

DW 3

a Dungeon World adventure



# Ghostwood Haunts

Johnstone Metzger







Midway upon the journey of our life  
I found that I was in a dusky wood;  
For the right path, whence I had strayed, was lost.  
— Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, “Canto 1.”

# Ghostwood Haunts

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Colonel Kaffshyth, Gambler the Elf, and William Parsnip.

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# Introduction



# Ghosts in the Woods

This adventure begins with a coach arriving in the quiet village of Knifesbridge after being robbed. The coachman and his six passengers, travelling south from the university town of Mournhaven, were held up by bandits at dusk. J. Rupert Hogge, his wife Mathilde, a man named Wilse, and the three Rosewell siblings—Mia, Darren, and Sereese—were relieved of their valuables, including even their luggage and wedding rings. The sheriff has allowed them to stay at one of the village's inns, the Cotter's Arms, for free until the matter is resolved. The coachman immediately departed south to report the crime to his superiors.

Knifesbridge is nested amongst the tall trees of the Ghostwood Forest. It is built around a bridge over the quick-flowing River Knife, linking the eastern and western parts of the duchy. Over the last decade, a new road was built, leading north to Mournhaven. As this road is now the quickest route north to the university there, it has become popular of late—especially since there are currently no toll collectors. Edgar Silerton, the man who financed its construction and obtained the rights to collect tolls along it, hanged himself in the woods several years ago.

Unfortunately, travel along this toll-free road does not come without a cost. There are bandits. And worse.



## Things to Come

Ghostwood Haunts presents two fronts for the players' characters to deal with. The first, Ravenous Wolves, details a gang of bandits and drug dealers that call themselves the Wolf Pack and the local mayor's ill-advised reaction to their depredations. If the bandits are not stopped, they will seize control of local politics and begin a reign of terror. But if the mayor's antics are not corrected, there may be little left for them to reign over.

The second, Hungry Ghosts, presents a tangled web of demon worship, betrayal, and murder. A dead witch's ghost seeks a vengeance that will allow the demon that corrupted her to walk beneath the Ghostwood's leaves in the form of man. Once summoned to the physical plane, he can work mischief far more insidious than even that of the Wolf Pack. The PCs are not alone in trying to prevent this horror, but the other would-be hero appears to be more of a problem than a solution.

At the crossroads that brings these two fronts together lies an old, abandoned tower. Beneath its crumbling stones lie the roots of all that threatens to destroy the village of Knifesbridge and bring a ruin down upon the forest the likes of which have never yet been seen. For a forest that takes its name from the spirits that haunt its depths, this is truly a terrible fate indeed.







## Knifesbridge

The village of Knifesbridge contains a few thousand souls, gathered around a bridge over the River Knife. This fast-flowing river runs south from the north-east and allows boat traffic to transport wood and other goods downriver. The bridge connects the eastern half of the duchy to the west, and by extension, the Southern cities, but these roads do not follow the river. The new north road runs alongside the river for a ways, then diverges, running north-west to Mournhaven.

The Knifesbridge Municipal Breweries—technically there is one each for aquavit, beer, cider, and whiskey—are the heart and soul of the village's economy. Private breweries exist all over the countryside, but are prohibited from operating within the village itself. Outside alcohol can be shipped through Knifesbridge, but not brewed, stored, or sold there. The municipal breweries are owned and operated by the village government itself, and have been for hundreds of years.

There are fewer farms around the village than one might expect. The Ghostwood is a thick and mystical forest, notoriously the haunt of ghosts and witches, and it surrounds Knifesbridge on all sides. It is hard to find both the foresters who will clear away its trees completely and the businessmen who will hire them to do so—especially since the Ghostwood killed the last one to try it. More superstitious people would say it claimed his ghost, too, and now it roams aimlessly between the trees. Because of this, the trade in wood lags behind the trade in spirits.

### **THE VILLAGE OF KNIFESBRIDGE**

- Moderate prosperity, steady population, and a watch for defence.
- Craft: Brewing, Oath: Fealty to the duke, Resource: Wood.

## The Initial Cast

### **MR. AND MRS. HOGGE**

J. Rupert Hogge is a barrister who went to Mournhaven on a business assignment he refuses to discuss, citing client confidentiality. He is very angry about the robbery and badgers the sheriff, the mayor, and anyone else he thinks is responsible, at every available moment. His wife Mathilde is very flustered and wants everyone to know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that she has just had the fright of her life.

### **WILSE**

Ostensibly a low-born courier, doing whatever honest work he can find, Wilse moans that this isn't even the first time he has been robbed by bandits along this route. This is all a sham, and he is actually one of the bandits. He was able to observe the other passengers and determine what sorts of valuables they had, which he indicated to his fellow bandits during the robbery, on the sly. He is confident enough in his disguise that he will stay the night at the inn, but depart early the next morning.

### **MIA ROSEWELL**

A stern-looking woman in her twenties, Mia works at a bank in Mournhaven. She recently discovered financial records showing that Norman Cole, the mayor of Knifesbridge, was Edgar Silerton's partner in the construction of the north road, but drove him into bankruptcy by embezzling all his money. She sent word to her brother Darren, who arrived and confirmed the records. They were on their way south to take these records to the duke when they were robbed, and the records were taken.

### **DARREN ROSEWELL**

A successful-looking young man, Mia's younger brother Darren is a clerk in the duke's River Transportation Development Office. He is very concerned about the mayor's corrupt practices, but remains tight-lipped. He is only peripherally concerned about the loss of his wedding ring—he knows his wife will be more concerned about his safety.

**SERESE ROSEWELL**

Having two older siblings educated at Nornfell University sealed her fate, though thankfully she is not studying accounting there. She is here because Mia refused to leave her in Mournhaven by herself, and while she understands the seriousness of the papers they were transporting, she is much more concerned about the loss of her amulet. On a silver chain around her neck, she wore a silver locket in the shape of a heart with a portrait of her best friend Emily inside it, but now the bandits have this keepsake in their grubby hands.

**SHERIFF REYNULF HARTFORD**

A rugged man with a lean and hungry look, the sheriff is an excellent woodsman, but between bandits, poachers, and reports of ghosts, he has his hands full. His budget does not allow him to hire a permanent staff of men large enough to deal with everything. He dislikes handing his legal powers over to opportunistic third parties by offering bounties on criminals, but this is the only tactic that allows him to increase his spending. Reynulf was made the sheriff by dint of a ducal decree, but in the event of his death or unlikely resignation, the mayor of Knifesbridge would have the authority to appoint a new sheriff.

**MAYOR NORMAN COLE**

The mayor might get out of bed to deal with the situation. Then again, he might not. At some point he will be informed and come around to get himself appraised of the situation and find out how he can benefit from it or at least avoid the repercussions. Often nicknamed “Old King Cole” in light of his dominating local politics for going on three decades now, Mayor Cole shows no sign of slowing down even as he approaches his sixtieth year. This could change if he finds out there is proof he swindled Edgar Silerton out of his money.

Front #1 :

# Ravenous Wolves

## Description and Cast

The bandits currently haunting the Ghostwood call themselves the Wolf Pack. Led by Calgodarro, a Southern mercenary, this gang has expanded its operations from merely extorting travellers to dealing amber nightshade, a dangerous narcotic. But the latest act of highway robbery is the final straw. Armed with Mia Rosewell's incriminating evidence, the Wolf Pack step up their attempts to seize control of politics. Backed into a corner, Mayor Cole calls on the worst kind of reinforcements, putting the financial future of Knifesbridge in jeopardy.

- Calgodarro.
- Kickal and Koning, the two Fomorian thugs.
- Mayor Cole.
- Sheriff Hartford.
- The Mellic siblings: Hayes, Christine, and Rupert.
- The Rosewell siblings: Mia, Darren, and Sereese.
- Wilse.

## Custom Moves

**When you smoke amber nightshade...** (page 44).

**When you've been high and you come down off of amber nightshade...** (page 44).

## Stakes

- Will drug addiction become an unfortunate staple of life in Knifesbridge?
- Will Norman Cole maintain his position as mayor?
- Will the Wolf Pack make the transition from criminal gang to corrupt officials?



# Dangers

## **Amber Nightshade**

Brewed from plants gathered on or around the Mellic farmstead, amber nightshade is a potent but dangerous—and somewhat supernatural—narcotic. The Wolf Pack were already bootleggers of alcohol, so this extra step seemed like easy money. They brew amber nightshade in the tunnels beneath the abandoned tower, but may move operations into the village itself, given the opportunity. Wilse acts as the primary conduit for drug dealing in Knifesbridge.

**Type:** Addictive narcotic (use cursed places moves).

**Impulse:** To enslave its users.

### **GRIM PORTENTS**

- The Wolf Pack introduces amber nightshade to Knifesbridge.
- Wilse buys the old house on Harlow Street in Knifesbridge to deal drugs out of.
- The Wolf Pack gets prominent citizens addicted to amber nightshade and takes advantage of them.
- A group of Fomorian thieves and enforcers arrives to prop up the nascent drug cartel.

**Impending Doom:** Pestilence (addiction).

### **Details:**

This danger is described in detail on pages 44-53.

Stats for Wilse are given on page 36.

The drug addict compendium class is described on pages 129-131.

### **Getting Involved:**

The Wolf Pack's amber nightshade business mostly affects people in Knifesbridge. If the PCs are preoccupied with seemingly more important matters and choose to ignore Wilse's growing influence, introduce the optional danger Hooked, Line, and Sinker, detailed on page 50.

## The Mayor's Mistakes

Having dominated local politics for so long, the mayor has entrenched himself to such a degree that the system will fall apart without him. Cole's cronies dominate both appointed and elected positions, and many of them are so used to his brand of corruption that they could never "go straight" even if they tried. Added to this situation, Old King Cole's solution to the bandit problem leaves much to be desired. You lie down with dogs, you get up fleas.

**Type:** Corrupt government (ambitious organization).

**Impulse:** To collapse in on itself from conflicting agendas.

### GRIM PORTENTS

- Cole sells off the Knifesbridge Municipal Breweries to private business interests.
- A large group of bounty hunters arrives to pursue the Wolf Pack.
- The bounty hunters run wild through the Ghostwood and the streets of Knifesbridge.
- The new owners of the breweries remove anything of value from their properties.

**Impending Doom:** Impoverishment (of Knifesbridge).

### Details:

This danger is described in detail on pages 40-43.

### Getting Involved:

The plague of bounty hunters should be a constant pain in the side of the PCs. The looting of the breweries should be a public spectacle, growing in its obvious ridiculousness until it becomes almost unbelievable. Make the consequences wrought by the mayor's mistakes very public in nature.

## The Wolf Pack

Calgodarro, Wilse, and the Mellic siblings are the most prominent members of the Wolf Pack. Two thugs have been loaned to them by a Fomorian gang from the south. Fill out the gang with as many extra bandits as you need.

**Type:** Criminal gang (ambitious organization).

**Impulse:** To seize power and wealth by threat of force.

### GRIM PORTENTS

- The Wolf Pack ambushes and assassinates Sheriff Hartford.
- Calgodarro blackmails Mayor Cole into appointing him sheriff.
- The Wolf Pack sets up toll booths on the north road.
- The Wolf Pack starts collecting tolls in Knifesbridge itself.

**Impending Doom:** Tyranny (control of local politics).

### Details:

This danger is described in detail on pages 35-39.

The Wolf Pack's operations at the abandoned tower are described on pages 68-70.

### Getting Involved:

The Wolf Pack is the initial driving force for this adventure. If you are ever at a loss for what should happen next, have them make trouble.

Front #2 :

# Hungry Ghosts

## Description and Cast

Once the Ghostwoods were a nest of black witchery, haunted by a coven of demon-worshipping witches. Half a century ago, the last of these witches perished, and people are only now beginning to forget what it was like to be terrorized by diabolists. But the souls of these witches are not at rest, and the revenge that one seeks against another threatens to return the dark days of demon-infested yesteryear to these thick, dark forests.

- Black Larissa's ghost.
- Corbin Grey.
- Noreen Mellic.
- The demon Corioleus.
- The Mellic siblings: Hayes, Christine, and Rupert.
- Wilse.

## Custom Moves

**When you take your last breath in the presence of Black Larissa's diary or Corioleus' physical form...** (page 132).

## Stakes

- Will Black Larissa have her revenge on Noreen Mellic?
- Will Corioleus attain physical form?
- Will one of the PCs strike a deal with Corioleus and become an infernalist?

# Dangers

## **Black Larissa's Diary**

The centrepiece of demonic influence in the Ghostwoods is a small black book that once served as a woman's diary. This is the book that holds the secrets of the forest's history of witchcraft. This is the book through which ghosts and demons reach into the world of the living. This is the book that will corrupt even the kind and the just and bring destruction down upon them.

**Type:** Infernal tome (arcane enemy / cursed place).

**Impulse:** To unleash hell, slowly and methodically.

### **GRIM PORTENTS**

- Larissa kills someone in the lower tunnels underneath the abandoned tower.
- Larissa kills someone inside the old house on Harlow Street.
- Larissa kills someone on the grounds of the Mellic farmstead.

**Impending Doom:** Pestilence (as Corioleus takes physical form and spreads his corruption with much greater ability).

### **Details:**

This danger is described in detail on pages 86-95.

The powers Corioleus can use in the diary's vicinity are described on pages 98-99.

The diary also contains some of the information on pages 58-59.

### **Getting Involved:**

If the PCs do not take the diary from under the abandoned tower or don't go there, have them find it in the possession of someone else, perhaps even while they are using it (see pages 94-95 for suggestions).

## The Demon Corioleus

A greater fiend of the abyss and a demon of the ancient world, *Κοριολεὺς* exists to foster base corruption of the human soul, encourage betrayal, and bring about ruin and misery. Without his devoted witches, his ability to influence the material plane is quite limited, but if Black Larissa's ghost should succeed in providing him with a corporeal body, Corioleus will emerge as the most dangerous threat this adventure has to offer, by a wide margin.

**Type:** Demon (planar force).

**Impulse:** To corrupt and debase.

### GRIM PORTENTS

- Corioleus gains possession of a corporeal body.
- Corioleus violates the sanctity of Noreen Mellic's tomb and claims her soul.
- The witches of the Ghostwood coven are raised from the dead and given corporeal bodies to inhabit so they can better serve Corioleus on Earth.
- Corioleus turns Noreen's tomb into a portal for infernal powers to emerge from.

**Impending Doom:** Rampant Chaos, although the consequences of Corioleus gaining total control over this area are up to you. Probably demons will have free reign and getting rid of them will require a whole campaign unto itself.

### Details:

Corioleus is described in detail on pages 97-101.

The infernalist compendium class is detailed on pages 132-136.

### Getting Involved:

Corioleus can exert his influence near the diary or if one of the PCs loses all their HP, but this danger only gets going if he gains physical form.

## The Witch Hunt

Knifesbridge is hardly an isolated little hamlet in the middle of nowhere. On the contrary, it is more like a bustling port community that sees its fair share of river traffic throughout the year—and hence attracts the attention of Southern businesses. But it has also attracted the attentions of the church. While there are no longer any active witches, there are always reports of ghosts, and with the recent rise in banditry, the Ghostwood Forest is once again a focus of ecclesiastical concern. Which is why they have sent Corbin Grey, a stern and grim-faced witch hunter of no small reputation. Is he truly prepared to handle the situation that arises here? Or will his heavy-handed approach cause more trouble than it solves?

**Type:** Religious department (ambitious organization).

**Impulse:** To take control and impose a rigid order according to existing doctrine.

### GRIM PORTENTS

- The church sends Corbin Grey to Knifesbridge.
- Corbin gathers proof of demonic activity and sends it to church leaders.
- Corbin is granted ecclesiastical powers over local politics.
- Corbin recruits bounty hunters and bandits alike with promises of coin.
- Corbin imports church templars to maintain control.

**Impending Doom:** Usurpation (as Corbin Grey imposes strict church law over the whole of Knifesbridge, systematically weeding out those who refuse to conform).

### Details:

This danger is described in detail on pages 102-108.

### Getting Involved:

Introduce Corbin Grey whenever you feel it is appropriate.



# Getting Involved

Getting the players' characters involved in this initial situation is easy enough. Either the coach arrives while they are staying at the inn, or they arrive in town moments later from another direction, perhaps after narrowly avoiding being trampled by the pale-faced coachman riding hard through the night with terror gripping his heart. This gives you several options:

- Since the PCs look like trustworthy and competent adventurers, either the sheriff or Mr. Hogge asks them to help root out the bandits and even offers them a modest reward.
- The PCs are related to, or associates of, either the Hogges or the Rosewells. This gives them some added incentive to recover their valuables and uphold the law.
- The PCs have other friends or relatives in Knifesbridge who ask them to step in and do something about this problem, possibly on behalf of the Rosewells, or possibly because they have their own ulterior motives.
- It's the PCs' job to hunt down the bandits, because they work for the duke or the church or some other governmental body. One of the PCs can be the sheriff instead of Reynulf—the druid or the ranger, for example. In this case, the mayor should have the ability to dismiss the PC and hire someone else, or else the bandits will have to kill the sheriff PC in order to be successful.



## Alternatives

The coach robbery is just one way to start this adventure, of course, and might not be the best one, given your players' characters. Other possible hooks that do not require the coach robbery include:

- If anyone is playing the new base class, the Magnate, they should have significant business concerns in Knivesbridge to attend to, and defend from the events of this adventure.
- Supernatural activity has brought the PCs to the Ghostwood Forest. There are always reports of ghosts and other spirits floating around, and they have been charged with investigating, or are doing so purely out of their own interest.
- The PCs are investigating historical witchcraft in the area, and have heard of one or more of the witches who once operated here.
- The PCs arrive with, or just ahead of, Corbin Grey. They are part of his retinue, hunting down witches in the name of the church. They likely have no idea how unstable Corbin has become and his behaviour may put them in something of a quandary later on.
- The PCs have been sent by a Southern business to protect their investment in the municipal breweries. Their job is to keep the breweries running and defend them from the vultures who want to make off with the entire inventory.
- The PCs have been sent north by Fomorian gangs to make sure the regular shipments of amber nightshade move south in a timely manner. This probably means that they replace Kickal and Koning, who are also nominally present to ensure a tight schedule.

# Preparing the Game

Read the whole adventure first and make notes about what jumps out at you. What parts of these two fronts make the most sense for your game? What parts do you think your players will get excited about? Keep these particular elements in mind during play, and especially note which dangers you like, so you can highlight them and bring them to the forefront.

These two fronts, Ravenous Wolves and Hungry Ghosts, come with a host of nefarious plots to unfold during your game sessions. If the opening scene is one that grabs your players, their characters will likely be on the hunt for the Wolf Pack in no time. After that, it is up to you to determine when and in what order each danger's grim portents come true, and how you will present them to the players. If the opening scene doesn't work for your group, you need to come up with an alternative, just like you will invent all the scenes that follow it. Use the previous suggestions or go with whatever backgrounds the players make up for their characters.

The next three chapters give you a wealth of details about each of these dangers, including suggested scenes, people, places, and things. Use what interests you and skip the other parts. Weave them together with details and sub-plots of your own devising. Weave them together with what the players tell you about their characters—if it turns out they know people in Knifesbridge, get those people involved in what's going on.



