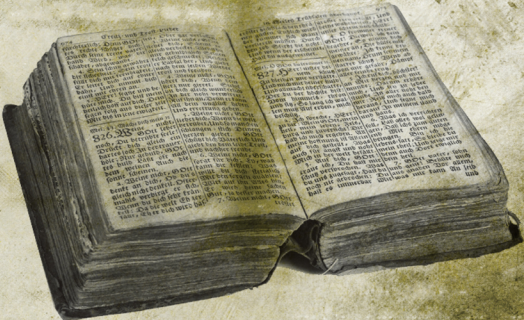


DEUS  
VULT

THE HERESIARCH OF TROYES



# DEUS VULT

## THE HERESIARCH OF TROYES

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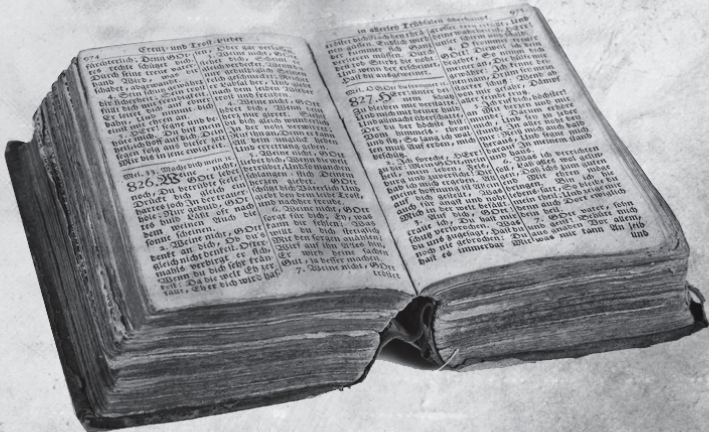
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Verse 3.0

# INTRODUCTION



This adventure takes the guardian priests into the city of Troyes, in search of a heretical preacher. The characters must follow the trail of the first group of monks to tackle this problem, which leads them to the famous 'hot fair' of Troyes and a Templar castle beset by supernatural foes. The adventure is suitable for first or second-degree guardian priests.

The tale of the Heresiarch begins in the Holy Land. The Knights of the Temple uncovered a cache of occult scrolls and magical paraphernalia in the lands near Bethlehem, including a strange sealed jar. They took their finds back to Europe, to the Chateau du Paynes, in order to study them and unlock their secrets. The chief of these researchers was a scholarly knight named Jerome, who broke the cipher on the jar's inscription and discovered it contained a bound spirit called The Joyous One. In experimenting with the jar, the Templars accidentally freed the spirit.

The Joyous One fled the castle and possessed a leper in the nearby leper colony. This leper was the first Heresiarch. He began to spread his gospel of madness and inhuman joy - the Joyous One can entwine the human soul in a spell of madness, where the victim believes he has achieved his heart's desire. The lepers put on masks and became proselytisers for the cult.

Meanwhile, a spy loyal to the Order named Alix reported the existence of the Heresiarch. The Preceptor of Paris sent four guardian priests to investigate. These monks managed to find the Heresiarch but were unable to defeat it. The Joyous One drove them insane and now these four monks wander the woods around Troyes, believing themselves to be in Hell.

Over the course of the scenario, the Templars will temporarily capture the Heresiarch, only to be bewitched by its power. The Templar Jerome then becomes the Heresiarch while the Joyous One flees to spread madness elsewhere.



# Racing Against Time

The characters are racing against time in this adventure. The more time they waste, the more time the Heresiarch has to prepare. Keep track of the number of days spent travelling and investigating. Some events in the adventure happen on a specific day, others are merely expected to happen. Expected events are in *italics* in the following table.

Day	Date	Events
	June 14 <sup>th</sup>	The Templars open the jar containing the Joyous One. It possesses the body of a leper.
	June 21 <sup>st</sup>	Alix writes to Rene, warning him of the Heresiarch.
	July 9 <sup>th</sup>	The first set of guardian priests are dispatched from Paris.
	July 12 <sup>th</sup>	The first set of guardian priests arrive in Troyes.
	July 14 <sup>th</sup>	The first set of guardian priests encounter the Heresiarch and go mad.
	July 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Rene sends word to Mont St. Michel.
1	July 24 <sup>th</sup>	The characters get their mission.
2	July 25 <sup>th</sup>	
3	July 26 <sup>th</sup>	The mad monks slaughter the merchants.
4	July 27 <sup>th</sup>	<i>The characters arrive in Paris.</i>
5	July 28 <sup>th</sup>	
6	July 29 <sup>th</sup>	<i>The characters discover the dead merchants. The mad monks are attacked by the Fair Guard.</i>
7	July 30 <sup>th</sup>	<i>The characters arrive in Troyes. The Count holds a tourney.</i>
8	July 31 <sup>st</sup>	The Count of Champagne visits the fair. The Templars recapture the Joyous One.
9	August 1 <sup>st</sup>	The Joyous One escapes. The Templar Jerome becomes the new Heresiarch.
10	August 2 <sup>nd</sup>	The Templars close for business.
11	August 3 <sup>rd</sup>	The bishop is attacked.
12	August 4 <sup>th</sup>	The Heresiarch preaches at the Champagne Fair.

## The Joyous One

The Joyous One is a spirit of madness and disorder, also known as the Lord of Misrule. It seeks to bring down existing order through madness. In human terms, it is both evil and mischievous – it claims to be a creature of chaos that brings joy but its gifts are always tainted. Long ago, when it tormented souls in the Kingdom of Israel, it was held to be a dybbuk or a djinn.

The Joyous One was imprisoned by King Solomon many centuries ago and should have been placed with the other imprisoned spirits in Solomon's Tomb. Instead, the urn containing the spirit was hidden in a cave and abandoned until the Knights Templar found it a year ago.

It can be thought of as an evil genie. The Joyous One grants 'wishes', or more accurately, it drives its victims mad and makes them believe they have attained their heart's desire. A greedy man who is touched by the spirit might think that stones are gold and bury himself alive, or sell his wife and children into slavery to earn money because his madness allows him to ignore law and social convention. The Joyous One feeds on belief and happiness – the more people it touches, the stronger it gets.

# THE JOYOUS ONE

		1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP	Combat Actions	4
STR	—	1-3	—	—	Damage Modifier	+1d10
CON	—	4-6	—	—	Magic Points	25
SIZ	—	7-9	—	—	Movement	12m
INT	15	10-12	—	—	Strike Rank	+18
POW	25	13-15	—	—		
DEX	—	16-18	—	—		
CHA	20	19-20	—	—		

*Armour:* None

*Traits:* Spirit, Worshippers, Blessing of the Joyous One, Inspiration of the Joyous One

*Notable Skills:* Insight 90%, Lore (History) 90%, Persistence 70%, Possession 80%, Spectral Combat 90%

The Joyous One can also inspire others, driving them to an unsustainable fervour. Those blessed by the Joyous One enjoy supernatural powers of strength, speed, agility and charisma – for a brief time. At best, they die of a heart attack or other systemic failure after a few months, as their body cannot keep up with the demands of the burning spirit within. At worst, they spontaneously combust from sheer joy.

**Spirit:** The Joyous One is a spirit and is vulnerable to spells and effects that target spirits. It is not a demon and does not need an anchor to remain in this world but cannot use its Blessings or Inspiration powers while disincorporated.

**Possession:** The Joyous One can possess a human host. While possessing a host, the victim's Strength, Constitution and Dexterity are all doubled.

**Worshippers:** The Joyous One can draw strength from its worshippers, taking Magic Points from them on a two-for-one basis.

**Blessing of the Joyous One:** As a Combat Action, the Joyous One can bless a target, affecting that individual and anyone in close proximity. This costs the Joyous One three Magic Points per target. The targets may each make a Persistence test opposed by the Joyous One's Spiritual Combat skill.

If a target fails, he is afflicted by the Blessing of the Joyous One. He goes insane and begins to hallucinate wildly, usually believing that he has somehow achieved his heart's desire. In combat, the character must make an Insight test each round to work out who his foes are.

After every 25-POW days, the victim may make a Persistence test to regain his sanity. A character who is aware of the spirit's ability to bewitch others may make a Persistence test every 20-POW days and will slip in and out of madness instead of being constantly deluded during this period. Effectively, a bewitched character can still be played, as long as his fellow PCs remind him every so often of what is real and what is not.

A *Heal Mind* spell can remove the Blessing. The Blessing counts as a spell of Magnitude 5 and can be dispelled normally.

**Lesser Inspiration of the Joyous One:** The Lesser Inspiration of the Joyous One gives the recipient a feeling of constant ecstatic joy and fills him with devotion to the spirit. The recipient's Strength, Dexterity and Charisma are all increased by +1D6 and he gains a +25% bonus to Athletics, Evade, Influence, Persistence, Resilience and Combat skills. Maintaining the inspiration costs the Joyous One one Magic Point per day and permanently reduces the recipient's Constitution by one point each day.

The Inspiration counts as a spell of Magnitude 3 and can be dispelled normally.

**Greater Inspiration of the Joyous One:** The Greater Inspiration works like the Lesser Inspiration but the increases to skills and characteristics are doubled. Furthermore, the recipient of the Greater Inspiration can use the Blessing of the Joyous One and the Lesser Inspiration powers. The Greater Inspiration costs the spirit 3 Magic Points per day and permanently reduces the recipient's POW by one point each day.

The Greater Inspiration counts as a spell of Magnitude 10 and can be dispelled normally.

**Exhausting:** The Joyous One must make a Resilience test after using an Inspiration or Blessing or gain one level of Fatigue.

For the statistics of Jacques Taillebois when possessed by the Joyous One, see page 94.

## The Joyful People

This is what the heretics of Troyes call themselves. They follow a bizarre inversion of rationality and faith, believing that when the Joyous One comes (or, to be more accurate, when the trickster-spirit that possesses their leader has accumulated enough power), then the social order will be turned upside down. The poor and the oppressed will have their revenge, while the great and the powerful will be punished and made to suffer.

Some of the cult's statistics change over time. For example, Subversion starts at 10% and rises by 3% per day. Thus, if the characters are delayed on the road and arrive in Troyes on Day 10 of the scenario, the cult's Subversion score will be  $10+(3 \times 10)=40\%$ . The cult starts with the following statistics:

**Subversion:** 10%, +3% per day: The cult grows rapidly in influence as the game continues, thanks to the supernatural gifts of the Joyous One. Most of those subverted by the cult are among the poor of Troyes but the cult is expanding to embrace merchants and richer citizens.

The characters can reduce the cult's Subversion by stopping the preachers in the city or by convincing people not to listen to their lies. Revealing that the preachers are hideous lepers by publicly unmasking one is an excellent way to turn people against the cult.

**Fanaticism:** 40%. The cult's message of upheaval and anarchy is appealing to those who have nothing.

Reducing Fanaticism is always difficult, especially when it is backed up by supernatural powers. The characters could possibly use Medicine or Alchemy to come up with a counter-agent to block the cult's use of mind-altering drugs.

**Concealment:** 80%, dropping by 5% per day. The cult starts off well hidden in the leper colony but as the Joyous One keeps sending out more preachers, it becomes easier to find the cult's stronghold.

Concealment can be reduced by gathering information about the cult and learning about the leper colony.

**Force:** 30% initially, rising to 80% once the cult takes over the Templar castle. Most of the cult warriors are madmen, whose only weapon is their insane belief that they are invisible. As soon as the Joyous One bewitches the Templars, though, the cult gains a number of trained and well-equipped fighting men.

Force can be reduced by killing the Templars or rescuing knights from their madness.

**Supernatural:** 20%. The Joyous One is the only supernatural threat involved in this adventure.

## Running the Adventure

Much of this adventure takes place in an overcrowded city. With the fair in town, the population of Troyes is swollen by many thousands; there are travellers here from all manner of exotic places, from England and Denmark, from the Holy Roman Empire, from the south of France, from Lombardy, Venice, Rome and even from further afield. The town is a babel of strange tongues and unusual costumes. Worse, the fair takes place at the height of summer and it is an unusually warm summer. The heat beats down on the crowded town like the blow of Vulcan's hammer, driving men to violence and madness even without supernatural impetus.

The characters must be careful and act discretely, or their unwise actions will cause widespread panic. Emphasise the heat and the closeness of the town, the crowded streets and the strange voices echoing down the alleyways, the carnival atmosphere of the fair and the growing threat of the Heresiarch. Turn Troyes into a pressure cooker.

## A Dream of Demons

In this short prequel to the main adventure, the players take on the role of the four guardian priests sent to investigate the Heresiarch. They have been driven mad by the Heresiarch's preachings and now see demons everywhere. They cut a bloody swathe through a pack of 'demons', which are actually innocent merchants on the road outside Troyes.

## On the Road to Troyes

The characters are sent from Mont St. Michel to the Paris preceptry, where Preceptor Jean outlines what is known of the situation in Troyes. From there, they travel in a caravan along with hundreds of merchants and traders to the fair at Troyes.



## **Troyes**

A guide to the city of Troyes and the great fair.

### **Pursued By Demons**

Once again, the players temporarily take on the role of the insane guardian priests, this time battling the fair guard and a knight.

### **Trail of the Heresiarch**

On arriving in Troyes, the guardian priests may explore the city and search for clues that might lead them to the Heresiarch. They rapidly discover that the heresy has but newly come to the city but is strangely well entrenched despite its newness. Supernatural compulsions must be to blame!

### **The Leper Colony**

The characters investigate the leper colony, which is the stronghold of the cult and here they learn the true nature of the Heresiarch.

### **The Chateau du Paynes**

The characters investigate the Templar castle outside Troyes and battle the crazed knights.

### **Demon Slayers**

The characters encounter the first set of guardian priests and catch a glimpse of their own future.

### **Murder in the Cathedral**

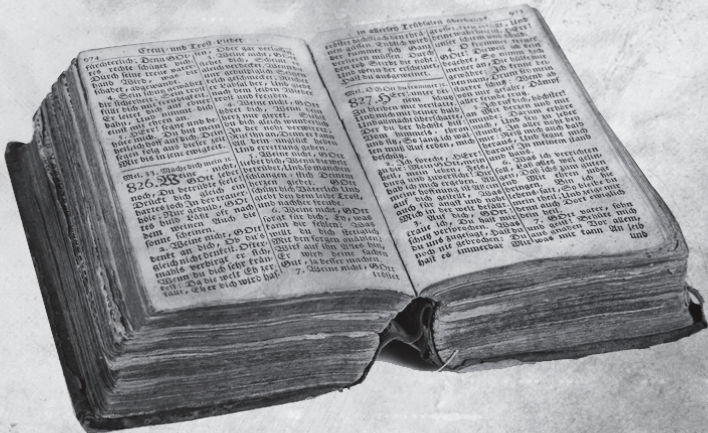
The Heresiarch attacks the bishop of Troyes as part of the revelations that are to come.

### **At The Champagne Fair**

The characters must race to the fair and eliminate the Heresiarch before his madness spreads across all of Christendom.

Verse 3.1

# A DREAM OF DEMONS



This prequel section sets the scene for the chaos that is to come.

Four guardian priests – Claude, Renaud, Victor and Andrew – were dispatched from the Paris preceptory to investigate allegations of heresy and supernatural activity in Troyes. They were bewitched by the supernatural powers of the Heresiarch and now believe that they have fallen into Hell. They are convinced that they are surrounded by demons.

Give the players the pregenerated character sheets of Claude, Renaud, Victor and Andrew. If you have extra players, they can either be an audience for this short drama, or else let them play the guards or merchants from the unfortunate caravan. Tell the extra players what is really going on, that the guardian priests are insane and are hallucinating, but make sure they do not give the game away to the guardian priest players. Describe everything as if the four characters really were in Hell and the caravan really is a demonic horror.

## Out of the Abyss

*It has been three days since you were plunged into this otherworld, three days of terror and nightmare, running from the packs of hunting hellhounds and the aerial fiends that circle constantly above this realm of tortured souls. Against the odds, you have survived but surely you cannot last much longer. The skies of this alien place burn hot indeed and you have seen no water in your travels, only streams of boiling, tainted blood.*

The four guardian priests are in a small wooded area on the road outside of Troyes. They have been roaming the countryside for three days, without food or water, raving about the hellfire and the demons, of running from dogs, crows and their own shadows.

*You have taken refuge in an outcrop of twisted obsidian spires. The larger demons – the hulking, brutish creatures bigger than houses, the ones that lumber around dragging the weight of their tremendous tusks – cannot get in here. Up ahead, cutting through this maze of black stone, is a road paved with flayed human flesh. It winds towards the horizon, where you can see a blood-red citadel crowned with lurid golden flames.*

Let the characters roleplay for a few minutes, then...

