in town. He investigates and discovers there are two factions of priests at the Cathedral in Felric's Redoubt. Pacele decides to kill the priests who support Belfric.

Body Appears in the Sewers (8 Pronus)

The next day the Ratcatcher's Guild makes their move. In an attempt to earn higher bounties on rats from the city, they steal a body, make it look like a victim of the Fat Man, and release it into the sewers.

Have the watch find the party in the middle of the investigation and tell them that they found a new body. The watch (a group of wainwrights) will lead them to a sewer grate, where you can read or paraphrase the following:

In the darkness below you can just make out a human form, stuck on a piece of twisted grate. While the sludge and sewage flows by and obscures much of the body, even from here you can see the open wound at its throat.

There is a man-sized entrance about a block away that will allow the characters to walk downstairs into the sewer proper. If they wish to investigate the body, allow them to make Knowledge (Arcana) checks (DC 15). If they are successful, they can tell the body is fresh. If they succeed by more than 10 they suspect the body was dead before its throat was cut.

The current of the "water" in these parts of the sewers is strong and it doesn't take much for the party to see what direction the body traveled. If they'd like to, they can try to track the body back to its origins.

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If the party tries this, read or paraphrase the following:

The sewers are palatial, with sidewalks on either side, five feet wide. A ten-foot trough for water runs through the middle. The ceilings are arched in the Imperial style and look like Dwarven craftsmanship. If it wasn't for the smell, this would be the most pleasant walk you've taken since your arrival at Felric's Redoubt.

There are two times where the body could have come from multiple tributary sewer lines. In both cases, a Tracking check DC (15) is enough to spot marks the body made bumping the walls, leading the party down the right path.

After an hour of trudging and searching in the sewers, read or paraphrase the following:

You round a corner and in the distance you can see a flickering yellow light pouring out into the sewer from the left. It looks as if it comes from a large open area, perhaps a room resting off from the side of the main sewer line. In the distance, you can hear voices.

The Ratcatcher's Guild

The Ratcatcher's Guildhall is found deep in the sewers. From here they send their patrols throughout the under city, setting traps and hurling sling stones, doing their part for the city. They are unsung heroes and they always keep the rat population down.

What Really Happened: Lately, they've become dissatisfied.

While the quality of their work hasn't flagged, inflation has devalued silver over the last few years. However, the Ratcatcher's Guild hasn't had a major raise in quite some time. Guildmaster Beodwine is too much the master of his craft to purposely *fail* to catch rats. That's left them no alternatives for forcing the city's hand.

Until now.

With the increasing killings of the Fat Man, Beodwine hit on an idea. For years he's been unsuccessfully using the city's criminal element as an excuse for a raise in the per-head price on rats. Many crimi-

nals act out of the sewers. With the attacks of the Fat Man, he's decided the fear in the city is enough to get him his raise. All he has to do is show the Fat Man is a threat to his guild.

Last night he sent his two thugs Æthedgand and Cewulf to the graveyard outside the city. They dug up the freshest corpse and cut its throat, tossing it into the sewers. Unfortunately, they didn't think anyone but them could track the corpse back to its origins and so they didn't bother to hide its starting point. They *wanted* it to be found near their guild-hall after all.

1) Ratcatchers' Guildhall

When the characters approach, read or paraphrase the following.

This hall essentially opens straight off the walkway of the sewer. As you approach, you can make out a large, open area with doors in all three walls and a trestle table running along the middle. A banner hangs on the far wall with the image of a trap woven in, and torchlight flickers and dances on the walls.

People converse inside. As you ease into view you can see they total three: A short man dressed a bit too nice for the sewers, a large brutish man, and a short weaselly fellow all stand in the room. It appears they are arguing but if so, a lull has hit the conversation.

How this plays out depends on the party. Some will just wade in and attack. Others will parlay. If they say they know the ratcatchers are responsible, especially if they say they are from the Church, Cewulf will break down and confess almost immediately, fearing excommunication followed by execution (punishment to body and soul). The others will hold out longer, but they'll confess under pressure. Any of them will confess if they think they are going to die in combat if they don't.

For full write-ups of the three ratcatchers, see the end of Act Three.

When the party discovers this is a dead end, the guard, the watch, and MacFlin will all be disappointed, but willing to push on. Everyone knows

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this might take some time to solve, despite their prayers.

2) The Lesser Hall

When the party enters this room, read or paraphrase the following:

This room is deep and wide, dominated by preparation tables. A hearth stands built into one wall, big enough to cook a small feast. The room seems to double as pantry and buttery as well, with all the food and drink on shelves lining the walls. With the smell, none of it is appetizing.

This room has plenty of cooking supplies for guild functions, but nothing else of interest.

3) Guild Office

When the party enters this room, read or paraphrase the following:

This room is much bigger than the furnishings warrant, as if it were built for another purpose, then changed later. Now almost everything is crammed into the far right corner: a writing table, stool and padded bench. Another bench sits against the far left wall, as if the occupants thought the room looked too bare without it. It just makes the place look more cavernous, however.

This is where all the guild's books are kept (well, "book" actually). There's a single ledger on the desk. Anyone who fancies himself a forensic accountant finds nothing untoward, but it does seem this guild is making woefully little money. They are already paying out nearly their entire income to their existing book of widows. If something doesn't change their finances soon, the guild will likely go under and all the widows will be left with nothing.

4) Guildmaster's Quarters

When the party enters this room, read or paraphrase the following:

This room is outfitted as if for a beggar king. Lavish tapestries, heaping bedding, and the finest rugs cover everything—all of them throw offs and threadbare. Most of them clash.

This is the Guildmaster's chambers. There isn't much of interest here, other than to the Guildmaster himself. There are a set of fifteen-year-old love letters under the bed. The woman died of the Gray Death before they could marry.

Pacele Begins Copycat Killings (9 Pronus)

The next day Pacele kills the first of the priests in a copycat killing. Having determined the Bishop died of a random killing, he sets about destroying Belfric's legacy. There are four priests and one popular deacon working out of the cathedral who are loyal to Belfric. Pacele decides to kill one of them a day, mimicking the Fat Man's style, until Felric's Redoubt is firmly in the hands of the Old Guard priests.

He begins with Aldrold, and the Deacon Leodwald discovers the body. Held sends out Deacons to alert the watch, the guard, MacFlin, and the party (if they've announced themselves as agents of the Angenus Priesthood). The Deacon Bedere finds the party. When they arrive at the scene, read or paraphrase the following:

This is a simple cell with a cot and a reading desk. The cot is bloody and on it lies the body of the priest. Pieces of bread and rinds of fruit litter the ground.

Feel free to flesh out the description to the comfort level of your group.

The crime scene is simple and Pacele is far too clever an assassin to have left anything behind. A Knowledge (Arcana) check (DC 15) can double as forensic science well enough for the character to decide this person was killed exactly like the others, except it is messier than eye witnesses have described at the previous sites. However, a Spot or Search check (DC 15) shows that far less food has been eaten than at the other crime scenes. It seems almost like the killer just tore the food up this time to look like he'd eaten a great deal. It's up to the party to wonder what all the food was doing here to begin with. Also, someone took the victim's purse.

What Really Happened: Pacele slid in here and hid under the cot. When Aldrold came in and laid down, Pacele struck, cutting his throat then climb-

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ing out. He pulled out the food and copied the Fat Man's gluttony, then cut the purse, believing erroneously the Fat Man did this as a matter of course. Then he slipped out.

Later copycat crime scenes will differ only in details. He will kill Held the next day and Léodwine will take over as Acting Bishop. Each successive day after that he will kill Wuldred, Celfric, and Ededward unless the party catches him or stops the Fat Man (likely killing Pacle in Act Three).

Pacle is clever, but because of the high rate of burn on these copycat killings, if the party gets stumped or held up on the other crimes,

it might be a good idea to let Pacle mess up. Mass murder is a little beyond his normal duties, after all. Catching this bad guy will do wonders toward bolstering flagging party spirits, especially since the Fat Man is tragic in his own way and obviously mad. Pacle is just plain evil.

If all goes as designed, the party should solve the crime before Pacle has a chance to strike again.

Cædmon Kills Fifth Victim (9 Pronus)

Six days after his last killing, Cædmon breaks down and kills again, a street urchin named Cedward. Ade Maregaring of the watch (Cooper's Guild) discovers this crime scene and the party is pulled away from the copycat to see it. They find the scene in a back alley.



Note: *A dead child might be a little much for some groups. If you feel this is the case, replace the Urchin with an adult homeless person.*

Read or paraphrase the following:

Ruined food and shattered drink fan out into the back of this alley, as if something terrible happened just around the corner. A thin, pale hand sticks out into the light.

The new victim is a street urchin, Cedward, who had been hoarding food. Feel free to fill in details to the comfort level of your group, but the death of a child is a touchy subject, so be careful. The boy was killed in the usual way, as the party will discover

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with a Knowledge (Arcana) check (DC15) to examine the wounds.

A Spot or Search check (DC20) will reveal a small bottle tossed to one side. Inside the party will discover the residue of a milky white substance. A glass rod is built into the cap as a dropper of sorts. This is their clue, and it should lead them to the Apothecary as outlined in Solving the Crime. If the party doesn't find it, it might be a good idea to have someone else on the scene point it out.