## Asking Questions

If any characters are from Knifesbridge or the surrounding area, ask them each one (or more) of these questions:

- Someone you know offered you a strange new drug they called “amber nightshade.” Who was it and what happened?
- There used to be witches around here, fifty years ago. What have you heard about them?
- What did you do to get on Old King Cole’s bad side, and what has he done to you in order to show his displeasure?
- Which of your friends was robbed by bandits recently, and what did they lose that was important to them?
- Which of your relatives was recently buried in the old cemetery next to the abandoned tower that hasn’t been used in ages and why were they buried there?
- Whose ghost have you seen prowling around in the Ghostwood forest, late at night?
- Why are you afraid to go near that old, abandoned tower, out in the woods?
- You’re pretty sure someone you know has become a bandit. Who are they and why have you become suspicious?

If any characters are from Knifesbridge and have been away for a while, ask them each one (or more) of these questions:

- What are people in Knifesbridge expecting you to return with?
- What unfinished business did you leave behind in Knifesbridge?
- What was it that made you leave and how have you changed?
- Who is happy to see you return?
- Who isn’t happy to see you back, and why?

# Running It

The majority of this adventure will likely consist of interacting with different NPCs. The abandoned tower presents quite a small dungeon, and is designed to be a location that the PCs return to several times after conducting investigations elsewhere. Most of those investigations—aside from studying Larissa’s diary—mean looking for NPCs. And once those investigations begin, those NPCs will also come looking for the PCs.

## **ENCOUNTERS**

Dangers are essentially lists of possible encounters and a rough order in which events should (or could) proceed. It is up to you to manage those specific details: which encounters to present to the players and exactly which order to present them in. It may be handy to keep the various lists of grim portents all in one place and to select the top-most entry of whichever list suits your fancy at the time. You will also need to account for the players’ choices, and allow the dangers to unfold, or not, based on what the PCs do. They might ignore certain developments, thwart some, and even encourage others.

## **TIME**

It is also important to keep this adventure from proceeding too quickly, in terms of time experienced by the characters. Zealous players may try to wrap up the entire business as fast as possible, even in a mere matter of a day or two. Don’t let them. Studying the diary, researching local history, tromping through the woods, questioning the locals about almost any topic—all these things take time. Municipal politics especially unfolds at its own pace, and no official person will appreciate being repeatedly bothered by rough-and-tumble “adventurer” types, especially the mayor. The PCs will also need to take care of their basic necessities during this adventure. Grooming is important to the villagers of Knivesbridge. They have no wish to associate with vagrants who camp in the woods at all hours of the day or night and eat nothing but rations!

## Journeys Through the Ghostwood

When the PCs go searching through the forest looking for something without a guide, treat it as a perilous journey that does not require a quartermaster. Just choose a trailblazer to lead and a scout to watch out for dangers. The scout follows the perilous journey move as normal.

If the party runs into trouble in the Ghostwood, select from or roll 1d6 on the following table to determine what kind of trouble it is (roll 1d8 if any of the witches have come back from the dead):

1	Angry farmer.	5	Ghost.
2	Bandits.	6	Pack of dogs or wolves.
3	Bounty hunters.	7	Undead witches.
4	Dangerous wild animal.	8	Witches or a demon.

**If you're the trailblazer**, leading a group through the Ghostwood, roll+WIS as normal but use these results instead: •On a 10+, you find what you're looking for and get there, or thereabouts, in good time. •On a 7-9, it takes all day but you catch a good lead. Choose one:

- Keep going after dark.
- Make camp and keep going after dawn.
- Turn back early and come back later.

Once the party have found the right path through the Ghostwoods to a particular location, they should be able to find their way back in good time and with little trouble.

If the party is intent on hiding out in the Ghostwoods or trekking through it up to Mournhaven, treat it as a perilous journey that will consume two rations.

## Heroes and Villains

This adventure contains an extravagantly long list of potential antagonists. It is important to note, however, that not all of them are truly evil. While a few of them are definitely unredeemable, this is all the more reason to portray the others in shades of grey—there are more than enough villains already without portraying those who make poor, selfish decisions in the face of adversity as inhuman.

### **LIGHT GREY**

Calgodarro and the Mellic siblings may be thieves and drug dealers, but they are not fundamentally evil people—they are just poor and trying to get by with what few skills, opportunities, and resources they have. They might even become fast friends with, or loyal hirelings for, particularly charismatic or generous PCs. They are probably the most receptive to being shown a more dignified and socially well-adjusted means of supporting themselves that doesn't include muscling their way into politics.

Likewise, the established political corruption is less a matter of intentional wrongdoing and more a collection of stupid mistakes made in order to protect the status quo. Mayor Cole, as venal, incompetent, and close-minded as he is, has no wish to see Knifesbridge ground into dust between a rock and a hard place.

The Fomorians, quite understandably, do not care what happens to humans. In general, they are indifferent to the fortunes of other races, having more than enough work to do in order to ensure their own survival in the sewers and tenements of Southern cities, never mind trying to create some prosperity for themselves. They know the value of a good deal, though, and are not so inimicable to humanity that they will refuse to work together with someone who is not their enemy against someone who is.



**DARK GREY**

Corbin Grey, like his name suggests, is a far more ambiguous character. A certified fanatic, he is domineering, intolerant, and obsessed with controlling other peoples' lives. That he does this not so much out of malice, but out of a genuine desire to see them become right and good is not really mitigated by the fact that he is also driven by his fear of everything he cannot understand or control. Corbin is probably the least likely character to listen to reason.

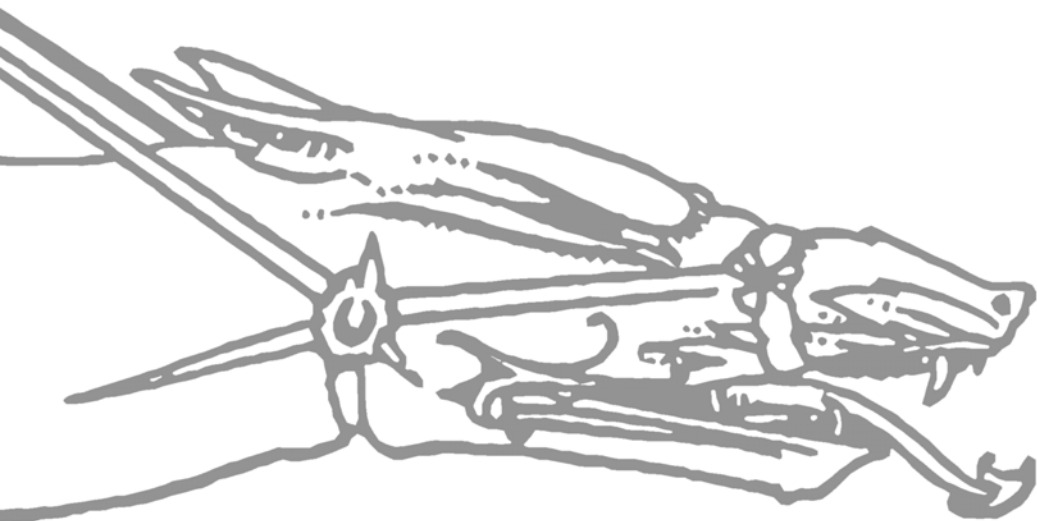
**BLACK OF HEART AND RED OF HAND**

On the other hand, some characters are thoroughly reprehensible. Wilse is a self-serving sociopath, and a perfect candidate for joining the ranks of the Ghostwood coven. The eleven witches who are already members are all guilty of ritual murder and bartering their souls in exchange for power over other people, and more than one of them desires revenge from beyond the grave. Noreen Mellic, alone among those who betrayed their mentors, chose not to pass on her knowledge of black magic to others. But even she sought release from the demon Corioleus through yet more witchery instead of genuine repentance.

Corioleus, needless to say, is the immortal, unchanging embodiment of moral and physical corruption—a perfect specimen of the arch-villain trope. With these thirteen examples of evil, you will probably find it necessary to inject some humanity and pathos into the other characters in order to create a sense of contrast and individuality among the supporting cast. Don't be afraid to turn some of them into more sympathetic characters.



# Ravenous Wolves





# The Wolf Pack

At the start of the adventure, there is only one gang of bandits in the Ghostwood: the Wolf Pack. Over the course of the game—as bounty hunters arrive and the breweries are looted—banditry may become more common, but these are the wolves who come out on top. Unless the PCs intervene, they will end up on the right side of the law, no longer running from it but bending it to their wills.

## Prominent Members

The most prominent members of the Wolf Pack, for the purposes of this adventure, are Calgodarro, Wilse, and the Mellic siblings. Pack members may also be accompanied by the Fomorian thugs Kickal and Koning—especially in Knifesbridge at night, as they prefer the urban environment. Otherwise, round out the gang with as many extra bandits as you need.

---

**CALGODARRO**      *Cautious, Hoarder, Intelligent, Organized, Stealthy.*  
 Sword (b[2d10] damage)      14 HP 2 Armour  
*Close*

---

Calgodarro, the handsome rake, fled north to the Ghostwood with a few trusty comrades. Better to desert your mercenary company on the eve of a disastrous siege than die in it, he always says. Now he is the leader of the Wolf Pack, with plans to expand his authority. Calgodarro is a flamboyant bravo and quite likable, but he has a shrewd eye for playing the angles to his own advantage. He figures Knifesbridge is ripe for the plucking and he can't be any worse than the present leadership. He wears a silver heart pendant around his neck. It has a portrait of Sereese Rosewell's best friend inside it. Calgodarro is quite taken with it.

**Instinct:** To lead his gang to plunder.

- Get out while the getting is good.
- Lead the Wolf Pack and command their loyalty.
- Make demands and threaten violence.
- Take by force.

---

**THE MELLIC SIBLINGS: HAYES, CHRISTINE, & RUPERT**

*Group, Intelligent, Organized, Stealthy.*

Axe or sword (1d8+1 damage)

8 HP 1 Armour

*Close*

Bow (1d8 damage, 1 piercing)

*Near, Far*

---

From eldest to youngest, the Mellic siblings are Hayes, Christine, and Rupert, who is barely a man grown. Calgodarro calls them “the Mellic brothers,” but only because Christine won’t sleep with him. The old Mellic farmstead, its soil mostly depleted, is the source of many of the herbs used to make amber nightshade. Lacking any income from farming, the Mellic siblings have turned to banditry to survive.

**Impulse:** To defend the Wolf Pack’s gains.

- Produce amber nightshade.
  - Run away.
  - Strike a foe quickly and from an advantageous position.
  - Threaten violence.
- 

**WILSE** *Cautious, Devious, Hoarder, Intelligent, Organized, Solitary.*

Dagger (b[2d8] damage)

12 HP 1 Armour

*Hand, Close*

---

A slight man with dark, greasy hair and spectacles, Wilse has been a thief and con man his entire life, travelling from one place to another. He saw Calgodarro’s natural leadership abilities immediately and knew he had a chance to build something that could last here in Knifesbridge.

**Impulse:** To take whatever advantage is offered, regardless of the human cost.

- Blackmail or manipulate someone mercilessly.
- Call other bandits for assistance.
- Detect weakness.
- Produce amber nightshade.
- Throw daggers.

**WOLF PACK BANDIT***Group, Intelligent, Organized.*

Knife or short bow (1d6+1 damage)

6 HP 1 Armour

*Close or Near*

Most of the Wolf Pack bandits are either Southern mercenaries who have been with Calgodarro for years, or poor, young farmers from the country around Knifesbridge. Their main concern in life is making a living without having to work themselves to death for it.

**Instinct:** To rob.

- Demand money or valuables.
- Steal something.
- Threaten violence.

**WOLF PACK COLLABORATOR (FARMER)***Intelligent, Organized.*

Knife or pitch fork (1d6 damage)

3 HP 0 Armour

*Hand or Reach*

Though they might be criminals, not every peasant farmer in the Ghostwoods is ready to turn the Wolf Pack in to the sheriff. Some farmers make a tidy profit off of feeding, hiding, and aiding bandits when they need it.

**Instinct:** To make a living.

- Keep watch.
- Provide food and shelter.
- Stay quiet.





## Blackmail

Calgodarro is not stupid, but he is bold. Now that he has Mia Rosewell's papers incriminating Mayor Cole, he intends to blackmail him for political leverage. With Sheriff Hartford out of the way, Calgodarro hopes to become the new sheriff and force the mayor to allow him to collect tolls on the north road and in the village itself.

### **The Plan**

This simple plan unfolds as follows:

- The Wolf Pack ambushes and assassinates Sheriff Hartford.
- Calgodarro blackmails Mayor Cole into appointing him sheriff.

### **The Ambush**

Rupert Mellic comes to Sheriff Hartford with news that bandits have holed up at the Mellic farm. He says he managed to slip away so he could come and report them, but he's sure they'll notice he is missing soon. The sheriff assembles a tiny posse and walks into an ambush where he is killed by the Wolf Pack.

### **The Letter**

Though he has been able to keep his identity as the leader of the bandits secret so far, Calgodarro is by no means a subtle man. He ties a page from Mia Rosewell's evidence, along with his demands, to a brick and throws it through one of the mayor's windows in the dead of night, then gallops off. The mayor meets with him, out in the woods, the next day, and agrees to appoint him to the position of sheriff (if it is vacant) and allow him to collect tolls along the north road. He might also agree to call off his bounty hunters. Even though this is not something he actually has the power to do, his ability to deliver—or lack thereof—has never stopped him from making promises before.

## Toll Collectors

At some point, Calgodarro will have the Wolf Pack start collecting tolls on the northern road. He would prefer to be sheriff by this point, but depending on how things work out, it may not be necessary.

### **The Plan**

Once Calgodarro is appointed sheriff—or even if he isn't and the opportunity arises—the plan is again two-fold:

- The Wolf Pack sets up toll booths on the north road.
- The Wolf Pack starts collecting tolls in Knifesbridge itself.

### **On the Road**

Once he decides to take this step, the Wolf Packs sets up toll booths and a gate where the road affords them a good place for an ambush. Two of them carry swords and man the toll booth while three archers lie in wait behind the trees. If a traveller refuses to pay the toll—or seems extraordinarily wealthy—they emerge and attack. Calgodarro is not above robbing the occasional fat plum of a merchant.

### **On the Streets**

If this tactic proves successful, they move into Knifesbridge itself, recruiting more members and collecting taxes, tariffs, and tolls on behalf of the mayor. This can be the source of any number of riots and violent altercations between villagers and the Wolf Pack:

- A mob of brewers assembles and begins a protest march, calling for an end to the new taxes, which are collected whenever the Wolf Pack wants them.
- Less disciplined members of the Wolf Pack smash the windows of a shopkeeper who refuses to pay their “taxes.”
- Stevedores begin carrying weapons and refusing to allow the Wolf Pack access to the docks. Apparently the shippers are paying them extra to block the collection of taxes.
- Zealous members of the Wolf Pack enter inns, taverns, and even restaurants in order to shake down patrons for gratuities.

# The Mayor's Mistakes

After the coach robbery, Mayor Cole starts making deals. For years he has been entertaining offers from outside businesses to purchase controlling interests in the Knifesbridge Municipal Breweries. So far he has refused to allow even a small degree of outside involvement, but no longer. In one fell swoop, with but a few signatures and a conversation over lunch, he puts the survival of Knifesbridge's most prized industry in the hands of fate. Old King Cole takes the capital gained from handing over the keys to the breweries and funnels it into a bounty on the Ghostwood bandits. This bounty is managed by a Southern law firm, so as to look more legitimate and not like the mayor's own handiwork.

## Bounty Hunters

The result of the mayor's intrigues is a flood of bounty hunters arriving in a mere few days, hungry to collect many thousands of coins for what they consider to be two-bit bandits. But many of them are no better than bandits themselves. Unfortunately, Mayor Cole is unable to rescind his offer in a timely manner, and by the time he might consider it prudent to do so, the damage has already been done—the mob is in Knifesbridge to stay.

Random prominent trait table for bounty hunters (1d12):

1	Chews tobacco.	7	Exotic weapons.
2	Criminal.	8	Facial mutilation.
3	Degenerate gambler.	9	Outlandish clothes.
4	Demagogue or preacher.	10	Overly dirty.
5	Distinctive voice.	11	Plays with fire.
6	Drug addict.	12	Practices a weird religion.

**BOUNTY HUNTER***Group, Intelligent, Organized.*

Crossbow (1d6 damage, 1 piercing)

8 HP 1 Armour

*Near*

Sword (1d8 damage)

*Close*

These bounty hunters are mostly amoral opportunists with smelly leather clothes and unshaven faces. As might be expected, they enjoy all forms of gambling and have trouble fitting into polite society. Though they descend upon the duchy like locusts and flock to its inns and brothels in hordes, they usually only work in small groups, jealously trying to guard their trophies from each other.

**Instinct:** To make money through violence.

- Ambush with little warning.
- Attack the wrong target.
- Demand payment.
- Make excuses.

## **Bounty Hunter Shenanigans**

Unchecked and wild, these new bounty hunters can get up to all sorts of antics over the course of the adventure:

- They attack the PCs, mistakenly presuming them to be bandits.
- They encounter ghosts in the forest and get spooked, preferring to stay in Knifesbridge and drink, harass the villagers, and get into fights with each other.
- They mistake poor farmers for bandits, slaughter them, and bring them back to Knifesbridge for the reward. The bodies are recognized, and a mob attacks the bounty hunters.
- They start collecting tolls on the north roads themselves, with little or no regard for the law. There are no other collectors here already, so they feel justified.
- They turn to blatant highway robbery, bandits and bounty hunting be damned.

## Municipal Breweries

Once any form of social instability becomes visible in Knifesbridge—be it swarms of bounty hunters, a visible rise in drug addiction, or any other trouble—the new investors in the Municipal Breweries arrive and begin to clear out the inventory stocks. Since they are technically part owners now, they at least have some justification to do this. A few of them might even try to smooth things over by stating their concern that things are becoming violent in the village and they want to protect these businesses, but all are nothing more than vultures come to feast on Knifesbridge's misfortunes. They see the opportunity to abscond with hundreds of thousands of coins worth in high-quality alcohol and brewing equipment, along with several cellars full of kegs, barrels, and bottles of booze, and they are not about to miss out—because if they do, it means someone else won't.

This rush to loot Knifesbridge is born of fierce competition between numerous Southern businesses. There is no one company perpetrating this theft, nor does it happen in a particularly organized fashion. Because no one wants to be left out, as soon as they smell weakness, all of them hurry in to cart off whatever they can, too caught up in profiteering to consider what it is they are doing or how their actions might affect the village.

### **TIMING IS EVERYTHING**

Make sure this development doesn't happen while the PCs are away from Knifesbridge. They should be around for this, so they can get involved. If it comes in the middle of other important business, so much the better.

### **OPPONENTS**

Not every villager is going to take this lying down, and the incidents of violence in the village caused by this race can come in many flavours. Brewers fight to protect their stock and equipment, drunkards fight to get at the alcohol before it is carted away, and stevedores, paid by the shippers, fight to carry off the most and earn a bonus in doing so. What will the Wolf Pack, the bounty hunters, and Corbin Grey think of all this? Will they even be there?

## **Inventories**

Loot from the breweries includes:

- Accounts and ledgers.
- Bags of fruit and grain.
- Barrels of aquavit and whiskey.
- Carpentry tools.
- Carts and horses.
- Filing cabinets.
- Furniture, including benches, chairs, and desks.
- Jars of herbs and spices.
- Kegs of beer and cider.
- Ladders.
- Large brewing vats.
- Measuring tools.
- Windows.
- Wood for making barrels.