*Travelling along this ghastly road of flesh is a grotesque parade of horrors. A humanoid figure with the head of a fly leads this procession of the damned; there are armoured demons clad in tatters of human skin, scorpion-women with shamelessly uncovered bosoms and stinging tails, along with a trail of shambling monsters that appear to be made from pairs of headless human corpses sewn together at the neckstump to serve as undead beasts of burden. At the core of this nightmare tableau is an elephantine thing, a mountain of writhing yellow-green maggots that squirms along the road. Embedded in this rolling pile of maggots, you can make out human shapes – damned prisoners, on their way to torture in the hellish fortress.*

*Perhaps if you could rescue these unfortunates, you might learn of a refuge in Hell or even a way out!*

**What is Really Going On:** The ‘obsidian spires’ are trees. The demonic procession is a merchant’s caravan on the road to Troyes. The ‘fly-headed demon’ is a rich merchant, Gerard of Paris, riding at the head of the caravan, accompanied by his retinue of servants (the scorpion women) and guards (the armoured demons). The beasts of burden are mules, laden down with bolts of cloth; the mountain of maggots is a cart with various other supplies and trade goods – including some beautiful puppets, which the insane monks have mistaken for damned souls.

The guardian priests have only a brief window of opportunity in which to rescue these ‘souls’. Once the caravan exits the forest, there is no good place to ambush it. The monks must act now.

**The Caravan:** The caravan consists of four armed guards, eight servants and the merchant himself. The guardian priests can just charge in and attack directly or they can take a more cunning approach like felling trees to block the road, using ranged attacks, spooking the mules or sneaking into the caravan in disguise.

## Running the Ambush

Remember to translate the actions of the caravan guards and the merchants from the real world (‘the guard attacks a guardian priest with his sword’) into something horrific that fits the hallucination (‘the demon lashes at you with a whip of braided serpents’). The guards initially assume that the guardian priests are desperate bandits and move to drive them away from the caravan. The servants go to steady the mules. It is only when the guardian priests start using their wonder-weapons and alchemical compounds that the guards realise that they are utterly doomed.

Ideally, the guardian priests carve through the guards without too much resistance but it is possible that a lucky blow eliminates one or more of the monks. Keep track of the casualties – the aftermath of this battle will be investigated by the actual Player Characters in a later scene.

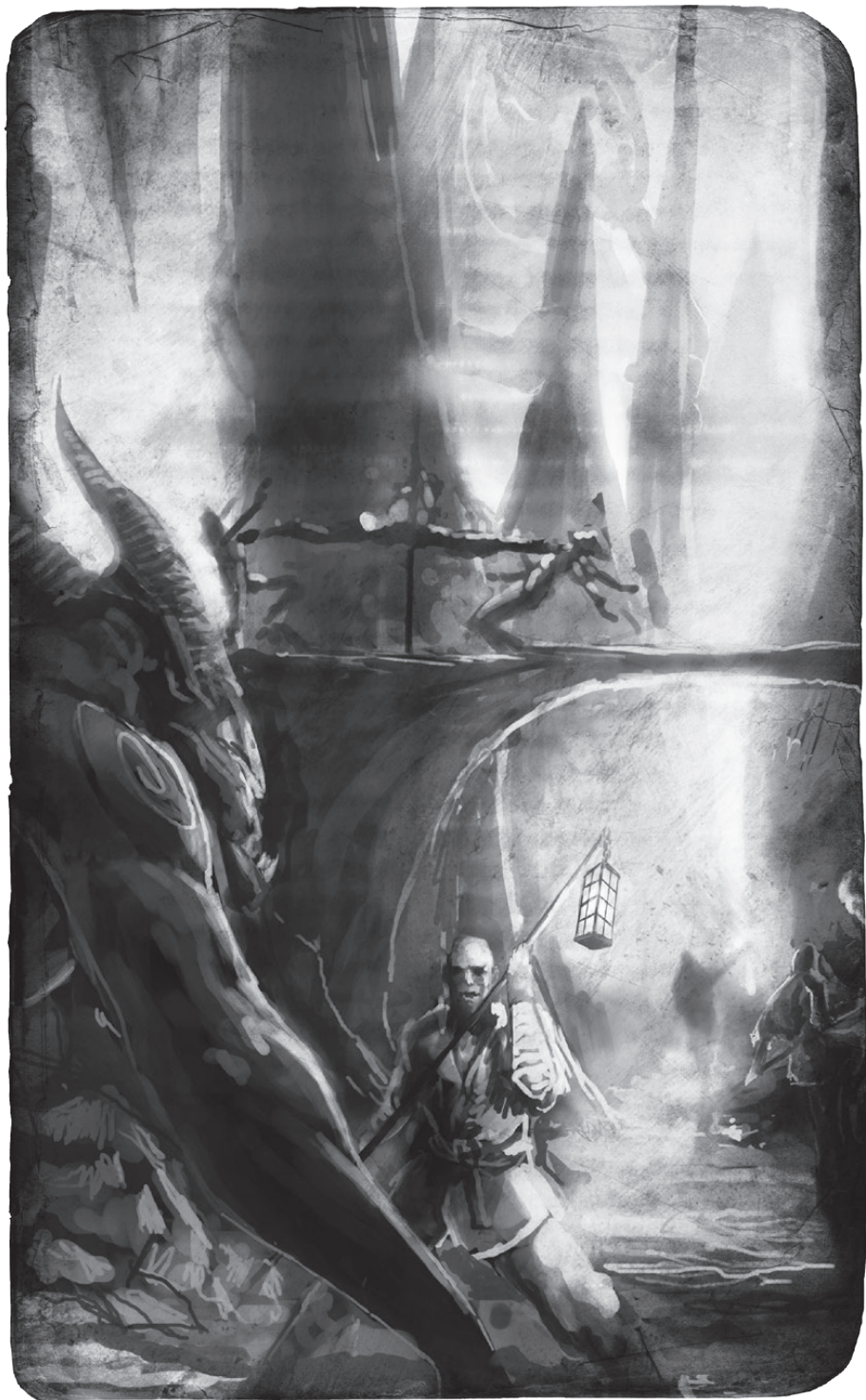
## After The Battle

This assumes that the guardian priests easily win and rescue the ‘souls’ from the caravan.

*Demonic ichor drips from your blades and the stench of the butchery fills the air... you are victorious over the forces of Hell. Plunging your hands into the writhing mass of maggots, you pull out one of the damned souls. It is small and light, like an emaciated child. Its voice is like the rustling of paper.*

*‘This is Hell’ it says, ‘and you wanted to come here.’*

Take the pregenerated characters back off the players and put them somewhere safe; you will need to refer to them again later on.



# Claude

*God has chosen us! We cannot fail!*

When you were a child in the Order's care, you asked your instructors why God had taken your parents in the plague. They told you that it was part of the divine plan; that if your parents still lived, you would not have been taken into the Order's orphanage and hence would never have become a Warrior of God. All events and actions, you realised that day, are part of a single divine plan, a great tapestry of fate that leads unerringly to some ultimate goal. You have been chosen for great things and so your parents were sacrificed on the altar of necessity. God has chosen you; you cannot fail him.

The Order is the secret hope of the world. Your destiny is to preserve that hope. You were sent to find the Heresiarch of Troyes but by his black magic, he transported you to this other world of horrors. So be it – you will fight your way back to Earth! You cannot fail.

Of your companions, none share your fervour. **Renaud** is a romantic fool ill-suited to the Order, **Victor** is an ill-bred thug and **Andrew**, whilst loyal, has doubtless imperilled his soul by studying magic.

		<b>1D20</b>	<b>Hit Location</b>	<b>AP/HP</b>	<b>Combat Actions</b>	3
<b>STR</b>	<b>14</b>	1–3	Right Leg	2/6	<b>Damage Modifier</b>	+1d4
<b>CON</b>	<b>9</b>	4–6	Left Leg	2/6	<b>Magic Points</b>	13
<b>SIZ</b>	<b>17</b>	7–9	Abdomen	5/7	<b>Movement</b>	8m
<b>INT</b>	<b>15</b>	10–12	Chest	5/8	<b>Strike Rank</b>	+15 (+8 in armour)
<b>POW</b>	<b>13</b>	13–15	Right Arm	5/5		
<b>DEX</b>	<b>12</b>	16–18	Left Arm	5/5		
<b>CHA</b>	<b>11</b>	19–20	Head	5/6		

*Armour:* Chain Coat (5), Leather Greaves (1)

*Equipment:* Crusader Blade x2 (6), Smoke Bomb x 3

*Notable Skills:* Acrobatics 76%, Athletics 106%, Brawn 101%, Culture (Norman) 40%, Evade 74%, Insight 64%, Language (French) 80%, Language (Latin) 30%, Lore (Christian Theology) 40%, Language (English) 30%, Lore (Occult) 75%, Lore (Regional) 40%, Perception 48%, Persistence 86%, Resilience 88%, Stealth 97%, Survival 34%, Track 26%, Unarmed 36%

## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Crusader Blade	M	M	96%	1d6+1	6/8

## Renaud

*It is a sorry world we live in, without love.*

There are many things you regret, a great many things indeed.

First and foremost, you regret going into the alley behind the Inn of the White Hart when running from a gang of local bullies. If you had not gone into that alley, then perhaps you would not have stepped into the middle of a battle between a monk and a trio of disguised ghouls and then the monk would have had no reason to drag you back to his monastery and later initiate you into the Order. You regret that particular choice a great deal.

There is also the fact that your hands spend more time holding a sword these days than a lute or, better yet, a woman's bosom. That pestilent oath of celibacy is also a matter for regret.

Right now, though, you really regret not stabbing the Heresiarch of Troyes to death. You and your fellow monks were sent to bring down the heretic leader but instead he used his magic to transport you into this other dimension. The chances of you escaping from this place, you fear, are slim to none. **Claude** believes you can fight your way out but he is a fanatic. **Victor** may be your best ally in this. He is always struck you as a sensible sort.

		<b>1D20</b>	<b>Hit Location</b>	<b>AP/HP</b>	<i>Combat Actions</i>	3
<b>STR</b>	<b>10</b>	1-3	Right Leg	2/5	<i>Damage Modifier</i>	+0
<b>CON</b>	<b>10</b>	4-6	Left Leg	2/5	<i>Magic Points</i>	14
<b>SIZ</b>	<b>12</b>	7-9	Abdomen	5/6	<i>Movement</i>	8m
<b>INT</b>	<b>15</b>	10-12	Chest	5/7	<i>Strike Rank</i>	+13 (+6 in armour)
<b>POW</b>	<b>14</b>	13-15	Right Arm	5/4		
<b>DEX</b>	<b>14</b>	16-18	Left Arm	5/4		
<b>CHA</b>	<b>14</b>	19-20	Head	5/5		

*Armour:* Chain Coat (5), Leather Greaves (1)

*Equipment:* War Sword (1), Scoped Automatic Light Crossbow (4) with Explosive Bolts (3), Healing Draught (1)

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 34%, Courtesy 29%, Culture (French) 60%, Dance 98%, Influence 73%, Language (French) 80%, Language (Latin) 30%, Lore (Christian Theology) 30%, Lore (Occult) 30%, Lore (Regional) 65%, Perception 44%, Persistence 33%, Play Instrument 88%, Resilience 25%, Seduction 29%, Sing 98%, Sleight 93%, Stealth 64%, Streetwise 53%, Unarmed 34%

### WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Light Crossbow	—	—	73%	1d8+1d4	4/5
Warsword	M	M	49%	1d8	4/8

## Victor

*The greatest treasure to be stolen is a secret.*

You were recruited off the streets. You would be God's thief, they told you, stealing the secrets of heretics and putting a knife to the throat of false prophets. They trained you to meld with the shadows, to lie with fluency and to masquerade as anyone from a beggar to a king. They taught you the use of poison and made you dissect corpses so that you would know exactly where to plunge your dagger.

Then they sent you after the Heresiarch of Troyes and all your stealth and cunning was useless. By his black magic, he hurled you and your companions into this kingdom of nightmares. What good is hiding in shadows, when the shadows come alive and bite at you with teeth as black as the night?

		<b>1D20</b>	<b>Hit Location</b>	<b>AP/HP</b>	<i>Combat Actions</i>	3
<b>STR</b>	13	1-3	Right Leg	2/5	<i>Damage Modifier</i>	+0
<b>CON</b>	14	4-6	Left Leg	2/5	<i>Magic Points</i>	9
<b>SIZ</b>	11	7-9	Abdomen	0/6	<i>Movement</i>	8m
<b>INT</b>	14	10-12	Chest	2/7	<i>Strike Rank</i>	+13 (+10 in armour)
<b>POW</b>	9	13-15	Right Arm	2/4		
<b>DEX</b>	14	16-18	Left Arm	2/4		
<b>CHA</b>	8	19-20	Head	2/5		

*Armour:* Silent leather greaves, vambraces, byrnie, cap (3)

*Equipment:* Bolt Sword (2) with Explosive Bolts (3), Healing Draught x2 (2), Climbing Claws (1), Choking Dust (4)

*Notable Skills:* Acrobatics 68%, Athletics 36%, Culture (German) 58%, Disguise 22%, Evade 78%, Evaluate 32%, Mechanisms 78%, Language (French) 28%, Language (German) 78%, Language (Latin) 28%, Lore (Alchemy) 28%, Lore (Christian Theology) 28%, Lore (Occult) 28%, Lore (Regional) 58%, Perception 43%, Persistence 23%, Resilience 33%, Sleight 92%, Stealth 118%, Streetwise 42%, Unarmed 62%

## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Bolt Sword	M	L	96%	1d8	6/10
Dagger	S	S	49%	1d4	4/8
Bolt Sword (Ranged)	—	—	38%	1d6	6/10



# Andrew

*The path to righteousness is as narrow as a razor's edge.*

It is as you feared - you have damned yourself and you have done it with the aid of priests and monks. The Order saw your natural intelligence and permitted you to study the occult You progressed quickly, learning the geometries of Solomon and the formulae of Abra-Melin the Mage and the hidden teachings of thrice-great Hermes. All the time, you prayed that your good intentions would shield your soul from the inevitable taint of sorcery.

Now, your fate has come upon you. The Order sent you out to hunt down the Heresiarch of Troyes and you did so - but he proved to be the greater sorcerer. Through some spell you still cannot comprehend, he transported you and your comrades to some otherworld filled with horrific creatures. The thought of a magic that could tear a hole in reality so casually staggers you and you can only surmise that your own sinful deeds somehow made it easier for his spell to take hold.

You suspect that there may be a way to use your magic to find a way home but doing so will involve opening yourself up to demonic powers. Should you doom your own soul to save your allies? Perhaps the decision would be easier if you trusted them but **Claude** is a fanatic, **Renaud** a fool and **Victor** a murderous wretch.

		<b>1D20</b>	<b>Hit Location</b>	<b>AP/HP</b>	<b>Combat Actions</b>	3
<b>STR</b>	<b>8</b>	1-3	Right Leg	2/5	<b>Damage Modifier</b>	+0
<b>CON</b>	<b>10</b>	4-6	Left Leg	2/5	<b>Magic Points</b>	13
<b>SIZ</b>	<b>12</b>	7-9	Abdomen	-/6	<b>Movement</b>	8m
<b>INT</b>	<b>17</b>	10-12	Chest	2/7	<b>Strike Rank</b>	+13 (+10 in armour)
<b>POW</b>	<b>13</b>	13-15	Right Arm	2/4		
<b>DEX</b>	<b>10</b>	16-18	Left Arm	2/4		
<b>CHA</b>	<b>13</b>	19-20	Head	2/5		

*Armour:* Leather greaves, vambraces, byrnie, cap (2)

*Equipment:* Consecrated Mace (4), Hoffman Device (2), Smoke Bomb (1), Heater Shield (1)

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 58%, Culture (Norman) 44%, Divine Fervour 38%, Evade 51%, First Aid 52%, Healing 55%, Insight 40%, Language (French) 84%, Language (Latin) 84%, Lore (Christian Theology) 44%, Lore (Occult) 94%, Lore (Regional) 44%, Manipulation 80%, Meditation 26%, Perception 55%, Persistence 66%, Resilience 30%, Stealth 47%, Unarmed 38%

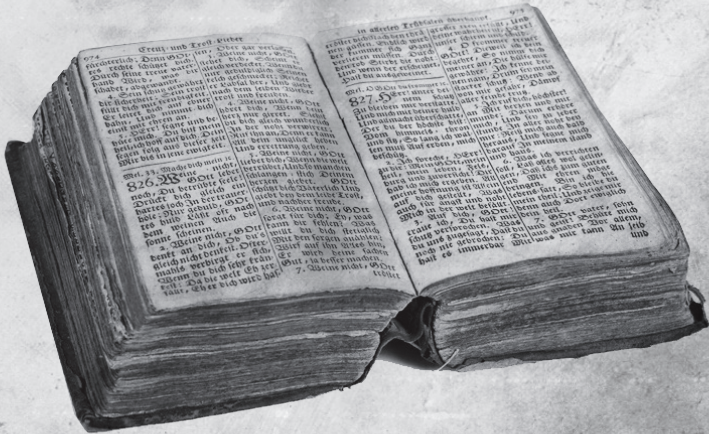
## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Mace	M	S	88%	1d8	6/6
and Shield	L	S	88%	1d4	6/12



Verse 3.2

# ON THE ROAD TO TROYES



*It is June, a blazing June that makes the crops wilt and the impious feel the hot breath of Hell on the back of their necks. Mont St. Michel is surrounded by a glittering jewelled sea as the sun reflects back off the wind-tossed surf. God is in His Heaven and all is right with the world.*

Ask the players where their guardian priests are and what they are doing. Pick one of them and read the following.