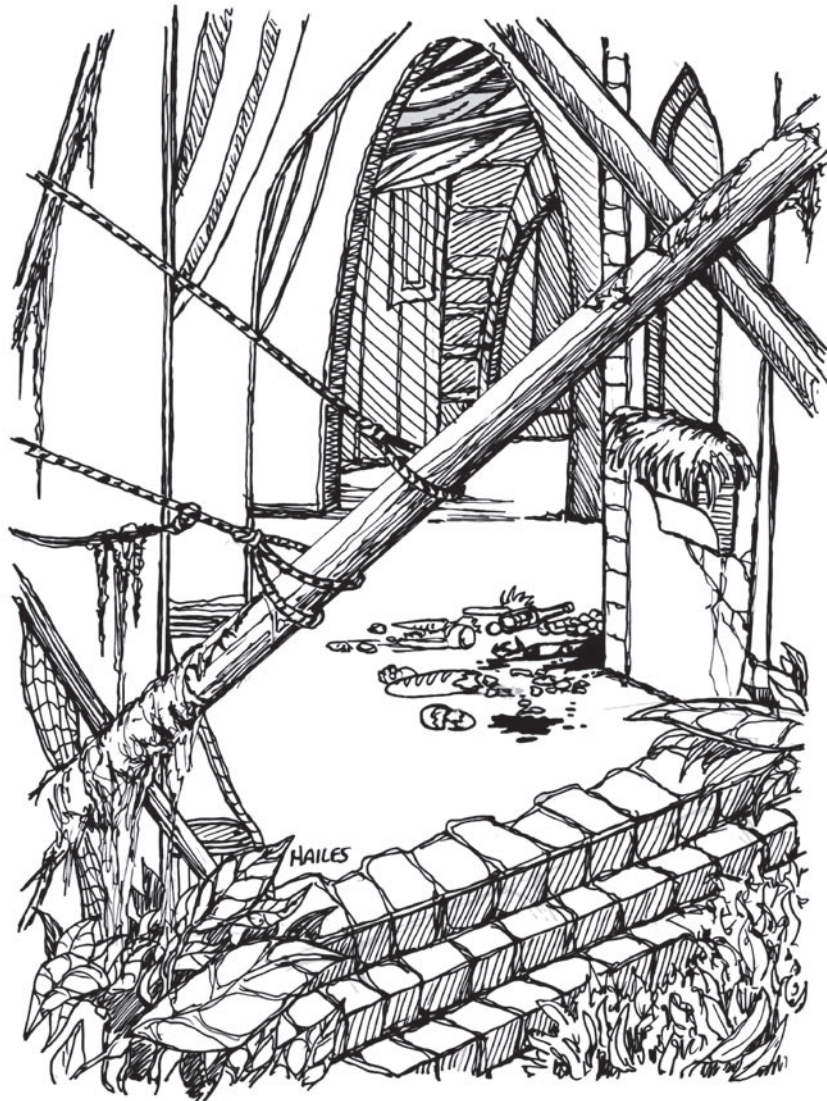
What Really Happened: The Fat Man, driven by pain and hunger, wandered the city, delirious and drinking this vial of poppy extract (Laudanum) to dull the pain. It didn't work, of course, but no amount of the drug would kill him either (you can't overdose on pain killers when they aren't enough to kill the pain). Finally, he stumbled into this alley and finished the bottle. Still in agony, he saw the boy, who was hiding food, and struck. Then, in an agony of remorse and without a sheet, he tried to hide the body, but fearing discovery, he only managed to tuck it away before devouring the food and running.

Cædmon Kills Sixth Victim (14 Pronus)

Weakening, Cædmon only makes it five days before killing his next victim, a prostitute named Freca. If the party hasn't solved the crime yet, something has gone wrong. The Fat Man kills Freca behind a tavern called *The Dirty Cup*. Watchman Eald Ardéoring (of the Tanner's Guild) discovers the body. When the party arrives, read or paraphrase the following:

The body lies stuffed under a wagon at the rear door of the tavern. Mud and slime coat her skirts and crumbs and rinds cover her legs. The baskets in the wagon lay cast about, the food inside torn and gnawed as if by some insane creature. The Fat Man's desperation is obvious in every detail. For some reason, you feel a strange sympathy for the man.

At this point, the Demon's Ulcer is almost complete, each killing fueling the Ulcer in the Buckle-maker's Guildhall more and more. One more and the Ulcer will begin its major growth push.



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If the party is still stumped at this point, it's probably best to provide a clue. If they missed or failed to follow up on the Poppy Extract bottle at the previous scene, you can provide it again. If that seems unlikely to work (because of the way the party handled the clue the last time), then perhaps an eyewitness can have spotted Caedmon and made out his brooch. Or perhaps the brooch itself could have fallen at the crime scene.

Either way, this is the party's last chance to stop the Fat Man before it's too late. While they think they are just solving a crime, the Demon's Ulcer is gaining in power with every killing. Before long, it will be too late.

What Really Happened: The Fat Man came on the wagon and wept over the food he found unattended there. Desperate, confronting more food than he's seen at once in many days, he enticed the prostitute here and she came, seeing an emaciated man and not believing him a danger. The Fat Man then killed her, stuck her body under the wagon, and ate the food.

Seventh Victim Killed and Ulcer Completes Forming (18 Pronus)

Four days later he kills his final victim. With the killing of the final victim, a guard named Ohthelm, the Demon's plan finally comes to fruition. The Ulcer, which had previously been confined to the Bucklemaker's Guildhall, grows outward, rapidly feeding on the other minor evils of the city and expanding until it encompasses the whole. Read or paraphrase the following:

You suddenly feel a chill wash over you and you can tell from the reactions of everyone around you aren't the only one. Your bones itch and your skin crawls. In the back of your mind, you can hear two sounds. One is a booming laugh and the other a hysterical weeping. You've lost. Somehow you know.

Felric's Redoubt has become an Ulcer.

With this, the adventure is over. The party will likely never find the crime scene, but it doesn't matter. The deed is done and now the only way to stop this Ulcer is to kill every bit of evil inside.

And even for the noblest party, there's only one way to be sure of that. . . .

Modus Operandi

Investigators in the Mortal Realm don't understand the mind of a serial killer, but they do have some grasp of modus operandi (they don't have a term for it). Caedmon has a modus operandi of his own, of course.

He waits until his victim is alone, driven by his inability to eat until he kills again. The time it takes for this to overcome him varies from murder to murder.

He sneaks up behind the victim or approaches them from the front. With a quick strike, he slices their throat and waits for them to die. If there are linens or the like nearby, he usually wraps the victim in these while they die, taking the linens away to the guildhall later.

When he's done, he assaults their pantry and buttery, tearing through their food, eating ravenously, far more than any human being can eat in one sitting. Only then does he withdraw in shame.

Running a Murder Mystery

It was possible to present this adventure in a linear structure, but that would suggest there was only one way to walk through this adventure. While it's likely the events beginning with the 5th victim until the end of the adventure will happen in the same order for most groups, remember that this isn't an A then B then C type adventure. This adventure needs to be in the hands of the PCs.

The easiest mistake to make in running this adventure is to treat it as if the murder mystery was the meat of the plot. It isn't. The murder mystery is actually the weakest plotline here. This adventure should be about role-playing and investigation, about dealing with the politics of the Church and the moods of the city. It's not a series of linear events. Let the characters loose in this environment. Allow them to grow into the adventure, don't force the events on the characters like a straitjacket. This really is about the *effects* of the murders, from politics to hysteria to final Ulcer, not the murders themselves.

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As the crimes progress, he feels an increasing need to hide the bodies. Circumstances don't always make this practical.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

There is a large cast of characters in this adventure. Some of them are important enough for statting. Others are just there for roleplaying and plot purposes.

Main Players

These are the major characters in the adventure, the ones most likely to affect the characters and their investigation of the murders.

Guildmaster Cædmon (The Fat Man) CR 7

Male human expert 5/aristocrat 2

Age: 53 **Eyes:** Brown. **Hair:** Brown. **Build:** Undernourished. **Height:** 5'8". **Race/Sex:** Urbanman/M. **Skin:** Pale, hanging. **Demeanor:** crazed. **Dress:** Fine robes filthy and tattering. **True Attitude:** Desperate for a way out. **Home:** Felric's Redoubt.

N medium humanoid

Str: 18 **Int:** 10
Dex: 21 **Wis:** 14
Con: 15 **Cha:** 14

Init: +5 **Senses:** Listen +2, Spot +2

Languages: Ludremonian, Elvish

AC: 15, touch 15, flat-footed 10

hp: 54

Resist: Dodge

Fort: +5, **Ref:** +6, **Will:** +11

Speed: 30 ft (6 squares)

Melee: dagger +8 (1d4+4/19-20)

Base Attack: +4; Grp +8

Feats: Negotiator, Investigator, Iron Will.

Skills: Balance 1, Bluff 4, Craft (Metalworking) 8, Diplomacy 16, Gather Information 14, Hide 9, Knowledge (Nobility and Royalty) 5, Move Silently 11, Ride 14.

Possessions: Robes, dagger.

Background/History: Cædmon is the Guildmaster of the Bucklemaker's Guild. He is under the domination of the Demon of Gluttony, driven to murder by terrible hunger. He can only eat in the minutes after he has killed, and although he holds out as long as he can, he always breaks eventually.

Personality/Motivation: Cædmon was once a charismatic and driven man, but now his terrible affliction has brought him to the edge of madness. He often babbles and whispers to the Demon, appearing to talk to himself. He is motivated only by hunger and the conflicting wish not to kill. His mind has room for nothing else.

Quote: "Please, God. Make it stop."

Powers/Tactics: Cædmon has been infused with great physical abilities by the Ulcer, making him much more powerful than he was before the Demon came. He uses the perception of the killer as a "Fat Man" and his emaciation to lure people in.

Campaign Use: Cædmon is the crux of this adventure, the killer driven mad by the effects of the Ulcer in his guildhall. The party doesn't have an opportunity to interact with Cædmon. They won't meet him until the final battle in Act Three.

To scale Cædmon adjust his level and combat feats.

Appearance: He is a middle-aged, balding man with increasingly slovenly appearance, but he was once attractive, and would be again with a little food.

You're a Loose Cannon, Detective!

The cliché in most every story of this type is to have the character investigating the crime come into conflict with the authority figures in their town, be they their bosses or the mayor or just the local beat cop. On top of this being terribly overdone, there is another reason we didn't go that route with this adventure.

The Festering Earth is about the conflict of opposite forces. The Ulcer and the Cathedral. The Supporting Priests and Old Guard Priests. The Party and Cædmon. The Ratcatchers and the City. Add to this Pacle and MacFlin. MacFlin is necessary to represent the honorable and faithful elements of the Church, just like the Captain of the Guard represents the honest elements of the city.

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He wears once-fine robes, now tattered and filthy. While everyone in the city assumes he's hugely fat, Cædmon is undernourished to the point of death. If it weren't for the power of the Ulcer inside him, Cædmon wouldn't even be able to walk.

Cædmon has 110 PP.

Sir MacFlin

CR 20

Male human paladin 20

Age: 39 **Eyes:** Green. **Hair:** Red. **Build:** Large. **Height:** 6'8". **Race/Sex:** High Man/M. **Skin:** Pale. **Demeanor:** Friendly. **Dress:** Utilitarian Plate Armor. **True Attitude:** Earnest and driven. **Home:** Ran.