## **Investors**

Some possible businesses that might be looting the Knifesbridge Municipal Breweries include:

- The Aggregate Holding Company.
- The Armour & Sandwell Cooperative Mercantile Institution.
- Castigan Personal Credit.
- Galang Bros.
- Geijer Holdings Company.
- Hazlehurst & Sons.
- Inglenook Financial.
- John Grey & Sons, Ltd.
- The Palisades Group.
- Royal Arsenal Trading Company.
- St. Cuthbert's Co-Operative Society.
- Templeton Trust Services Corporation.
- Underwood Assurance Group.
- United Breweries Guild Association.
- The Wheelock Wharf and Shipping Company, Ltd.

# Amber Nightshade

Farmers in the countryside around Knifesbridge have developed a strange narcotic drug, made from plants that grow in the Ghostwood Forest. When it is properly brewed, it looks like an amber-coloured tobacco with a blackened exterior, as it turns dark in contact with the air. The Wolf Pack distributes it in tightly rolled sticks that resemble little black cigarillos. When smoked, it causes a euphoric high, psychedelic sensory distortions, and—because of the nature of the Ghostwood—some magical effects as well. The effects of smoking one small stick last for an hour or two at the most.

## Doing Drugs

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**When you smoke amber nightshade**, roll+CON. •On a hit, you have a good trip and for the duration you can see and interact with ghosts and spirits, but on a 7-9, you also experience hallucinations and can easily become confused. •On a miss, the unpleasant hallucinations are much more powerful than the high and you do not have a good trip at all.

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**When you've been high and you come down off of amber nightshade**, take -1 forward and 1d4 damage (ignores armour).

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Amber nightshade is also an addictive narcotic, and frequent use of it allows a PC access to the drug addict compendium class (described on pages 129-131).





## Fomorian Gangs

The Wolf Pack's primary customers, when it comes to amber nightshade, are Fomorian gangs. Fomorians are grotesque and grey-skinned humanoids that live in the sewers and underground caverns beneath the largest Southern cities. One of those gangs has sent two thugs, Kickal and Koning, north to assist the Wolf Pack and keep the supply of drugs flowing.

The Fomorians use amber nightshade in two different preparations. The first and most obvious is that they sell it in various adulterated forms to humans looking for a chemically-assisted high. The Fomorians rarely sell it in sticks, like the Wolf Pack does in Knifesbridge. Usually they turn it into a resinous substance or a powder, mixed with other, cheaper ingredients to increase profits.

They have also turned it into an oil with which they coat their knives. Anyone stabbed by these oil-coated knives is struck by an intense feeling of cold and numbness, and will have problems moving properly.

---

### **KICKAL & KONING**

*Group, Hoarder, Intelligent,  
Organized, Stealthy.*

Club or knife (1d8+1 damage)

10 HP 2 Armour

*Close*

**Special Qualities:** Knives cause paralysis.

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Kickal and Koning are a pair of thuggish Fomorians, accustomed to living in underground urban areas. They are large and muscular, but stooped and hunched. Their arms are slightly longer than a human's, and they can walk on all fours when moving across an incline. They have grey skin and their eyes are large black pools.

**Instinct:** To beat up foes.

- Attack with poisoned knives.
- Grab someone and beat them with a club.
- Hide in the sewers.
- Intimidate.
- Steal something.

## The Old House on Harlow Street

On Harlow Street, in Knifesbridge, there is an old house that no one lives in for very long. This was Larissa Reece's house when she was alive, and where she committed one of several acts of betrayal.

### **Red Jenny's Ghost**

The body of a witch called "Red Jenny" is buried underneath the dirt floor of the basement, where she has lain for about seventy years. Her restless spirit is responsible for driving all subsequent inhabitants to a hasty exit or an early grave. The house usually stands empty for years at a time, until some poor outsider rents or buys it for a pittance, completely unaware of the house's history.

When harassing the inhabitants, Red Jenny employs a number of tactics, though her favourite is to encourage arguments. She laughs at a man behind his back so he thinks his wife is laughing at him, or she adds to women's' comments things that only a man can hear, mocking words to make them angry. She has only her own voice to use for this, which can sound like many different women but never a man. If the resulting domestic abuse is not enough to drive the inhabitants away, she has other tricks:

- She appears in mirrors, but only behind the person who sees her.
- She causes food to spoil faster than normal, causing illness ranging from indigestion to outright food poisoning.
- She creates the sensation of coldness in a single room, or a strange smell. This lasts for only a few hours at a time.
- She turns still water (or clear alcohol) red, so it appears to have blood in it.

If any of the former occupants are found and questioned, they will describe similar experiences, as well as more fanciful stories that include masses of flies or other insects, poltergeist activity, demonic possession, and even murder brought on by madness. These are mostly the result of sensitive nerves—Red Jenny does not have the power to possess the PCs or drive them mad.

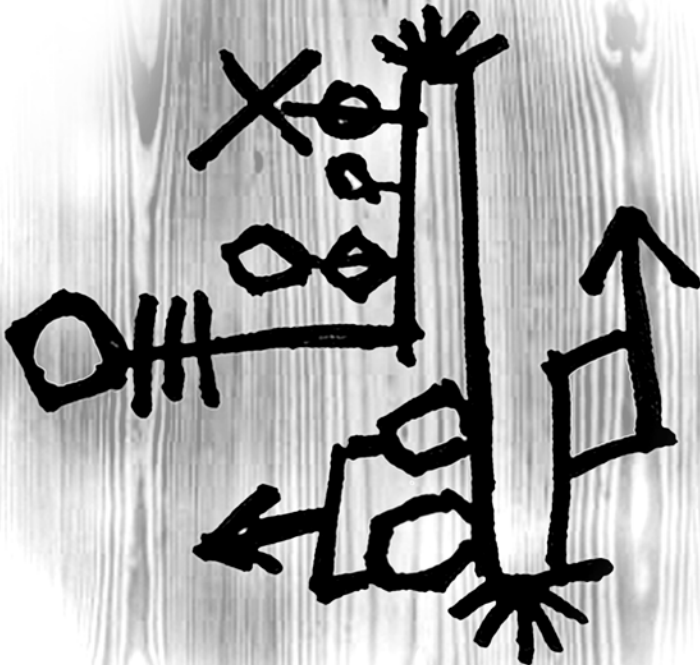


## The Basement

By murdering Red Jenny and burying her in the basement, Larissa Reece consecrated this ground for unholy purposes. Any magic worked in this house is accompanied by infernal taint or hostility from Red Jenny's ghost.

Her body is still buried several feet beneath the bare earthen floor. There is no evidence on the surface any more, but if she is dug up, her bones are found loose in the dirt, without a coffin. Her bright red hair is still intact and can be used to make demonic charms. Removing her bones does not stop her ghost from haunting the house—they must be blessed, exorcised, and buried on holy ground in order to truly give her rest.

The wooden walls have not been treated kindly. They are covered in all kinds of strange marks, some that look like they were made with weapons, some by claws, and occasionally what looks like old, dried blood can be seen. There are several wooden pillars supporting the ceiling. On the wall behind one of these pillars is a map, carved into the wood. It depicts the lower tunnels beneath the abandoned tower, and includes areas now sealed up.



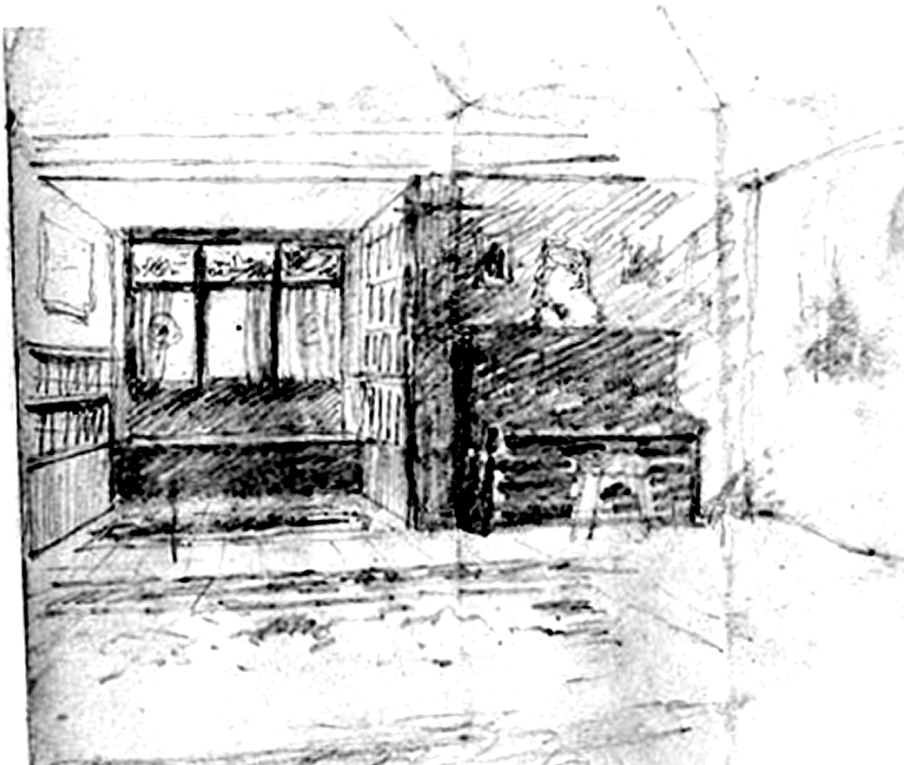
## Wilse the New Owner

Being the cheapest space in town, the old house naturally attracts Wilse's attention. He buys it with the intention of using it as the base of operations for his drug-dealing activities.

The more money he makes from this enterprise, the more respectable the front rooms of this house become—gradually filling up with books, paintings, and rugs—and the more sordid and debauched the upstairs gets.

If the PCs enter this house while Wilse is the owner, they might find some or all of the following:

- A mess made by Red Jenny's ghost.
- A supply of amber nightshade and/or bootleg alcohol.
- One or more Fomorian thug, usually hidden.
- One or more of the Wolf Pack bandits.
- One or more young women either already besotted by the amber nightshade or willing to do anything to get there.
- Wilse fighting with one of these young women, Red Jenny whispering in his ear and egging him on.



## Addiction in Knifesbridge

As Wilse and the Fomorians expand their operations in Knifesbridge, more and more locals become addicted to their drug. Wilse is no fool—he uses the local interest in amber nightshade for his own benefit as soon as possible. What follows is an optional danger that can be used as an additional sub-plot, either as an expansion of or a replacement for the Amber Nightshade danger.

### **Hooked, Line, and Sink**

The mayor's youngest daughter is not a girl who follows the rules or listens to her teachers. Teresana and her friends are like many precocious young women in small towns everywhere: they desperately want to be sophisticated and adventurous, exuding a heady mix of mystique and class like proper Southern ladies. Unfortunately, this desire has led them to become enamoured of the amber nightshade.

**Type:** A bad situation (use the cursed places moves).

**Impulse:** To entangle and exploit.

#### **GRIM PORTENTS**

- Teresana and her friends dabble in amber nightshade.
- Teresana's desire for the drug exceeds her allowance. She starts stealing in order to pay for it.
- The mayor cuts off his daughter's allowance. She starts sleeping with Wilse in order to get the drug.
- Wilse extorts the mayor in exchange for his daughter's safety.

**Impending Doom:** Tyranny (as Wilse exerts undue influence over the locals and their politics).

## **Eloise Faraday (née Cole)**

The mayor's daughter by his first wife, Eloise is a married thirty-something woman with young children of her own, but she is sharp enough to notice when Teresana's situation becomes dangerous, and not too proud to ask for help. If the PCs look like the kind of good Samaritans that might intervene on her sister's behalf, she goes to them. She can't offer them much, except the possibility of the mayor's good will and the chance to stamp out crime, but she knows where Teresana hangs out and where she buys her drugs.

Actually obtaining the mayor's gratitude is up to the PCs and how they deal with the prickly politician. He refuses to publicly admit there is any sort of addiction problem in Knifesbridge and even in private he prevaricates. He will be more accommodating of people he feels he can buy. He mistrusts people who act out of altruism.

## **Teresana Cole**

Teresana is Mayor Cole's youngest daughter. Twice a widower, the mayor now has a third wife who is younger than Eloise and less than a decade older than Teresana, with whom she has a contentious relationship at best. This, along with his devotion to politics, has driven a wedge between Teresana and her and her father. She is not proud of her hometown, doesn't see any advantage to being an influential person in such a "provincial backwater," and longs to get out into the larger world.

Teresana has been to the duke's court—a spartan, provincial affair—and seen the duke's Southern guests. These are the educated, stylish, and above all exciting people she wants as her peers. But in the meantime, she dreams of escape from the dreary confines of Knifesbridge, trying as best she can to ignore her father and step-mother.

## Late Night Haunts

Being young, relatively wealthy, and having influential parents, Teresana and her friends are habitués of several late-night establishments in Knifesbridge. The village has as many inns, pubs, and taverns as you want it to, but these are the most important ones.

### THE OPERA HOUSE

Knifesbridge isn't big enough to have a real opera house, though Saint Rosby's Hall fills in for any and all large theatrical or musical performances. The Opera House is the name of a bar and casino that hosts popular after-parties and other private events. It caters primarily to wealthier visitors, and is Teresana's favourite late-night haunt—in part because her father is an infrequent visitor at best. He prefers to hold court at the Wellington instead.

The owner of the Opera House—and its principal bartender, since he can't stand other people pouring drinks—is Harrison Peel, a big man with gold rings and a black beard. Because, as he says, "it's an exclusive joint," he only lets Wilse in if he's summoned by one of the regulars. But if he is called for, Harrison won't stop him from peddling his wares. The Opera House's two bouncers are the toughest men in town (though still no match for the Fomorians).

### THE KNIFEGRINDER'S

When the Opera House becomes inconvenient (or tiresome), Teresana and her friends can be found at the Knifegrinder's, one of the seedier dockside taverns that specializes in lurid performance art, peepshows, and private rooms. Madame Eksarina and her son Kostas run a tight operation, importing new talent on a regular basis and tolerating no violence on their premises—but any other vice is fair game. Their clientele consists mostly of boatmen, brewers, stevedores, and labourers engaged in forestry.



**THE WELLINGTON**

A cosy, up-scale tavern and brewhaus, the Wellington serves civil servants exclusively. The mayor can be found here more often than any other single place in town, even—it is said—his own bed. He is particularly notorious for hosting all-night games of cards during which large sums of money and even political appointments readily change hands. Teresana and her friends make a point to avoid this establishment, and Wilse would never even be allowed in. This does not mean, however, that the smoking of amber nightshade is unknown to its interior.

Roger Sellers runs the Wellington with the single-minded goal of giving the mayor whatever the mayor wants, and has been rewarded for his diligence by the sight of all of his dim-witted sons behind desks, sporting important-sounding titles and collecting generous incomes while they push papers meaninglessly from one end of their desks to the other.

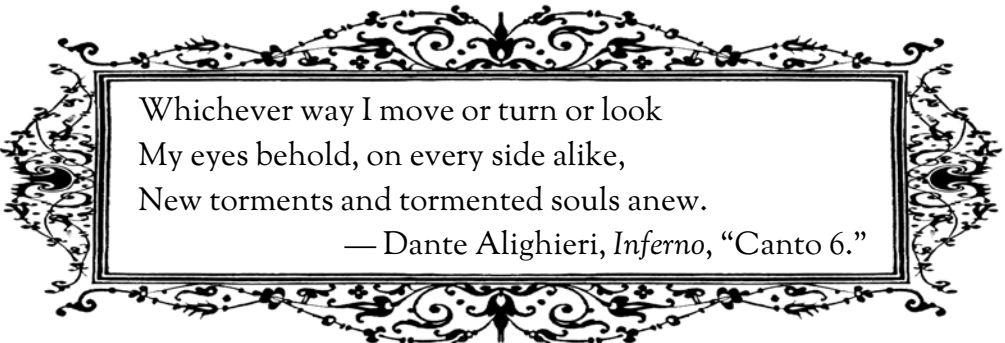
**THE BLACK DRAGON**

This run-down, ratty little pub is Wilse's favourite, though not because it has much to be proud of. It's primary business is selling watered-down drinks to the rough-and-tumble river traffic, and he likes it for much the same reason many of them do—it has a tough-sounding name.

As the Wolf Pack gains more and more political influence in Knifesbridge, more and more of them will hang out here, throwing their weight around and making nuisances of themselves. Wilse can often be found here with whatever young lady of unsound judgement he is attempting to court through the application of amber nightshade.

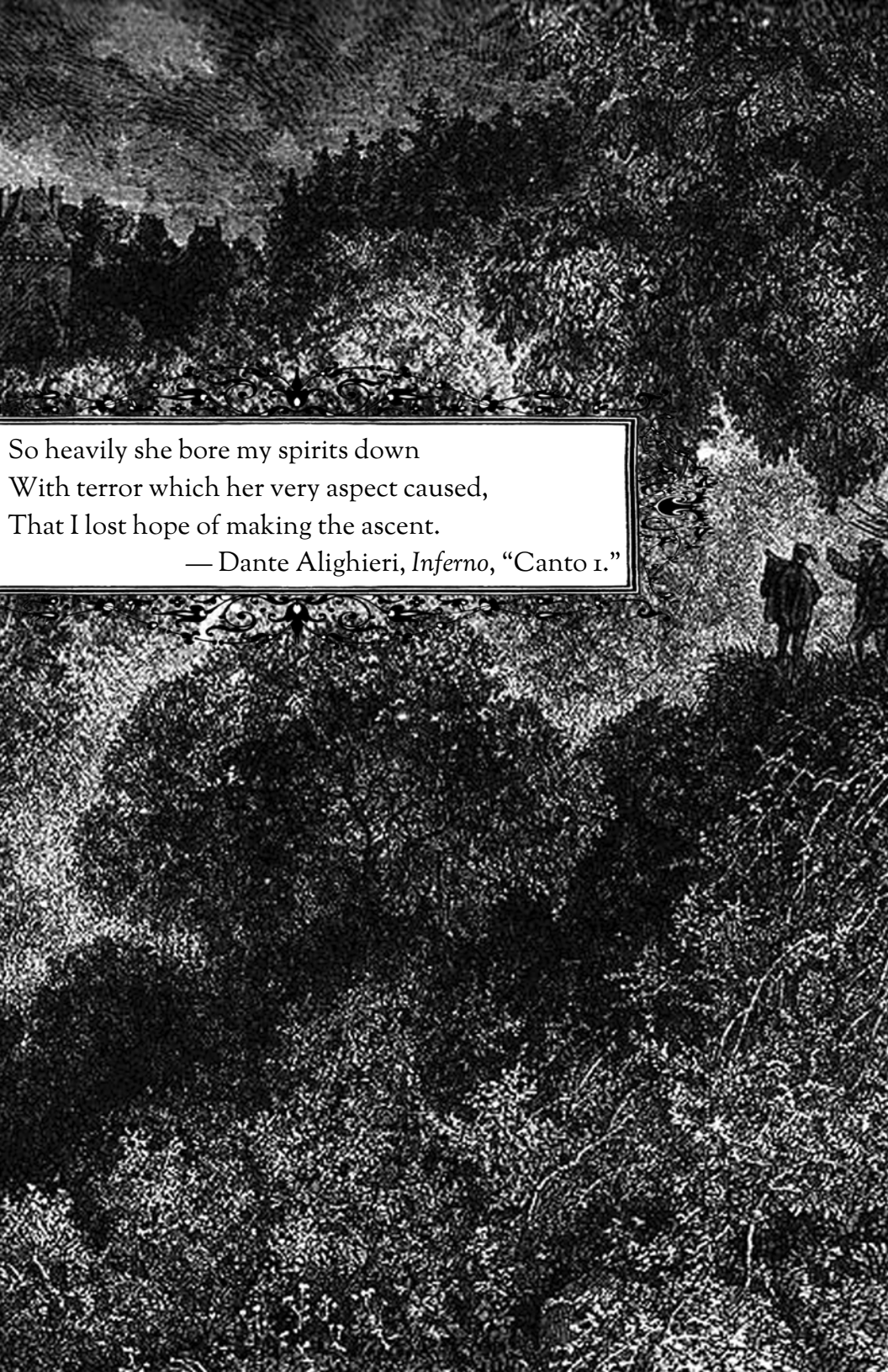


# The Abandoned Tower

A decorative border with intricate floral and scrollwork patterns, framing the text below.