*[PLAYER NAME], you see a familiar figure approaching you. Sweat rolls off his balding pate as he strides up the steep slope towards you. Despite the intense heat of the day, he is dressed in chain mail over his thick black robes. It is Basilio de Rossi, the abbot and Superior General of the Order. He salutes you and says 'brother, there is little time to lose. Gather your fellows and take what supplies you need from the Prior Artifex. Be swift – you must be in Paris in three days time. The Preceptor of Paris will explain. Godspeed!'*

A direct command from the abbot is like the word of God to a guardian priest. The characters must gather their equipment (standard asset point allocations for their Degree; remind the players that they must buy horses too) and ride for Paris immediately.

If the characters question the abbot, he is visibly irritated but explains: *'We sent four guardian priests to investigate heresy in the city of Troyes and they have not reported back. We fear they are lost. You must complete their work and discover their fate. The Preceptor of Paris, Rene the Black, knows more of the situation in Troyes than I do – follow his commands as if they were mine. Now, be swift, for I fear the heretics have chosen their time well.'*

## Riding to Paris

It is 150 miles from the monastery gates to the city of Paris; getting there in three days is extremely demanding. There are several choices that the players must make en route:

- **Cross the sands now or wait for the tide?** The tide is coming in when the characters are about to leave. They can try racing across the causeway to make it to the mainland before the island is cut off or wait for a safer time to cross. If they wait, it costs them half a day. If they race across, call for Riding Skill Tests. A character who fumbles the test loses his horse and half a day.
- **Go across country or cling to the roads?** Taking a short cut requires a successful Lore (Regional) test. If successful, the characters gain half a day. If failed, the characters lose half a day. A critical success gains a full day; a fumble loses a full day.
- **Drive the horses to the edge or let them rest?** Pushing the horses requires a Riding test. If successful, the characters gain half a day. If failed, the characters lose a whole day. A critical success gains a full day; a fumble loses a day and kills the horse.

The ride to Paris is otherwise relatively uneventful; treat it as a red line crossing the map.

## Paris

The Paris of 1189 is a city undergoing rapid change. The charismatic and ambitious king Philip Augustus has embarked on a series of building works and the whole city echoes to the sounds of saw and hammer. As the characters ride through the narrow streets, they notice an unusual number of closed shops – many of the city's merchants have travelled to Troyes for the great fair.

# The Ghouls of Paris

The construction work in Paris uncovered an ancient ghoulish relic. Rene the Black stole it from the construction site to study it and last night ghouls crawled out of the catacombs and attacked the preceptry. They captured Rene and the relic and carried them off into the underworld. If the characters want to find out what Rene knows, they will have to rescue the preceptor – and doing so will take time they can ill afford.

## The Preceptry

The Paris Preceptry is located in a house near the Church of St. Sulpice. The house looks like a large two-storey house from the outside but there are certain hidden signs and symbols on the walls that the characters can recognise, which mark it as an outpost of the Order. The front door is locked; once the characters gain entry via the back door or a window, they discover signs of a struggle. The back door was smashed open and it looks like there was a brawl in the downstairs room.

Searching the house turns up several clues. The skill used to discover the clue is in brackets:

- **(Perception):** Whatever smashed the door was strong. There are several sets of clawed footprints. There are also signs of combat; those scars in the wall look like they were made with a Crusader sword.
- **(Insight):** Reconstructing the situation suggests that the attackers broke in through the back door and ambushed whoever was in the house. They also stole something from the study upstairs. Bizarrely, though, nothing else was taken, even though there were weapons and money lying around.
- **(First Aid):** There is not enough blood shed here for any of the wounds to be immediately lethal. Some of the blood certainly is not human.
- **(Mechanisms):** There is a secret trapdoor in the floor. It looks like the intruders never noticed it.
- **(Track):** There is a trail leading out of the door. It should be easy enough to follow.
- **(Streetwise or Difficult (-20%) Influence):** Asking around picks up a few rumours. 'That place? It's where Rene the merchant lives. Odd fellow. Strange people call there at all hours of the day or night. The last time I saw Rene, he was heading up to Les Halles.' Les Halles is the great covered market recently built by the king.
- **(Hard (-40%) Lore: Occult):** This place stinks of ghoulish.

In the upper study, the characters find a sheaf of letters from a clothier's wife called Alix, one of the Order's informants. These letters comprise Handout #1 (Page 16) and are enough to warn the players of what awaits them in Troyes. The names referred to in the letter are described further in the next chapter.

If the characters try to open the trapdoor, call for a Hard (-40%) Mechanisms roll. If this test is failed, a trap is triggered – call for a Difficult (-20%) Perception roll. If this second roll is successful, the character hears a faint click as he unlocks the trapdoor. If both rolls are failed, then the unlucky first player down the ladder activates the trap – the whole basement is sprayed with Greek fire for three rounds after weight is put on the ladder. Anyone in the basement takes 1D4 damage to all locations each round and

## PARIS WARREN ENCOUNTER TABLE

Roll	Encounter
0 or less	<b>A Pack of Ghouls:</b> 1d6 ghouls plus one per Player Character. This is a hungry pack of hunters, out searching for the intruders.
1	<b>A Lone Ghoul:</b> A lone ghoul, perched on a coffin and gnawing on a leg bone. The ghoul's attention is focussed on its meal and it does not notice the approach of the characters. However, if not slain immediately, it will run off into the darkness and alert its kin. Any future encounters of this type are lone ghoul scouts, looking for the intruders.
2	<b>Unexpected Pit:</b> The lead guardian priest runs into an unexpected pit. The character must make a Perception or Evade test (whichever is higher); if failed, the character falls into the pit and takes 1D6+1 damage to a random leg.
3	<b>Treacherous Tunnel:</b> The tunnel floor here is especially uneven, the roof is low and the characters have to clamber over debris and fallen stones. An Athletics roll is necessary to get past these obstacles. Failure means the characters cannot pass this way and lose any accumulated bonuses to their Encounter Table rolls.
4	<b>Empty Corridors:</b> Nothing of note, just empty coffins and the smell of ghouls.
5	<b>Treasure Trove:</b> A coffin contains (roll 1d6) 1-3: a handful of coins, 4-5: a lucky amulet, 6: a rusted short sword.
6 or more	<b>The Ritual Chamber:</b> The characters have found the heart of the ghoul nest.

has to climb out of the basement to roll on the floor as the basement is completely saturated with the chemical spray.

Assuming the characters do not get incinerated by the fire trap, they discover that the basement contains a cache of weapons and supplies – mostly conventional swords and armour but also two Crusader swords and a chest full of alchemical compounds.

## Les Halles

Investigating Les Halles in the centre of the city is largely a dead end but the characters can pick up an odd tale from some workmen. Two days ago, they were digging the foundations of a new building just off the market and they accidentally broke open a strange leaden coffin. The foulest stench imaginable issued forth, sickening all those present. Inside the coffin was a withered corpse '*like a man but also like a dead goat*' and clutched in the corpse's bony hands was a weird idol.

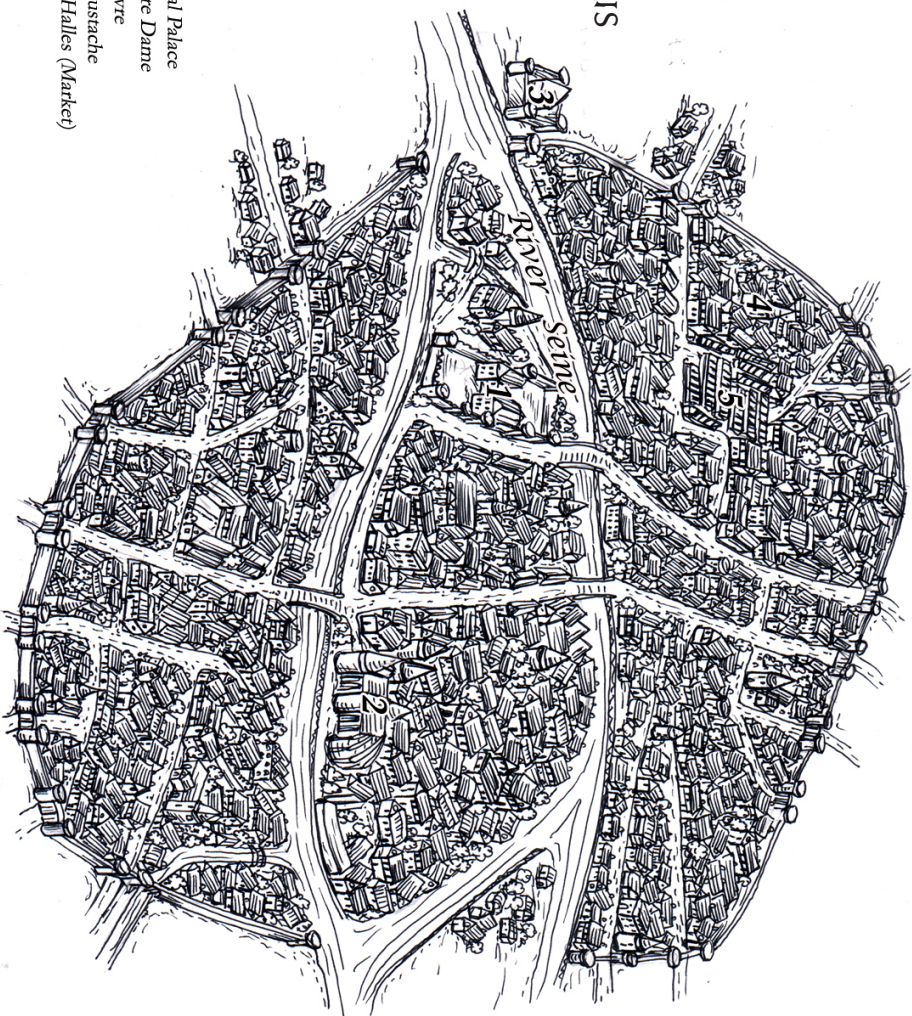
The local priest was called to drive away any evil spirits that might be lurking in the grave. They covered it with a canvas overnight and when they returned the next morning, both corpse and idol had vanished. They did find a curious burnt patch of ground nearby – any guardian priest who examines the patch can tell that someone used Greek fire to incinerate something, most likely the 'goat'-like corpse.

## Following the Trail

If the characters wish to rescue Rene, they can follow the trail out into the streets of Paris, a trail that will lead them to the Catacombs. The ghoul pack that abducted Rene travelled at night and stayed away from humans, so the trail winds its ways through the hedgerows, the woods and the back alleys.

Along the way, call for a Perception test. The character who succeeds by the most finds a small scallop-shell token on the ground. The scallop-shell is a symbol of pilgrims but is also used by the

# PARIS



## Key

1. Royal Palace
2. Notre Dame
3. Louvre
4. St Eustache
5. Les Halles (Market)

Order on occasion. Rene obviously dropped this shell to let any other monks know they were on the right track.

The trail ends in a field surrounded by a few tumble-down old stone walls. These are Roman ruins that have been quarried for stone over the years. In one spot there are a few old flagstones set into the ground and the earth around one of them shows signs of being recently disturbed. Searching around the field also turns up a few gnawed bones and a Medicine roll confirms them as being those of a human child.

Lifting the flagstone requires a Difficult (-20%) Brawn test. Lifting it *quietly* raises the difficulty to Hard (-40%). A stench that seems to flow from Beelzebub's own backside issues forth from the depths below. There is no ladder or steps down, just a very steep slope. Moving on the slope at speed without falling requires an Athletics test.

## Into the Catacombs

The slope leads into a warren of tunnels. These are part of the old Roman burial chambers. The corridors are lined with coffins, most of which are shattered and alarmingly empty of bones.

Emphasise the cramped conditions (-20% to attacks with Large weapons, -10% with Medium weapons), the darkness, the stench and the fact that there could be any number of ghouls lurking down here. All the tunnels look the same, too, so the characters are in danger of becoming lost.

There is no light down here, the floors are treacherous and the characters must move silently to avoid alerting the ghouls. It is Hard (-40% to Tracking) to follow the trail down here - ghouls have been tramping up and down these corridors for centuries. If the character succeeds in the tracking attempt, it is worth a +2 bonus to rolls on the Warren Encounter Table.

As the characters make their way through the warrens, roll 1D6 on the Paris Warren Encounter Table. Call for a Stealth test from the least stealthy character (or all characters, if the guardian priests split up); apply a -1 penalty to the Encounter Table roll if the Stealth test is failed and a +1 bonus for each previous Encounter Table roll.

In the central ritual chamber are a dozen ghouls, dancing and gibbering around a coffin. Lying in the coffin is a man dressed in the black robes of a guardian priest. He is bound and his hands have been lashed around a small ugly leaden idol. There is a disturbing energy in the air, a sense of rising power as if a storm was about to break over this underground chamber.

The ghouls are distracted by their ritual, so the characters have a moment to prepare their attack. If they catch Rene's eye, the elder monk will not give their position away but will call a ghoul over once they are ready. He will then head-butt this ghoul with all his might - a clear signal for the characters to attack!

The characters are heavily outnumbered, so a quick strike to free Rene and retrieve the idol is the best tactic. The fight takes place in extremely close quarters - the ghouls are like a solid wall of claws and flesh and there are all manner of tunnels and passageways for the characters or the ghouls to retreat into.

- Bright light or open flames repel the ghouls. A ghoul will retreat if threatened with a burning torch but they will also try to ambush or overwhelm characters armed with fiery weapons, ideally by ganging up on them or attacking them from behind.
- Although there are a dozen ghouls here, the place is so cramped that only two or three ghouls can attack a single Player Character at most.



- The ceiling in this room is unstable – a charge of blasting powder or a very solid blow that inflicts 10 or more damage can collapse it.
- If the characters are losing the fight, let a player spend a fate point to find Rene’s belongings strewn around the floor. Rene was carrying a Crusader sword, two vials of Flaredust and a vial of Blasting Powder.

Once freed, Rene grabs whatever weapon he can – a leg-bone if nothing else – and urges the characters to flee. Retrieving the idol is not a priority for him but if the characters can grab it, it will prove useful later on. If they have Flaredust, he shouts at them to use it, as the ghouls fear the light. The Preceptor also knows the way back out of the corridors, as he memorised the route when he was being dragged in.

As soon as they are out of the catacombs, Rene takes charge and leads the characters to a small shack on the outskirts of the city – the Preceptry is compromised now. This shack is not much but it is shelter for the night. ‘There are some emergency supplies around here somewhere’ he mutters as he digs around in a pile of skins and produces a stoppered jug of surprisingly excellent wine.

## Rene the Black

The Preceptor of Paris is a guardian priest of the Third Degree. He was severely wounded in a botched investigation in Denmark (there is a lake there where monsters dwell) and is no longer fit for field work. He has gone a little soft with easy living and good wine but he still has a core of steel. His nickname of ‘the Black’ comes from his hair, which was jet-black when he was younger. Ever since that lake, though, most of it has turned white.

The ghoul problem is unrelated to the Heresiarch of Troyes but the characters will obviously have questions about it. Rene tells them what he knows – the king’s workmen dug up a strange coffin that contained a misshapen corpse that held the idol. Suspecting that the idol was supernatural, Rene stole it during the night and took it back to the preceptry to study it. The ghouls attacked the following night.

He suspects that the idol somehow drew the ghouls to it. Worse, the ghoul ritual that the characters interrupted seemed to be a magical rite to bind him to the idol as a replacement keeper for the one he destroyed. He is very grateful to the characters for rescuing him. Insightful characters may notice that Rene’s confidence is born of bravado; his lack of caution when dealing with the supernatural has destroyed the Paris preceptry and nearly got him killed.

If the characters rescued the idol, then Rene asks if they want to take it with them. The further away it is from the ghouls, the better. If the characters do not wish to be burdened with a cursed idol, he accepts their refusal – he will bring it to Mont St. Michel as soon as he can but he must first erase the evidence of the Preceptry.

## The Heresiarch

The characters are really here to learn about the Heresiarch, of course. The tale begins with one of Rene’s spies, Alix. She is the wife of one of the more successful merchants in Troyes and for many years she has passed on useful information to the Order. Most of her reports are inconsequential things – rumours, tales of the cloth trade, gossip about the nobility and the church – but her latest reports were much more troubling. A strange heretical cult appeared in the city of Troyes and grew with alarming rapidity.

The report warranted investigation, so Rene dispatched four of his monks – Claude, Renaud, Victor and Andrew, all experienced agents of the Order – to Troyes to deal with the matter. They left

three weeks ago and have not reported back. At the very least, they should have sent word through Alix. He can only assume that they are dead or captured.

Give the players Handout #1 (page 29) if they have failed to find it so far.

## Troyes and The Fair

Rene suspects that the location and time of these heretical preachings is no co-incidence. Troyes is a prosperous city at any time but this month it hosts the Hot Fair.

The Fairs of Champagne are perhaps the greatest market in Europe. Six times a year, a great fair is held in the county of Champagne. Merchants come from far and wide to sell their wares and trade. Cloth and wool from northern Europe is exchanged for Milanese weaponry and spices from the east. The Fairs are a time for settling debts and grand financial transactions – especially in the last few years, thanks to the influence of the Knights Templar. The Templars, with their vast wealth and network of castles across Europe, have become the bankers of Christendom.