LG medium humanoid

Str: 16 **Int:** 14
Dex: 10 **Wis:** 14
Con: 12 **Cha:** 10

Init: +4 **Senses:** Listen +2, Spot +2

Aura: Aura of Courage, Aura of Good.

Languages: Ludremonian, Divine Tongue, Marnench, Mab, Elvish

AC: 24, touch 10, flat-footed 24

hp: 130

Fort: +15, **Ref:** +8, **Will:** +12

Speed: 20 ft (4 squares)

Melee: Longsword +27/+22/+17/+12 (1d8+7/19-20)

Base Attack: +20/+15/+10/+5; Grp +23

Attack Options: Smite Evil.

Special Actions: Turn Undead 3/day (turn level 17) (turn damage 2d6+17).

Spell-Like Ability: Remove Disease 5/week.

SQ: Divine Grace, Divine Health, Special Mount.

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative

Skills: Concentration +4, Diplomacy +5, Hide +7, Knowledge (Religion) +7, Knowledge (the Planes) +7, Move Silently +7, Profession (Priest) +5, Ride +7, Spot +7.

Possessions: Amulet +4 STR, Ring Save Bonus (Sacred) +2, Full Plate +4, Longsword +4, Shield (Heavy/Metal).

Background/History: MacFlin lost his family when he was very young and found refuge working for a clerk in the Order of the Knights Equenis. Over the years, he showed an aptitude for more than just

books, but for combat and magic as well. Since the age of 16 he has served the Church as a paladin, righting wrongs and defending the weak.

Personality/Motivation: He is honest and open, but slow to accept the help of others. He's free with information and aid, but doesn't trust other's intentions. He's not above a little strong arm when it's necessary.

Quote: "Let's talk about this, laddie."

Powers/Tactics: MacFlinn has his Paladin abilities.

Campaign Use: MacFlin will help the party as much as possible. He is charming and idealistic. The Knight Equenis don't usually assign people directly to missions, but rather allow Knights to check in and pick from lists of problems collated by their clerks. Because of this MacFlin is here because he wants to be here, not because Church politics arranged for him to be here.

To scale MacFlin adjust his level and combat feats.

Appearance: MacFlin is huge, with stunning, rugged good looks. He carries himself with an easy gait and he smiles a lot. His laugh is enough to make people shake with fear.

MacFlin carries 15 PP, 27 GP.

Pacele

CR 7

Male human rogue 5/assassin 2

Age: 21 **Eyes:** Brown. **Hair:** Brown. **Build:** Wiry. **Height:** 5'4". **Race/Sex:** Urbanman/M. **Skin:** Fair. **Demeanor:** Childlike. **Dress:** Middle-class cast offs. **True Attitude:** Sadistic murderer. **Home:** Endre.

LE medium humanoid

Str: 9 **Int:** 13
Dex: 14 **Wis:** 10
Con: 10 **Cha:** 10

Init: +6 **Senses:** Listen +10, Spot +10

Languages: Ludremonian, Marnench

AC: 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10

hp: 29

Resist: Evasion, Improved Uncanny Dodge.

Fort: +1, **Ref:** +9, **Will:** +1

Speed: 30 ft (6 squares)

Melee: rapier +7 (1d6-1/18-20)

Base Attack: +6; Grp +5

Attack Options: Death Attack, Sneak Attack +4d6

Special Actions: Poison Use

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SQ: +1 save against poisons, Trap Sense +1, Trap-finding.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Alertness, Investigator, Weapon Finesse.

Skills: Balance 1, Bluff 4, Disguise 8, Gather Information 10, Hide 12, Listen 10, Move Silently 12, Search 11, Sense Motive 8, Spot 10.

Possessions: Rapier.

Background/History: Paclele is a Marnench assassin for the Society of Sinnius. He is one of the most successful of his order and over time the Society has come to rely on him for their most difficult jobs.

Personality/Motivation: Paclele was a mute urchin who has had his entire life turned around by the Church. The Church is everything to him, and he's taken all the pain and horror of his childhood and turned it into a blazing hate he unleashes at the slightest threat to his faith. He uses his youthful appearance and the pity inspired by his muteness to great effect.

Quote: "—"



Powers/Tactics: Paclele is a mute. He makes great use of the pity he engenders with his look and muteness and most people assume he's deaf as well.

Campaign Use: Dispatched out of Marnele, Paclele has come to seize the opportunities following Belfric's death. As a full Bishop, Belfric was untouchable, but now his teachings of free exploration of scripture threaten to grow in the wake of his death.

To scale Paclele adjust his level and combat feats.

Appearance: Paclele is an inquisitor and an assassin. He is twenty-one but can appear fourteen when in disguise. He uses this apparent youth in his favor. He has cultivated an aspect of wonder and naivete that plays well for him.

Paclele carries 33 PP, and 3 SP.

Guildmaster Beodwine

CR 6

Male human expert 6

Age: 71 **Eyes:** Brown. **Hair:** Brown. **Build:** Scrawny. **Height:** 5'8". **Race/Sex:** Urbanman/M. **Skin:** Pale. **Demeanor:** Gruff. **Dress:** High-middle class clothes, worse for wear. **True Attitude:** Earnest and hardworking. **Home:** Felric's Redoubt.

N medium humanoid

Str: 5

Int: 17

Dex: 11

Wis: 8

Con: 10

Cha: 10

Init: +4 **Senses:** Listen +10, Spot +10

Languages: Ludremonian, Marnench

AC: 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10

hp: 24

Fort: +2, Ref: +2, Will: +4

Speed: 30 ft (6 squares)

Melee: dagger +4 (1d4-3/19-20)

Missile: dagger +4 (1d4-3/19-20)

Base Attack: +4; Grp +1

Feats: Improved Initiative, Negotiator, Alertness, Weapon Finesse.

Skills: Balance 1, Bluff 4, Craft (Trapmaking) 12, Diplomacy 11, Gather Information 7, Handle Animal 9, Hide 9, Listen 10, Move Silently 9, Profession (Hunter) 8, Search 12, Spot 10.

Possessions: Dagger.

Background/History: Beodwine became a rat catcher as a street urchin and joined the guild at a young age.

Act Two

Over the years his skill, personality, and political savvy have launched him upward through the ranks. Now he stands at the height of his career, watching everything around him teeter and prepare to fall.

Personality/Motivation: Beodwine is a desperate and earnest old man. He takes the responsibilities in the guild seriously, especially his duty to the widows of dead ratcatchers. He speaks with a raspy voice and sometimes hops in place when excited.

Quote: “This is bigger than you understand, boy.”

Powers/Tactics: Beodwine does not fight. He works through plans and political maneuvers and will defend himself but nothing else.

Campaign Use: Beodwine is the Guildmaster of the Ratcatchers’ Guild. It is his plan to use the Fat Man’s killings to increase the profitability of the guild.

To scale Beodwine adjust his level and combat feats, but this shouldn’t be necessary.

Appearance: Beodwine is a stooped, spry elderly man who reeks and has carved a tiny empire out in the sewers of Felric’s Redoubt. Beodwine cackles when he talks. He has milky white eyes.

Beodwine carries 28 PP.

Æthedgand

CR 4

Male human fighter 4

Age: 29 **Eyes:** Blue. **Hair:** Brown. **Build:** Huge. **Height:** 6’4”. **Race/Sex:** Urbanman/M. **Skin:** Fair. **Demeanor:** Oafish. **Dress:** Workman clothes. **True Attitude:** Intelligent and discerning. **Home:** Felric’s Redoubt.

N medium humanoid

Str: 14 **Int:** 16
Dex: 10 **Wis:** 10
Con: 12 **Cha:** 13

Init: +4 **Senses:** Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages: Ludremonian, Ældic

AC: 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13

hp: 32

Fort: +5, Ref: +1, Will: +1

Speed: 30 ft (6 squares)

Melee: longsword +7 (1d8+4/19-20)

Base Attack: +4; Grp +6

Attack Options: Power Attack, Cleave, Great Cleave.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Weapon Specialization (Longsword), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Longsword), Great Cleave, Cleave.

Skills: Balance 1, Bluff 4, Craft (Trapmaking) 10, Handle Animal 8, Hide 2, Jump 6, Move Silently 2, Swim 7.

Possessions: Longsword, studded leather.

Background/History: Æthedgand was the son of the former guildmaster, and although his father raised him with a keen eye toward Æthedgand succeeding to the position, Æthedgand had other ideas. While he was intelligent and insightful, he saw how the trials of running the guild put his father into an early grave and ruined his marriage. Æthedgand decided that he would rather work from behind the scenes. A large man, he cultivated the reputation as an idiot, while subtly manipulating his friends.

Personality/Motivation: Æthedgand wants the best for the guild but he isn’t willing to take over to make sure it happens. Instead he plays the dumb muscle, carefully making “boneheaded suggestions” that lead the guildmaster toward better management of the guild. Æthedgand is a friendly and outgoing man, easy to laugh and quick to help a friend. He was against the current plan, but unable to swerve Beodwine.

He is also a drunk.

Quote: “This guy looks mean, boss. Can I punch him in the throat a little?”

Powers/Tactics: Æthedgand fights straight on. This is easy do to with his physical brawn, but he’s also careful to keep an eye on the tactical situation, maneuvering foes into bad positions when possible and never taking on more than he can handle.

Campaign Use: Æthedgand is the brains behind the grave-robbing operation, though he’s the only one who knows that. While he is against the plan, he’s also loyal and decided that if the guildmaster refused to see reason, he would try to make sure everything carried off without a hitch.

To scale Æthedgand adjust his level and combat skills.

Appearance: Æthedgand is a hulking brute who looks able to shatter rocks with his hands. Many people mistake him for a High Man and his good eye watches everything carefully. His other eye is missing.

Act Two

He carries 11 PP.

Cewulf

CR 4

Male human expert 4

Age:31 **Eyes:** Hazel. **Hair:** Blond. **Build:** Slight. **Height:** 4'0". **Race/Sex:** Urbanman/M. **Skin:** Fair. **Demeanor:** Aggressive, all knowing. **Dress:** Lower class. **True Attitude:** Angry and ambitious. **Home:** Felric's Redoubt.