Whichever way I move or turn or look  
My eyes behold, on every side alike,  
New torments and tormented souls anew.

— Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, “Canto 6.”



So heavily she bore my spirits down  
With terror which her very aspect caused,  
That I lost hope of making the ascent.

— Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, “Canto I.”

# A Haunt of Thieves

The old, abandoned tower stands upon a hill out in the Ghostwood Forest, just to the west of the new road to the north. During the day, it can be seen from the spot where the carriage was robbed, peeking over the tops of the trees. A long and troubled history haunts this tower, but these days, the Wolf Pack use the tunnels underneath it to brew their amber nightshade and small amounts of moonshine. Their alcohol distilling helps to hide their real activities.

## A Long and Troubled History

Most of the following information can be obtained from history books and local folklore, and each day spent doing research or talking to people in the know should uncover between one and three of the paragraphs below. It is somewhat harder to track down factual accounts of the private doings of witches, however, so *piecing together anything in italics requires a working knowledge of Black Larissa's diary.*

### **c. 300 YEARS AGO**

The tower is built as part of a defensive line by the local duke, under threat by an invading army. This string of forts ends up being used primarily against a neighbouring duke in the aftermath of the war, since the deciding battle resulted in the invaders being defeated many miles to the south. With the annexation of territory to the east of the territory over the subsequent decades, the tower is no longer needed to defend these lands.

The tower's construction at this time includes three levels of underground tunnels, but not the crypts or the meditation chambers.

**c. 250 YEARS AGO**

With hostilities long since over, the last detachment of soldiers posted to the tower leaves. Peace is upon the duchy and the tower is abandoned and allowed to fall into ruin. The cemetery, created for soldiers who died at the tower, begins to receive the bodies of local farmers.

**c. 230 YEARS AGO**

Seven monastic brothers move into the abandoned tower. They add the crypts and the meditation chambers to the underground tunnels. They live in isolation from the locals but tend the cemetery.

**c. 200 YEARS AGO**

The last of the monastic brothers dies and is buried in the crypts below the tower, which once again becomes abandoned.

**c. 150 YEARS AGO**

The last local farmer is interred in the cemetery, and no new graves are dug there from this point onward. The cemetery starts to gain a reputation for being haunted, as witch activity in the Ghostwood increases dramatically from this point on.

**c. 110 YEARS AGO**

The Witch King arrives in the Ghostwood, *along with some or all of his five lovers*. Over the next quarter-century, his reputation grows and several quests are undertaken by holy knights to rid the woods of his evil influence. None of these quests succeed, however, and it is said their ghosts still haunt the forest to this day.

**c. 85 YEARS AGO**

*The Witch King takes Zenara Khallari as his sixth apprentice but she betrays him within a matter of months. After removing the bodies of the monastic brothers, she leaves the Witch King and his five lovers in the crypt and bricks up the entrance. Over the next fifteen years, Zenara begins to pass on her stolen knowledge to apprentices of her own.*

The ghosts of the monastic brothers join the holy knights in haunting the forest.

**c. 70 YEARS AGO**

*Zenara is betrayed by her third apprentice, Larissa Reece. After breaking into the crypts below the abandoned tower, Larissa deposits Zenara's body in the last available crypt, replaces the bricks, and replasters the wall. She also murders Zenara's two other apprentices and buries their bodies on the grounds of the Mellic farmstead and under the old house on Harlow Street.*

After this, Larissa becomes known locally as "Black Larissa," and people assume she gained her powers by devouring other witches.

**c. 50 YEARS AGO**

*Larissa is in turn betrayed by her only apprentice, Noreen Mellic, who chains her to the wall of a room underneath the abandoned tower and bricks up the doorways. Noreen then has herself interred in the special tomb Larissa constructed for herself in the lower levels of the tunnels that allows her soul to remain free from the grasp of demons.*

From this point on, witch activities in and around Knifesbridge cease altogether, though the forest remains haunted.

**THE PRESENT DAY**

Black Larissa's diary sits on a desk just outside the room where she died, waiting for someone to pick it up. If one of the PCs don't take it, someone else might...





## Outside the Tower

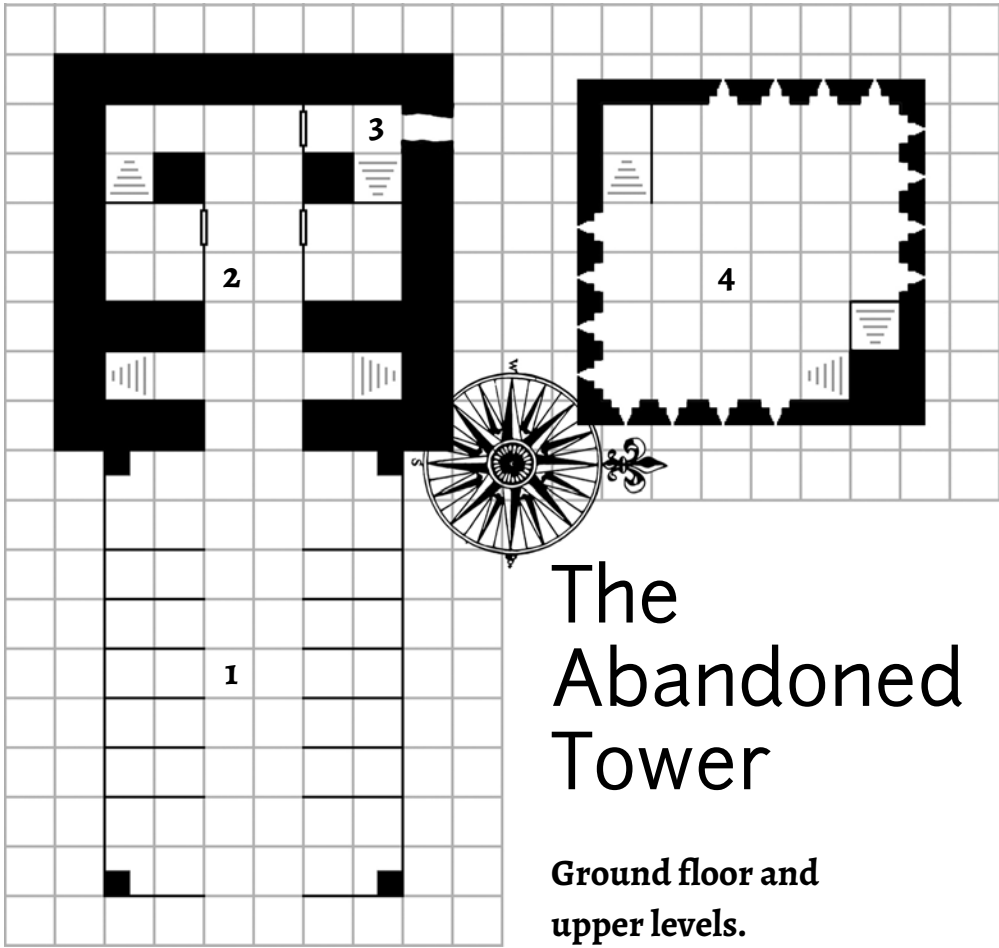
### **CEMETERY**

An old stone wall partially surrounds the cemetery on the north side of the abandoned tower, which has not been used at all for the last century and a half. There are a few larger tombs and statues, but most graves are simply marked by a stone with a name engraved upon it. Many of these headstones are weathered and almost illegible. The ground is overgrown with weeds except for a patch about a hundred feet long right next to the stables and the tower. In this patch, the ground is dry and nothing grows at all.

### **TWISTED TREES**

A small grove of trees stands to the south of the tower, all twisted and dead, with strings and ropes inexplicably hanging from their branches. They were part of the spell that sealed the witch-king and his lovers in the crypts directly below them. These trees withered and died because of the infernal taint below.





# The Abandoned Tower

Ground floor and upper levels.

## Key

One square equals five feet.



Arrow slits.



Bricked-up passage.



Broken wall.



Door.



Non-functioning door.



Open doorway.



Solid earth.



Stairs.



Stone construction.



Tunnel.

# Inside the Tower

The tower is square in shape, forty feet to each side, and made of dark grey stone. A pathway used to lead up to the tower from the road but has now been mostly overgrown. There is no obvious way to get there except through the trees. The clearing around the tower is quite large, although the hillside to the north is steep enough to be called a cliff.

## Above Ground

### 1. STABLES HALL

The stone hall adjacent to the tower proper contains ten stable stalls, long since ruined and rotted, though some of the wood still stands. Weeds have pushed through the ground and ruined the floor, except against the east wall, where they have all died and the ground is barren. The roof leaks and there are animal droppings and garbage strewn here and there.

### 2. FIRST FLOOR

The ground floor of the tower has thick stone walls and floors, though it still leaks in places. The stone ceiling is about eight feet high and vaulted. Two storage rooms with brick walls have warped wooden doors that do not close properly and contain only spoiled food, garbage, and mold.

### 3. NORTHEAST STAIRS

The stairs in the northeast corner of the tower that lead down are separated from the rest of the tower by a sturdy wooden door that is warped by age and moisture, but has been cut recently so that it once again fits the frame.

These stairs can also be accessed by a low passageway from the graveyard outside that once had doors. Long ago, these doors were removed and then bricked up by the monastic brothers. Some of this brickwork was removed by the Wolf Pack to once again allow passage through the tower's thick wall. This passage is partially hidden by shrubs and bushes outside the tower.

**4. SECOND FLOOR**

The second floor of the tower is reached via the stairs in the northwest corner. Arrow slits are the only windows on the first upper level and the stone floor is covered in small pieces of old, rotted wood. The four floors above this one used to have wooden floors but they have all rotted away and now this floor is exposed to the sky above. Stone stairs still climb up to the top and the view from the ruined rooftop seventy feet up is rather nice.

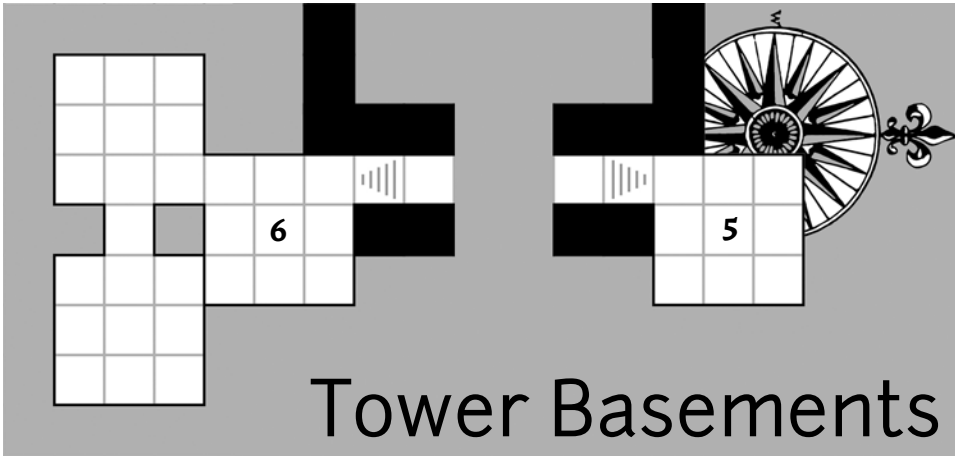
**5. EAST BASEMENT**

The stairs in the southeast corner lead down to a fifteen-by-fifteen foot storage room that is completely empty. It is slightly damp but because it is situated directly above Noreen Mellic's tomb, not even mold grows down here. There is a small amount of garbage and debris on the ground but no sign of any inhabitation for decades.

**6. WEST BASEMENT ROOMS**

The stairs in the southwest corner lead down to a series of storage rooms that are inhabited by a small pack of wolves. These are no ordinary wolves, however, but spectre wolves.

These rooms are littered with bones, including the bones of humans that the spectre wolves have killed. This is also an opportunity to introduce some treasure or the belongings that are significant to characters in this adventure. Perhaps there are people who have gone missing and the bandits have been blamed—finding their belongings here may confirm that the Wolf Pack does not make a habit of murdering people, and in fact it is real wolves who have been making people disappear.



# Tower Basements

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## SPECTRE WOLF

*Group, Magical, Terrifying.*

Bite (1d8+2 damage, 1 piercing)

10 HP ○ Armour

*Close, Forceful*

**Special Qualities:** Diseased, Mute, Susceptible to Magic.

---

These spectre wolves have been adversely affected by the infernal taint of this location, losing all their colour and falling prey to infectious parasites, even as they grow more violent and physically powerful. Sightings of these wolves have contributed to recent rumours of the tower and the graveyard being haunted. The wolves will attack any intruders and try to either drive them off or kill and eat them.

Spectre wolves are particularly susceptible to the power of arcane magic. Any spell cast on them is particularly effective, having an increased effect or additional results that benefit the caster. Furthermore, wizards, witches, and other magicians can intimidate and even command spectre wolves simply by showing them a sample of their magical power.

**Instinct:** Challenge intruders.

- Bite down on a foe, then pull and shake them.
- Expose a foe to infectious mange.
- Look like a ghost and scare someone.

At night: Hunt the woods.

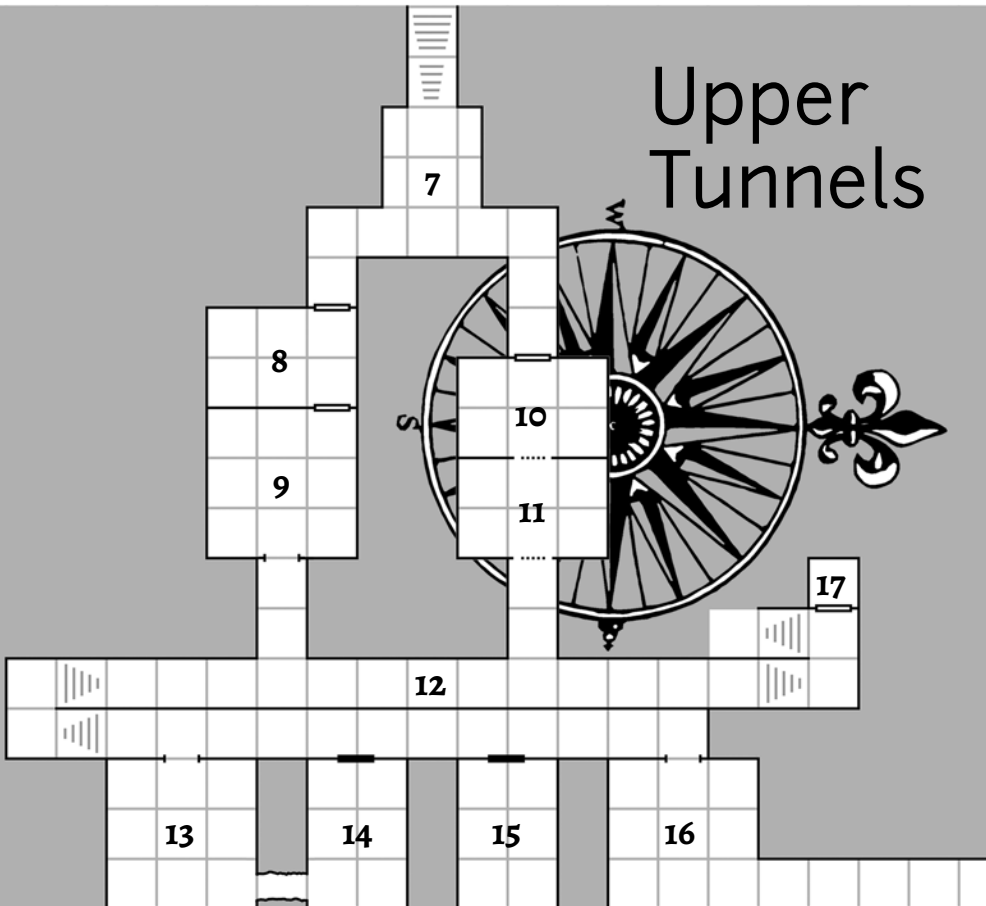
When danger threatens: Attack as a group.

## The Upper Tunnels

### 7. WAITING ROOM

The stairs in the northeast corner of the tower lead down farther than the others do, descending twenty feet beneath the surface of the earth. At the bottom is an antechamber, fifteen feet long, with eight-foot benches sitting against both walls. The construction style is consistent with the tower above—austere and functional military stonework. The ceilings are between six and seven feet high and vaulted.

## Upper Tunnels



**8. ANTECHAMBER**

Leaving the waiting room by the southern passage leads to a sturdy ancient door and a room that is barren save for a single, large oak table that is too large to fit through either doorway. A carpenter will realize this is not magic—its legs were glued on in this room after the pieces were brought here.

**9. CLUTTERED STORAGE ROOM**

The large room beyond the antechamber is full of old junk and rusty brewing equipment. A path has obviously been cleared through the junk that leads between the door and the passage opposite. None of the junk is worth anything. There is a single, battered stone pillar in the middle of the room.

**10. OFFICE**

The northern passage leading away from the waiting room ends in another door with a small office behind it. There is a large bureau desk stuffed full of papers, which also cover the floor around it. Those that are still legible seem to be the accounts of a monastic brotherhood. On top of these papers, but not covered in dust, rests a small black, leather-bound book. This is Black Larissa's diary.

The eastern wall of the office appears to have been bricked up at one time, but someone has created a passageway by smashing away at the bricks. There is just enough room for a person to squeeze into the next room, but not enough to see much of that room by torchlight.

**11. BRICKED-UP ROOM**

Both sides of this room have been bricked up, and then smashed—both from the outside—to create a way through. The room itself is full of garbage, rusty old pieces of metal, and more dusty papers. Hidden underneath this mess are the bones of Larissa Reece, still chained to the wall but broken up and scattered. Her ghost still haunts this room, however, and can manifest here, creating eerie sounds and a ghostly image of herself even if the diary is removed.

**12. UPPER HALLS**

Past the cluttered storage room and the bricked-up room is a long hallway running north and south. There are sconces for torches along the walls but no torches. To the south, stairs turn left and upwards to another hall of similar construction but with adjacent rooms. There are two open doorways leading to other rooms and two doorways that seem to have been bricked up.

This second level of the upper halls has a lower ceiling, just slightly under six feet at its highest points. The Wolf Pack and their Fomorian allies have grown used to this low ceiling.

**13. GUARD ROOM**

The southern-most room of the uppermost halls serves as a guard room, and there will be several members of the Wolf Pack here, as long as they are still using this location to brew alcohol and amber nightshade. They have torches inside this room and play cards or dice on a scarred and battered table. Barrels line the walls, hiding a small passage, only four feet high, dug into the wall that allows them to access the next room over. The walls are made of bricks but the ceiling is made of huge slabs of dark stone. This ceiling is only a few feet below the surface but the thick stone muffles all sound and whatever happens in these upper rooms cannot be heard above ground.