The fairs are of such importance that they have the protection of the Count and a special police force, the Keepers of the Fair, exists just to maintain order for those few crowded weeks. Visitors from every nation and agents of every king and merchant in Christendom will be in Troyes for the fair. From there, a heretical belief could spread like wildfire and the Order might not contain the contagion.

Finding this so-called Heresiarch is vitally important. The heresy must be cut out at the source.

Rene advises that the characters continue on to Troyes. If they wish to disguise themselves as merchants, he can supply them with suitable clothing and a few mules. He also suggests that the first step should be making contact with Alix; she will be able to shelter the characters and aid their investigations but they should be wary. The first Commandery he sent to Troyes were also told to make contact with Alix. She may have been subverted by the heretics.

## Riding On

It is another three days' travel from Paris to Troyes. If the characters do not accept Rene's offer of disguises and just ride for Troyes, they can make it there in two days.

## The Killers on the Road

En route to Troyes, the characters run into another merchant and his entourage. The merchant is named Nabon; he is a Parisian mercer and a representative of the influential guild of mercers. He travels with a dozen crossbowmen and two score servants, aides, his wife Pernelle and his young apprentice Yon. The head of his guards is a churlish, sullen Lombard mercenary called Daufer.

Nabon is a talkative and curious fellow, interested in everything. Indeed, it seems as though it is impossible for him to sit quietly – if he is not working, he is talking to anyone or everyone. He will engage a bishop or a beggar in conversation with equal enthusiasm. His eye is always on the possibility of making a deal. For the characters, Nabon may be something of a curse – if they are trying to keep a low profile, then having to engage Nabon in conversation at night may test their patience and their cover identities to the limit.

If the characters ask about Nabon's business at the fair, he grumbles that his main role is to deliver a letter to representatives of the Bishopric of Troyes, settling a considerable debt owed to them. Personally, he feels that the letter is a mistake and that the guild should wait until next year and negotiate a better deal in the meantime. As it stands, he and every other mercer stands to pay a 'king's

ransom' to the Bishop, money he can ill afford. Nonetheless, he will obey his masters in the guild and deliver the documents. Perhaps, if he is lucky, he can make back some of the money at the Fair.

Pernelle is a quiet woman but there is a curious intensity to her gaze. She is quite pretty and is obviously several years younger than her husband. She wears a strange religious symbol in place of a crucifix; a Lore (Christian theology) roll suggests that it is a Cathar symbol. The Cathars do not honour the cross Christ died on, believing it to be a symbol of torture and suffering, not sacrifice. She also speaks with an accent suggesting she comes from the Languedoc, the heartland of Catharism. In 1189, the Catholic Church frowns on Catharism and speaks out against it but the full brunt of the Inquisition and the Albigenian crusade lie years in the future. To be a Cathar in this age is unusual but not unacceptable in secular society. Pernelle spends much of her time speaking in low tones with Yon.

Yon is a nervous young man; this is his first visit to the Champagne Fair and he is obviously worried about failing his master. He sits in the wagon, keeping an eye on the heavy chest containing the money and documents belonging to Nabon and the mercer's guild. A successful Insight roll suggests that Yon's devotion to Pernelle may not be entirely honourable; tales of apprentices cuckolding their masters are almost as common as those of apprentices being treated as slaves by their master's wives.

Daufer takes an immediate dislike to the guardian priests. The big Lombard despises monks (if they are in disguise, then he despises Normans instead). He considers them weak and greedy (or, in the case of Normans, uncivilised and greedy) and warns them several times to keep out of his way. He openly suggests that they could be scouts working for a band of thieves. Nabon dismisses this idea out of hand – the roads near Troyes are some of the safest in Europe right now. There is so much well-guarded traffic that no bandit would dare come near the fair. Nabon is travelling with a dozen guards and that is a comparatively small entourage! When his warnings are dismissed so casually, Daufer mutters and sulks.

Asking around, the other guards tell the characters that Daufer has a gambling problem. He loves to wager on dice but has abominable luck. He is paid more than any of the others but is still penniless. Even Yon won money off Daufer.

## The Theft

If the characters camp with the merchant caravan overnight, then they are woken by a shout of alarm the next morning. As is his nervous habit, Yon checks the chest first thing in the morning and the document promising payment from the Mercer's Guild of Paris to the Bishopric of Troyes has vanished!

If the characters avoided interacting with Nabon and the other NPCs, then suspicion immediately falls on them. Pernelle whispers to her husband that those strange monks must have stolen the documents! Daufer orders the characters to hand over their bags so he can search them. If the characters want to avoid their secret wonder-weapons and other tools being pawed by an uncouth Lombard, they must act quickly and solve the crime themselves.

The other main suspect is Daufer. He has gambling debts to pay, is unpopular and has quarrelled openly with Nabon. The stolen documents could be sold for a considerable sum and he was on watch last night. If accused, Daufer offers to let his belongings be searched but then Yon pipes up, suggesting that Daufer could have hidden the stolen documents in the woods with the intention of recovering them later.

The players may suspect Nabon himself – he has easy access to the chest and he has reason to destroy or steal the documents, especially if he thought he could blame the crime on the PCs or Daufer. With the documents gone, he can postpone his debt to the Bishop of Troyes for a year.

The true thief is Yon, the apprentice. Pernelle convinced him to burn the documents; she is a Cathar sympathiser and used this opportunity to aid her husband financially, doing what he dared not to and also attacking the Catholic church by denying them the money from Paris. If the characters examine Yon's campfire, they find a few scraps of vellum and a melted blob of wax that must once have been a seal.

If the characters solve the crime, then Nabon says he will deal with his disobedient wife and apprentice privately. He now owes the characters a favour.

## Death on the Road

A day outside of Troyes, the characters (and Nabon's caravan if they are travelling together) come upon a scene of absolute horror – the aftermath of the crazed guardian priests' attack on the other merchants that the players played through in *A Dream of Demons*. This time, describe the scene as it really is – instead of maggots and scorpion-women, there are butchered bodies and blood pooled an inch thick on the road. There is a wagon in the middle of the carnage that has been looted and burned; the characters can find several broken marionettes amid the debris.

The players may be able to work out, from the physical evidence or their own intuitions, that this is the aftermath of the scene they played through from the other side. This is especially obvious if the insane guardian priests used wonder-weapons like blasting powder or Crusader Swords, or if any of them died in the battle.

## Arriving in Troyes

After two or three days travel, the characters arrive at Troyes. The roads immediately around the city are choked with traffic – merchants and their entourage, hawkers, mountebanks, beggars and whores – but eventually, the characters pass through the west gate of the city called the Porte de Paris.

Somewhere in this crowded medieval city is the Heresiarch.

If the characters head straight to Alix's house, see the section on Alix on page 20. If they begin investigations immediately, at an appropriate juncture, run *Pursued by Demons* (page 21) as soon as possible after the characters reach Troyes.

# The Ghoul Idol

The idol is a spirit fetish, the anchor for an otherworldly entity, a lord of the dead.

The presence of the spirit in the idol causes several disturbing supernatural effects:

- Ghouls can sense the idol and are drawn to it.
- Worms, crows and other carrion-eaters are also drawn to the idol. Put it down on the ground, even for a minute and the earth beneath it seethes with insects.
- Those who sleep near the idol must make a Resilience roll at night. If the test fails, the sleeper suffers from a form of paralysis at night; while sleeping, he is cold and stiff as a corpse and when he awakens, it takes him several minutes to rub feeling and warmth back into his limbs.

The ghouls bound the spirit to the idol and then bound the idol to a human to serve as a mouthpiece and interpreter for the spirit. A character who carries the idol may, over time, become bound to it. After carrying the idol for a number of days equal to the character's POW, secretly make a Persistence test for the character. If he fails, he becomes psychically linked with the idol. If he succeeds, he must make another Persistence test after another POW days, at a cumulative -20% penalty.

A bound character can communicate with and command the spirit. By spending three Magic Points, the spirit can drag back a soul to a recently dead corpse, allowing the dead to speak for a few minutes. By spending five Magic Points, the spirit can animate a corpse as a zombie for up to an hour.

The bound character is affected by his link to the idol. Over the course of several weeks, the character becomes increasingly ghoul-like.

Week	#1	#2	#3	#4
Strength	+0	+1	+2	+3
Charisma	-1	-2	-3	-4
Natural Armour	0	0	0	1
Visible Effects	Greyish skin	Longer canines	Light sensitivity	Ghoul features

## HANDOUT 1

Troyes, 21<sup>st</sup> June

My brother in Christ,

I pray God that this letter finds you well and that the solemn duties of your most holy office are not beyond your strength to bear. In Saint Sebastian's name, I greet you.

The Keepers of the Hot Fair in Troyes this year are Aribert the Moneylender and Foulque the Spicer. Aribert I know little of, save that he is a Christian. Of Foulque, it is said that his trade caravans bring more than pepper and saffron from the East and I have heard tell that he traffics with devils and collects books of magic. Such venomous rumours are said of any man who accumulates a fortune, of course, and while I shall endeavour to discover more of him, I dare not do more than report what the fishwives whisper.

Count Henry grows eager to depart for the Holy Land and he ordered 50 bolts of cloth from my husband for the making of tabards for his knights. He begs our indulgence and wishes to have credit and it is widely known that the coffers of Champagne have been emptied to pay for his soldiers. I surmise he will try to borrow more money at the Fair and I shall learn who holds his debts and what the terms are, if I can.

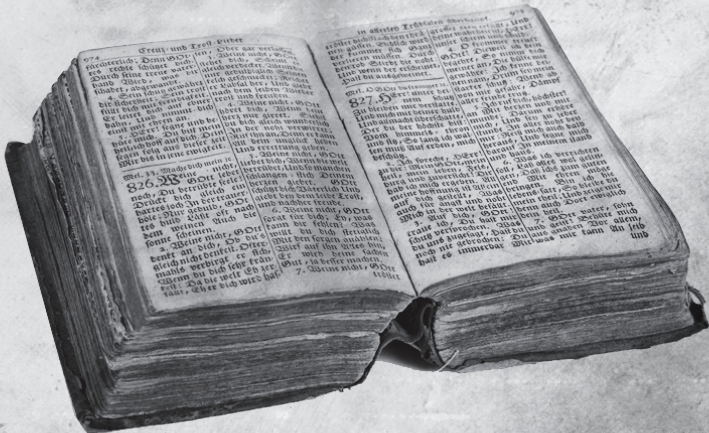
Of late, I have heard a strange tale repeated over and over. It speaks of a band of holy men who are coming or, in some versions, have already come to Troyes. These holy men have been absolved of all sins and so they rejoice. Those who join them shall also become sinless. This is plainest heresy and I fear that this message may seduce many, especially with the shepherd Manassé no longer attending to all his duties. The tales all agree that a preacher will come to give the good news. This preacher is the root of the heresy and warrants, I think, the attention of the Order.

I remain your most faithful servant and a devotee of the Divine Path

*Alix*

Verse 3.3

# TROYES



Founded as a Roman town 1,000 years ago, today Troyes is the seat of a bishop and the second city of Champagne, one of the richest regions in the kingdom of France. Some 10,000 citizens call the city home.

The town is built on the river Seine, which is choked with run-off and debris from the tanner's district. At the height of summer, it stinks to high heaven. Roughly speaking, the town west of the river has the new commercial district in the north and the poorer quarter in the south, while east of the river is the old town, including the cathedral and the palaces and castles of the count of Champagne, as well as the pasturage and farmland enclosed by the walls.

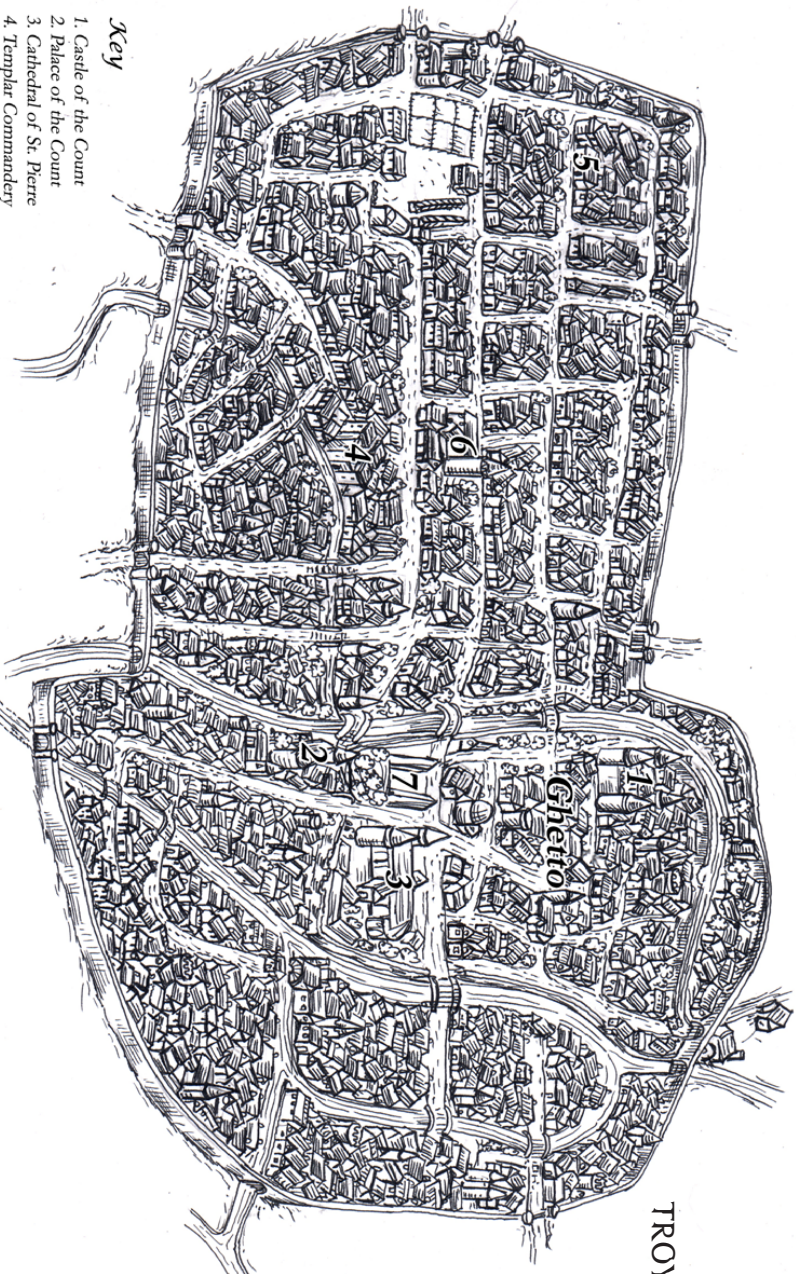
Troyes is a typical medieval town. Buildings crowd in on each other and in many streets the upper stories sag so far over the street that it is possible to step from one rooftop to the other. The streets are unpaved; in winter, the rains turn them to muddy swamps but right now in summer they are dusty dirt tracks, streaked with animal dung and human waste that has been thrown from windows. A rich merchant might live in a house that is two or even three or four storeys tall, while a poor family lives in a single room and many buildings in town are shacks and hovels. There are barns and cowsheds even on main streets. The town echoes to the sound of many churchbells.

## Locations

- 1. Castle of the Count:** This fortification is not the seat of the Counts of Champagne – their seat is in Provins but Count Henry is resident in Troyes for the duration of the fair.
- 2. Palace of the Count:** The castle is used only in times of war; this smaller palace is the usual home of the count and is vastly more comfortable than the draughty castle.
- 3. Cathedral of St. Pierre:** There are more than a dozen churches, not to mention a handful of abbeys, priories and friaries in the city, however, this is the most important. The bishop of Troyes is a wealthy and influential figure in the church but the current cathedral does not reflect his power, being comparatively small and humble.
- 4. Templar Commandery:** The Templars have long been associated with this region; the order was officially recognised here at the Council of Troyes in 1129 and in the 80 years since, they have built this great commandery on the Rue du Temple. The Templar order is heavily involved with the Fair; they enjoy a monopoly on wool weighing and also work as bankers and money-changers.
- 5. Alix's House:** This is the home of Gerner, a merchant of Troyes and his wife Alix; she is a friend of the Order. See *Alix*, on page 20.
- 6. Ghetto:** The 'Broce aux Juifs' is the Jewish district of the city. In this time of crusades and religious fervour, the Jews of Europe often suffer attacks from Christian youths. Those of Troyes, though, are so important to the smooth running of the all-important fair that they enjoy the protection of the Count.
- 7. The Church of St. Jean au Marché:** The Feast of St. Jean takes place during the Hot Fair and so the church of St. Jean is the traditional centre of the fair.
- 8. Hospital-Dieu-le-Comte:** This hospital was endowed by Count Henry I and is acclaimed as one of the greatest centres of healing in Europe.