N small humanoid

Str: 5 **Int:** 6
Dex: 12 **Wis:** 9
Con: 8 **Cha:** 12

Init: +5 **Senses:** Listen -1, Spot -1
Languages: Ludremonian, Ældic

AC: 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10
hp: 9

Fort: +0, Ref: +2, Will: +5

Speed: 30 ft (6 squares)
Melee: club +0 (1d6-3)
Missile: sling +4 (1d4-3)
Base Attack: +3; Grp +0

Feats: Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Stealthy.
Skills: Balance 1, Bluff 4, Craft (Trapmaking) 5, Hide 10, Jump 4, Move Silently 10.
Possessions: Club, sling.

Background/History: A human with dwarfism, Cewulf had few options as a young man. He joined the Ratcatchers' Guild because they were one of the few organizations that wouldn't judge him on his size. Since then he has known some minor success, growing in power in the guild, building on a reputation of intelligence and cunning. Unfortunately, he's not that smart (it has nothing to do with his physical problems, he took several blows to the head as a child), but he can usually make up for it with sheer determination and much thinking and plotting.

Personality/Motivation: Cewulf is aggressive and ambitious, but he's usually pleasant to people he likes. He's especially nice to women, children and others who he thinks are "disadvantaged." He takes candy to Church every Godsdays for the kids.
Quote: "I have an idea."

Powers/Tactics: In combat he tries to stand back with his sling.

Campaign Use: Cewulf tends to run things, and most people assume he's good at it. Often he is, but it was he who dropped the body by the Ratcatchers' Guildhall.

To scale Cewulf adjust his level and combat feats.
Appearance: Cewulf has dwarfism and blond, wavy hair. He's good looking and many ladies in town chase his attentions. Those who can stand the smell.

He carries 19 PP.

Captain of the Guard Éodwyn

CR 4

Male human expert 4

Age:36 **Eyes:** Gray. **Hair:** Blond. **Build:** Powerful. **Height:** 6'7". **Race/Sex:** High Man/M. **Skin:** Fair. **Demeanor:** Authoritarian, Stern. **Dress:** Middle class clothing and armor. **True Attitude:** Caring and protective. **Home:** Felric's Redoubt.

NG medium humanoid

Str: 16 **Int:** 14
Dex: 14 **Wis:** 10
Con: 10 **Cha:** 12

Init: +2 **Senses:** Listen +6, Spot +6

Languages: Ludremonian, Ældic, Divine Tongue, Elvish, Maroldo.

AC: 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15
hp: 51

Resist: Dodge.

Fort: +6, Ref: +4, Will: +2

Speed: 20 ft (4 squares)
Melee: longsword +13/+8 (1d8+8/19-20)
Missile: shortbow +10/+5 (1d4+1)
Base Attack: +8/+3; Grp +11

Attack Options: Power Attack, Cleave, Great Cleave.

Feats: Alertness, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Longsword), Great Cleave, Investigator, Cleave, Dodge.

Skills: Balance 1, Bluff 4, Gather Information 7, Listen 6, Ride 5, Search 7, Spot 6).

Possessions: Shortbow (Composite), Longsword (Masterwork), Breastplate.

Act Two

Background/History: The son of an errant knight, Éodwyn knew a life of poverty and hardship as a youngster. He learned a great sense of honor and duty from this father, however. His father died a pauper, never once turning to banditry. When he came of age, Éodwyn joined the city guard and his dedication and noble heritage drove his climb up the chain of command.

Personality/Motivation: Éodwyn plays a gruff and annoyed role, but in reality he's a bit soft at heart, giving alms and feeding stray pets. His greatest motivation is his loyalty to the city, which he would die rather than let down.

Quote: "Stop that! How would you like it if a dog baited you?"

Powers/Tactics: Éodwyn prefers to fight from the back of many troops, but when forced into a fight, he attacks head-on, using his notable combat ability.

Campaign Use: Éodwyn is beset and over his head. His job is to defend the city against military threats, and he's not prepared to deal with a serial killer. He heads the guild watch program as well, but this is no aid during these killings.

He has given over the investigation to MacFlin, but he will help the party as much as they ask.

To scale Éodwyn adjust his level and combat feats.

Appearance: Éodwyn is a hard middle-aged man with gray hair and an exhausted look. He dresses in nice clothes, but he values protection and practicality over fancy clothing.

He carries 15 PP.

The Supporting Priests

These priests were the most devoted followers of Belfric. In the wake of his death, they are trying to keep his teachings alive. While there is a slight momentum to make Belfric into a martyr, these priests have yet to take a stand, hoping the idea

of people interpreting their own scriptures will be enough to move the teachings forward.

Father Aldrold

Aldrold is a young priest, friendly. He has a habit of invading the personal space of others.

Father Held

Held is an elderly priest, dour and unpleasant but helpful. He smells strongly of dust. In the wake of Belfric's death, he has become acting Bishop.

Father Wuldred

Wuldred is a middle-aged priest. He thinks the death of the Bishop is an attack on the Church and when Aldrold dies, he panics. Eventually, he will beg the party for protection.

Father Celfric

Celfric is a charming, horrifically ugly priest with bad teeth and of an indeterminate age. He often pretends that he just now noticed his own hump in an attempt to lighten the mood. This joke is so old that not even young children think it's original.

Deacon Ededward

A young acolyte, Ededward is the most fervent follower of Belfric.

The Old Guard Priests

The Old Guard priests were firmly against Belfric's teachings in the past. With his death, they've tried to stamp out his teachings, but the ascendance of Held as acting Bishop has made things difficult.

Father Léodwine

Léodwine is a scripture-bashing, bombastic, middle-aged man, handsome and full of sound and fury. As might be expected, he signifies nothing. He will take over if Held dies.

Languages

If the characters came from Heaven in the Teaser of the last adventure, they came knowing no languages but the Divine Tongue. After the last adventure, they probably began to learn Ludremonian. This is a good thing if true, because Ludremonian is the most spoken language in Felric's Redoubt (as well as Mab in Act One.) The learned men of the city including the priests speak the Divine Tongue. If need be, the Church can give the party translators.

Act Two

Father Athedwin

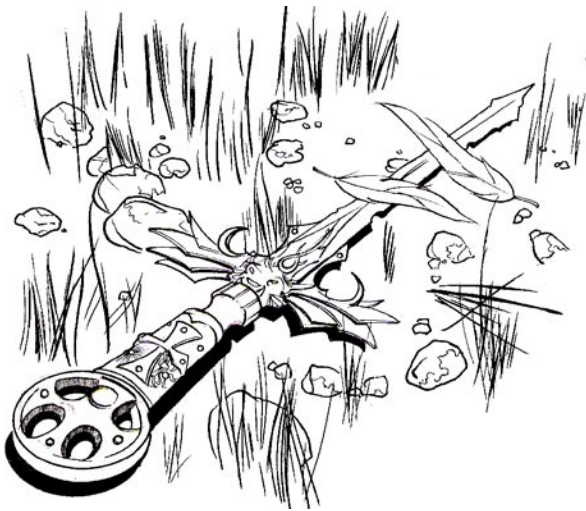
Athedwin is a young noble priest. He will try to get a party member into a duel if he thinks they lean toward Belfric. While this is terrible behavior for a priest, Léodwine protects him from punishment if he succeeds. If he succeeds, treat him as a 3rd level expert.

Father Tréodere

Tréodere is a soft-spoken scripture scholar. He doesn't fit in with the other Old Guard Priests, but he doesn't believe a person should interpret scripture without years of training.

Father Eadwig

Eadwig is a young zealot. He will meet with Pacele on the first night in town and ally with the Society of Sinnius. He will then keep Pacele informed of all the party's actions.



SOLVING THE CRIME

Now that you know all the pieces, it's important to pull it all together. Below is listed the common path of the adventure, in a rough order. Keep in mind that these are only suggestions. Let the party's actions dictate the events and how they unfold.

Party Arrives in Felric's Redoubt

The party arrives in town. They likely report to the authorities and the Church. If they announce themselves as sent by the Angenus Priesthood, both the town and the priests help as much as possible.

On this first day the party will likely spend their days running into frustrating dead ends. The players will likely expect to investigate like a modern detective, only to find there is no evidence of any kind.

Also on this day, the party will probably ally with one faction of priests or the other. If they let their feelings be known, the other faction of priests will become hostile and impede their investigation where possible.

One thing that would add to the drama of the adventure here is to meet Cedward. If the party becomes enamored of the street urchin in advance, his murder will mean that much more.

Dramatic Purpose

This scene is integral to progressing the story. Here, the party arrives and takes on the mantle of the investigation. More importantly, here is where they discover the Act Two complication, that this wasn't a single killing, but part of a serial killer's crime spree.

The Society of Sinnius

It's likely the party will have a bad view of the Society of Sinnius once they realize what Pacele is doing in this adventure. If they discuss this with one of the authority figures in the city, they will not find the blanket hate they expect.

The Society of Sinnius will likely stand against the party more than with them, but they have saved the world many times over. While the Knights Lonnuso are military and blatant in their acts, the Society of Sinnius has probably stopped more Ulcers, hunting those people who breed the heresies that cause the corruption of the land. Not only do they stop these Ulcers, but fewer innocents die of a subtle assassination than from a troop movement.

Act Two

Pacele Arrives

Pacele arrives and allies with Eadwig. Eadwig agrees to spy on the party. If the party is known to be allied with the supporting priests, they plot to foil the party's investigation. This can take the form of everything from bad-mouthing them to the watch patrols to making sure that messages to the party get "lost" somehow. This, of course, all happens behind the scenes.

Dramatic Purpose

This scene sets up the subplot of the adventure, the work of the Society of Sinnius. Whereas the Demon is the antagonist of the story, Pacele is there to muck up the works rather than directly oppose the party. Pacele is not trying to make the Ulcer grow, he's trying to stop the party from making the Bishop into a martyr. He's willing to sacrifice the city to do it.

Body in the Sewers

The next day the body appears in the sewers. This plays out as a quick miniadventure, as outlined in the Murders, above.



Dramatic Purpose

This scene serves several purposes. It allows the party to seize control for the first time. It allows them to experience a slightly challenging fight. Most importantly, this is the party's first red herring, an important element of every mystery. This also serves as part of the Act Two twist when the party discovers their only lead is a dead end.