Depending on how long it takes the PCs to explore this far into the abandoned tower, they might encounter (in chronological order):

- Calgodarro discussing Mia's evidence against the mayor with Hayes and Christine Mellic.
- Wolf Pack members, with or without Calgodarro, playing cards while Hayes and Christine Mellic brew amber nightshade in the brewing room.
- Calgodarro playing cards with some of his fellow mercenaries while others move all the equipment from the brewing room out for good.
- A room empty save for spent torches, old cigar butts, scraps of moldy food, the odd playing card, and the table (they take the chairs when they go).



**14. STASH ROOM**

The doorway to this room was bricked up long ago, because the room partially collapsed, but a passageway has been dug out between it and the guard room. Kickal and Koning may be lurking here, on guard, even if there are Wolf Pack members in the guard room. The Fomorians do not socialize well with humans and prefer the darkness.

This room, made entirely of brick, is where the Wolf Pack stashes all their ill-gotten gains. Everything they stole from the coach, except for Mia's evidence and Sereese's locket, are here, along with the loot from several other profitable hold-ups that has not yet been moved. Possible treasure include:

- Architectural plans for several houses and mansions.
- Bag full of mail.
- Bracelets, earrings, and rings.
- Fancy spectacles.
- Gold bar stamped with the arms of a rival duchy.
- Gold necklace set with emeralds and matching earrings.
- Oil painting of a ship at sea in a storm.
- Pearl necklace and a matching ring set with a large pearl.
- Promissory notes written on paper.
- Several rings of keys.
- Silver tiara set with tiny blue sapphires.
- Sketch book of watercolour depictions of Mournhaven.
- Snuff boxes, all empty.
- Trunk full of fancy clothes, including a fur coat and muff.
- Wallets and purses full of coins.

**15. COLLAPSED ROOM**

The doorway to this room, along with the stash room's door, was bricked up long ago because the ceiling of this room collapsed. If the bricks are removed, all that is found beyond is dirt.

**16. BREWING ROOM**

This room is where the Wolf Pack currently brews their moonshine alcohol and makes their amber nightshade. The room is full of stills and other equipment. Some or all of the Mellic siblings can be found here most times during the day. Other members of the Wolf Pack are usually here day and night unless they decide to move their operations.

A long hallway leads north from this room out into the open air. This exit is obscured by trees and bushes, but is close to a road, so the Wolf Pack use it more often than the tower entrances. It is easier to get a cart down to the brewing room this way than to use the stairs.

**17. TOILET**

A small room just off the landing at the northern end of the upper and lower halls sits atop a deep hole and serves as a toilet. The door is sturdy but warped and has been cut recently so that it can be closed properly. There is a bucket of water on the floor and next to the wooden seat lies a copy of a once-famous novel, with half its pages ripped out.



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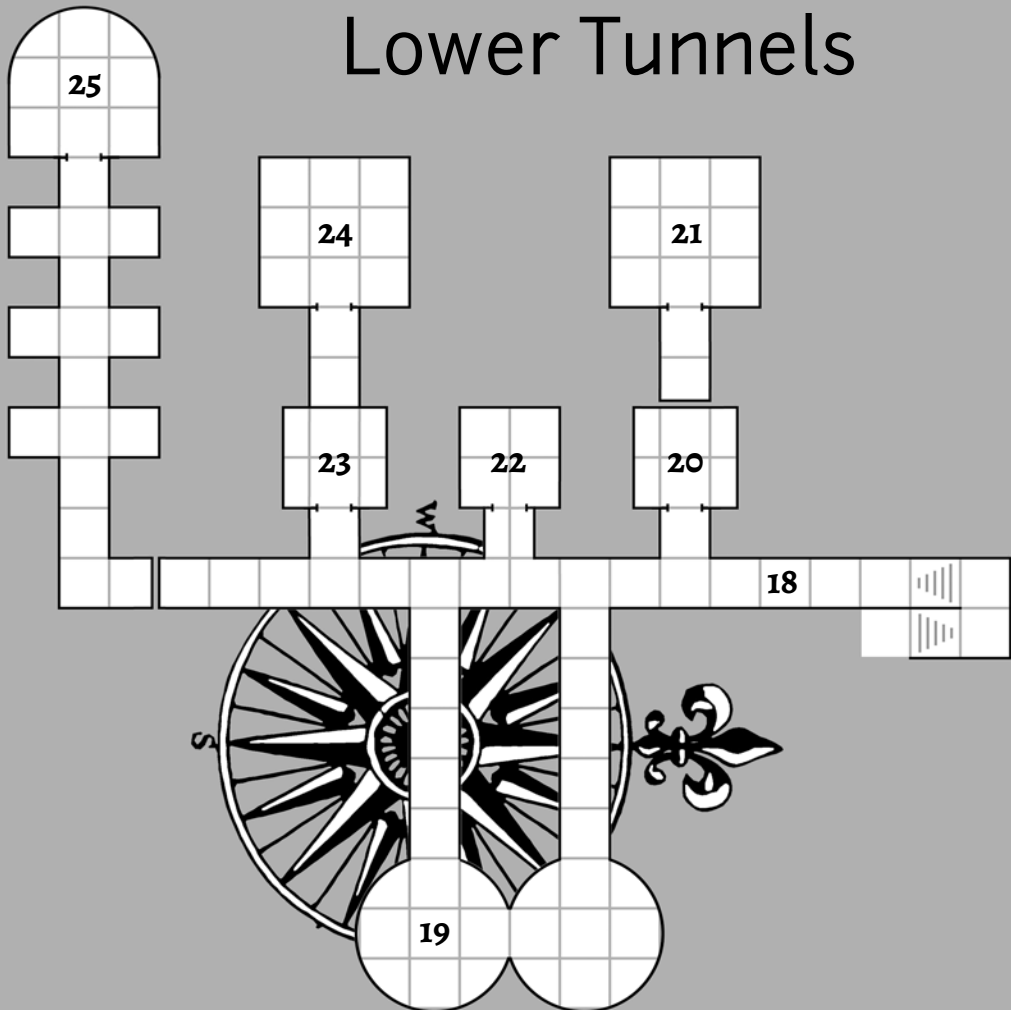
EDMUND S. SULLIVAN.

## The Lower Tunnels

### 18. LOWER HALLS

The lowest section of this underground area is not of the same quality as the tunnels above it. The inferior craftsmanship of the rough, plastered-over masonry is obvious, though these tunnels are serviceable enough.

These halls have a musty, damp smell to them but there is little mold and the walls seem strangely cold. The infernal taint that seeps from the witches buried here stops life from thriving here.



**19. MEDITATION CHAMBERS**

To the east of the lower hall are two circular, beehive-shaped tholos tombs, built by the monastic brothers as an aid to meditation. Any magic worked in these chambers has an increased effect, for good or ill.

**20. NORTHERN MONKS' CELL**

Along the western side of the hall are three rough monks' cells, seemingly carved out of a vein of living rock. Shelves along the north and south walls serve as beds or tables, but these cells are otherwise empty. The northernmost one does not appear to have any other exits, though an examination of the plaster on the walls reveals that the west wall has been plastered over more recently than the other walls. Beyond it lies Noreen Mellic's secret tomb.

**21. NOREEN MELLIC'S TOMB**

This room is fifteen by fifteen feet, with an eight-foot ceiling made of stone slabs. It was originally prepared by Larissa Reece, but after Noreen betrayed her, she had herself interred here, where Corioleus cannot reach her.

Her body lies inside a sarcophagus made of two layers of polished mahogany and is surrounded by black candles and small statues. The room is fifteen by fifteen feet, and the floor is completely covered. Ropes hang from the ceiling, nailed to the stone with iron nails. If a demon should enter this room, the candles will relight of their own accord.

**22. MIDDLE MONKS' CELL**

The middle monks' cell is empty like the others, but someone has tried to smash through the western wall, only to reveal that there is nothing behind the plaster but more stone.

**23. SOUTHERN MONKS' CELL**

Someone has smashed a hole through the west wall of the southernmost monks' cell, breaking through plaster and bricks to reveal empty, dark space beyond. A person cannot fit through the hole yet, only stick an arm inside.

**24. ROOM FULL OF BATS**

On the other side of the west wall of the southern monks' cell is a ten-foot hallway and a larger room that is empty except for vicious, blood-sucking ghost bats. Owing to a collapse in the far wall, this room now connects to a natural cave system. These caves are too treacherous and narrow for people to navigate, but they do eventually lead back to the surface far to the west of the abandoned tower.

**GHOST BAT SWARM**

Many bites (1d8 damage)

Close

*Magical, Swarm.*

10 HP 1 Armour

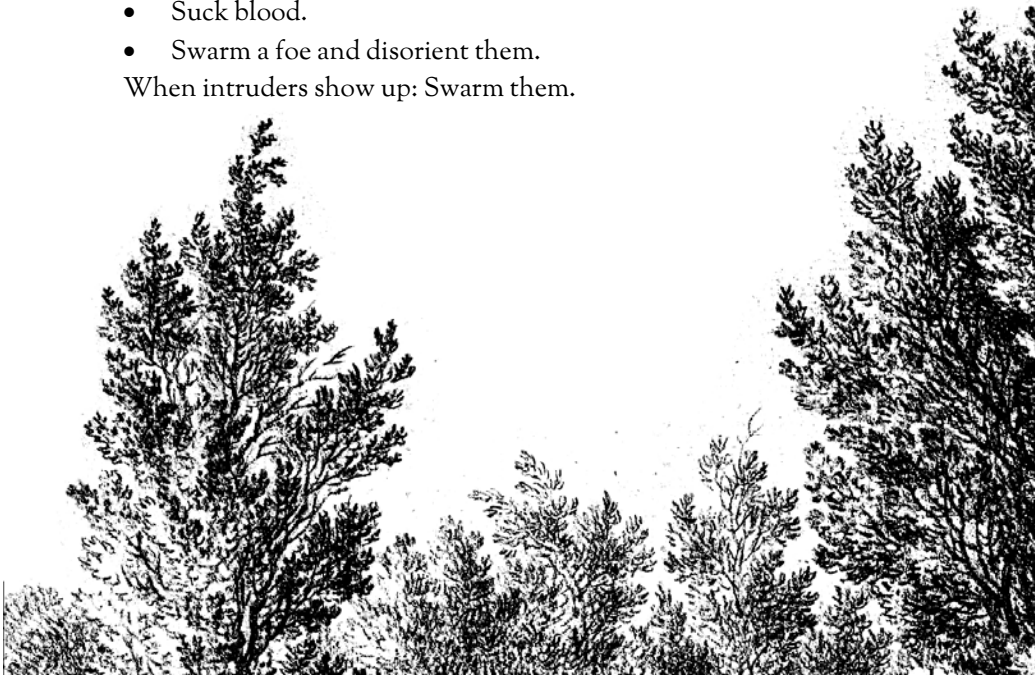
**Special Qualities:** Flight, Sonar.

The ghost bats are mostly black except for their bright red eyes and the patches of white on the insides of their wings. Instead of feeding on fruit and bugs, these bats seethe with malevolence and what they want is blood. They are the bane of a neighbouring village on the other side of the forest, as few people have ventured down to the lower halls in quite a long time.

**Instinct:** To thirst after warm blood.

- Disrupt magical processes.
- Suck blood.
- Swarm a foe and disorient them.

When intruders show up: Swarm them.



## 25. SECRET CRYPTS

The southern end of the main hall ends in nothing but a blank wall of crude masonry that has been plastered over, much like the rest of the hall. Close inspection will reveal that the end of the hall was bricked up, then broken into, and finally bricked up and plastered once again.

Behind the wall is a hallway, containing six small niches along the walls, and one large chamber at the end. In each of these lies a witch, waiting to rise again. In the stone sarcophagus of the monastic brotherhood's leader lies the witch king, and in each of the small niches lies one of his lovers. Black Larissa deposited the body of Zenara Khallari in the northern niche closest to the exit. Only Zenara will stir when the wall that seals them in is breached, and she will do her best to escape, instead of fighting any intruders. The other witches will only rise again if their rest is disturbed, since the runes and wards that bind them are much stronger than those binding Zenara.



# The Coven

The witches that have sold their souls to Corioleus currently include the seven buried in the crypt, who still have bodies; Red Jenny, Tannis Cross, and Larissa Reece, who remain as ghosts, their bodies nothing but bones, too deteriorated to be inhabited by spirit; and Noreen Mellic. Her tomb protects her from Corioleus, but her death does not remove her from the coven.

## The Unlucky Seven

Seven witches are buried in the secret crypt underneath the abandoned tower: the Witch King himself, his five lovers Brysil, Hassan, Hilda, Maelgrim, and Thorntyr, and the woman who betrayed them all, Zenara Khallari.

---

**THE WITCH KING**     *Devious, Hoarder, Intelligent, Magical, Solitary.*

Ancient sword (1d8+4 damage, 1 piercing)     22 HP 1 Armour

*Close, Forceful*

**Special Qualities:** Undead, Witch.

---

His origins remain a mystery. Some of his followers do not even believe he is human, and truth to tell, he has forgotten so much since dying that even the Witch King does not recall who he used to be when he was young. Infernalism has twisted his features enough that it is impossible to tell whether he possessed his horns and tusks before he sold his soul or only gained them later. He wears the hides of Northern black elks and wields a sword made from meteorite by those who dwelt upon the ice before mankind was born. He is covetous by nature, driven by greed and desire.

**Impulse:** To collect (and own) people, places, and things.

- Bind a foe with runes and wards.
- Call and command dangerous animals.
- Command a lover.
- Magically fade into the forest and disappear.
- Send dreams and nightmares to a foe or servant.
- Spit magic words that cause physical pain.



**LOVER OF THE WITCH KING***Group, Intelligent, Magical.*

Sacrificial blade (1d8 damage)

10 HP ○ Armour

*Close***Special Qualities:** Undead, Witch.

Each of the Witch King's five lovers are different, but they all have several things in common. First, they are devoted to both the Witch King and to Corioleus, having sold their souls to him. Second, they are all trained witches, with their own magical powers in addition to those granted them by Corioleus. And third, they are all undead, betrayed and killed by Zenara Khallari, and for this, they all want revenge.

**Impulse:** To serve in exchange for magical power.

- See their individual descriptions for each of the lovers' moves.

**BRYASIL**

A pale beauty of the north, her short hair as yellow as straw, Brysil is unable to feel pleasure and pain as strongly as others, and so she throws herself into extremes. With the power of magic coursing through her, she makes her home amidst the frigid waters and the storms of winter. Corioleus has also given her fangs like razors and a thirst for human blood.

Now that she is undead, Brysil takes no steps to disguise this fact. Though she died of poison, she appears to have drowned. Her skin is white as chalk and her lips are blue. Her eyes are black orbs full of blood, but she is far from blind.

- Bite down and drink deep.
- Call down rain, sleet, and snow.
- Coat a foe with frost and ice.
- Control rivers and streams.
- Freeze water with a touch.
- Swim through water like a fish.

**HASSAN**

Captured by slavers as a boy, Hassan grew up in the harems and seraglios of rich and powerful lords, traded between them like a toy, until the Witch King put a knife in his hand and offered him the throat of his master. Blinded by power, he continued to take what was offered him, and in so doing, gave away his soul.

Hassan is short and willowy, with black curly hair, olive skin, and smouldering, seductively dark eyes. His movements are sensual and practiced. When he grows angry, his warmth disappears and he grows cold and calculating, vicious and spiteful.

- Appear defenceless and defeated.
- Destroy locks, clasps, buckles, and bindings.
- Produce fire out of nothing.
- Spit poison.

**HILDA**

She was always a prodigy, but when Richard Mellic, the man she loved, spurned her for her sister, Hilda left the Ghostwoods. After becoming a prostitute in Mournhaven, she returned in order to seek revenge, only to find Richard and her sister had died of plague, and that none of the couple's three young children were even fathered by Richard after all. Still intent on vengeance, Hilda became a witch in order to call up their ghosts and punish them, but this never worked. The need for revenge still burns within her, though she has no way to satisfy it.

Hilda appears to be a short, plump woman with long brown hair. She can appear normal, but years in the crypt have replaced most of her muscles with grave worms.

- Bind a foe with a curse or hex.
- Bind an animal with magical wards and runes.
- Command a familiar.
- Fly through the air.
- Scatter grave worms with a wave.
- Wail like a banshee.

**MAELGRIM**

A renowned and blood-stained hero amongst the reavers of the north, Maelgrim gave up his life of rape and pillage to become a witch. He scoured all the lands of ice and snow looking for the trolls who dispense their craft to those who would slake their lusts. After years of fruitless searching, he found the Witch King—all he had ever hoped for in a master. He has no idea that Corioleus' transgressions and violations will never be the ones he enjoys.

Maelgrim has thick black hair and a scruffy beard unless he takes the time to shave properly, which is a vanity he enjoys. His abdomen is a rotting, putrid mass, and he must consume human flesh in order to heal it once he has risen again.

- Bind a person with magical wards and runes.
- Call spikes and spears to burst forth from the ground.
- Crumble stone to dust in his hands.
- Crush a foe with an iron grip.
- Shake the earth.
- Unleash a flurry of flying blades.

**THORNTYR**

Born into a farming community on the brink of failure, when the rest of his family and everyone he knew succumbed to the savage winter, Thorntyr turned to magic and witchcraft. Like Maelgrim, he believed the Witch King to be a troll, so he traded his body in exchange for magical knowledge. He is the most conflicted amongst the lovers, for he knows the taste of disobedience is immeasurably sweet, but fears Corioleus' corruption more than the Witch King's retribution.

Thorntyr has long blond hair and a full beard. His right eye has been gouged out and continues to bleed, while his left arm is a withered skeleton that has lost none of its strength in undeath.

- Bind a natural location with wards and runes.
- Call down ice and snow.
- Leech the heat from a foe's body and breath.
- Strike when a foe shows signs of weakness.
- Summon the great Northern winds.

## War of the Witches

While the Witch King's lovers are all devoted to him, Zenara Khallari is their enemy. She is part of their coven, like it or not, but when these witches arise again, they will fight.

If the crypts are opened, Zenara regains the use of her body immediately, and attempts to flee as quickly as possible. She will cause as much harm as is necessary to effect her escape. The bindings she put on the other witches are much stronger than those Larissa put on her, however, and the other witches must be disturbed in order to awaken. Zenara will not disturb them, but foolhardy explorers almost certainly will, especially if they are engaged in magical combat with Zenara.

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**ZENARA KHALLARI**     *Devious, Intelligent, Magical, Solitary, Stealthy.*  
 Shadow blade (1d10 damage, ignores armour)     16 HP   0 Armour  
*Close, Messy*

**Special Qualities:** Undead, Witch.

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She came from the East in search of knowledge she could not find at home, and the Witch King was waiting for her. He knew she was a snake is what she told herself when Corioleus showed her how to betray him.

It appears as if death has done nothing to diminish Zenara's beauty. Her black curls are as lush as always, her skin as smooth, her eyes the same dark pools to fall into. This is all magic, hiding the fact that she died by fire.

**Instinct:** To be at risk, always.

- Appear beautiful.
- Catch fire for an instant.
- Command the shadows.
- Offer excitement and danger.
- Send a bird of shadow winging through the night with a message or a curse.
- Turn shadows into blades and weapons.

## Three Ghosts

Unlike the seven witches buried in the crypts, the bodies of Larissa Reece, Tannis Cross, and Red Jenny have all been destroyed enough that they cannot be reanimated. Larissa's remains are scattered amidst the debris of the room she died in, Tannis was buried in a field and ravaged by the plough, year after year, and the only thing holding Red Jenny's bones together is the dirt that surrounds them. All three have become ghosts and will only have physical bodies when Corioleus allows it.