# TROYES



## Key

1. Castle of the Count
2. Palace of the Count
3. Cathedral of St. Pierre
4. Templar Commandery
5. Alix's House
6. The Church of St. Jean au Marche
7. Hospital-Dieu-le-Comte

## The Champagne Fair

There are six Fairs of Champagne held each year; two in the nearby city of Provins, two in Troyes and one each in Lagny and Bar-sur-Arbe. Merchants come from all over Europe to trade at the Fair. The first 10 days of the Fair are given over to the trade of cloth and wool, then the Fair's focus switches to spices, cheeses and other goods that must be weighed. All through the Fair, there is trade in other goods, from livestock to precious metals or weapons. The money-changers and money-lenders also do great business during the Fair; the importance of the Fair as a clearing place for debts and a time to settle accounts between distant trading partners cannot be understated.

The fair is overseen by two Keepers of the Fair, drawn from the ranks of the town's merchants and burghers. These Keepers oversee a small army of clerks, notaries, accountants, assayers and servants, including more than 100 guards. Crimes committed at the Fair are tried at the Fair; those found guilty may be exiled from Troyes and, worse, unable to return to their home city - if their former home lets them return, then the merchants of that city will be banned from future Fairs. The threat of economic isolation is a powerful one, so the Fair is surprisingly crime-free despite the vast wealth that flows through it.

The heart of the Fair is the Church of St. Jean on the Grande Rue but there are stalls and merchant halls spread throughout the city. Every inn in the town is full; travellers rent rooms in private houses or sleep in tents. The streets of Troyes ring with foreign voices and the cries of salesmen, hawking everything from fish to magical charms and relics from the Holy Land.

### Outside the Walls

Troyes is partially surrounded by forest, although much of the woodland has been cleared for farming. There are several major castles within a short ride of the town. One plays a major role in this adventure - the Chateau du Paynes, a Templar castle some seven miles north-east from the town. This castle was the home of the knight who founded the Templars 80 years ago, Hugh de Paynes.

Another important location is the leper colony, the Leperserie des Deux Eaux, in the woods east of town.

### Time Keeping In Troyes

The clock keeps ticking while the characters are in Troyes. Most avenues of investigation take half a day to follow and it similarly takes half a day to get from Troyes to one of the outlying locations and back again. The players will likely have to split up to follow every lead - if they do so, the GM should cut from one character to another at dramatically appropriate moments, so that none of the players feel left out of the game.

# Important NPCs

## Count Henry II

The dashing young Count has only just come into his own. His father, Henry I, died eight years ago and his mother Marie ruled in his stead until Henry II came of age. His mother is the sister of King Philip II of France, making Henry one of the most important nobles in the whole country. He is unmarried and will not take a bride until he returns from Crusade. The Hot Fair is one of the last duties he must oversee before departing. (In fact, Henry II will never return from the Holy Land – in three year's time, he marries Queen Isabella of Jerusalem and becomes King of Jerusalem.)

Henry II is brash and vigorous, he cannot wait to be off with his knights. Funding his expedition requires a huge amount of money and he is on the verge of beggaring the county to equip his army. Any disruption to the Champagne Fair incurs his wrath.

## Bishop Manassé II

The elderly bishop of Troyes was once a keen political operator, a power-broker and manipulator but senility overcame him in the last few years. Today, Manassé is a kindly old fellow, easily confused and more than a little simple. His aides try to keep him away from the common folk, in case he hands over the keys to the treasury to some beggar or mistakes a stray dog for an angel again.

## Aribert and Foulque

These two merchants – a moneylender and a spice-trader respectively – are the elected Keepers of the Fair. Both are wealthy residents of Troyes but neither has a reputation for complete honesty. The word on the street is that Aribert is a pawn of the Templars, who bought up many of his debts and now play him like a puppet. As for Foulque, while he has contacts and trading partners that stretch from Paris to Baghdad, business is just a means to an end to him; he is said to be a mystic and possibly a secret alchemist, and has spent a great deal on relics and magical items from the East.

## Street Encounters

If the characters are exploring the streets of Troyes, throw in one of the encounters described here. Some of them give clues to the main investigation.

**1. Whispers of Heresy:** The characters overhear two citizens talking about the Joyous, a new band of preachers and holy people who will soon come to deliver Troyes from sin. They are joyous because they have been washed clean of all taint and so live in Heaven and on Earth at once. According to the rumour, the Joyous walk amongst the townsfolk in disguise but soon will reveal themselves in glory!

**2. Wild Horse:** A horse, panicked by the jostling crowds, bolts down the road in a wild charge, dragging a young stableboy behind it. One character is right in the path of the stampeding beast. A simple (+20%) Evade test lets the character dodge the horse but the stable boy will have his skull smashed to pieces against the ground unless the characters intervene to save him.

**3. The Madman:** A deranged lunatic begins to preach to the crowd. He announces that he is John the Baptist returned and that soon all will know the joys of the kingdom of Heaven. Laugh, laugh and the burden will be lifted from your hearts! The Fair guards soon arrive and shove the madman into the filth of an alleyway to shut him up but that just makes him laugh in a disturbing, high-pitched and incessant cackle. Most of the crowd are amused by the madman's plight but the characters glimpse a pair of Templar monks who look stony-faced and worried at the madman's antics.

**4. The Moneylender:** The characters come upon a knot of young men, probably servants and apprentices, who are beating up an older man. The victim is obviously one of the Jews of Troyes. If

## Finding Shelter

The obvious place to stay in town is with Rene's contact Alix. Alternatively, the characters can just camp on the pasturage in the south of town or outside the walls entirely. Unsubtle characters can also stride up to the bishop, wave their Blessed Rings and demand rooms in his palace.

the characters intervene, the gang argues that the Jew is a moneylender and a practitioner of usury; worse, he refused to lend money to outfit one of the gang's friends, Gilbert, as a knight to go with Count Henry II on crusade. The old Jew begs for mercy; he did indeed refuse the request, because he believes Gilbert will certainly die on crusade and the youth could offer no surety except his word and the promise of booty from the Saracens.

**5. Wonders of the East:** One booth in the market is selling medicines and wonders from afar, not cloth. A Lore (Occult) test suggests that there are a few genuine scrolls amid the dross – nothing especially important or powerful and nothing that the Order does not already have in the vaults 10 times over but still something that should not fall into the hands of the impious. How do the characters ensure these scrolls do not fall into the wrong hands?

**6. Pickpocket:** A girl of eight years is a sneak-thief (Sleight 70%) who tries to steal the purse of one of the characters as they walk along a crowded street.

**7. A Seller of Relics:** If the characters are wearing monk's robes, then they are approached by another merchant. He introduces himself as Istario, a Venetian merchant. When in Byzantium, he obtained a most holy relic, one of Jesus' baby teeth, and now finding himself in need of money, he is prepared to sell the Holy Tooth for a reasonable price. Could the characters perhaps introduce him to a wealthy bishop or priest who would be interested in having such a relic displayed in their church?

The tooth is not actually a tooth at all but it is magical. It was created more than 1,000 years ago by Egyptian alchemists. It is a tiny insect egg, wrapped in a shell of magical nacre. The insect – a golden-green fly that shines in the darkness – that slumbers within possesses supernatural powers – anyone stung by it gains +50% to the Spirit Walking skill for 2d6 minutes but also suffers two levels of fatigue. The egg can be hatched by breaking it. Note that if the insect escapes, it will sting several people in the crowd, allowing them to see the spirit world and terrifying them.

**8. The Beggar:** A beggar approaches the characters, asking for alms. He says that he was recently cursed with leprosy but was turned away from the leper colony because they did not want another mouth to feed. He must therefore rely on the charity of others. A successful Medicine or Insight test confirms that he is actually telling the truth – he is a leper and should therefore have been accepted into the colony.

**9. Street Thieves:** A band of half-a-dozen thugs try to forcibly extract money from the monks. The characters can either flee to the safety of the Fair guards, or else show the thugs the virtues of Order combat training.

**10. Drunken Louts:** The characters are abused by a gang of drunken louts, who demand entertainment. The leader of the gang is Philip of Provins, a cousin of King Philip and an influential lord. Attacking or injuring him will bring the wrath of Count Henry down on the characters.

## Alix, Wife of Gerner

Two dozen years ago, Alix was taken by the Order and trained to be a guardian priest. She failed to complete the trials and never came to Mont St. Michel; instead, she left the nunnery and returned to the secular world. The Order ensured that, despite her low birth, she had the money and education to find a good husband – in her case, Gerner, a wealthy merchant of Troyes.

Alix has been an informant for the Order all her life. She reports to Rene in Paris once every six months on average by letter, passing on rumours and secrets. She owes the Order a great debt but her days in the nunnery are now far behind her and if she could extricate herself from her arrangement with Rene, she would. Given a choice, she would much prefer to be the wife of a rich noble instead of a spy. She wants to keep the two halves of her life as separate as possible.

## Gerner

Gerner, her husband, has no idea that his beloved wife spent her childhood being trained to fight and kill for a secret order of holy assassins. He knows that she writes to a priest in Paris every so often but he believes that it is part of her religious devotions, which he indulges out of fondness. He is a busy, self-absorbed man who considers the Troyes cloth trade to be the centre of the world and the highest possible calling. If the characters want to talk about the price of English wool versus Flemish linen, he is eager to expound further on such topics.

Fortunately for the characters, Gerner is busy with the Fair most of the time and barely notices visitors coming and going as long as they stay out of his way. However, if the characters interfere with his business or, say, getting into a running battle with the Fair guards or the heretics in his living room, he will protest quite vigorously.

## The House

Gerner's house is a typical merchant dwelling. On the ground floor is the shop and workroom. The shop opens directly onto the street via a large window, while in the back room Gerner's apprentices cut and fold cloth. The middle two floors are the family's living quarters and dining room, while the servants live in the attic. There is a stable and storerooms at the back of the house.

## Alix's Loyalty

The characters may take Rene's advice and spy on Alix for a day or two to ensure she is loyal to the Order. Her behaviour is almost entirely consistent with a burgher's wife; she oversees the household, hosts dinners for important guests from abroad and embroiders in the workroom. While the characters are watching her, she invites the occultist Foulque, one of the two Keepers of the Fair, to dinner; she is certainly associating with the rich and powerful.



## Alix's Tale

Once the characters present themselves to Alix, she ushers them into the upstairs room as quickly as possible. She is torn between relief that there is someone here to deal with the Heresiarch and frustration that she once again has to give shelter to a band of heavily armed assassins without her husband asking too many questions.

*'Tell Rene that this is the last time. This is it. I left the House of Sophia years ago, I cannot keep jumping every time your Masters whistle. You can stay here until the task is done if you must but I pray you, stay out of the way. I am Gerner's wife now, not a ward of the Order.'*

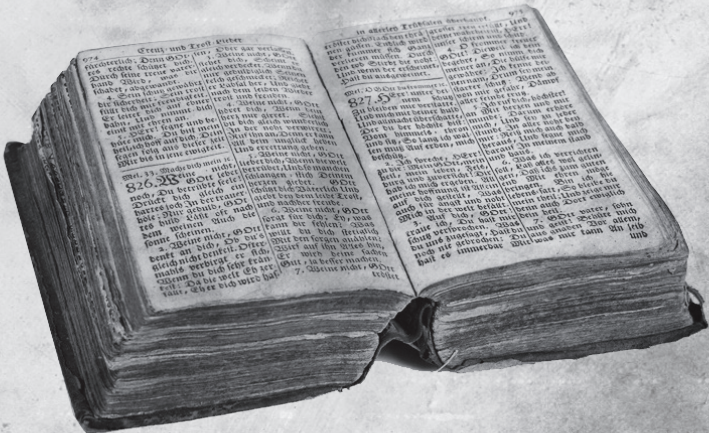
She repeats the account she gave to Rene (see handout #1 - page 29), then tells the characters what has happened since the first band of guardian priests arrived.

*'They stayed in the stables here. I told my husband that they were friars from the Papal States, come to preach at the fair. They stayed here for two days, then they left in the middle of the night. One of them had a...what do you call it? One of those new little brass things? The Hoffman Device, is it? One of those. They left the city by St. Jacques' Gate, going east. I have not seen them since.'*

*'There has been little sign of this Heresiarch, either but people keep talking about him. The danger has not passed, I am sure.'*

Verse 3.4

# PURSUED BY DEMONS





This is the second interstitial scene where the players get to play the insane guardian priests. Hand out the pregenerated characters again. You should also collect the players' own character sheets and put them to one side – this has no bearing on this encounter but plays a part in *Demon Slayers*, page 45.

*Time has no meaning here in Hell. There is night and day – or, at least, the skies burn hotter at times and at others the shadows crowd around you like a swarm of hungry insects – but you have lost track of the whirling of the heavens. What does it matter when you are damned?*

*The souls you rescued from the demon prison told you that you were in Hell. Perhaps the Heresiarch killed you with a spell and you were condemned here, or perhaps you still live and his magic opened a gate to Hell. However it happened, you are stuck here and the demons are close on your heels.*

*A band of demonic hunters – things that look like men with the legs of storks and the heads of wolves – are chasing you through the obsidian maze. You are exhausted beyond measure and you must make your stand soon, or perish. But where will you fight them? The maze of black stone spikes stretches for miles all around but you passed a dark cave a short while ago and you could double back. The souls you rescue chatter that there is a bridge over a chasm just ahead – if you quicken your pace, you might be able to reach it before the demons catch you.*

The characters have three obvious options – fight in the woods, take refuge in the cave or try to reach the bridge.

## **Fighting in the Woods**

These woods are thick and heavily overgrown. Using ranged weapons is almost impossible (maximum range is only 30 metres). The characters can hide in the trees and attack from above, or fight with their backs to a tree to avoid being surrounded.

## **Fighting in the ‘Cave’**

The ‘cave’ is actually a peasant’s shack where a forester and his family live. The bewitched monks perceive them as lizard-like horrors. If the characters are going to hide in the cave, they need to either slaughter or drive out the lizard creatures. In reality, they are butchering an innocent family.

## **Fighting on the Bridge**

To the hallucinating monks, the bridge is a narrow span of stone over a fiery gorge. In reality, it is a small wooden bridge over a fast-flowing stream. A guardian priest who falls into the ‘gorge’ dies of shock.

## **The Pursuers**

The ‘stork-demons’ that the insane guardian priests perceive are actually Fair Guards, sent from Troyes to investigate the attack on the caravan a few days earlier. They believe they are looking for unusually brutal thieves, not a band of crazed monks. There are eight guards led by an armoured knight, Baldewyn of Troyes.

It should be relatively easy for the guardian priests to defeat the Fair Guards, especially if they fight with the customary brutality of Player Characters. Baldewyn will fight to the death; the guards are less willing to sell their lives and will flee as soon as the fight turns against them or the guardian priests start using wonder-weapons or sorcery. Try to let some of the guards escape, as this will cause problems for the Player Characters – see *Accusations*, page 30.

## Baldewyn of Troyes

One of Count Henry's knights, Baldewyn rather hopes that the bandits include a knight or two who is down on their luck and can be captured for ransom. Only a few years ago, a bad harvest near Troyes forced some once-wealthy knights to rob churches for money and there are still noble outlaws in the woods. He is a doughty knight, tenacious as a badger.

		<b>1D20</b>	<b>Hit Location</b>	<b>AP/HP</b>	<i>Combat Actions</i>	2
<b>STR</b>	<b>14</b>	1-3	Right Leg	2/6	<i>Damage Modifier</i>	+1d2
<b>CON</b>	<b>13</b>	4-6	Left Leg	2/6	<i>Magic Points</i>	9
<b>SIZ</b>	<b>15</b>	7-9	Abdomen	5/7	<i>Movement</i>	8m
<b>INT</b>	<b>9</b>	10-12	Chest	5/8	<i>Strike Rank</i>	+9 (+3 in armour)
<b>POW</b>	<b>10</b>	13-15	Right Arm	5/5		
<b>DEX</b>	<b>9</b>	16-18	Left Arm	5/5		
<b>CHA</b>	<b>9</b>	19-20	Head	5/6		

*Armour:* Chainmail

*Equipment:* Longsword, Kite Shield

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 50%, Courtesy 40%, Perception 40%, Persistence 45%, Resilience 50%, Ride 60%, Track 40%

### WEAPONS

<i>Type</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Reach</i>	<i>Weapon Skill</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>AP/HP</i>
Longsword	M	L	65%	1D8	6/12
and Shield	H	S	65%	1D4	4/18

## Fair Guards

The Fair Guards are relatively lightly armed, as their duties usually involve dealing with pickpockets, thieves and argumentative merchants.