Fallout of the Sewers

If the party has made their beliefs about Belfric obvious, the opposing faction of priests will begin to poison their reputation in the town. Most likely the priests spread the rumor the party had the opportunity to catch the Fat Man in the sewers, but they screwed it up. Shopkeepers and tavern owners will begin to charge extra to the party and hostility will grow over the next days.

Dramatic Purpose

This scene allows the party to feel the pressure of their "failure" in the sewers. It personalizes the troubles of the murders. It also completes the Act Two twist by giving them a series of copycat crimes with which they will also need to contend.

Pacele Kills a Priest

The second of the red herrings, the party will probably not fall for this one. Still, they should feel the mounting pressure to solve the crime.

Dramatic Purpose

This scene is another red herring, making it important to the mystery structure. In addition, this gives a second driving impetus to the party. With two people killing in the city, the party should feel twice the need to succeed.

Divination Spells

Ulcers are immune to divinations. This encompasses all the actions of the Fat Man, making even the crime scenes and bodies immune to information gathering spells. While this might be a tip off there is an Ulcer involved, there are many ways to stop divination magic, which is spotty in the Mortal Realm at best. Very general divination that gently guides the party's actions will still work, as long as they don't directly shoot for the Ulcer, the killer, or the crime scenes.

Act Two

A Real Crime Scene

The party discovers a new killing. Hopefully this comes in the middle of their investigation of Pacele's copycat killing, because that will take the adventure into a more breakneck pace. The details of this killing are described above, under the Murders. Here they should find the bottle of Poppy Extract, their first real clue.

Dramatic Purpose

This scene is the first step in the clue chain. This also serves as an easy encounter to let the character feel like they make good progress.

This apothecary, named Amberht, will recognize the bottle and remember the man he sold it to. While he doesn't know the Guildmaster, he does remember the Guildmaster wore an elaborate dragon brooch (because of the magic surrounding the guildmaster, this is easier than remembering his face). He also describes the man as thin and emaciated, which might well throw the party off.

Dramatic Purpose

This scene is the second step in the clue chain. This also serves as an easy encounter to let the characters feel like they make good progress.

The Apothecary

There are many apothecaries in the city, and at this point the characters must engage in a little footwork. It isn't hard to go to apothecary after apothecary until they find someone who recognizes the substance.

They will direct the party to the man who sold the bottle. The Apothecary is found near the noble quarter. When the characters arrive, read or paraphrase the following:

This shop is unique in the fact that customers enter through a door and shop inside. The room is wide and open, with a counter along one side. The walls are covered in diagrams of plants and obscure formulas.

Behind the counter is a young man in noble garb with a bookish look. He nods and smiles as you enter.

Buckle-makers

The party might not realize at first that a brooch was likely made by a buckle-maker. The first or second jeweler they talk to will suggest they try buckle-makers as well. Obviously, the first buckle-maker they try is going to recognize the brooch of their Guildmaster. When they approach the first buckle-maker's shop, read or paraphrase the following:

The shop is much like any other, with two long horizontal shutters. The top one is propped up to form an awning. The bottom one is braced against the wall underneath to form a counter thrusting out into the street. Buckles of all shapes and sizes cover the counter.

The man inside this window is slightly full around the middle. He looks sleepy and bored, whipping the flies that cluster around him with a horse's tail.

An Ulcer in Felric's Reboot

Because of the repulsion on the guildhall, only the people inside know it is an Ulcer. All the citizens skirt the building unconsciously. A person must seek the building out to approach it.

If the characters let anyone know there's an Ulcer in the guildhall, a panic will quickly arise in the city as word spreads and everything surges out of control. Looting will begin. A riot will rock the streets. If things continue too long, the entire city will burn to the ground.

Luckily that isn't likely to happen. MacFlin has powerful paladin abilities that allow him to help calm the city. He will take to the streets, making Diplomacy skill checks and generally bringing his considerable public speaking abilities. Slowly, things will fall back into line, but the characters should feel the impact of their actions.

Act Two

The bucklemaker will recognize the buckle immediately, but when the subject comes around to the Guildmaster, he acts strangely evasive. He'll explain the Guildmaster wears that brooch, but he will find it difficult to talk about the guildhall. A little determined questioning will get to the details.

Dramatic Purpose

This scene is the third step in the clue chain. This also serves as an easy encounter to let the character feel like they make good progress.

Muggers

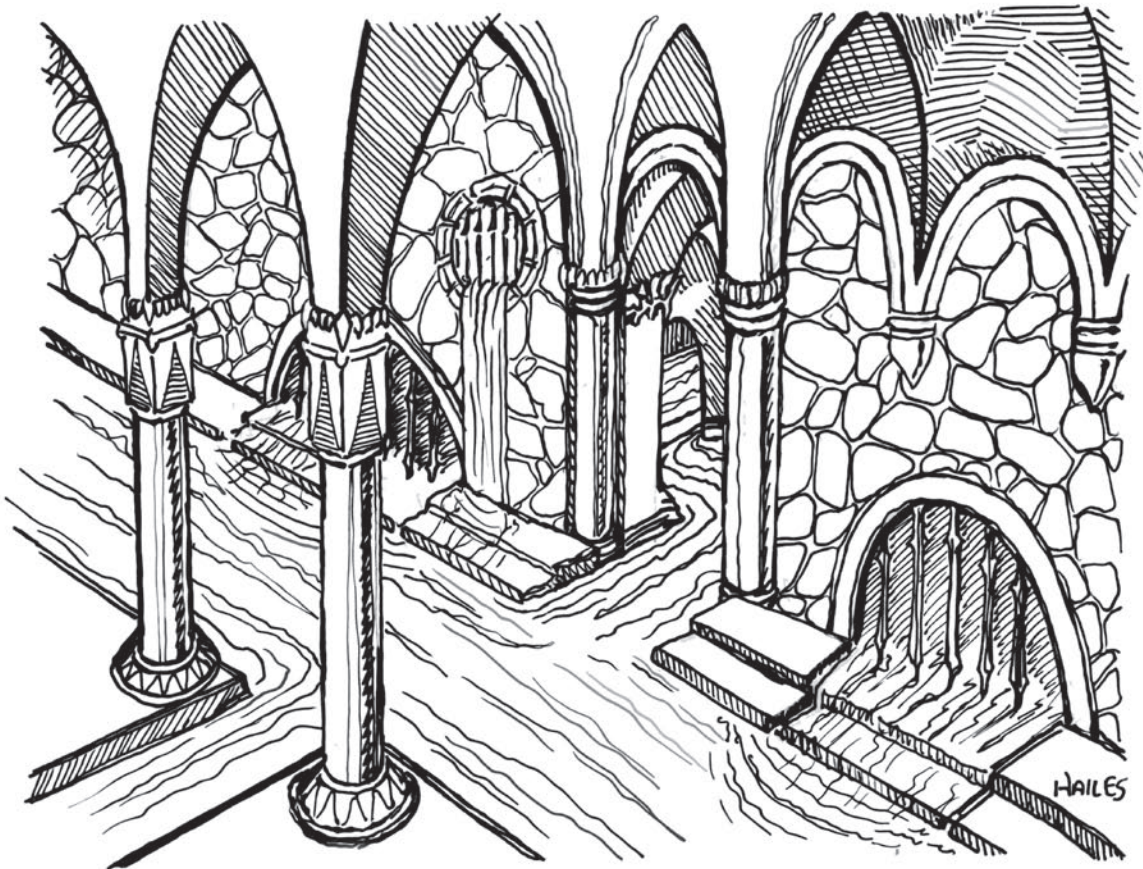
Meanwhile, Pacle hires some thugs to “mug” the party. Five men will trap the party on a narrow street, the leader and two men in front and the other two blocking the escape from behind.

Leader: human fighter 7; CR 7; Medium humanoid; HD 7d10; hp 39; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk/Grp +7/+10; Atk +11 melee (1d8+5/19-20, longsword); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d8+5/19-20, weapon); SA –; SQ –; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 7, Wis 9, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Appraise 3, Intimidate 12; Improved Initiative, Weapon Specialization (Longsword), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Longsword), Persuasive, Great Cleave, Cleave, Leadership.

Possessions: Chain Shirt, Rope (Hempen/50 Ft.) Longsword, Shield (Heavy/Wood), 21 PP, 2 SP.

Muggers: human warrior 3; CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 1d8+2; hp 20; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk/Grp +3/+6; Atk +6 melee (1d8+3/19-20, longsword) or +6 melee (1d10+4/19-20, Flail, Heavy); Full Atk +6 melee



Act Two

(1d8+3/19-20, longsword) or +6 melee (1d10+4/19-20, Flail, Heavy); SA -; SQ -; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Appraise 3, Intimidate 7, Jump 9.

Possessions:

1st Mugger: Longsword, 6 PP, 5 GP, 3 SP.

2nd Mugger: Longsword, 9 PP.

3rd Mugger: Heavy Flail, 24 PP.