Red Jenny's ghost haunts the old house on Harlow Street, but Corioleus can free it from this location, or give her a human body to possess.

Tannis haunts the Ghostwood forest, roaming where she will, but her mind is gone and she is but a spectre of the past until Corioleus restores her. She too could have a body to possess, should Corioleus find it useful.

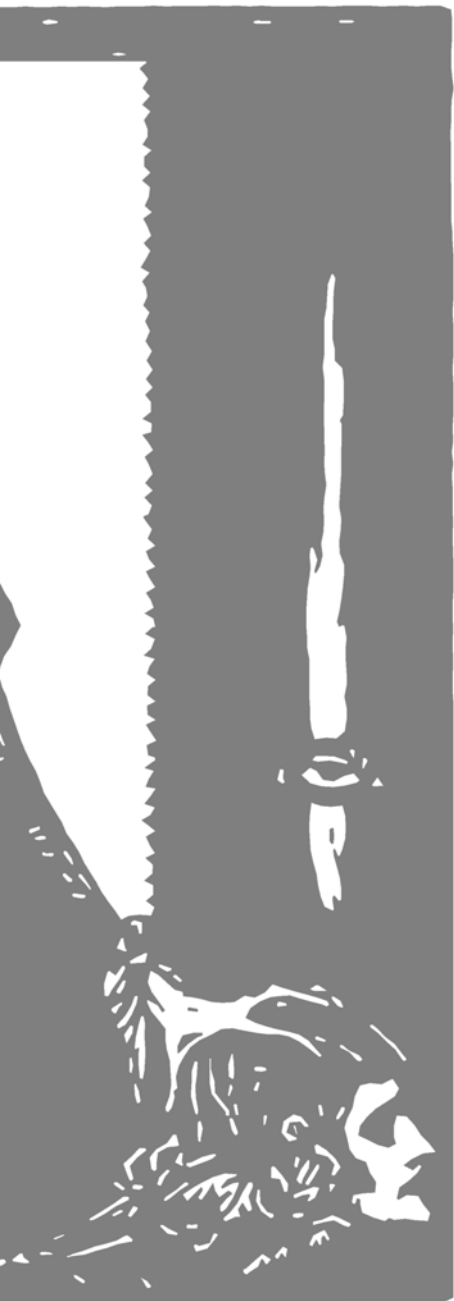
If Corioleus has the power, he will find a particularly enjoyable body for Larissa to possess, as she has been so useful to furthering his plans—almost indispensable, really. She remains bound to the diary, however, until Corioleus finds a better anchor for his power on the mortal plane.

## The Tomb

Unique amongst the coven, Noreen Mellic is buried in a special tomb. If it is breached, though, she will not rise from her sarcophagus unless Corioleus or one of the other witches comes and raises her. If this happens, she will be claimed by Corioleus and punished in one of the many hells of the abyss, not allowed to serve or roam the Earthly plane.



# Hungry Ghosts



And I, who stood intent to gaze and wonder,  
Beheld a host of spirits, foul with mud,  
All naked, and with hatred in their looks.

— Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, “Canto 7.”





# Suffer a Witch to Live

The second front in this adventure, *Hungry Ghosts*, presents the sordid world of witchcraft and demon worship in and around the village of Knivesbridge. Although the heyday of these practices has passed and there have been no active witches in the area for half a century, their undead spirits linger still, lurking in the Ghostwood, waiting for a chance at resurrection—and for a chance to summon once again the power of their demonic patron.

This front contains three dangers: the diary of Larissa Reece, through which her ghost attempts to summon the demon Corioleus; Corioleus himself, who has little power on the mortal plane until summoned; and the witch hunter Corbin Grey. While it is possible to introduce Corbin immediately, these three dangers are meant to start slow and gradually work their way to a fever pitch. If the witches buried in the secret crypts under the abandoned tower are freed, they will join this front and work to assist Corioleus.

These dangers are intended to be much more of a problem for adventurers than the bandits and political shenanigans of the Ravenous Wolves front, and should be much harder opponents to defeat.



# Black Larissa's Diary

Sitting in plain view on an old, long-unused desk, just outside the room in which Larissa Reece died, is the small black book that served as her infernal diary. Unlike other books, it does not age, it does not accumulate dust, and it cannot be destroyed. The demon it is bound to has enough power to maintain, at the very least, a single foothold in the mortal world—and this book is it.

Each of the eleven witches once had their own infernal diary, in which they kept their spells and other secrets, and each in turn was destroyed by their betrayer. But there has always been at least one diary of spells in the hands of a witch in the Ghostwoods, and when Noreen Mellic destroyed her own diary along with Larissa's, before entering her special tomb, Corioleus was able to interfere. And so Black Larissa's diary reappeared, unharmed, in the room next to her lifeless body.

Whether or not the PCs take this diary into their possession or not is up to them. If they do not, however, it should be found by someone else—someone with fewer scruples, someone with scores to settle, or someone far too irresponsible. Either way it causes trouble, as it was meant to do.

## Reading the Book

The diary is a black leather-bound notebook of good quality workmanship. Almost all of the pages have writing on them, and there are numerous diagrams. One of several inks used appears to be blood, and it is quite obvious that the contents of the diary pertain solely to the workings of black magic.

The diary is clearly an autobiographical account of witchcraft, betrayal, and murder—and just as clearly meant to be incomprehensible to anyone but its author. Reading it takes time and effort. The cursive script is cramped and almost illegible. The language is full of strange terminology, obscure metaphors, and even the occasional occult cipher.

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When you spend a day studying Black Larissa's diary for the first time, roll+INT. •On a 10+, you learn the first two rituals and for each full day you spend studying it more closely, you will learn another piece of knowledge. •On a 7-9, you learn the first two rituals, but must study for two days (or an entire day and night) to learn each subsequent piece of information. •On a miss, you find the diary nearly impenetrable and downright dangerous. For each two full days of study, you can learn one of the rituals or one piece of information, but each time you do, you attract infernal attention.

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## Black Magic Rituals

The most obvious section of the diary details a summoning ritual, described in plain language. This ritual allows contact with a demon, as long as the summoner knows the demon's name and performs the ritual within a circle of light surrounded by darkness. This means it must be performed at night or in an enclosed space, and must be accompanied by torches. The summoner must stand within a protective circle and perform magical incantations for several hours, after which the demon will appear in an imprisoning circle during negotiations. This ritual was successfully performed in the basement of a house in Knifesbridge, by the author of the diary and a female apprentice. The name "Corioleus" is mentioned, as well as any others you decide to include.

Less obvious, but still described in plain language, is a ritual that allows a demon to possess a human host and thus gain terrestrial purchase (as demon's have no natural physical form). Like the summoning ritual, this one must also be performed within a circle of light that is surrounded by darkness. It takes several hours and is meant to be performed on a willing subject. It can instead be performed on an unwilling subject, but this requires the sacrificial murder of a third person in order to work.

This type of possession is not the same as the demon entering the mortal plane by using the victim as a host. The demon is able to speak and act through the possessed person, but cannot use its full powers. The most useful aspect of this spell is that it allows the caster to bargain directly with Corioleus and to draw up a contract. This still results in the loss of one's soul, of course, but Corioleus is not above theatrics in order to get the job done.

The diary also claims this ritual can be performed in reverse to achieve an exorcism, but this is false and has no real effect. The demon Corioleus may cause a possessed person to appear to be exorcised if this version is used, however, in order to lull the PCs into a false sense of security.

## Summoning

When you perform Black Larissa's summoning ritual, roll+INT.

•On a hit, it works just like the 5th-level wizard spell Contact Other Plane, but on a 7-9, the demon may leave a mark on the material plane. •On a miss, it unleashes infernal trouble.

## Possession

When you perform Black Larissa's ritual of possession, either on a willing subject or upon an unwilling subject after a sacrificial murder, roll+INT. •On a 10+, they are possessed by a demon and exhibit no signs of their old personality. •On a 7-9, they are locked in a very obvious fight with the demon and still retain control over their body half the time. •On a miss, you are possessed by a demon.

## Exorcism

When you perform Black Larissa's ritual of exorcism, don't roll, unless you are performing the ritual under pressure or in the face of opposition, in which case you must defy danger to complete the ritual as instructed. Regardless of how accurately the ritual is performed, Corioleus may create the appearance of a successful exorcism, or not, as is his wont.



## Autobiography

The following additional pieces of knowledge can be learned from the diary, in the following order. Until the final piece of information is gleaned, someone studying the book will always know there is more to uncover.

### **ONE**

A second formula for bringing a demon onto the physical plane is detailed, obscurely, in the margins. A trained black magician must commit three murders—one each on three different plots of land consecrated for unholy purposes by three previous murders. There are no rituals involved, and apparently this will allow a demon to enter the world through the body of one of the three more-recently murdered people.

### **TWO**

Based on numerous short anecdotes seemingly-taken from real life, the author of the diary is a woman named Larissa Reece, known in and around Knifesbridge as “Black Larissa,” and this diary is at least fifty years old.

### **THREE**

Larissa details a scheme to escape having to repay her debt to the demon Corioleus. This includes a special tomb, constructed so as to protect her body and soul from infernal influence. This tomb is located in or around the cemetery next to the old abandoned tower, though the exact location is not indicated (it can be found on the map carved into the wall in the basement of the old house on Harlow Street).

### **FOUR**

In plain language but awful handwriting, Larissa recounts how she was betrayed by her apprentice, Noreen Mellic, who apparently sealed her up in a room to die, alone. Larissa has plans to take revenge from beyond the grave, which include destroying the tomb she had planned to use.

**FIVE**

The three plots of lands that are consecrated for unholy purposes are: the old house on Harlow Street, the Mellic farmstead, and the abandoned tower. Larissa consecrated the old house with the murder of Red Jenny, the farmstead by the murder of Tannis Cross, and the tunnels underneath the abandoned tower by the murder of her mentor Zenara Khallari.

## Black Larissa's Ghost

Aside from the dodgy nature of the magical rituals it contains, there is another potent threat posed by the diary, and that is the ghost of its author. Larissa Reece did not go quietly to those black gates, and in the Ghostwoods that often means one does not go at all. Those who stay in close proximity to the diary will have Larissa's ghost to contend with.

Her main ambition is to exact revenge upon her apprentice, Noreen Mellic. In order to do this, she plans on summoning the demon Corioleus to the physical plane, so he can take the measures needed to gain possession of her soul. To do this, she must spill someone's life's blood on each of the three locations she has consecrated: the basement of the old house on Harlow Street, the Mellic farmstead, and the crypts underneath the old, abandoned tower.

If one of the PCs is in possession and gets close to any of these three locations, Larissa will appear in his or her peripheral vision, a far-away figure wrapped in black cloth, rushing hurriedly in the location's direction. She will lead them straight to the old house, the farmstead, or down into the crypts, preferably when there are also hostile people there.

**BLACK LARISSA'S GHOST***Devious,, Intelligent, Magical,  
Solitary, Stealthy, Terrifying.*Ghostly hands (1d8 damage, ignores armour) 16 HP ○ Armour  
*Close***Special Qualities:** Book-Bound, Insubstantial, Undead.

Black Larissa's ghost is mystically tied to her diary, and cannot roam far from it. Normally, she is a ghostly presence, insubstantial and invisible. There are three exceptions to this. Larissa can reveal herself to whoever holds the book, but only at night or in darkness. She can also appear to anyone near her corpse. When she appears, however it is as a murdered and bedraggled woman, covered in dirt and blood with her fingers worn down to the bone—obviously a spectre. Larissa can also touch living people, but only if they do not know she is there. This means that after she touches someone for the first time, she cannot do so again, so she does not use this ability until she is in a position to murder someone on the ground she consecrated and thus bring Corioleus one step closer to manifesting physically.

Finally, the use of amber nightshade (or similar magical workings) can reveal her presence and form. This is not a pleasant experience for the drug user, as Larissa will harass and terrorize any living person she can if she is given the opportunity. Anyone using amber nightshade in the presence of her diary will inevitably have a bad trip, no matter what they roll. Larissa's mind is not a coherent thing. It is singularly fixated on revenge and filled with rage.

**Impulse:** To revenge herself on her apprentice.

- Appear in the corner of the eye.
- Attack the living who are unaware of her presence.
- Cause minor poltergeist effects.
- Terrorize someone who can see ghosts.

When the diary is in a populated area: Cause trouble.

When they are close to a consecrated location: Lead them there.



## **At the Mellic Farmstead**

Since the Mellic farmstead is no longer profitable as a producer of crops, there is often no one there, although the Wolf Pack may use this location to ambush Sheriff Hartford—or anyone else they think deserves such attention.

However, PCs that venture out to investigate the farm could themselves be mistaken for bandits by any number of other investigators: bounty hunters, Corbin Grey, or even Sheriff Hartford. The ensuing altercation provides Black Larissa the opportunity she needs.

## **At the Old House on Harlow Street**

If the diary is taken to the old house, the ghosts of Black Larissa and Red Jenny will fight. All manner of poltergeist activity will occur, mundane objects will fly across the room, things will fall off shelves, blood will run down the walls, and anyone high on amber nightshade, being especially vulnerable to attacks made by either woman's ghost, will experience the most horrific drug experience of their lives.

Assuming Wilse probably has one or more drugged-up playthings here at any one time, it is an easy thing for Larissa to perpetrate a murder during all this commotion.

## **In the Tunnels Underground**

Since no one goes down there, this is the trickiest part of the plan for Larissa to accomplish. She may try to attack the PCs down here, but with only a single shot, she is unlikely to kill one of them. She may try to lure nearby innocents down into the tunnels along with whoever holds the diary, but since people avoid the tower, this is unlikely to be successful.

On the other hand, if the PCs end up fighting the Wolf Pack in these tunnels, she will have a perfect opportunity. If the PCs bring hirelings or other assistants into the tunnels, she tries to make the holder of the diary think one of them is about to commit betrayal, in the hopes that she will not have to start the bloodshed—only end it.

## Idle Hands

If the PCs do not take possession of the diary, or attempt to destroy it or otherwise rid themselves of it, someone else will fall pre to its baleful influence. There are several people in and around Knifesbridge who would make excellent candidates for coven membership:

### **WILSE**

If Wilse gets a hold of the diary, after some time spent deciphering it he will attempt the rituals. Depending on how many people he has gotten addicted to amber nightshade by this time, he will either have a willing subject for the possession ritual, or he will have to capture an unwilling one. Because he rarely ventures out to the abandoned tower, it is unlikely he will be able to help Larissa complete the three necessary murders, but his experiments with the rituals may result in him striking a deal with Corioleus directly and joining his coven. The PCs may be alerted to his plans through several obvious situations:

- When Wilse brings the diary to the old house on Harlow Street, all hell will break loose. Almost certainly someone will die, and the house may even catch on fire. Gossip and rumour will inform everyone in town about some sort of row on the premises, although the specifics will vary. If the PCs are nearby, they might even be able to witness it.
- Unable to complete a ritual in his house, he will attempt it at the Mellic farmstead. Since there is not enough space to conduct the ritual inside, it must be performed outside, in the middle of the night. The required bonfires can be seen from quite a ways off.

**CORBIN GREY**

If Corbin Grey gets a hold of the diary, he is just overconfident enough to think that he can beat a demon at its own game. He might also try to use the results of these rituals as proof of demonic activity he can show his church superiors. His obsessive nature drives him to pursue things all the way to the end and to treat it like a showdown. Since Corioleus cannot lose, this does not work out well for Corbin.

**FOMORIANS**

The Fomorians may take an interest in the diary if no one else is left. Kickal and Koning are not quite bright enough to make a complete mess of things, but if the gangs send more intelligent soldiers to Knifesbridge, they could become devoted and capable servants of Corioleus.

**TERESANA**

If Teresana Cole becomes trapped in drug addiction and is looking for a way out, she could turn to the diary—provided she knows about it. She is a fast learner, but being young and inexperienced she is easy prey for a demon. As wild as she tries to be, she would not even entertain the idea of turning to witchcraft while clean and sober.

**OTHER INNOCENT VICTIMS**

Not many others, even in the Ghostwoods, are prepared to have anything to do with witchcraft. Calgodarro will pass the diary on to Wilse, the Mellic siblings will avoid it, the mayor doesn't believe in witchcraft, and most people in Knifesbridge just want to live a comfortable life, not trade away their souls in exchange for power.

And so there remains only the PCs...



# The Demon Corioleus

There are bandits in the Ghostwood and corruption in Knifesbridge, yes, but all else that is evil in this duchy stems from a great and powerful demon known to the ancient world only as *Κοριολεύς*. This demon is charged with watching over these woods, these hills, and these rivers. Of this infernal prince, all who dwell here must beware.

As a demon, Corioleus is not native to the physical plane, and cannot simply step out onto it as a sailor would regain the shore. He can exert his influence enough so as to tempt the weak-willed among humankind, but he is not truly terrifying until his servants provide him with a vessel to inhabit.

He almost always appears to mortals in the form of a handsome man with silvery blond hair that shimmers in the firelight. He dresses well, in dark clothes that show he has good taste but is not a slave to fashion. If he wishes to appear intimidating or terrifying, he can be surrounded by swirling flames or tornado-like winds. He can walk upon a bed of squirming insects, or make his face look like a skull with blazing eyes. He might appear holding chains that serve as leashes for his slaves: men and women whose souls he has captured, and now appear in their mortal guises but with iron collars rubbing their necks all bloody. He may even, on very rare occasions, appear as a beautiful woman instead of a man. But never to seduce. This form is only to inspire jealousy in overly-vain women and to draw the ire of misogynists. The last intention Corioleus will ever have is to make a human feel comfortable, in any way.

Without a vessel, however, Corioleus' activities in the Ghostwoods are very limited. He has some influence over the area around Larissa's diary, around the abandoned tower, and other places where his witches are buried or have had a significant impact upon. This influence includes the manipulation of animals, a few hallucinations, the odd possession, and of course, making the diary available for others to find.

## Demonic Influence

What follows are examples of the things that Corioleus can cause to happen. These things can occur in the vicinity of the diary and any of the dead witches except Noreen Mellic, or in any place that has been significantly affected by witchcraft. But they must happen only within a hundred yards or so of any of these.

### **Crazed Animals**

- Ants, cockroaches, or other bugs invade the house where the diary rests and march in spirals to no useful purpose.
- Cats and dogs run in circles, chasing their own tails.
- During a storm, the heavy rain is suddenly accompanied by fish or frogs, falling from out of the sky. These animals flop about after landing, but quickly die.
- If whoever holds the diary stares at the ground too long, a centipede emerges and coils in on itself, spiralling around its own body until it breaks itself into pieces and dies.
- Locusts appear on crops and other plants, devouring furiously, even though there are only small handfuls of them.
- Roosters crow at midnight, dogs bark at the moon, livestock will not sleep at night.

### **Minor Hallucinations**

- “On the other side of the wall, you can hear a woman crying out as someone beats her. It sounds like a man using a belt as he preaches on the wretchedness of sin.” If the PCs intervene, they discover their neighbours are a pious and quiet young couple who work in one of the local breweries. If the PCs only shout through the wall, this couple will feel terrorized and will complain to their landlord or even the city watch.
- “The bartender pours you a drink, but out of the corner of your eye you see him slip something into it. He even glanced at you to see if you were looking and he thought you weren’t.” The only thing the bartender “slipped” into the glass was whatever the PC ordered.