		<b>1D20</b>	<b>Hit Location</b>	<b>AP/HP</b>	<i>Combat Actions</i>	2
<b>STR</b>	<b>13</b>	1-3	Right Leg	2/5	<i>Damage Modifier</i>	+0
<b>CON</b>	<b>12</b>	4-6	Left Leg	2/5	<i>Magic Points</i>	9
<b>SIZ</b>	<b>11</b>	7-9	Abdomen	2/6	<i>Movement</i>	8m
<b>INT</b>	<b>9</b>	10-12	Chest	2/7	<i>Strike Rank</i>	+9 (+6 in armour)
<b>POW</b>	<b>9</b>	13-15	Right Arm	2/4		
<b>DEX</b>	<b>9</b>	16-18	Left Arm	2/4		
<b>CHA</b>	<b>9</b>	19-20	Head	2/5		

*Armour:* Leather

*Equipment:* Spear, Club or Sword

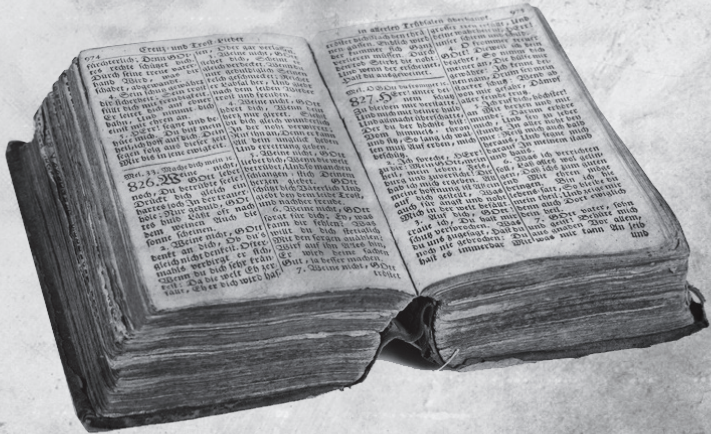
*Notable Skills:* Athletics 40%, Evade 30%, Insight 30%, Perception 40%, Persistence 30%, Resilience 40%, Streetwise 30%

### WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Spear	M	L	40%	1D8+1	4/5
Club	M	S	40%	1D6	4/4
Sword	M	M	40%	1D8	6/10

Verse 3.5

# TRAIL OF THE HERESIARCH



Having arrived in Troyes, the characters can begin their hunt for the Heresiarch. There are multiple potential avenues of investigation that they can pursue. While in Troyes, there are also several events that may throw new light on the mystery. Some of these events happen on a particular day, others should be triggered by the GM depending on circumstances.

## Secrets of the Streets

The characters hit the crowded streets of Troyes, searching for rumours and looking for signs of the heretical cult. There are several sections of Troyes society that the characters might investigate; each one takes half a day's questioning to gather all the clues.

### The Nobility

The characters approach the court of Count Henry and his knights. A Courtesy test is needed to gather rumours here, modified by -20% if the characters are not suitably attired (no travel-stained monks gets into the palace unless they have a very good reason to be there) and by +20% if one of the characters is of noble blood or is a trained knight.

With a successful Courtesy test, the characters discover the following rumours:

- Count Henry is borrowing money heavily to pay for his crusade; many of the moneylenders are waiting until the fair before entering into a contract with Henry.
- If the moneylenders refuse, then he will have to turn to the Templars, which will give the knights considerable influence over his actions in the Holy Land.
- The nobles have heard nothing of this heresy; all the believers in the new faith seem to be among the poorer classes.
- There are stories about unusually daring bandits; Henry sent a knight named Baldewyn out with the Fair Guards to chase them off.

A Critical Success reveals that Count Henry intervened in the election of the Keepers of the Fair. Normally, the Keepers are elected from amongst the nobles and merchants of the city but this year Henry unofficially demanded that Aribert and Foulque be given the positions.

While the characters are at the palace, it is an excellent time to run *The Tourney* (day 7) or *The Count and the Fair* (day 8).

### The Church

This assumes the characters approach the church covertly, without revealing themselves as guardian priests. Most clergy are hesitant about talking too much to the Order's Inquisitors, so it is better to ask questions first and pull out the Blessed Rings later. An Influence test is needed to turn up the following rumours (-20% if the characters have already revealed themselves to be guardian priests, +20% for good roleplaying):

- Bishop Manassé is a little touched in the head; Father Daison has taken over the day-to-day running of the cathedral and the diocese.
- Father Daison is busy dealing with some dispute between the Parisian mercenaries and representatives of the church. Apparently they are trying to cheat their way out of certain debts to the church. How shameful! (This can lead into *The Trail of Nabon*).
- The church has indeed heard tales of these heretics; they call themselves the Joyful People. The priests of the town have castigated them in the sermons but so far the heretics have not acted openly. No doubt it is a fancy from abroad brought by some merchant. The Fair is always a chaotic and strange time, when people adopt new fashions and profess odd things. Once the Fair is over, sanity and normality will hold sway again. Patience, brothers!

A Critical Success picks up the rumour that something strange is going on at the leper colony outside town - Father Michel visits the colony once a week to perform mass for the unclean and he is

now said to be very unwell but not with the curse of leprosy. No, it is said that his mind is unhinged and he is now mad.

See also *The Leper Colony*

## The Merchants

Picking up rumours at the fair is easier than picking up fleas from a mangy dog; along with cloth, cheese and spices, gossip and news is perhaps the most popular commodity at the Fair. The characters can get a better sense of the rumours if they are willing to buy and haggle. They may roll Influence or Streetwise to pick up rumours and may augment either roll with Evaluate.

Most of the rumours from the merchants concern far-off events – disputes between the French and the Normans, Emperor Barbarossa's continuing disputes with the cities of Lombardy, stories of how all Genoese are lying bastards, tales of the Holy Land – but a few stories are of relevance to this investigation:

- At least one caravan was attacked on the way to the Fair. What fool would dare do such a thing? Not only will he surely be hanged by either the Fair Guard or Count Henry but they will never let his family or his city back into the Fair!
- The Keepers of the Fair this year are not doing the best job, all things considered. Everyone knows Aribert is in the pocket of the Parisian guilds/the Lombards/the Jews/the Templars, depending on who you ask and Foulque is just... strange, really.
- Heretics? You mean those stories about those strange men who are talking about joy and forgiveness? I thought they were Bougres or Free Spirits or Poor Brothers. I always knew the Church thought joy was sinful! But no, I've not heard them preach to anyone in the market.
- Friend, we are the moneylenders in the temple who Our Lord drove into the street. We are here to sell, not listen to preachers. We get enough of that at home.

A Critical Success turns up one very interesting rumour from an Italian merchant. He says that a few months ago he travelled up from Genoa to Troyes in a caravan that included a dozen Knights Templar. The Templars were newly returned from the Levant and brought with them a large chest. They were very secretive about its contents and their mission. They did not go to the Templar commandery in town but instead were bound for a nearby castle.

A Perception or Streetwise test in the market district lets the character notice a strange street entertainer in the middle of the crowds. He wears a leather mask over his face but the mask itself has the image of a wildly grinning man on it. This is one of the mad lepers – see *Madmen in the Streets*, page 30. If the characters attempt to capture or chase the street entertainer, he flees through the crowd and tries to lead them into the ambush that is part of *Madmen in the Streets*.

## The Poor

The tanner's district south of the Rue Notre Dame and the alleyways around the old town are the poorer regions of Troyes. During the Fair, even these areas are overcrowded with strange visitors. The poor are often most receptive to the honeyed words of heretics.

Streetwise or Influence rolls are needed to pick up rumours in the poor district. Disguise can be used to augment these rolls, if the character pretends to be a poor pilgrim or gives alms.

- A few Joyful People visit Troyes each day. They wear masks because their faces shine with the light of God. They do not preach openly but instead hold small meetings in houses. Only a chosen few are told where these meetings are and those who are picked seem to change each time. If the characters follow this lead, see *Searching for Heretics*, page 25.
- The Joyful People dwell in the woods outside the city, or somewhere nearby anyway. They say that they are free of sin and dwell in Paradise and that soon the Joyous One will come and save everyone.

A Critical Success picks up a really interesting rumour: apparently, a forester saw four Knights Templar riding through the woods, as if searching for something – or someone. They stopped the forester and asked him if he had seen the 'Joyous One'.

Characters exploring the poor district may spot masked figures in the streets – see *Madmen in the Streets*, page 30.

## The first guardian priests

Rene sent four guardian priests to investigate the Heresiarch before the characters and discovering their fate will put the Player Characters on the trail of the enemy.

### The Prior Investigation

Claude, Andrew, Renaud and Victor arrived in Troyes on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July, more than three weeks before the Player Characters. They presented themselves to Alix and rested after their long journey before beginning their investigation. Andrew had a Hoffman Device and was able to use it to locate the Heresiarch. According to their readings, the Heresiarch was somewhere in the woods east of town.

They followed the trail into the woods and discovered the leper colony. They crept into the colony and identified the Heresiarch, then fell upon him with knives, believing they could kill him easily. They were wrong – the spirit bewitched them and convinced them they were in Hell. The guardian priests blundered out of the leper colony and into the forest.

### Alix's House

Claude and his comrades stayed in the stables at the back of Gerner's house. Alix ordered the servants to seal the room until the Player Characters arrived. A quick search of the room turns up two useful clues. The first is a series of scratchings and charcoal marks on one wall, that a successful Lore (Occult) roll correctly interprets as calculations related to a Hoffman Device. If the characters have a Hoffman Device with them, then they gain a +20% to Lore (Occult) rolls when using it in Troyes, as they can build on Andrew's earlier observations.

The second item is a bundle of cloth. Unwrapping the bundle reveals its contents – a human forearm, chopped off with a single blow from a sword! The flesh of the limb is pock-marked and rotten in places. A successful Difficult (–20%) Medicine roll suggests that the previous owner of the limb is suffering from a plague, probably leprosy. This is a clear clue that points the way to the leper colony.

Alix will be simultaneously furious and sickened if the characters parade around her house waving a leper arm. Getting rid of the limb quietly is an excellent idea.

### Looking for the Black Monks

The first guardian priests were wearing the standard robes of the Order, so the characters can ask around town about the black monks. Several people remember seeing black-robed monks in the city, especially in the poor district. After Day 7, once the insane monks have fought Baldewyn and the Fair Guard, then rumours start circulating of crazy monks in the forest. If the characters do not immediately disguise themselves as something other than black monks, then run *Accusations!*, on page 30.

## Searching for Heretics

The characters' mission is to find heretics and eliminate them, so they can take the direct approach – plunge into the town and search for those spreading the sinful gospel of the Joyful People.

The Joyous One, the Heresiarch himself is in the leper colony (at least until Day 8) but he does not enter the town himself. Instead, he has inspired a number of the lepers to be his preachers and prophets. These madmen are the ones who are spreading the heresy of the Joyful People. They wear leather masks with smiling faces and black gloves to hide their leprous flesh. Thanks to the Joyous One's magic, the enchanted lepers are supernaturally persuasive and inspiring. They truly believe they are the prophets of the Old Testament reborn into new and perfect flesh.

Up until Day 8, the Joyful People are slowly spreading their heresy. Four or five Joyful People leave the leprosarium and head into town via the eastern gate. Once inside the walls of Troyes, they retrieve their leather masks from their allies within the town. Some of the Joyful People go to the poor district, to spread the gospel. Others visit the Fair, disguised as street entertainers, to spy on events there.

After Day 9, the cult takes control of the Templar fortress and through the Templars, Aribert the Keeper of the Fair. The Fair Guards are ordered to let the Joyful People into the city when they arrive en masse on Day 12.

If the characters try following one of the Joyful People, then run *Madmen in the Streets* if they do so in Troyes, or else see *The Leper Colony* if they do so in the woods outside town.

## Cult Meetings

The Joyful People hold religious ceremonies once a day in the town, initially in the poor district but advancing into the richer parts of town as their influence grows. The cult prefers to invite those who are useful - influential or trusted people, guards, strong workers - but they take anyone they can get. A single Player Character might be able to disguise himself as a burgher of Troyes and sneak into a meeting; this requires a Difficult (-20%) Disguise test and a Difficult (-20%) Influence test to allay suspicion. No more than one guardian priest can sneak into a meeting, although other characters could lurk nearby.

In these ceremonies, the masked Joyful Person takes four or five supplicants into a dark room and speaks to them of the Joyous One who is to come. The content of the ceremony varies but the core of the message remains the same. When the Joyous One comes to Troyes, then the old order of things will be turned upside down. Those who are poor shall be rich, those who are downtrodden shall be exalted and those who are sinful will be purified, however, those who are wealthy shall be beggared, those who are masters shall be servants and those who claim false piety will be damned. Until the Joyous One comes, spread his message and await the day of change.

As part of the meeting, those being initiated into the cult must drink a cup of wine which contains a powerful drug. Anyone who imbibes must make a Resilience test opposed by the drug's POT of 65; if the drug wins, the character feels euphoric and energetic for several hours, suffering a -20% penalty to all Persistence rolls in this time. A critical failure on the roll means the character hallucinates wildly, suffering a -40% penalty to Persistence rolls. If the character wins, he merely feels mildly intoxicated.

## The Heretics

The characters can eliminate individual heretics in a variety of ways, such as the traditional knife in the ribs, appealing to Count Henry or the bishop to imprison them, or even setting up a stake in the middle of Troyes and burning the heretics alive. This does not address the root of the problem, for as long as the Heresiarch is out there, the heresy will continue to grow.

Capturing and interrogating heretics is potentially more useful. The cult's Fanaticism score gives them a bonus to Persistence but imaginative and dogged interrogation can extract some information from the lay members of the cult. The characters can learn that the Joyful People live some-



where east of the town and are eager to recruit more followers. They seem especially interested in recruiting merchants and those involved in the Fair. The characters can learn the location of cult meetings in the poor district.

Interrogating one of the lepers is an exercise in frustration. The Joyful are bewitched and believe they are in Paradise, or are Elijah or John the Baptist or St. Paul or some other divine figure. Threats and torture seem to them to be the caresses of angels and songs of praise.

## Approaching the Church

The characters need to use their Blessed Rings to assume authority in Troyes. The most likely target for the players is Bishop Manassé, which effectively means dealing with his assistant, Father Daison. The church's influence in Troyes is considerable but they are ill-equipped to deal with the threat of the Joyful People.

### Bishop Manassé

The elderly bishop of the town is quite senile. He will happily receive the characters in his palace if they demand an audience but he has the attention span of an excited squirrel. If they talk about heresy, he will reminisce about previous ecclesiastical councils in Troyes where he dealt with other heresies but pays no attention to the current problem. He is extremely excitable but getting him enthused about anything risks inducing a heart attack.

### Father Daison

Daison is Manassé's aid and is the effective manager of the diocese. He has no noble blood or family connections, so he can never hope to be chosen as the replacement bishop. His only hope of retaining any influence or power is to keep Manassé alive as long as possible. He is a harried, middle-aged priest who is deeply suspicious of anything that could take his position away from him.

### The Parisian Guild

Daison's current obsession is with a contract from the Parisian mercers' guild – the same contract that Nabon is involved with. As the characters probably already know, the contract was destroyed en route to Troyes, leaving the question of whether or not the mercers will actually pay up this year. If Daison loses that money, then questions will be asked, the competence of Bishop Manassé will come under scrutiny and the priest will almost certainly lose his position. Daison has to get the mercers to pay up.

If the characters come to the church in Troyes for aid, then Daison will argue that he is the best person to talk to – he speaks for the bishop – but that he cannot act freely unless they intervene in The Trial of Nabon (see page 29) and get the mercer's guild to pay up this year. If the characters do this (or if they force the issue, arguing that dealing with the heresy is vastly more important than petty financial arguments), then Daison tells them of Father Michel, the priest who ministers to the leper colony. He has gone insane and is being kept in the Hospital-Dieu-le-Comte.

### Father Michel

This kindly priest visited the leprosarium outside Troyes twice a week to celebrate mass. On June 16<sup>th</sup>, Michel was the first to discover that the Joyous One was possessing one of the lepers. The brave young priest attempted to exorcise the spirit but failed. The Joyous One drove him insane. Michel wandered back into Troyes and was taken in by the church before anyone discovered him spouting heresies. They locked him up in a room in the hospital and prayed he would recover from this sudden madness. He is kept under 'guard' – there is a student from the seminary stationed outside his door at all times.

Worse, Michel has contracted leprosy and the disease is spreading incredibly quickly. Already his hands and face are rotting and his nose is attached only by a tiny strip of skin. The sweet smell of rot and decay pervades him. Make it clear that the last thing anyone wants is Michel laying his wormy hands on them. He is tied to the bed with ropes.

If the characters speak to Father Michel, they can try navigating his rambling account. The Joyous One has cursed Michel to believe that he is a great healer who can cure the sick but that everyone else in the world is dying of an assortment of hideous plagues.

*'I went to the leprosarium and...there was a man there, his name was Jacques Taillebois... there was a demon in him. I wrestled with it and... God be praised! I drove it out and he was cured of his leprosy. I saw his smiling face... Iasu, I cured them all! My hands burn with the power of God! Lord, I am not worthy to receive you but only say the word and I shall heal you!*

*Everyone...all of you, brothers, I see your suffering. I can see the plague rotting your flesh, the worms crawling in your skin, the death-rattle in your lungs. Come close, come close and I shall heal you! God has given me the power to heal!*

If asked about the demon in Jacques Taillebois, Michel describes it as follows: *'It laughed and said it would grant my wishes and bring me great joy. It tempted me with my heart's desire but I held true! I held true! The Lord protected me and I drove the demon out with the power of God! It... his face, Jacques' face, it was twisted and he smiled so wide he bled!'*

## Church Aid

The church can provide shelter, money and political pull. The bishop, for example, has enough influence to request troops from Count Henry if the characters need to storm the templar castle.