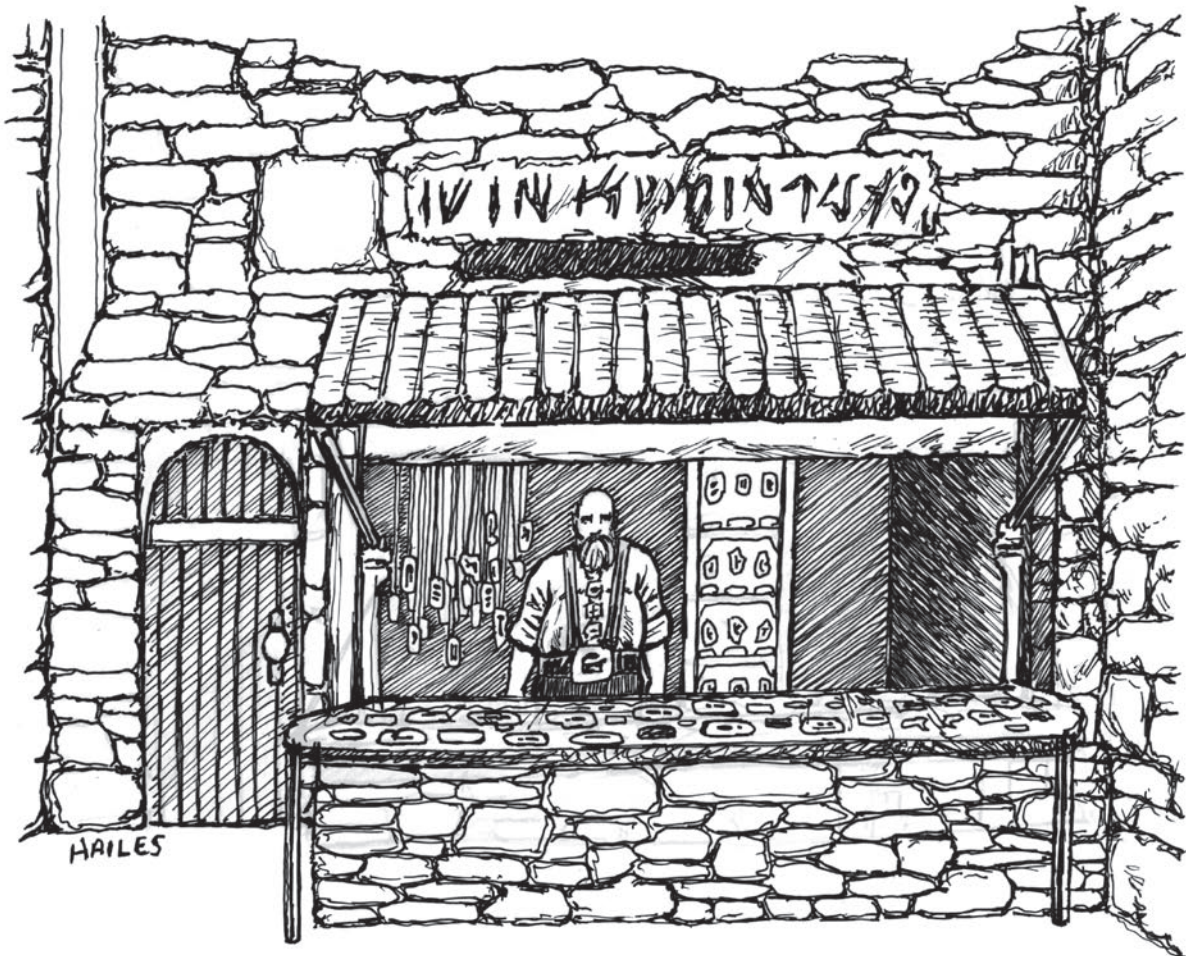
4th Mugger: Longsword, 4 SP, 2 CP.>

Dramatic Purpose

This scene allows the party to work out a bit of their aggression in an easy fight. This is meant to be slightly challenging and to get the party back into fight mode for Act Three.

The Bucklemaker's Guildhall

In the heart of the city the party will find the Bucklemaker's Guildhall. Read or paraphrase the following:



Act Two

This imposing building has an engraved facade and elaborate window dressings. Statues and marble stairs decorate the entrance. The front door is varnished yew.

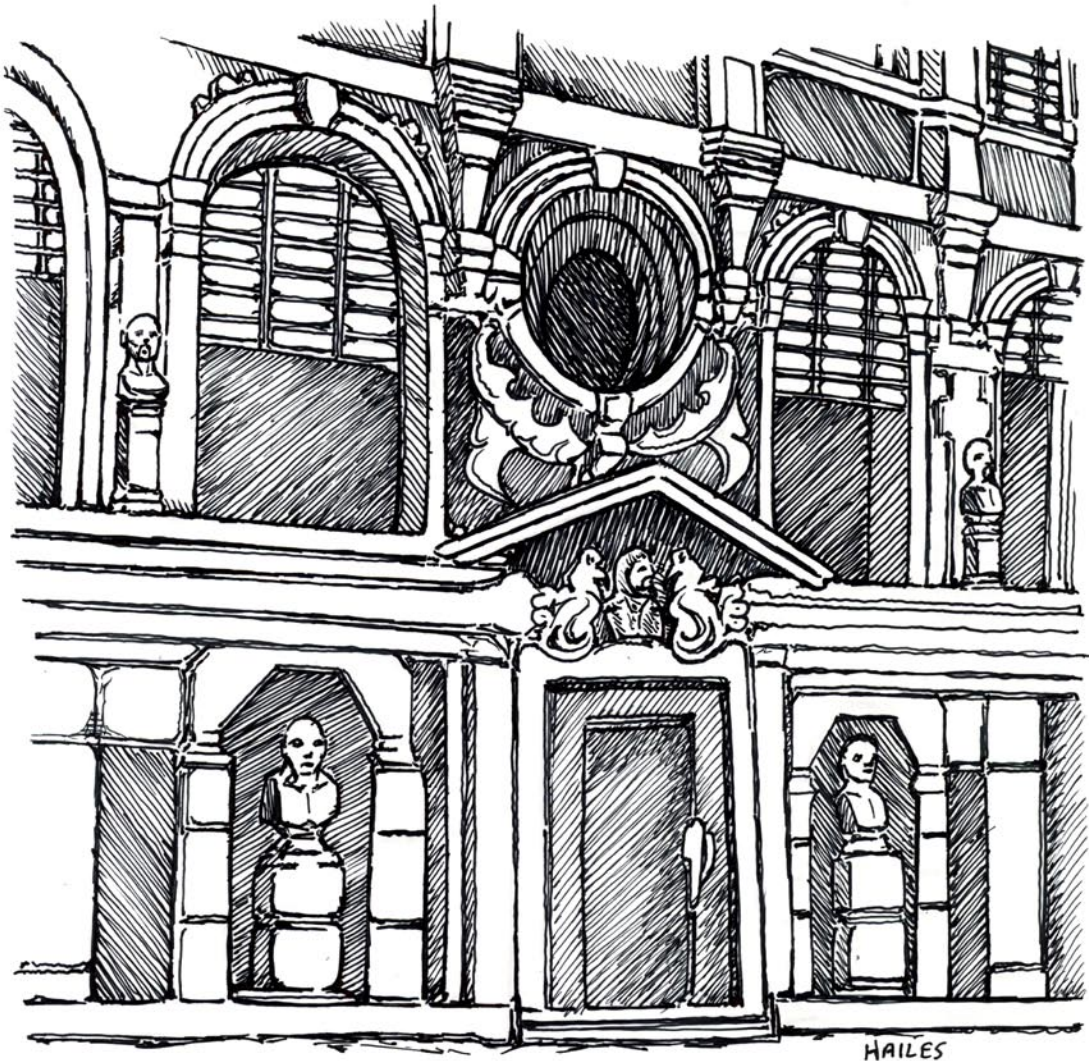
As you approach the door you suddenly hear a distant wail from inside the building. The sound is unearthly, tormented. The sound of suffering and pain, the sound of anguish. The sound of Hell.

The guildhall is an Ulcer.

When the characters enter, continue to Act Three.

Dramatic Purpose

This is the end of Act reveal. Here, we learn something of the real truth behind this entire adventure. The end of Act reveal should change the nature of the story and rocket the characters into the final dramatic climax.



Act Three

Act Three

The stage is set, the players are in place. It's time for the final battle.

Dramatic Purpose

Act Three contains the climax of the story and any denouement. Act Three starts the minute the characters' plan collapses and the moment they begin the final battle, in whatever form it might take.

1) ULCER

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

The air in this room seems to throb as you enter. A feeling of thickening air mounts before you, as if the building tried to expel you. Light through the high windows is red and hellish. The boards of the floor sink slightly under each footstep. The air reeks like a slaughter yard.

Stairs rise on the far side of the room, but collapse halfway to the ceiling. Beyond them stands a wall of bone, reaching up, it would seem, through the floor to the level above. Obviously all the exits from this room were once on the far side of that wall, but a gap between it and the wall to the left leads to the next room, where the dividing wall crumbled when the wall of bone clove it in two.

There is nothing special in this room. As it says above, the only exit not cut off by the wall of bones is the one the bones created, cutting through the wall to the left. They must squeeze through this hole one at a time.

Dramatic Purpose

This area is meant to set the mood.

2) THE FATE OF BUCKLEMAKERS

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

A tinkling sound comes suddenly as your head breaks the plane into the next room. Here, under the hellish light, you see three bucklemakers working at a table, their tiny hammers rising and falling. It's only as you move more fully into the room that you realize that they aren't sitting on benches. Their bodies have *melded* into the benches at the waist. Their legs are nowhere to be seen.

The bone wall continues straight along your right hand. Where it pierces the far wall, you can see another crumbling hole.

This is what the Demon has done to those bucklemakers with enough willpower to return to the guildhall. They don't seem to be in pain, or to even notice the party. No amount of effort will distract them from their work. They will be released when the Ulcer collapses, thrown out into random parts of the city.

Dramatic Purpose

This scene is meant to set mood and invoke player sympathy. Try not to cross the barrier from the surreal into the gruesome.

Details in the Ulcer

A GM could really make this Ulcer disturbing, should he want. The wall of bones, smell of blood, and fused bodies could turn this into a slasher movie. That's not the intention of this location. The bones are animal, the blood from beef. The Demon of Gluttony is not meant to be portrayed as anything other than a ravenous eater. The fused people are meant to show the melting together of man and Ulcer, not to give your players nightmares. Remember, this is a murder mystery, not a horror story.

Act Three

3) ANIMATED CLOAKS

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

This room contains nothing but cloaks on hooks. The wall of bone either ends or turns halfway into the room.

The wall of bones turns here and where it pierces the wall to the right, there is another crumbling hole.

Meanwhile, when the party enters the rooms the cloaks spring to life. They rise, revealing swords hidden behind. They take up these blades as if they were worn by invisible fighters.

There is one cloak for every party member.

Animated Cloaks: CR 1; Medium construct; HD Special; hp 1; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk/Grp +1/+1; Atk +1 melee (1d8/19-20, longsword); Full Atk +1 melee (1d8/19-20, weapon); SA—; SQ—; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: None.

Possessions: Longsword, cloak.

The cloaks cannot be harmed, neither can the “invisible” people wearing them. They are controlled by the brooches clasping them together. Striking at the brooch invokes a –10 penalty. A critical might cause an accidental hit, at the GM’s discretion. This would destroy a brooch and show the party the trick to winning this fight.

Dramatic Purpose

This battle is simple if the characters hit on the trick. If not, it could be nigh unwinnable.

4) THE FUSED MAN

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

This room has an eerie silence to it. In the center, under the red and orange light, a table sits. On top of the table lies a man, sunken halfway into the table’s top. A crumbling hole leads out the other side where the bones pierce the far wall.