- “Through a small window on the second floor, you can see what looks like a fresh corpse—like someone who has just been murdered!” To get to this room, the PCs must barge through a dining room on the same floor where a large family is eating a meal. The kitchen, it turns out to be, contains a large beef roast but no dead person.
- “You hear someone on the other side of the doorway, hiding around the corner, as if they were about to ambush you.” When the PC springs around the corner, there is an old person there, who did not even know the PC was inside the house!
- “You notice a drop of blood fall from the ceiling. Looking up, there is a dark stain, and more drops fall. The blood is very fresh.” Upstairs, the PC finds a woman taking a bath. She has spilled some water on the floor, but no blood.

## Possession

Corioleus will save this trick for when the PCs are close to ruining Black Larissa’s plans to give him corporeal form, or if they are about to get rid of the diary somehow. When this happens, he will possess someone, or cause them to be possessed by another, weaker demon. The victim speaks in tongues, shouts obscenities, and causes a ruckus. They are wracked by spasms and attempt to harm themselves and others. Their features twist horribly, leaving no doubt as to the cause of their malady.

Corioleus prefers those of weak will, and adolescent girls in particular, though anyone will do. If the PCs use the exorcism ritual in Black Larissa’s diary, the symptoms of possession will go away. For now.

## A Corporeal Demon

If Black Larissa's plan comes to fruition and Corioleus gains physical form, he becomes far more dangerous. In order to do this, he requires a human vessel, as his "natural" form is not one made of mortal clay. The inhabitation of this vessel is more than mere possession, as the demon is able to express his infernal nature to a much greater degree. There are two ways this incarnation can be achieved.

### **A Trio of Murders**

Larissa's plan to bring Corioleus to the mortal plane is to murder one person in each of the three locations that she has consecrated: the old house on Harlow Street, the Mellic farmstead, and the lower tunnels beneath the abandoned tower. Should she achieve this, Corioleus enters the body of any one of the three victims—most likely the last, but in the abyss, only torment is certain.

### **Completing the Coven**

A demon can also enter the mortal realm through a complete coven of thirteen witches dedicated to them. Currently there are only eleven witches in Corioleus' coven. Death does not remove one it, nor does Noreen Mellic's tomb—it only keeps her safe from Corioleus' further influence.

If any of these witches are reburied on holy ground, or their spirits are otherwise destroyed, the coven will be reduced in number. If more people become infernalists in the service of Corioleus, they become part of his coven.

Once the coven reaches thirteen members, Corioleus will manifest physically through the body of one of them—whichever one he wants—or through the body of someone they sacrifice for that purpose. If the coven does not make sure to sacrifice someone as the thirteenth member is being initiated, an one of them is vulnerable.

Once Corioleus manifests in a person's body, he reshapes it to his preferred image. If it dies, Corioleus is unaffected, and this is a likely outcome unless he has some reason to preserve the body's life for future use.



**CORIOLEUS IN THE FLESH**

*Devious, Infernal, Intelligent, Magical,  
Planar, Solitary, Terrifying.*

Curse (b[2d10]+2 damage, ignores armour)      20 HP 4 Armour  
*Close, Near, Forceful*

**Special Qualities:** Demon of the ancient world.

Once incarnate in flesh, Corioleus walks the Earth in someone else's body, possessing it and controlling it. This body is less like a living vessel for his alien consciousness and more like a window through which his infernal light shines forth. He can allow his physical body to be killed (if it is even still alive) and it does not affect his presence on the mortal plane. This body is just an anchor. Corioleus is an immortal fallen angel, unkillable, but always residing on another plane of existence. Still, he longs to touch the souls of humans, and bring them down.

**Instinct:** To ruin all that is good and right.

- Cause an animal to birth a freak of nature.
- Cause an infant or small animal to die.
- Curdle milk, turn wine to vinegar, and spoil food.
- Drive animals insane.
- Inflict a minor hallucination upon someone.
- Offer to buy a soul.
- Posses someone.

The following moves only apply when Corioleus takes physical form:

- Blight the earth so that nothing grows.
- Curse a foe's physical existence.
- Summon an infestation of vermin.

In addition to the effects listed previously, Corioleus' physical presence causes the following effects:

- Clouds, winds, and birds in flight revolve in circles.
- Heights make people dizzy.
- Liquid runs in circles on flat surfaces.
- Spinning objects continue to spin on their own.

# The Witch Hunt

Corbin Grey is one of the church's most dedicated witch hunters. He casts a long shadow wherever he goes. Because the Ghostwoods are a constant source of gossip and rumours of the supernatural, when word gets out that there may be a more serious problem, he moves quickly to investigate and root out evil. He is a man used to being in control, however, and his zeal may well be more fuel for the fire than any real solution.

## Arrival

Corbin arrives one of two ways. Normally when he begins an investigation, he sends a lieutenant first to secure accommodations for him, his soldiers, and their servants. In this case, Father Petrus arrives and rents rooms or even an entire house. The PCs may well encounter him before Corbin arrives, especially if they are both trying to obtain access to Mayor Cole.

If there has been an emergency or some kind of violent outbreak of a supernatural origin, Corbin shows up with his full retinue as soon as possible and demands a place to stay, even if he arrives in the middle of the night. Mayor Cole may have to quarter them in private homes until space in an inn opens up. At the very least, Corbin will take control of the village hall or the Cole household.

When he arrives, it attracts the attention of a curious few, but is not an occasion for uproar, unless conditions in Knifesbridge have become very bad indeed. Most people are more concerned with the mayor's political shenanigans, the boisterous bounty hunters, and the bandits threatening the roads.

## Hunting Witches

If any of the PCs are part of Corbin's retinue of witch hunters, they qualify for the bounty hunter compendium class (described on pages 126-128). They might know a few tricks for dealing with the supernatural, but mostly the job is just like hunting down criminals.



## The Hunt Begins

In Knifesbridge, Corbin undertakes to question everyone he believes to be involved with witchcraft and demon worship—from those suspected of it to those who might be witnesses. This includes people who talk about seeing ghosts or witches and whomever those people implicate. He does not employ torture on anyone until he has proof of their guilt and thinks they are withholding information.

Once he has enough evidence of witchcraft to convince him there is a problem here, he claims executive powers over Knifesbridge, which the church allows him to do, and begins telling Mayor Cole how to run it. This will probably include some or all of the following:

- A curfew after dark except for river traffic.
- Exhumation of the dead who might be connected to those practicing witchcraft.
- Forced closure of the bawdier taverns, especially those catering to the river traffic (which is most of them).
- Ordinances banning public displays of wealth.
- Regular patrols by the village watch both in Knifesbridge and on the roads.
- Surprise searches of farms in the Ghostwood Forest.

## Things Fall Apart

As he becomes more convinced that there is a supernatural evil in the Ghostwoods, Corbin Grey recruits more hunters to his cause. First he offers employment to the numerous bounty hunters in town, then he tries to recruit the bandits, if they are still active in any capacity. He offers them pardons for an crimes they may have committed before joining his service to hunt witches. He also promises regularly-paid wages, which is another powerful draw.

The one problem these new employees have is that Corbin is also a strict disciplinarian. Crimes committed while in his service are punished by whippings, the loss of hands, or by hanging, depending on their severity. There is no trial, and those accused are judged by Corbin based on his understanding of their character

and personality. He is a stickler for the rule of law—common criminals must have trials, yes, but those sworn to him may be punished as he sees fit, and so a trial is not necessary. This leads to general unhappiness amongst his new recruits, who begin to desert.

The last card Corbin has to play is bringing in a troop of church templars to maintain order and lead the hunt. These are heavily-armoured cavalrymen, dedicated to upholding the rule of law and church doctrine. They are loyal to Corbin and have no ties to Knifesbridge, so they will act in an unbiased and principled manner—which means they have little or no consideration for individual circumstances and no mercy for the less-fortunate.

After Corbin begins to take these measures, the townsfolk turn against him. They secretly work to sabotage his investigations, they give him misleading information to send him away from them, and they act less knowledgeable and skilled than they really are when he needs anything done. They also begin to inform on each other, hoping that grudges can be settled for them by Corbin and his men. When Corbin realizes this, he punishes these informants severely, leading to even more backlash against him.

## Things Go To Hell

If Corbin Grey comes into possession of Larissa's diary, he cannot stop himself: he performs the rituals. His idea is to contain and counter the demonic forces promoted by the diary, and banish them from the world for good. As he fails, one or more of the following results:

- He discovers the witches buried beneath the abandoned tower and sets them loose.
- His retinue discovers his experiments with the diary and splits into two warring camps. Father Petrus opposes any exploration of demonic powers but some servants stay loyal to Corbin.
- The diary leads him to the three consecrated locations, and Larissa's ghost kills a person on each of them, thus bringing Corioleus physically into the world.
- Thinking he can outwit the Devil himself, Corioleus inadvertently makes a deal with Corioleus, becoming an infernalist himself.

Know then, in brief, that they were clerics all—  
Scholars of great renown, who on the earth  
Were all polluted with the selfsame sin.

—Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, “Canto 15.”



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**CORBIN GREY** *Divine, Intelligent, Organized, Solitary, Zealot.*

Crossbow (1d10+2 damage, 2 piercing) 12 HP 1 Armour

Near

**Special Qualities:** Exarch inquisitor of the lawful church.

---

A brilliantly accomplished theologian from a very young age, Corbin Grey always achieves what he sets out to do. He brings order to the world around him with his rigorous vision and exacting attention to detail—even flagellating his own flesh to make sure it obeys.

**Instinct:** To destroy what offends his sense of order.

- Attack relentlessly and without mercy.
- Find something hidden.
- Judge.
- Summon more troops.

In a fight: Command troops into a strategic advantage.

When a prisoner is taken: Wear them down until they cannot lie.

Where there is disorder and chaos: Take charge and stamp it out.

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**FATHER PETRUS** *Divine, Intelligent, Organized, Solitary.*

Spiked flail (1d10+2 damage) 12 HP 0 Armour

Reach

**Special Qualities:** Keryx inquisitor of the lawful church.

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An orphan, Father Petrus was raised in the church, nurtured by it, and it is the only home he knows. To those who conform to its ways and live as brothers will find him generous to a fault. Those who practice strange magics will find him an implacable enemy.

**Instinct:** To defend the law against chaos.

- Batter and subdue a foe with his flail.
- Make a stand against what is evil.
- Perceive the truth.
- Pray for guidance.

When Corbin requires assistance: Come to his aid.

When the supernatural is found: Reject it, fight it, pray for the lawful gods to destroy it.

When they are guilty and tight-lipped: Prick them with pins and needles until they tell the truth.

When violence erupts: Unleash the old and trusty flail.

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**CHURCH TEMPLAR** *Divine, Intelligent, Mounted, Organized.*  
 Mace or sword (b[2d8]+2 damage, 1 piercing) 8 HP 3 Armour  
 Close

**Special Qualities:** Church authority.

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Church templars are recruited from knights and soldiers whose faith in and loyalty to lawful religious precepts are stronger than their ties to lord or king. At some point in their lives, while young or old, they abandon their old life and are born again as martial champions of law. Although they do not swear as many vows as proper priests do, they nevertheless tend to live a fairly austere and regimented life.

**Instinct:** Use violence to maintain law and order.

- Run a foe down
- Stand fast against the enemy.
- Strike as a unit.

When commanded: Obey.

When confused: Turn to the highest-ranking cleric for guidance.

When making a snap judgment: Apply the lessons of scripture.

When the mission is finished: Return to the church.

These templars have no ties to Knifesbridge or the Ghostwood Forest. They do not know anyone here, and they do not know the local culture or how things are done. As the adventure progressed and the supernatural forces at work here become more and more visible (assuming they do, that is), they should develop their own individual opinions of what is happening and what the proper solution is. Many will assume that the political and financial woes afflicting Knifesbridge are caused by the supernatural problems, and proceed forward upon that assumption.





As one idea will blossom from another,  
So, out of that, another thought arose,  
Which served but to intensify my fear.

— Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, “Canto 23.”



# Custom Rules



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# Mechanisms of Questionable Taste

This section introduces some new character options that you may find especially useful for this adventure. Here you will find one new race, one new base class, and three new compendium classes.

The Fomorian rules make it easier for you to play Fomorian PCs, either specifically for this adventure, or after they are discovered in Knifesbridge. Or you can use them in other campaigns.

The Magnate character class is something rather different from most other Dungeon World classes—someone with wealth and power, and many minions to command. All these advantages come with responsibilities, however—the Magnate has estates and business ventures to manage. Who else would be so concerned with the political corruption plaguing Knifesbridge?

The three compendium classes are the bounty hunter, the drug addict, and the infernalist. Given the influx of bounty hunters into Knifesbridge, to say nothing of the witch-hunters, whose job is much the same, it should be easy for the PCs to pick up the ropes. The opportunity to become a drug addict is even more rampant, although the drug addict compendium class presented here is specifically tailored for amber nightshade addiction. Likewise, the infernalist compendium class is set up specifically for making deals with Corioleus, and no others.

# Fomorians

Fomorians are grotesque, grey-skinned humanoids with long, thin arms and black or yellowish eyes. They have greasy black hair and dress in dark, functional clothes. Shunned by humanity, they make their homes in the sewers and tunnels beneath the largest cities of the warmer southern lands. They have little interest in the arts and sciences of the surface world, but do care about money and other items they can barter for resources with.

---

**FOMORIAN** *Group, Intelligent, Organized, Stealthy.*  
 Knife (1d8 damage) 6 HP 0 Armour  
*Close*

**Special Qualities:** Knife wounds cause paralysis.

---

The average Fomorian survives by cultivating fungal gardens, hunting feral dogs and cats, and stealing from humans. They are not averse to eating the occasional human, though it is not something most of them prefer.

**Instinct:** To live in the shadows.

- Ambush from the sewers.
- Slink back into the night.
- Snatch something and run.
- Stab with poisoned knife.

---

**FOMORIAN WARRIOR** *Group, Intelligent, Organized, Stealthy.*  
 Spear (1d10 damage) 8 HP 1 Armour  
*Reach*

**Special Qualities:** Spear wounds cause paralysis.

---

Some Fomorians carry spears, wear armour, and train to fight in groups. Their tactics are mostly focused on making the most of tight spaces, and their job is to defend other Fomorians, whether they are important leaders or thieves on a mission aboveground.

**Instinct:** To defend other Fomorians.

- Ambush from darkness.
- Attack as a group.
- Break things.

# Fomorian Player Characters

## **Fighter**

Because of your long arms, melee weapons you use all have the close, hand, and reach tags.

## **Druid**

In addition to any other attunements, the City Sewers are always considered your land.

## **Thief**

When you defy danger while moving through an urban environment (stealthily or not), take +1.

## **Wizard**

Always so cautious and careful, Alarm is a cantrip for you.





You have set up a god of gold and silver:  
How do you differ from idolators,  
Save that they worship one, and you a hundred?  
— Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, “Canto 19.”



# The Magnate

## A New Character Class

Wielding power and wealth, surrounded by minions, the Magnate is a new character class intended to add a twist to this module. Where the usual adventurers—wandering penniless from dungeon to dungeon one day, flush with unimaginable wealth the next—experience this adventure from one perspective, if you play the Magnate you are no flea-bitten, rough-and-tumble bounty hunter. You are the lord of vast estates, of your own house or office, always travelling with an entourage, and you have certain interests to attend to—namely, your profit margin. But as the businesses of Knivesbridge go down, so does your ability to earn off of them.

## Names

*Dwarf*: Casan, Corneille, Destrix, Iakim, Isalina, Ramus, Volkov, Zotov, Zuniga.

*Halfling*: Bilba, Chemah, Farrel, Hudson, Judith, Luisillo, Matello, Nannette, Primo.

*Human*: Clement, Croesus, Dives, Gordon, Heshen, Isabella, Midas, Musa, Natalia, Pluton, Solomon, Staristina.

## Look

Choose one for each:

Austere Uniform, Extravagant Outfits, or Wealthy Finery.

Emaciated Cheeks, Robust Physique, or Round Body.

Contemptuous Eyes, Eyes of a Killer, or Friendly Eyes.

Bad Haircut, Oiled and Perfumed Hair, Pale Hair.

## Stats

Your base damage is d4.

Your maximum HP is 6+Constitution.

## Starting Moves

Choose a race and gain the corresponding move:

### Dwarf

Your entourage is composed of hardy dwarves, add +1 fighting.

### Halfling

When you use a move to request foodstuffs or find people with food-related skills or experience, take +1.

### Human

Your race are conquerors. **When you see or come to know of a thing you want**, ask an extra question from the eye for loot list, even if you haven't taken the move.

You start with these moves:

### Dominion

You are the master of wealthy estates, either tracks of land, mercantile operations, or governmental offices. **When you request an expensive item from your estates**, as long as it is not unique, roll+WIS. •On a 10+, your estates supply you with your heart's desire. •On a 7-9, you are supplied with the item, but your estates are exhausted until you put them back in order, by doing any one of the following:

- Close out an old, presumably-problematic account.
- Set up a new profitable venture.
- Spend time in your offices reorganizing your accounts.
- Take a tour of your estates, correcting any errors you encounter.

**Once you put your estates back in order**, you can request things again. •On a miss, your estates are in disarray.

## Entourage

You can surround yourself with up to a dozen or so minions who will back you up, follow your orders, impress people, and help you conduct your business. Choose what type of people compose your entourage:

**Noble Courtiers:** Dissent +2, Eloquence +1, Fighting +1, Learning +1.

**Obedient Servants:** Dissent +0, Eloquence +0, Fighting +1, Learning +1.

**Savvy Clerks:** Dissent +1, Eloquence +1, Fighting +0, Learning +2.

**Seasoned Mercenaries:** Dissent +1, Eloquence +1, Fighting +2, Learning +0.

**Talented Artistes:** Dissent +1, Eloquence +2, Fighting +0, Learning +1.

You can order individuals around like hirelings if you want them to do things other than act as part of your entourage. If they are obedient servants, take +1 to order them. If they are noble courtiers, take -1 to order them.

Choose their accoutrements, as many as their dissent or fighting:

*Books and instruments, costumes and props, finery, many weapons, metal armour, mounts, samples of your wares, travelling gear.*

Choose their skills, as many as their eloquence or learning:

*Accounting, appraisal, crime, diplomacy, the fine arts, hospitality, hunting, music and poetry, politics, rhetoric, science, soldiering.*

Choose their weaknesses, as many as their dissent:

*Arrogant, careless, cowardly, dead inside, feuding, gossiping, greedy, hedonistic, insular, obsequious, religious heresy, treacherous.*

## Ex Officio

**When you're surrounded by your entourage...**

**...and you attack the same target,** add both their dissent and their fighting to your damage.

**...and you defend the same target,** add their fighting to your roll.

**...and you parley,** add their eloquence to your roll.

**...and you spout lore,** add their learning to your roll.

**...and someone interferes with you,** add your entourage's dissent to the penalty they inflict on your roll.

## I Know People Who Know People

When you put the word out that you need someone with certain skills or experience, roll+CHA. •On a 10+, you find someone suitable or a hireling with +2 skill points. •On a 7-9, you find someone with similar experience or a hireling with +1 skill points.

## Alignment

Choose an alignment:

### Evil

Take someone else's possessions or position for your own.

### Good

Use your wealth and power to directly benefit the least fortunate.

### Lawful

Bring a criminal to justice.

### Neutral

Acquire a new estate or title.