## Approaching the Templars

Since their founding two generations ago, the Templars have accrued influence and power to rival the greatest nobles of Christendom. In the region around Troyes, they are especially strong. There are two Templar fortresses nearby. In the heart of the new town of Troyes, just south of the Fair, there is the Templar commandery. This is part palace, part armoury and part bank. The Templars' network of castles stretches from England to Jerusalem and the order is very wealthy. Instead of transporting treasure from one country to another, a merchant can deposit his gold in one Templar castle, travel to another and withdraw an equal amount (less the knight's fee) there using a letter of credit. The Templars have invented international banking and the Troyes commandery is a major part of this network. Over the course of the Fair, the commandery is crowded with rich merchants depositing their profits or borrowing money from the knights.

The Templars also have a monopoly on the weighing of wool, so half the deals involving textiles and clothing at the market go through the commandery and the Temple takes its cut of every one. This monopoly was a gift from Count Henry's father and many merchants grumble about the Templars' undue influence over the market.

Characters observing traffic in the commandery will note that Aribert, one of the two Keepers of the Fair, visits two or three times a day. Aribert is a pawn of the Temple; they are using his influence in the Fair to take a greater share of the profits. See *At The Champagne Fair*.

The second Templar fortress near Troyes is the Chateau du Paynes. Unlike the commandery, which is effectively a civic building, the Chateau du Paynes is a military stronghold. Visitors are welcome at the commandery; the chateau is off limits and intruders will be forcibly turned away. If the characters visit *The Chateau du Paynes*.

The highest-ranking templar at the commandery is Audal. He is a stocky, badger-like man who has little interest in anything other than the smooth running of the Temple's financial affairs. He tries to stonewall any questions about the Templars' activities. If the characters ask about the Templars' knowledge of the Joyful People, or the first group of guardian priests, or the mysterious cargo that was transported to Troyes by road a few weeks ago, then Audal claims that he is just a banker and has no information on any of these things.

If the characters force the issue, or use their Blessed Rings, then a visibly angered Audal says that there is another templar castle nearby and that he will send word to Master Jerome, the commander of that castle, to ask him for news. Audal cautions the characters not to approach the Chateau du Paynes – intruders and visitors are not welcome and the castle is 'protected'. He will not elaborate on the nature of the protections but will simply say that if Master Jerome has any need to speak with the guardian priests or their nameless Order, he will send word through the commandery.

On Day 10, the commandery abruptly closes. See *The Templars Close For Business*.

## At The Champagne Fair

The players may assume that the Champagne Fair is more important to the mystery than it actually is and hence investigate goings-on at the feast of St. Jean.

Most of the Events in Troyes take place at the Fair. Characters lurking around the market will see or hear most of these happenings. The characters can also pick up rumours from the merchants.

### The Fair Guard

The Fair Guard is responsible for maintaining order and ensuring the safety of all those at the Fair. They are recruited mostly from citizens of Troyes but there are also hardened mercenaries among their number. The Fair Guard hold their own courts for any crimes related to the Fair, they patrol the roads and drive out bandits. They are responsible for protecting the various stalls and for opening and closing the markets each day.

If the characters cause a disruption at the Fair, then 1d4+1 Fair Guards arrive in 1d6 minutes. If the Fair Guards are unable to effectively deal with the disruption, then more guards are called in. For truly dangerous foes (which most likely includes the Player Characters), then veteran guards in heavier armour arrive to quell the disturbance.

If the Fair Guards are asked about current events, then their current major concerns are:

- The bandits on the road who attacked the merchant caravan from Paris. Baldewyn and his guards have been sent out and will surely deal with this problem. (After Day 7 and the events of *Pursued by Demons*, then the news spreads that the bandits slew the hunters. Soon after, the characters may run afoul of *Accusations*, page 30).
- The guards are aware of the strange masked entertainers or preachers or whatever they are; so far, they have been nothing more than a nuisance. The problem has been reported to the Keepers of the Fair.

### The Heralds

Troyes also sends out heralds to nearby towns and villages to drum up interest in the fair. These heralds are excellent sources of gossip and rumours. If the characters seek out one of these heralds and get him drunk, or otherwise win his trust, then the herald tells of a strange event that happened a few weeks ago. The herald was riding back to Troyes when he encountered a merchant caravan that included a number of Knights Templar. The Templars headed for the chateau du Paynes; they threatened the herald and told him never to talk of their caravan and its strange cargo to anyone.

## Foulque, the Keeper of the Fair

According to Alix's letter, Foulque is suspected of being an alchemist and a sorcerer. The old spicer does indeed dabble in alchemy, although this is just a red herring and has nothing to do with the Hesiarch or any of the other mysteries. Foulque is an old and bitter man; a plague took his wife and three children 10 years ago and he has lived on alone in his mansion. He is obsessed with immortality and magical methods of restoring health. His trade in spices funds his experiments with alchemy and allows him to smuggle mummy dust and other rare items from the east.

Foulque's appointment as Keeper of the Fair stems from an arrangement he made with Count Henry. In exchange for funding for Henry's crusade, Foulque is permitted to experiment on the prisoners in the count's gaol. The alchemist is trying to perfect a formula that restores dead flesh; the fresher the corpse, the better for Foulque's experiments. Such experiments are forbidden under normal circumstances but with the protection of the count, Foulque hopes to avoid excommunication, imprisonment or incineration.

If the characters are arrested by the Fair Guard (as a result of *Accusation* or for other crimes), they may be handed over to Foulque.

In Foulque's mansion on the Rue du Domino, there are a dozen corpses in the basement. Some were recently executed by the Count; others were condemned prisoners who were poisoned by Foulque's experiments. The upper rooms contain Foulque's laboratory and workroom, where alembics and crucibles bubble with bizarre compounds. A character with Lore (alchemy) or Lore (occult) can tell that Foulque is experimenting with healing compounds. The characters also find a letter from Foulque to one 'Hernaudin of Provins', thanking him for his advice and promising to send him the 'ichor of the hydra' as soon as it can be procured. See *The Cursed Tower of Provins* for more details on the mysterious Hernaudin.

**Foulque and the Zombies:** The alchemist corresponds with several other occultists across Europe. He has heard rumours of mysterious black-clad assassins and is terrified at the thought of being murdered before he perfects his immortality potion.

If the characters do investigate Foulque and are spotted, then the alchemist leaps to the conclusion that they are here to kill him. He panics and runs down to the basement, where he treats the corpses with another of his alchemical concoctions – a compound that temporarily revivifies dead flesh, turning them into short-lived zombies. The dozen corpses rise up as shambling horrors and attack anyone and everyone in the house. These creatures only last a short time – the toxic chemicals injected into them makes their veins bulge and burst, their skin sizzle and flake, and their internal liquids run in rivulets from every orifice.

**Foulque as an Ally:** If the characters approach Foulque in his official capacity as Keeper of the Fair and then raise the question of the occult as fellow adepts instead of church-sponsored assassins, or if they put pressure on him through Count Henry, then the alchemist can be a useful ally. He is an expert in the occult and knows the Templar Jerome quite well. He knows that Jerome recently returned from the Holy Land bearing a strange treasure, which the templar has been trying to decode ever since.

Foulque can also provide healing draughts to the characters; he has made four such potions at great expense to himself but he will give them to the characters in exchange for a promise that the Order will leave him alone in future.

## Aribert, the Keeper of the Fair

Unlike the sinister Foulque, Aribert knows nothing about the occult or the supernatural. He is a moneylender – a profession traditionally associated with the Jews, as Christians are not permitted to charge interest but of late there are more French and Italian moneychangers, lenders and bankers who skirt the law. Aribert’s appointment to the post of Keeper of the Fair comes thanks to the machinations of the Templars. Aribert owes a lot of money to the Temple; they will forgive some of his debt if he arranges things at the fair to their benefit. The mastermind behind this scheme is Audal, the head Templar at the local commandery.

Characters who observe the events at the fair for a few hours and succeed in a Commerce roll notice that Aribert is arranging things to benefit the Templars. He makes some merchants stop trading while he examines their weights and measures, while he insists on any deal involving wool to be scrupulously weighed by the Templars. Merchants favoured by the Temple, on the other hand, get away with anything short of murder.

On Day 10, when the Commandery closes, Aribert and a few Fair Guards ride out to the Chateau du Paynes to investigate, where he runs afoul of the Heresiarch. See *Aribert the Insane*, page 46.

## Supernatural Evidence

If the characters have a Hoffman Device, they can use it to trace the Joyous One’s movements. Make a Lore (Occult) test for the character using the Hoffman Device and compare it to the table that follows. On Days 8 and 9, the Joyous One is in the custody of the Templars, within the warded walls of the Chateau du Paynes. After Day 10 and later, the Joyous One leaves Troyes but the presence of Jerome the Heresiarch distorts the readings.

Remember also that if the characters have the notes from Alix’s stable, they get a +20% bonus to Lore (Occult) rolls when using the Hoffman Device.

### HOFFMAN TRACES

Day	Success	Critical
5-7	Supernatural activity is concentrated to the east of Troyes.	Supernatural activity is concentrated to the east, somewhere near a river. There is also an oddly blank area to the north-east.
8-9	No readings beyond the normal background fluctuations.	It is as though the readings are masked. There is something to the north-east but it is oddly faint, as if concealed deliberately.
10-12	Extremely distorted readings; it is like the supernatural forces are right on top of the characters.	There are two strong sources of magic; one is moving away from Troyes, the other is strangely doubled, as if there were two entities in close proximity.

## Events in Troyes

These are events not triggered by the Player Characters. Some happen on a specific day; others happen at the whim of the GM. The players do not have to get involved in any of these incidents.

## The Trial of Nabon (Any day after the PCs arrive)

The merchant Nabon was bringing a contract to the Fair, arranging payment between the mercer's guild of Paris and the Bishop of Troyes. As the characters learned in *The Theft* (see page 15), the contract vanished on the road. The players may have already learned who was responsible for this crime, or at least come to their own conclusions about who the guilty party is but justice is still not satisfied.

Upon arrival in Troyes, Nabon reports the loss of the contract to the Keepers of the Fair and requires arbitration. The Bishop of Troyes 'sends' his aide Daison (or, more accurately, Father Daison nominates himself, as the Bishop of Troyes is too senile to do anything else). Daison demands that the Mercer's Guild be compelled to hold to the original contract. Nabon argues that without a physical contact to sign, he cannot speak on behalf of the guild and the whole deal will have to be renegotiated next year.

Regardless of what happened in *The Theft*, Nabon wants to blame the theft on his untrustworthy guard, Daufer. If the characters were present after the contract was stolen, Nabon contacts them and asks them to testify against Daufer. If the blame can be pinned on the Lombard, then the Keeper of the Fair will be more likely to allow Nabon to postpone the payment. If the characters acted suspiciously in the camp or are already unpopular with the Keepers of the Fair, Nabon may even try blaming the crime on them.

### THE TRIAL OF NABON

Guilty	Result
Nabon	Nabon is arrested. Judgement is made in favour of the Bishopric.
Purnelle	Daison demands that the Cathar heretic be imprisoned; in an attempt to protect his wife, Nabon draws his sword but is restrained by the Fair Guard. Nabon then falls in with the Joyful People, who promise to free Purnelle from the prison. He tells the Joyful People everything he knows about the PCs. Judgement is made in favour of the Bishopric.
Yon	Yon is arrested, imprisoned and ends up being given to Foulque for experiments. Judgement is made in favour of the Bishopric.
Daufer	The Fair Guards drag Daufer out of the wine shop, arrest him and hand him over to Foulque for experiments. Optionally, a revenge-crazed zombie Daufer attacks the PCs the following night – see <i>Foulque</i> . Judgement is made in favour of the guild.
The PCs	The Fair Guard try to arrest the PCs. Judgement is made in favour of the guild.

Father Daison wants the guild to pay immediately and for this to happen, he needs to prove that Nabon himself (or someone close to him, like Yon the apprentice or Nabon's wife Purnelle) destroyed the contract. He too will turn to the guardian priests, asking them to testify against Nabon.

The judgement of Aribert and Foulque depends on the testimony of the Player Characters.

## Messages from Afar (Any day after the PCs arrive)

A messenger arrives in Troyes with one of the merchant caravans. He is Odo, a German tinsmith and an agent of the Order. He makes contact with Alix and delivers a sheaf of letters to her so she

can pass them on to Rene the Black. These encoded letters have no relevance to this investigation but the characters must still deliver them to Mont St. Michel.

Optionally:

- Some of the letters are not encoded and contain plot hooks for side treks you can use between this adventure and the others.
- If the players are stuck, then Odo can tell them that he heard a rumour about a Templar caravan that came to Troyes several weeks ago, bearing a mysterious cargo.

## Madmen in the Streets (Any day after the PCs arrive)

The Joyful People have agents in the market and the poor district of Troyes. These preachers or mummers wear elaborate leather masks to hide their leprosy-scarred features. If the characters threaten the cult, or their investigations get too close to the truth, then the crazed agents will attack.

This battle takes place in the narrow alleyways and rooftops of Troyes. Inspired by the magic of the Joyous One, the Joyful People are superhumanly quick and agile. The ambush begins with one of the Joyful People luring the characters by fleeing down an alleyway and taking refuge in a house at the end of the narrow passage. There are three more Joyful People waiting inside the house, while another three are on the rooftops overlooking the alleyway with bows.

The lure runs into the house, leaving the door unsecured behind him. The lead pursuer is allowed to follow the quarry into the house; one of the Joyful People then bars the door while the other three attack the now isolated hunter. Meanwhile, the three archers fire on the pursuer's comrades, who are left outside in the open beating on the barred door. The Joyous Ones then flee through the streets once more; at all times, they try to avoid a stand-up fight.

Remember, the Joyful People are insane. They believe themselves to be treading the diamond-strewn streets of the heavenly Jerusalem, or think they are experiencing incredible pleasure when they are actually in agonising pain. Death and dismemberment hold no fear for them.

In this fight, emphasise:

- The urban environment. Have the Joyful People flee over rooftops, leap over alleyways, clamber up walls and so on. Let the battle spill onto the streets.
- The disturbing nature of the foe. This is likely to be the first time the Player Characters have engaged in combat with the foe, so make the fight memorable. Make the players' collective skins crawl.
- The need to remain secret. The cult has nothing to lose but the guardian priests must stay secret.

## Accusations (Any day after Day 7)

The first guardian priests are now insane killers and on Day 6, they slaughter Baldewyn and the Fair Guard. Any survivors from this encounter stagger back into Troyes with a bizarre tale to tell. They speak of an attack by 'black-robed monks, like savage beasts' and luridly describe the monks' weird weapons and almost preternatural combat ability. Rumours about the 'mad monks' spread like wildfire.

If the Player Characters are still wearing monks' robes or if anyone knows they are monks, then they will fall under suspicion. The Fair Guards assume they are the mad monks and go to arrest them. The characters have to either fight their way out, or somehow roleplay their way into getting help from either Count Henry, the Bishop of Troyes, or the Keepers of the Fair.

Imprisoned characters are sent to the castle of the Count, where there are cells for holding prisoners. They may be handed over to Foulque for his experiments if they prove unwilling to explain themselves. If the characters are found to be carrying strange weapons similar to those of the 'mad monks', then this is taken as incontrovertible proof of guilt.

## Elite Fair Guards

These are the best of the fair guards, called in to deal with especially belligerent or violent trouble-makers or unusually dangerous bandits. Most are Norman or French mercenaries recruited for the duration of the fair, often to keep them out of trouble in the first place.

## The Tourney (Day 7)

On Day 7, Count Henry holds a tourney in the fields, where knights and warriors may fight for a purse of gold. This event draws huge crowds from the Fair. If the characters are of suitable social standing, they can take part in this tournament.

## The Count and The Fair (Day 8)

On Day 8, Count Henry and his courtiers leave the palace and march in a great parade into the market. They pray at the church of St. Jean, where the bishop (heavily prompted by Father Daison) extols the virtue of going on crusade and says that those who *support* a crusade are also blessed, even if they themselves do not go to battle Saracens in the Holy Land. The clear subtext is 'moneylenders, open your purses for the prince, or else!'

Among the dignitaries in the procession is one distinguished-looking Knight of the Temple, a keen-eyed man with an iron-grey beard. His left hand is missing three fingers; his shield was splintered by a giant Saracen during a battle in the east and he left three fingers behind in Jerusalem. He is obviously the leader of the Templars in the procession and he speaks in low tones with the Count as if giving him wise counsel. This imposing Templar is Jerome.

If the characters see Jerome, call for Perception tests. A successful Perception test reveals that Jerome's armour is decorated with a number of curious gems and runestones; a successful Hard (-40%) Lore (Occult) test suggests that his armour is magically augmented in some fashion, perhaps to protect the wearer against evil spirits.

After the procession, Jerome and the Templars request a chance to pray privately in the Church of St. Jean. The Count magnanimously grants this request and the Templars then announce that they have pledged some 500 pounds to the Count's cause, a signal for the other moneylenders to join in and lend money. The church is sealed so the Templars can pray.

A character who spies on the Templars finds they are not praying in the sealed church – instead, Jerome conducts a magical divination ritual involving a pendulum and a fragment of old pottery. This spell is designed to locate the escaped Joyous One. It could not be conducted at the Chateau du Paynes because that castle is magically warded and the wards interfere with divination.

The Templars do not ride back to the Chateau du Paynes but instead ride east towards the leper colony.