The man in the table is unconscious and anyone examining him will see lines of exhaustion. There isn’t much the party can do for him now. He will be expelled like the others when the Ulcer collapses. If the party wants to chip him out, they can.

The real threat here is Pacele, who arrived at the Bucklemaker’s Guildhall before the party. He managed to evade the animated cloaks and now hides under the table. He’ll ambush them when the first of them enters, hoping to take them one at a time in the bottleneck of the hole in the wall. See Act Two for his stats.

Dramatic Purpose

There is a decent chance that Pacele can kill a character if you aren’t using <<Fate Points.>> Other than that, this is a challenging battle at best, probably a bit on the easy side, depending on whether Pacele can catch them at the hole.

5) THE BUCKLE GOLEM

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

This is another corner room with the wall of bones curving back to the right. The floor of this room is scattered with buckles. As you move into the room, the buckles move together, those in the middle more slowly but distant ones flying into place. After no more than a moment, a human-shaped creature rears into the air.

Buckle Golem: CR 6; Large construct; HD 8d10+30; hp 64; Init –1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 8, flat-footed 16; Base Atk/Grp +6/+11; Atk +10 melee (2d8+5, slam); Full Atk +10/+10 melee (2d8+5, 2 slams); SA —; SQ Construct traits, damage reduction 5/rune gold (adamantine), darkvision 60 ft, immunity to magic, low-lite vision; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 20, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: None.

Possessions: None.

Act Three

There is a crumbling hole in the wall around the corner, just like in the other rooms.

Dramatic Purpose

This is a challenging battle, meant to stretch the party's abilities a bit.

6) THE LARDER

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

In front of you the wall of bone has collapsed into a large open area to the right. The red and orange light bathes the room in a bloody sheen to match the increasingly coppery smell. As you move forward, you can see an emaciated man on his knees against the far wall, weeping and begging. He wears a dragon brooch.

Sides of beef hang from hooks and chains from the ceiling, swinging as if in some unseen wind. As you move forward, you can see more of the room, until in the center you see a ten-foot demon staring down at you.

Horns point back from the rear of his head. A line of small horn buds run forward along the center. Ragged, batlike ears stick up on either side and pointed ridges of bone stick from its shoulders.

But what you really notice is its obese belly, a great, rolling wave of fat and flesh, covered in warts and blemishes. It laughs, and the movement mesmerizes.

The demon says, "That Splinter was most useful for creating this Ulcer."

If the party cast the splinter into the maw in the first adventure, read or paraphrase the following:

"Thank you for casting it into the maw."

The Splinter isn't here. In fact, it's no longer in the Mortal Realm.

Demon of Gluttony: CR 8; Large outsider; HD 10d8+50; hp 82; Init +5; Spd 40 ft.; AC 21, touch 9, flat-footed 20; Base Atk/Grp +10/+14; Atk +14 me-

lee (2d6+4, claw); Full Atk +14/+14 melee (2d6+4, 2 claws); SA —; SQ Damage reduction 10/good, spell resistance 17; AL CE; SV Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +10; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Bluff 18, Concentration +18, Diplomacy +17, Hide +14, Intimidate +19, Jump 17, Listen +18, Move Silently +14, Search 16, Sense Motive +17, Spot +18; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Persuasive, Weapon Focus (Claws).

Possessions: None.

The Demon of Gluttony and the guildmaster will attack. For Cædmon's stats, see Act Two.

The sides of beef are beef. They do nothing special, but characters and enemies alike could use the swinging beef as cover, they more than mass enough to absorb any reasonable attack.

Dramatic Purpose

This is the final battle. It should be difficult, dangerous and above all else, *exciting*. This is the last real chance to make the party work for their goals. This is, in short, the climax of the entire adventure.

ENDGAME

If they kill the Demon, Cædmon is released from his geas and begs the party not to kill him, if he's still alive. He'll try to bargain with the treasure in the room.

300 PP, 6000 GP, +3 Heavy Metal Shield (no arcane spell failure percentage), +1 Pipes, Masterwork Studded Leather Armor, +2 Composite Shortbow, +1 Sling.

After a moment of this role-playing, read or paraphrase the following:

The building throbs and groans. The walls seem to bend inward, to bow and strain against the pull of imploding reality. Your heart skips a beat. The Ulcer is collapsing.

Let them make their mad dash out. If they insist on carrying out the fused people, play up how long it takes (though they have time). If they abandon the fused people, play up how easy it was to get out and



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see if they go back in.

When they are outside for good, read or paraphrase the following:

With a final shudder, the whole building seems to bend and fold in on itself. Then there's a hiccup, as if the world caught up and twisted backward a moment.

And the building is there again, silent and foreboding.

If the characters pulled out the fused people:

But the people you rescued have vanished.

The victims have been scattered around the city, whole now. They will turn up one after another over the next day or two (many will head straight home and go to sleep, thinking they've had a drunken nightmare).

If they let Cædmon live, he collapses shortly after this. The power of the Ulcer was keeping him alive and it will take magical healing and days of care to bring him back to full health. If the party seeks out the Knight Ephestus or another healing Order, they will take him in no questions asked. If the party explains anyway, they will keep the secret.

Felric's Redoubt is safe. The party has won.

Dramatic Purpose

This final rush out and the decision of whether to save the fused people should be plenty tense. If the players try to rescue people, make sure that they understand that if they are in the Ulcer when it collapses, they will likely end in Hell. Let the horrors of what might happen play out in their head.

DENOUEMENT

The denouement is the falling action of a story. In it, the bad guys get punished, the good guys get their rewards, and all loose ends are tied up.

Oh, and it's pronounced dā'nū'män.

Dramatic Purpose

The dramatic purpose of the entire denouement is to give the character's a feeling of completion, to let the story wind down and wrap up naturally.

The Guildhall

The Guildhall is completely mundane after the events of this adventure. Unfortunately, there is now a hole in the middle, all the way to (but not through) the roof. This matches the location of the wall of bones. The inside of the building, even the undamaged portions of rooms, look like ruins, filled with dust and debris. The entire building will need to be gutted and rebuilt before anyone can use the guildhall again.

Cædmon

If the party hangs around long enough for Cædmon to come around (and he survived), he awakes and remembers almost nothing of his time in the control of the Ulcer. He recalls disconcerting dreams, but nothing else. If the party tells him what he did, he won't believe them.

MacFlin

MacFlin is ready to declare this entire thing an Ulcer, now the threat is passed and there's no risk to the city. *Something* interfered with his magical divinations, after all. He'll accept the party's story, especially if they describe the Demon of Gluttony in detail. He has fought one before, and he remembers details as they fill them in.

MacFlin asks the party for their opinion of what to do about Cædmon if they explain everything, and if they haven't told any city officials or Cædmon himself. It's probably safe to tell a Healing Order who the killer was. If they've told anyone else (even Cædmon) there is nothing he can do. Matters will need to take their course.

If the party and MacFlin are the only ones who know, MacFlin will accept their judgment. They are the only ones who saw him in the throes of the Ulcer, after all. If they think the man is innocent because of extenuating circumstances, he will suggest they put forth the story the *Demon* committed the murders, dressed as Cædmon and in an illusion of a fair form. He was a Demon of Gluttony after all. The city will accept it.

Éodwyn

Éodwyn will accept any reasonable story the party puts forth. He'll be shocked to hear of an Ulcer, but he'll believe it, considering the horror of the killings (serial killings aren't well known in the Mortal Realm).

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If they tell the man that Caedmon committed the crimes, he will insist the man be put under guard and tried. He won't take no for an answer. Extenuating circumstances are for the court to decide.

The Trial

If Caedmon goes to trial, there is a brief fight between the Church and the city over who gets to try him, as the court that tries him keeps all fines. The Church wins and he goes to ecclesiastical court. The trial lasts one day. The characters are called to testify. If they try something outlandish to get him off, adjust the results accordingly. If they tell the truth, his fate depends on who runs the trial.

If Held is acting Bishop, he dismisses the murder charges for extenuating circumstances (essentially he considers it self-defense, because the Guildmaster held out amazingly long against the hunger before his first few killings). On the charge of trafficking with Demons, he finds the Guildmaster guilty, Caedmon could have tried harder to prove to the Bishop that he wasn't crazy. Still, Held considers the Ulcer an extenuating circumstance and reduces the charge from burning to banishment. Caedmon's wealth and lands are taken in fines and he's stripped naked and banished from town. The guard <<Guard?>> has to post extra patrols to make certain that citizens don't find him in the wilderness and lynch him. Eventually, the man passes out of the knowledge of the city.

If Léodwine is acting bishop, things go worse for the Guildmaster. Léodwine declares that no extenuating circumstances matter, that Caedmon should have come to the Church for aid at once, even if it had meant his life at the hands of Witch-Hunters. Léodwine finds him guilty on both charges, but he does have one moment of mercy for the man's misfortune and he orders him hanged for murder instead of burned for trafficking with Demons. Caedmon dies peacefully in his sleep that night. Those who thought the sentence too harsh maintain that God granted him the mercy of a painless passing to paradise.

And peace.

The Celebration

It might be bittersweet for the party, depending on the fate of Caedmon and their pity for the man, but one week

after the Ulcer falls (and one day after the sentence on Caedmon would have been or is carried out), Felric's Redoubt holds a grand celebration for the party.

People try to hide the existence of Ulcers when they fear they'll be killed for living in one, but the Ulcer in Felric's Redoubt is destroyed. Even the Knights Lonnuso can find nothing in the Guildhall to complain about. The Church lets the entire city know, and the city wants to thank the party.

The city confers on the party the Order of Almia, which is a honor one step below knighthood. Afterward, they are taken in a parade through the city.

Read or paraphrase the following:

The streets are lined with people as you ride in decorated wagons through the city. Women and children lean from the balconies above you and the shouting of the crowd turns into a wall of sound, deafening.

You creep through the town to the adulation of the citizens. People rush forward to touch your hems, the guard has to push them back, beset on all sides by a screaming mass of humanity. You did this. These people love you. You probably *did* save them all. There's no chance they'd be allowed to live, if the Ulcer had grown.

You smile in the glory of the moment, pride and joy welling inside you. It's hard to resist. The feeling is contagious. You laugh.

And then you spot a man ahead of you, standing in the crowd. He's a man in bishop's robes, but he doesn't look familiar. He isn't the acting Bishop.