## Gear

Your load is 7+STR. You have the same accoutrements as your entourage, plus choose one:

- Antitoxin, healing potion, leather jacket (1 armour, 1 weight), metal mace (close, 1 piercing, 1 weight), and 100 coins.
- Fancy dagger (hand, valuable, 1 weight), gold chain of office, snuffbox, and 500 coins.
- Prized rapier (close, precise, valuable, 1 weight), gold-embossed telescope (1 weight), halfling pipeleaf, and 50 coins.

## Bonds

- \_\_\_\_\_ is a worthy business partner.
- \_\_\_\_\_ makes a good front for my schemes, but I can't let them know.
- I would never let \_\_\_\_\_ handle my affairs. No money sense!
- I've had dealings with \_\_\_\_\_ before, but they are confidential.

## Advanced Moves

When you gain a level from 2-5, choose from these moves:

### **Bodyguards**

When you are accompanied by your entourage, you get +1 armour.

### **Cultured Host**

When you provide hospitality to someone, take +1 forward to discern realities about them or parley with them.

### **Dogs of War**

When you attack with your entourage, your base damage is d8 instead of d4.



## Entrepreneur

You have two or three business ventures:

- Apothecary or barber shop (medicine / malpractice).
- Brothel (influence or secrets / disease or scandal).
- Contracting service (influence / betrayal or scandal).
- Extortion racket (influence / turf war).
- Grain mill (influence / fire).
- Inn (secrets / scandal).
- Silver mine (silver / flood or strike).
- Smithy (arms and armour / strike or theft).
- Trade ships (exotic spices / a ship sinks).
- Transportation service (secrets / lost goods).

**When you set up a new venture**, add it to this list, along with what it produces and possible disasters it could experience. **If a venture goes under**, remove it from your list.

**When you have downtime or at the beginning of a session**, choose up to three ventures from your list to tend to and roll+CHA.

•On a 10+, each venture you chose produces either its surplus or money for you and you take +1 forward to making requests of your domain. •On a 7-9, only one of your ventures produces surplus or money for you, and one venture experiences disaster, such as bankruptcy, legal problems, or the disaster listed. •On a miss, all the ventures you chose experience disasters. Ventures you choose not to tend to do not produce for you and do not suffer disasters, but may still experience changes. **If a venture produces money**, your take is 1d6×100 coins.



## Eye for Loot

When you see or come to know about a thing you want, roll+INT. •On a 10+, ask the GM three questions about it. •On a 7-9, ask two. •On a miss, ask one anyway, but your desire is betrayed to everyone who cares:

- What happened to it recently?
- What is it really worth, all things considered?
- What protects it and keeps it where it is?
- Who will try to keep it from me?
- Who will want it once it is mine?

## Prestigious Companions

Your entourage gets another pick from accoutrements and another skill, which can be whatever you want.

## Profitable Enterprise

When you return to your estates after an absence, roll+WIS. •On a hit, your estates have produced income for you. •On a 10+, take 2 income. •On a 7-9, take 1 income. You can spend 1 income this session to put your estates back in order or purchase a moderately expensive item, like a house, from someone else. Any income left over at the end of a session is converted into coins. You get 1d6×100 coins per income.

## Trade Networks

When you consult your contacts before undertaking a journey to another settlement, the GM will tell you about a person there who can help you.

## We All Want Things

When you parley with someone or discern realities connected to them, on a hit you can also ask the GM one of these question:

- What does this person *really* want from me?
- What does this person value most?
- What is the most valuable thing here?

When you gain a level from 6-10, you may choose from these moves as well as the level 2-5 moves:

## Back-Up Plan

When you meet with someone on business, you may ask the GM two questions from the list below:

- Is there an ambush waiting for me?
- What are they really feeling?
- What is my best way out of this?
- Who is watching?

## I Must Have It!

*Requires: Eye for Loot*

When you use your eye for loot, on a 12+, ask the GM an additional question, any question, about the thing you want.

## Influencer

When you parley with someone, on a 12+, not only do they do what you want, they change their mind about you and become your ally. They will no longer advance the GM's dangers and will instead support your plans.

## A Many-Headed Beast

Choose an additional entourage type. You may surround yourself with companions from either type of entourage, but for ex officio you can only use the stats of whichever is most numerous. You can switch between the two types by dismissing some companions and summoning others.

## Mortgages

When you leverage your estates to purchase something ridiculously expensive (an army, ship, or castle, say), take -1 forward to dominion and roll+WIS. •On a 10+, it is yours. •On a 7-9, it is mostly yours but there are strings attached and your estates are exhausted.



## Palace Guard

*Replaces: Dogs of War*

**When you attack with your entourage**, your base damage is d12 instead of d4.

## This is my Domain

*Replaces: Cultured Host*

**When you provide hospitality to someone**, take +1 ongoing to discern realities about them or parley with them while they stay with you, and take +1 forward against them when they leave.

## Versatile Companions

*Requires: Prestigious Companions*

Choose a move from another class. You may use this move as long as you are accompanied by your entourage.

## Wealthy Entrepreneur

*Requires: Entrepreneur*

**When a venture produces money for you**, you may take 1 income instead of cashing out. Spend 1 income to get the 10+ result from your domain without rolling. Any income left over at the end of a session is converted into coins as normal. You can spend income from profitable estates in the same way.

# Bounty Hunter

## A New Compendium Class

“What’s the difference between a kidnapper and a bounty hunter? The one who pays the ransom money! Oh, sorry, I meant reward, of course. I hunt down bad people before they can do bad things and I return them to the rightful authorities. That’s the real difference. Why? You know somebody worth something?”

**When you track down a wanted criminal and bring them back to the rightful authorities**, the next time you level up you can choose to take this move:

### The Hunter

Name someone you want to find, either an individual or a gang that sticks together. **When you discern realities while looking for them**, on a hit, the GM will also tell you if there is any evidence of their passage, and if so what. •On a miss, though, something catches up to you instead, the GM will tell you what. You can only be hunting one target at a time, but you can change that target whenever you want.

**When you have the hunter**, these moves count as level 2-5 class moves for you and you can choose from them when you level up:

### The Bigger They Are

**When you spout lore about someone you know or you’ve heard of before** (your call), on a hit, you can also ask the GM either of these questions and then take +1 forward when acting on the answer:

- How could they be taken?
- What are they worth and to whom?

## The Harder They Fall

When you successfully attack someone, you can roll a d6. If you roll your foe's current HP or higher, after they take your damage, you knock them out cold or capture them.

## Official Position

You work for the law. When you first enter a civilized settlement someone in authority will take you in as their guest. Take +1 to parley if you can use your authority as leverage.

## Professional Gossip

When you ask around at the local watering-hole or other social nexus and make your profession obvious, roll+CHA. •On a hit, you're told about available work. •On a 10+, you're also able to suss out the backgrounds of prospective employers. •On a 7-9, though, you only hear about the most promising job currently available. •On a miss, you're shut out or given bad information.

When you have the hunter, these moves count as level 6-10 class moves for you and you can choose from them when you level up:

## Considered It Already

*Replaces: The Bigger They Are*

When you spout lore about someone you know or you've heard of before (your call), on a hit, you can also ask the GM both of these questions and then take +1 forward when acting on the answers.

- How could they be taken?
- What are they worth and to whom?

## Hellhound on Your Trail

Once you have shed someone's blood, or they have shed yours, you can track them anywhere. No matter where they go you can always find them.

## Wrap It Up

*Replaces: The Harder They Fall*

**When you successfully attack someone**, you can roll a d8. If you roll your foe's HP or higher, after they take your damage, you knock them out cold or capture them, however you want.

## Specialty Option

If you want to start as a bounty hunter at level 1, you can replace one of the following starting moves with the hunter:

- **Bard:** Charming and Open.
- **Cleric:** Divine Guidance or Turn Undead.
- **Fighter:** Armored or Bend Bars, Lift Gates.
- **Paladin:** Lay on Hands.
- **Ranger:** Called Shot or both Animal Companion and Command.
- **Thief:** Backstab, Poisoner, or Trap Expert.
- **Wizard:** Ritual or Spell Defense.

Note: If you are a bounty hunter with the ranger starting move hunt and track, the hunter applies when you use that move just like it does when you roll discern realities.

**If you start as a bounty hunter at level 1**, you may choose one of the following race options instead of those offered by your class:

### Dwarf

You are blessed with a hardy constitution. **While on someone's trail**, you do not need to consume any rations.

### Elf

**When in the wilderness**, you may discern realities with INT instead of WIS.

# Drug Addict

## A New Compendium Class

These are the normal rules for using amber nightshade:

---

**When you smoke amber nightshade**, roll+CON. •On a hit, you have a good trip and for the duration you can see and interact with ghosts and spirits, but on a 7-9, you also experience hallucinations and can easily become confused. •On a miss, the unpleasant hallucinations are much more powerful than the high and you do not have a good trip at all.

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**When you come down off of amber nightshade**, take -1 forward and 1d4 damage.

---

**After you have smoked amber nightshade**, however, the next time you level up you may choose this move:

### Nightshade Addiction

**When you smoke amber nightshade**, instead of the normal effects, roll+INT. •On a 10+, hold three. •On a 7-9, hold two. •On a miss, hold one anyway, but you also suffer terrible hallucinations. Spend a hold to:

- Experience a confusing but prophetic vision.
- Find a demon, ghost, or spirit in the Ghostwood Forest.
- Get +1 to your roll when you take your last breath in the Ghostwood.
- Interact with a ghost as if it were solid and alive.

**When you are not under the influence of amber nightshade**, take -1 forward each day. **If you have the opportunity to indulge in amber nightshade but pass it up**, take -1 forward (unless you're already high, of course).

**If you are a nightshade addict**, you take 1d6 damage when you come down, but these count as class moves for you and you can choose from them when you level up:

### **Forest Walker**

**While high on amber nightshade**, you can find your way to any location, person, or object in the Ghostwoods within an hour, no matter how far away or how carefully hidden, your destination is. You can also escape anyone who pursues you in this forest simply by passing between its trees.

### **Ghost Sight**

**When you encounter a ghost for the first time**, you may ask the GM one of the following questions:

- Where did this person die?
- Where is this person's body (or where are its parts)?
- Where is this person's grave?

### **Nightshade Chemist**

From selected plants picked in the Ghostwood Forest, you can brew up amber nightshade. **If you try to brew up a new version of the drug**, roll+INT. •On a 10+, choose two properties the new drug has. •On a 7-9, choose one property; the GM will choose another.

### **Numb to All Sensation**

**When you get high on amber nightshade**, you get 2d4 temporary hit points. Any damage you suffer must reduce your temporary HP to zero before affecting you. You lose them when you sober up.

## Kicking the Habit

Even though getting high on amber nightshade is exhilarating—and may offer valuable insights into the nature of the Ghostwood Forest—you may find the downsides of addiction to be more than you bargained for.

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**When you fight through the urge to keep using amber nightshade and go cold turkey**, roll+CON. •On a 10+, after a few days of cold sweats and shaking, you find you can function again without the drug. •On a 7-9, you suffer the debility of your choice and you're out of commission for a month, but once that's done, you can start to put your life back together. •On a miss, choose a debility—you suffer this as long as you're off the drug. Better stay high.

---

### Sober

**If you get sober** (by rolling a hit), you lose all the moves you have taken from this compendium class, as well as a level for each one. You don't lose other moves gained from levelling up after taking drug addict moves and you don't lose any level 6-10 moves if your level drops below 6th. You don't forget any spells you learned, but you might not be able to prepare and cast some of them if your level has dropped enough. For each level you lost, you must also lower a stat by one, but you can choose which stats to lower. For example:

*Ovid is a 6th level Wizard with Nightshade Addiction, Ghost Sight, and Numb to all Sensation. If he successfully manages to kick the habit, he loses all three moves and becomes, once again, a 3rd level Wizard. Since the other moves he chose upon levelling up were Arcane Ward at 3rd level and Arcane Armor at 6th level (which replaces Arcane Ward), he retains Arcane Armor, even though he is only 3rd level, but he can no longer prepare any of his 5th level spells.*

**If you ever go back to the drug after getting sober**, mark XP.

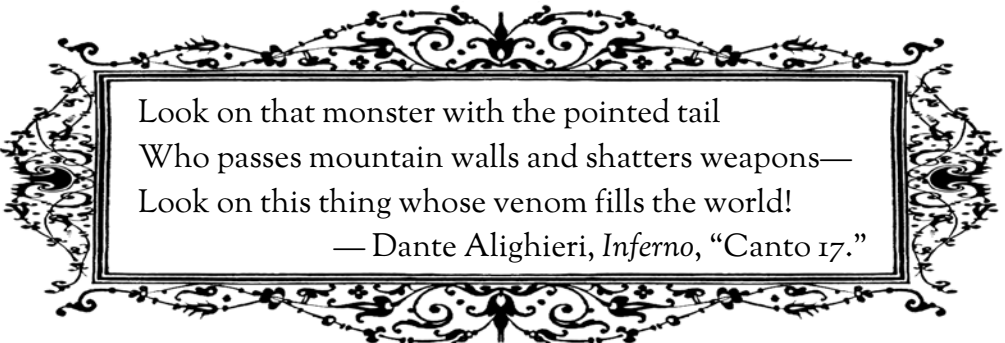
# Infernalist

## A New Compendium Class

When you take your last breath in the presence of **Black Larissa's diary** or **Corioleus' physical form**, before you roll, this happens: You find yourself walking uphill through a dark wood. Fast or slow, you cannot help but trudge onwards, as if some great, invisible chain were pulling you inexorably forward. After a time, the trees part. Beyond you see a huge black arch beneath a featureless grey sky. Beyond the gateway of this arch you see nothing but grey clouds and ashes.

In front of this arch sits a blond man, well dressed in dark clothes, at a small table. He is sitting comfortably, sipping some exotic kind of tea, his legs crossed in the polite style. There is a small black book on the table. When you get closer, he reaches out, as if touching the invisible chain that pulls you in and it seems to stop. You cannot go back, but you need not go forward.

He offers you the book. You may take it and leave, or refuse and pass into the hands of Death. **If you refuse**, roll for your last breath, as if you were alone in the Ghostwood Forest. **But if you take the book**, instead of your last breath, you turn around and head back. Again you walk uphill through the woods, up and back into the darkness that brought you here. You live, but you are an infernalist now, bound to the demon Corioleus.



Look on that monster with the pointed tail  
Who passes mountain walls and shatters weapons—  
Look on this thing whose venom fills the world!

— Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, “Canto 17.”



## If You Take the Book

If you make a pact with Corioleus, giving him power over your soul later in exchange for power on Earth now, the next time you level up you can take this move:

### Deal with a Devil

You have made an infernal pact with a fiend of the abyss. You can call upon this patron of yours times of need, and it will lend you its power. **Once it has done this for you a set number of times**, however, it will ask you for a favour in return. Do what the demon asks and your debt is cleared. Refuse and your debt comes due. Each demon has different powers and advanced moves that are available to you, as well as different wants and desires, and a different number of favours it will grant before asking for one in return.

**Once you make a deal with a devil and that devil is Corioleus**, the following count as class moves for you and you can choose from them when you level up:

### Dervish of the Blade

**When you fight with blades in the style of the dervish**, constantly spinning and turning, a whirlwind of deadly weapons, you inflict +1d6 damage. **When you stop fighting to perform any other action**, take -1 forward.

### Turn Your Blade Aside

**When you become involved in a fight or battle**, roll+CHA. •On a 10+, take three dice, of any size you have at hand. •On a 7-9, take two dice. •On a miss, take one die anyway, but you owe Corioleus one item in your possession. **When you take damage**, you may roll one of these dice and reduce the damage by that much, as the demon's magic seems to send your attacker's weapon spinning away from you. But if the die rolls 6 or higher, evidence of your infernal pact appears, and your blasphemy is revealed.

## Walk Around in Circles

When you perform a full counter-clockwise circumambulation of a location, object, or person, any supernatural properties they possess are revealed to you in visions. True forms are revealed to you and magical abilities shown to you in visions. If a location contains, hides, or is overlapped by another plane of existence or a supernatural realm, you may cross over if you wish—but this power cannot be used to escape Corioleus' influence. He cannot grant you access to realms where he has no purchase on your soul.

## Corioleus as Patron

Because Corioleus' special number is six, the spiralling number, he will perform five favours for an infernalist before asking for a task to be performed. The powers he will lend to an infernalist, aside from the advanced moves above (which do not count as favours granted), are as follows:

- He can cause a misfortune that befalls you (damage, debility, spell effect, etc) to be suffered by someone else instead.
- He can cause someone else to become lost.
- He can change a person's mind, for one decision.
- He can make you young again, or someone else grow old.
- He can slow down or speed up the passing of a day or night.
- He will give you a +1 bonus to a move made to commit a crime.
- He will show you the right path to take to find something or someone that is hidden.
- He will spy on someone for you, invisibly, and report their doings as accurately as possible.
- He will use one of the moves or supernatural abilities described on pages 98-99.

## Corioleus' Special Gift

If you betray someone who trusts you and murder them, you may transfer all the good luck and good fortune they would have had to another person of your choice. However, you must also choose someone to receive all the bad luck and ill fortune your victim would have experienced.

## A Favour in Return

Because his number is six, the sixth favour belongs to Corioleus. It is his for the asking, not the granting. Instead, he demands one of the following favours from the infernalist, in return for the five already granted (GM's choice):

- Determine the infernalist's most cherished activity that is also good and virtuous. This could be championing the less fortunate, conducting religious services, defending someone or something, giving charity to the poor, healing the sick, or teaching and mentoring others—anything that is done out of selflessness and compassion. Whatever it is, Corioleus demands they give it up. If the infernalist agrees, they can never participate in this activity again, and must turn violently against it if they cannot keep themselves physically away from others performing it. This includes merely witnessing the activity, which can cause the infernalist physical pain, once they have given it up themselves.
- If the infernalist has any prior religious connections, such as a patron deity, a regular church, or membership in a religious order, Corioleus demands they turn against this former allegiance, either publicly or violently. Defacing holy idols, setting monasteries ablaze, murdering priests, violating the holy ground of sanctuaries—he asks all of this and more, until a mighty blow has been dealt to this divine institution.
- Name someone the infernalist loves and cherishes, particularly someone they look up to or see as a mentor. Corioleus demands that person be murdered. Until this murder is committed, the infernalist must spend half their time plotting it, or it counts as a refusal of Corioleus' request.

The infernalist is then free to accept this request and perform the favour, or to refuse, but the choice *must* be made. It cannot be put off.

## The Choice

Once you have been granted those five favours, Corioleus presents you with a thing you must do for him. All this has been explained above.

If you refuse to do this thing, it means your flesh is forfeit. Corioleus takes possession of your body, or grants it to some other demon as a boon. Either way, your physical existence is lost to you.

If you do not refuse, and if you do this thing, your body is yours, but your soul is not. When it leaves your body, it will go to Corioleus and be his to keep. Once you have made this deal and done this thing that he asks of you, and bartered away your immortal soul, it means that heaven's gates are closed to you.

For now.

And for ever.



# The End.



In the midst of the Ghostwood, the village of Knifesbridge holds a mere few thousand souls, but trouble enough for all. A gang of bandits preys upon the local road traffic, drug addiction spreads through sleepy village streets, and corruption at the heart of municipal politics stymies all attempts to restore law and order. Worse yet, a dead witch's ghost seeks vengeance, and a demon waits to walk once more beneath the Ghostwood's leaves. At the crossroads between these fronts lies an old, abandoned tower, and the secrets buried beneath it will tear this village apart.

## Red Box Vancouver