He nods to you and he speaks, and somehow you hear him through the roar and the commotion. His voice carries in a whisper, as if he leaned close to your ear. "All glory," he says, "is fleeting."

And then he vanishes.

Playing the Next Adventure

If you intend to play *On Corrupted Ground*, how you proceed from here depends on when exactly you intend to play it. If you wish a little time between adventures, allow the characters to get some play in and around Felric's Redoubt. Make one or two simple adventures for them there. Try to time the adventures so they'll end

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when you are ready for *On Corrupted Ground* (If, for instance, you are waiting for it to release). Otherwise, just have fun and let the play continue.

On Corrupted Ground begins in Felric's Redoubt. It's possible to adjust the beginning to start elsewhere, but the Cardinal of Belm will be the one to tap the party, and he'll be looking for them here, so it might be best to keep them within his reach. If not, putting them near Belm or Marnele would leave them in the prime position to act.

If you intend to run the next adventure immediately, just follow the instructions in the Experience section and then begin.

Monsters

There are not many creatures of any type in this adventure, but two stand out enough to warrant full treatment. They are the Buckle Golem and the Demon of Gluttony.

Buckle Golem

	Large Construct
Hit Dice:	8d10+30 (74 hp)
Initiative:	-1
Speed:	30 ft. (6 squares)
Armor Class:	16 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +8 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 16
Base Attack/Grapple:	+6/+11
Attack:	Slam +10 melee (2d8+5)
Full Attack:	2 slams +10 melee (2d8+5)
Space/Reach:	10 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks:	—
Special Qualities:	Construct traits, damage reduction 5/rune gold (adamantine), darkvision 60 ft, immunity to magic, low-lite vision
Saves:	Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +2
Abilities:	Str 20, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1
Skills:	—
Feats:	—
Environment:	Any
Organization:	Solitary or gang (2-4)
Challenge Rating:	6
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always Neutral
Advancement:	9-16 HD (Large); 18-27 HD (Huge)
Level Adjustment:	—

Background/History: The Buckle Golem is a construct cobbled together out of loose buckles and other workshop debris. They are invariably created by magic but few mages have the drive to make one on purpose. If a mage makes a Buckle Golem, he probably couldn't afford to make anything better.

Personality/Motivation: Buckle Golems are created beings and they have no free will. They carry out their mission without any care for personal safety, discomfort, or desire.

Powers/Tactics: Buckle Golems have no special powers. They use frontal assaults unless their instructions give them more sophisticated tactics. During combat, hits against them spray the room with buckles and filings and other pieces of metal.

Immunity to Magic (Ex): A buckle golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below.

A magical attack that deals fire damage slows a buckle golem (as the slow spell) for 1 round per die damage, with no saving throw.

A buckle golem is affected normally by rust attacks, such as that of a rust monster or a *rusting grasp* spell.

Campaign Use: Buckle Golems guard magical locations. They are given detailed instructions which they follow to the letter. They are smart enough to carry out these orders, but they rarely invest much "initiative" in their thinking.

To increase or decrease the Golem's scaling, adjust their hit dice.

Appearance: A Buckle Golem stands over eight feet tall. It's made of a mobile, packed conglomeration of articulate buckles. Usually human in shape, they are restricted to moving the way a body moves. They have only the hint of facial features in the make-up of their buckles.

Demons

There are many creatures in Hell, but the most numerous are Demons. All Demons except Demons of Damnation are the souls of dead Nephilim, taken form and unleashed back on the universe in general.

No Demon can take a fair form, although they may use illusions to make themselves appear fair (not

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many people understand the distinction). Their forms and appearances are many and varied, based on type. Some of them can even take on multiple shapes.

All Demons have the following abilities:

—*Darkvision*: 90 ft.

—*Low-light Vision*

—Demons are immune to all fire, cold, water and poison.

—*Resistance*: air 10, acid 10, and electricity 10.

—*Bane (SU)*: Demons gain a +2 enchantment bonus and +2d6 damage vs. anything with the Divine or Angelic Spark.

—*Soul Sense (SU)*: Demons can sense any Mortal's greatest temptation.

—*Tongues (Su)*: All Demons can speak with any creature that has a language, as though using a tongues spell (caster level equal to angel's Hit Dice). This ability is always active.

Shurgol (Demon of Gluttony)

	Large Outsider (Chaotic, Extraplanar, Evil)
Hit Dice:	10d8+50 (95 hp)
Initiative:	+5
Speed:	40 ft. (8 squares)
Armor Class:	21 (+1 Dex, +11 natural, -1 size), touch 9, flat-footed 20
Base Attack/Grapple:	+10/+14
Attack:	Claw +14 melee (2d6+4)
Full Attack:	2 claws +14 melee (2d6+4)
Space/Reach:	10 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks:	—
Special Qualities:	Damage reduction 10/good, spell resistance 17
Saves:	Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +10
Abilities:	Str 18, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 18
Skills:	Bluff 18, Concentration +18, Diplomacy +17, Hide +14, Intimidate +19, Jump 17, Listen +18, Move Silently +14, Search 16, Sense Motive +17, Spot +18
Feats:	Alertness, Improved Initiative, Persuasive, Weapon Focus (Claws)
Environment:	Hell, Ulcers
Organization:	Solitary
Challenge Rating:	8

Treasure: Standard coins; double goods; standard items

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Advancement: 11-15 HD (Large); 16-23 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment: +7

Background/History: The souls of dead Nephilim, Demons of Gluttony thrive on that one Deadly Sin. They have tempted Mortals since the beginning of the Mortal Realm.

Personality/Motivation: Demons of Gluttony live on the hunger and gorging of Mortals. They love to torment the damned souls in Hell but they value the gluttony of living Mortals even more.

Powers/Tactics: Shurgol Demons are not ones for subtlety and tricks. They are the least magical of all Demons. They hammer on hunger, thirst, and the need to eat and drink, knowing that these are the most powerful of all Mortal temptations. Even the most moderate Elf must still eat and drink. If there was a Demon of Breathing, he might have a greater hold on the Mortal drives, but there isn't.

They approach combat the same way. Their combat skills are notable and they use them to powerful advantage.

Once per day, a Shurgol Demon can attempt to summon another Shurgol with a 40% chance of success.

Campaign Use: Demons of Gluttony use their powers to tempt Mortals to eat to their doom. As they have no magical abilities, they tend to rely on the power of Ulcers to achieve anything but a direct temptation. They are powerful in combat and relish tearing into Mortals with bare claws.

To increase or decrease the Demon's scaling, adjust their HD and combat feats.

Appearance: A Shurgol stands ten feet tall. Its skin is sickly and bloated. Horns point back from the rear of his head. A line of small horn buds run forward along the center. Ragged, batlike ears stick up on either side and pointed ridges of bone stick from its shoulders. It has a huge belly, covered in warts and blemishes.

The Shurgol Demons rarely wear armor or carry weapons. Those of rank among the Gluttony Demons decorate their skins with rings and piercings made of bone.

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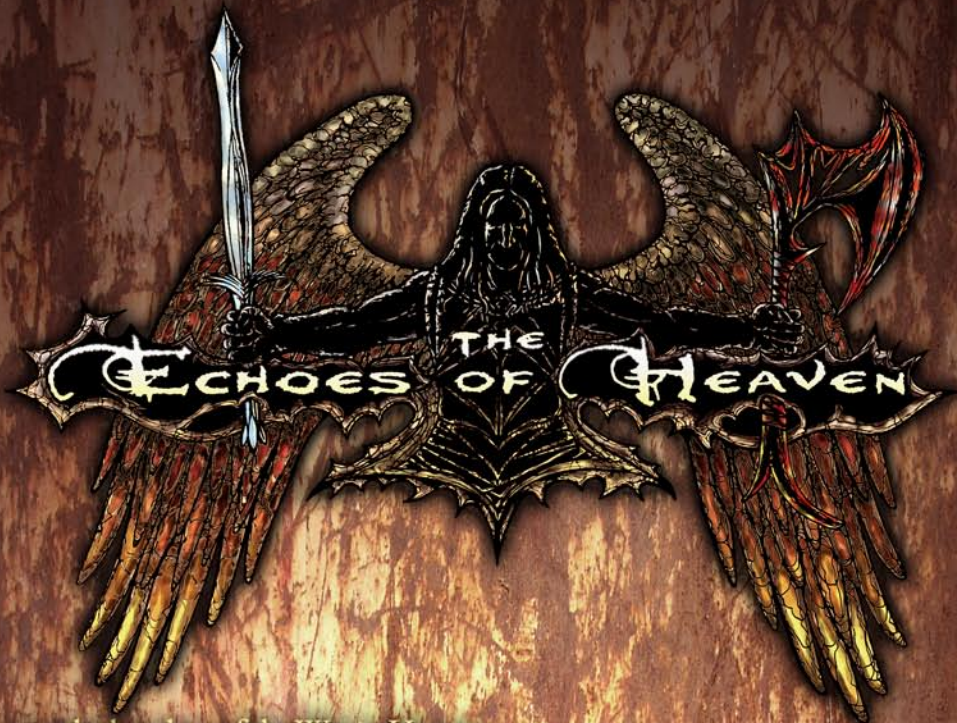
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It was the last days of the War in Heaven.

It was six months before the Sundering, six months before the Second Falling, before that last, desperate battle. Six months before everything you cared about turned to ashes. You had been called from across Heaven, volunteers who had journeyed out to the edge of the lands of the faithful. You'd all traveled hard and far to meet with one of the great generals of the war, the Archangel Areniel. The light of God shone everywhere in Heaven those days, except in Hell, the lands of the Fallen. The border knew the only true twilight in Heaven.

Here the light of God shines dim. Here the Faithful stand against the heretics. Here you meet on the road to the border fortress Stands in Faith. . . .

Welcome to the second adventure in the *Moving Shadow* campaign. This adventure, *The Festering Earth*, is the second of a ten-part series that will take a group of characters through the Mortal Realm. Starting at 2nd level and taking the party to 20th level, this campaign will take the world to the brink of destruction.

The Echoes of Heaven is designed for use in four different games systems. They are the *d20 System* game (owned by Wizards of the Coast), *Rolemaster* (owned by Iron Crown Enterprises), *HARP* (owned by Iron Crown Enterprises), and *HERO System* (owned by Hero Games).

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