# ELITE FAIR GUARDS

		1D20	Hit Location	AP/HP	Combat Actions	2
STR	15	1-3	Right Leg	2/5	Damage Modifier	+1d2
CON	14	4-6	Left Leg	2/5	Magic Points	9
SIZ	14	7-9	Abdomen	5/6	Movement	8m
INT	9	10-12	Chest	5/7	Strike Rank	+9 (+3 in armour)
POW	9	13-15	Right Arm	5/4		
DEX	9	16-18	Left Arm	5/4		
CHA	9	19-20	Head	5/5		

*Armour:* Chain and Leather

*Equipment:* Spear, Club or Sword

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 60%, Brawn 50%, Insight 30%, Perception 60%, Persistence 40%, Resilience 60%, Streetwise 30%, Unarmed 40%

## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Spear	M	L	60%	1D8+1	4/5
Club	M	S	60%	1D6	4/4
Sword	M	M	60%	1D8	6/10

## The Templars Recapture The Joyous One (Day 8)

The characters bear witness to this event only if they follow the Templars or if they are already at the leper colony. The Knights ride out of the wood and charge straight into the colony, slaughtering anyone who stands in their way. They seize the leader of the leper cult, Jacques Taillebois (the host of the Joyous One) as well as a few other prisoners, then put the little community to the torch before riding furiously back to the safety of the Chateau du Paynes.

Attempting to interfere with this event is suicidal. There are two dozen Templar knights led by Jerome; not even a guardian priest could hope to defeat so many hardened warriors.

## The Joyous One Escapes (Day 9)

The characters are extremely unlikely to be present for this event, unless they manage to sneak into the Templar castle very early in the investigation. Jerome believes that he can return the Joyous One to the jar it was contained in. He attempts to rebind the spirit and remove it from Jacques' body.

He fails and the Joyous One takes full advantage of being within the Templars' wards. It drives the Templars insane, lavishing especial care on Jerome himself, breaking his mind into pieces and convincing him to take Jacques' leather mask and become the new Heresiarch.

The Joyous One then leaves Troyes. The characters will pick up his trail in the next adventure, *The Lord of Misrule*.

## The Templars Close For Business (Day 10)

The Templar commandery in Troyes is a vital part of the city's economy. During the Champagne Fair, it is one of the busiest places in the whole town. It is therefore surprising when on the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup> day, the merchants of Troyes awaken to find the commandery closed.

During the night, Audal became worried that he had heard nothing from the Chateau du Paynes since the recapture of the Joyous One (Audal was not informed exactly what Jerome and the other Templars were up to in the woods but he knows *something* was going on). He therefore took the four remaining knights from the commandery and rode to the chateau. The characters may encounter Audal again if they too visit the chateau.

If the characters have yet to connect the Templars to the strange events in Troyes, this should be a large clue that they should investigate the chateau.

## The Bishop Is Attacked (Day 11)

To distract the town from the escape of the Joyous One, the new Heresiarch launches an attack on Bishop Manasse during the Feast of St. Jean.

## The Heresiarch Preaches (Day 12)

In the final scene of this adventure, the new Heresiarch attempts to preach at the Champagne Fair. If he succeeds, the madness of the Joyful People will be spread to the whole town.

# Zombies

These are not truly undead – they are animated by Foulque’s alchemical concoctions. Faith or other spells that affect the undead have no power over these creatures. The zombies move quickly and are immune to the effects of Wounds. A zombie is slain when its Head, Chest or Abdomen is reduced to a negative Hit Point total equal to three times its starting Hit Point total. The fizzing, boiling alchemical potions in the zombie’s veins have two added effects. Firstly, the zombies lose one Hit Point per round from any location that is reduced to 0 Hit Points. Secondly, anyone who inflicts more than five points of damage in a single melee attack on a zombie is sprayed with a hot gush of toxic chemicals, suffering one point of burn damage to a random location.

		<b>1D20</b>	<b>Hit Location</b>	<b>AP/HP</b>	<i>Combat Actions</i>	2
<b>STR</b>	23	1-3	Right Leg	-/4	<i>Damage Modifier</i>	+1d6
<b>CON</b>	4	4-6	Left Leg	-/4	<i>Magic Points</i>	2
<b>SIZ</b>	13	7-9	Abdomen	-/5	<i>Movement</i>	6m
<b>INT</b>	2	10-12	Chest	-/6	<i>Strike Rank</i>	+7
<b>POW</b>	2	13-15	Right Arm	-/3		
<b>DEX</b>	12	16-18	Left Arm	-/3		
<b>CHA</b>	–	19-20	Head	-/4		

*Armour:* None

*Equipment:* None

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 40%, Brawn 30%, Unarmed 40%

## WEAPONS

<i>Type</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Reach</i>	<i>Weapon Skill</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>AP/HP</i>
Unarmed	S	T	40%	1D3+1D6	as per arm

## Foulque

The spicer Foulque is one of the two Keepers of the Fair, which he intends to use as cover for his alchemical research. If the characters run afoul of him, they may become his test subjects.

		<b>1D20</b>	<b>Hit Location</b>	<b>AP/HP</b>	<i>Combat Actions</i>	3
<b>STR</b>	<b>10</b>	1-3	Right Leg	-/5	<i>Damage Modifier</i>	+0
<b>CON</b>	<b>8</b>	4-6	Left Leg	-/5	<i>Magic Points</i>	13
<b>SIZ</b>	<b>13</b>	7-9	Abdomen	-/6	<i>Movement</i>	8m
<b>INT</b>	<b>15</b>	10-12	Chest	-/7	<i>Strike Rank</i>	+13
<b>POW</b>	<b>13</b>	13-15	Right Arm	-/4		
<b>DEX</b>	<b>10</b>	16-18	Left Arm	-/4		
<b>CHA</b>	<b>9</b>	19-20	Head	-/5		

*Armour:* None

*Equipment:* Knife, Healing Draught

*Notable Skills:* Commerce 60%, Influence 50%, Language (Arabic) 40%, Language (French) 80%, Lore (Alchemy) 60%, Lore (History) 40%

### WEAPONS

<i>Type</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Reach</i>	<i>Weapon Skill</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>AP/HP</i>
Knife	S	S	45%	1D3	5/4

# Joyful Lepers

The prophets and inspired madmen of the Joyful People, these lunatics are gifted with superhuman strength and agility by their inhuman master.

		<b>1D20</b>	<b>Hit Location</b>	<b>AP/HP</b>	<i>Combat Actions</i>	3
<b>STR</b>	17	1-3	Right Leg	-/4	<i>Damage Modifier</i>	+1d2
<b>CON</b>	8	4-6	Left Leg	-/4	<i>Magic Points</i>	9
<b>SIZ</b>	12	7-9	Abdomen	2/5	<i>Movement</i>	10m
<b>INT</b>	11	10-12	Chest	2/6	<i>Strike Rank</i>	+14 (+12 in armour)
<b>POW</b>	9	13-15	Right Arm	-/3		
<b>DEX</b>	17	16-18	Left Arm	-/3		
<b>CHA</b>	15	19-20	Head	2/4		

*Armour:* Leather jack and mask

*Equipment:* Dagger

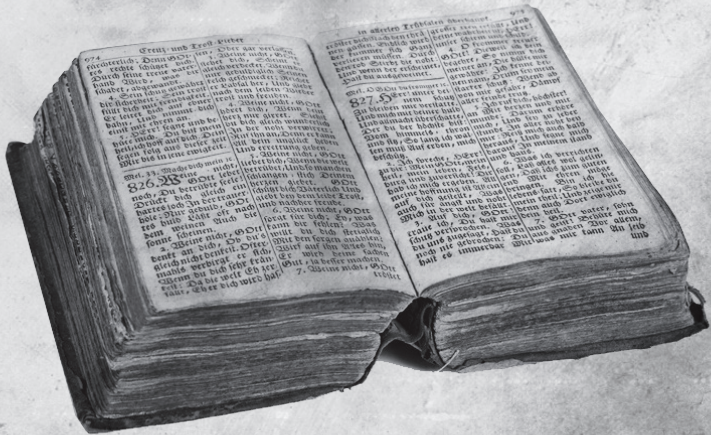
*Notable Skills:* Acrobatics 54%, Athletics 79%, Evade 34%, Influence 65%, Persistence 43%, Resilience 41%

## WEAPONS

<i>Type</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Reach</i>	<i>Weapon Skill</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>AP/HP</i>
Dagger	S	S	54%	1D4	6/8

Verse 3.6

# THE LEPER COLONY



To the people of medieval Europe, few sicknesses were as terrifying as leprosy. Those who developed the symptoms of the disease – rotting of the extremities, lack of sensation, pocked skin – were treated as though they were already dead. They were sent out of their home communities and forced to beg for alms or to live in isolated leper colonies with others of their kind. Bizarrely, the lepers were also seen as holy, as they were believed to be undergoing purgatory on Earth instead of in the afterlife.

The Leperserie des Deux Eaux was established by the first Count Henry. Situated on an island between two small rivers, the colony numbers some 30 lepers of all ages and sexes. On this little island, they raise fruit trees and kept goats for food but mainly they survive on the charity of the healthy. There is a small wooden chapel on the island, which is divided into two sections by a wooden screen. The visiting priest and other healthy visitors stand on one side of the screen, while the leper congregation remains on the unclean side and watches the miracle of the Mass through narrow windows.

The lepers live in small huts on the island. There are also some huts on the shore, used by visitors or travellers. There is a narrow and unstable foot bridge over the marshy river to the island; in some places, this bridge has rotted away, forcing visitors to jump from stump-to-stump to avoid an unwelcome dunking in the mud.

## The Joyous One and The Lepers

When the Joyous One was freed by the Templar Jerome from the jar, it fled the Chateau du Paynes in search of a host. It was extremely weak after many centuries of imprisonment and lacked the power to possess Jerome or any other strong-willed individual. It needed someone whose hold on the flesh was extremely weak.

It found Jacques Taillebois. This woodsman developed leprosy some nine years earlier and the disease had worn both body and spirit away until Taillebois could do nothing except lie on a pallet and wait for death. His soul had already given up its ties to his physical body, making it easier for the Joyous One to slip in and take the flesh. Taillebois rose up and began to preach to his fellow lepers, telling them of his revelation that the world would soon be turned upside down in a great time of misrule and upheaval; that those whose current lot in life was the hardest and most cruel would, in the new disorder, be the most joyous and powerful.

The miraculous ‘resurrection’ of Jacques and his seductive vision of the future caught the imagination of the other lepers, who began to worship him as a Messiah. Those who were most suggestible were then enchanted by the Joyous One. They believed they were part of a new religion, so the Joyous One granted them their wishes. These chosen followers became convinced they were reborn prophets and disciples, reinforcing the beliefs of the rest of the lepers. Within three days of his ‘resurrection’, Jacques was the undisputed god-king of Leperserie des Deux Eaux.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of June, Father Michel visited the leper colony, as was his custom. He arrived to find the colony in chaos and hearing of the miracles, he leapt to the correct conclusion that Jacques Taillebois was possessed. Fearing there was no time to lose, Michel entered the church and tried to exorcise the spirit from the leper’s body.

He failed. The Joyous One had grown much too strong for a mere exorcism to evict him. Michel believed himself to be a good priest, a healer of the sick and a saviour of souls, so the Joyous One granted him too his heart’s desire. Father Michel staggered out of the leprosarium, deluded into thinking that he had not only exorcised Jacques but also miraculously cured all the lepers. He was found by the church before news of his madness could spread.

To avoid suspicion, the Joyous One ensured that everything appeared to be normal when future visitors arrived.





## The guardian priests and the Lepers

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of July, a month after Father Michel's madness, the four guardian priests arrived at the leper colony, following the emanations of the Joyous One detected by Andrew's Hoffman Device. They pretended to be pilgrims and stayed in the huts on the shore. During the night, they crept onto the island and searched for the spirit.

The guardian priests were spotted by the Joyous One's guards and a fight broke out. A band of lepers, even those inspired by the divine madness of the spirit, were no match for the monks. Two of the Joyous One's chosen were killed in seconds. The spirit gathered its powers and blasted the guardian priests with a devastating vision. They wanted to be monster-slayers - well, it gave them all the monsters they could want, and more, by bewitching them into thinking they were in hell.

Believing themselves to be surrounded by demons, the guardian priests retreated into the woods, where they encountered a merchant caravan - and that is where the tale began, back in *A Dream of Demons*.

## People of the Leper Colony

Of the 30 lepers in the colony, all but two succumbed to the cult of the Joyous One within three days. The cult can be broken down into several sections.

**The Joyous One:** The Joyous One has made the lepers build him a 'palace' on the island. It is nothing but a bower of branches and mud but to those 'blessed' by the spirit, it appears to be a wonderful pleasure-dome with marble walls and flowing fountains. The spirit is still comparatively weak and is still marshalling its power. Every new believer gives it more strength, so its main focus is inspiring more Joyful People to become prophets and missionaries. For more on the Joyous One, see page 4.

**The Prophets:** These are the inner circle of the cult, the lepers who took most strongly to the spirit's enchantment. There are always 12 of these - if one is killed, another is promoted from the ranks of the Joyful People to take his place. Prophets do not live long; this is partly because the Joyous One sends them on missions into Troyes but mainly because he inspires them to such feats of devotion and heights of fervour that their withered bodies break under the strain. The Prophets wear smiling leather masks to hide their leprous faces.

If the characters interact with a Prophet, the one they are most likely to meet at the leprosarium calls himself Elijah. He is convinced that he returned from the heavens in a chariot of fire. If the characters ask to see his chariot of fire, he shows them a blackened tin cooking pot.

**The Joyful People:** The Joyful People are the other followers of the cult; they include most of the other lepers as well as ordinary people from Troyes and the surrounding lands who have fallen under the sway of the Joyous One. They live in the leper colony and worship the Joyous One. There are now more than 60 Joyful People in the colony, with more in the nearby countryside.

**The Anathema:** The Anathema are those who do not follow the Joyous One but know of the cult. Not everyone reacts in the same way to the spirit's enchantments. It can grant your heart's desire but if what you desire cannot be twisted to the spirit's purpose, it must turn to brute force. The first two anathema were lepers named Antonio and Heloise, both of whom refused to bow down to the spirit. Another four anathema come from the surrounding lands.

The anathema are imprisoned in one of the huts on the island. They are bound hand and foot at all times. They are kept alive because it is from their living flesh that the masks of the Joyful People are made.

## The Leper Colony (Prior to the Night of Day 8)

Characters who visit the colony before the night of Day 8 see nothing out of the ordinary. They arrive at the river and see the shoreline huts are empty. From the island rises a few thin trails of smoke from cooking fires. Crossing the river via the bridge is easy enough in daylight; it is somewhat more hazardous at night, requiring an Athletics test to avoid falling.

Waiting at the bridge is a leprous beggar, Fera, who asks passers-by for alms. He is also the cult's look-out. He has a Y-shaped staff topped with a little bell, which he shakes to warn people to beware of the leper. If suspicious intruders approach, he shakes his staff vigorously so those on the island can prepare. Fera greets the characters and welcomes them to the leper house. If they wish to stay, they may sleep in the shoreline huts to avoid excessive contact with the unclean.

If the characters visit the island, there are places where it is dangerous to go, according to the lepers. These hazardous places include the wooded section of the island where the Joyous One has his lair and the hut where the anathema are imprisoned. There are also several obvious clues to pick up on. Each clue lists the associated skill; call for Skill Tests if the players do not pick up on the clues from your descriptions.

- There are too many people on the island. There are two dozen huts but every one of them is overcrowded and some people are sleeping in the open. (Streetwise to notice the overcrowding; Survival to realise that such a situation is untenable, as if there were this many lepers here all the time, they would surely starve.)
- Some of the people here do not appear to be especially ill. (Medicine confirms that less than half the people on the island are lepers.)
- You know, these are the merriest lepers you have ever seen. (Insight suggests they are happier than they have any right to be.)
- There are several sections of the island where the characters are warned not to go. The lepers claim that the ground there is treacherous and full of sinkholes. (Track suggests that actually, there is quite a lot of traffic into the forbidden sections.)

## Skulduggery in the Village

Visitors to the leper colony are kept under close watch. During the day, outsiders are watched by the Joyful people. At night, outsiders *must* sleep on the shoreline huts; a guard is placed on the bridge to spot intruders trying to cross the marsh. To sneak around the village, the characters need to escape this surveillance.

During the day, it is virtually impossible to hide. The leper colony is full of watchful eyes. If the characters stage a distraction, then one of their number might be able to slip away into the undergrowth on the island but any such distraction will put the cult onto high alert and the guards and prophets will flock to protect the Joyous One.

At night, crossing the bridge requires an Athletics test to avoid falling in; doing so in total darkness increases the difficulty to Hard (-40%). Characters carrying a light will be spotted by the guards. Characters can also try swimming to the island, by making a standard Swim test. Once on the island, the characters will need to use Stealth to move around without raising the alarm.

During the day, the effective Perception of the cult is 100%, dropping to 40% at night. Make one roll for the cult under most circumstances.

If the alarm is raised, then the characters have a fight on their hands – the cult can muster up to a dozen madmen and 60 fanatical believers. The characters will be swamped by multiple foes in a stand-up fight (the rules for multiple opponents are on page 91 of the *RuneQuest Core Rulebook*).

If the characters do explore the hidden sections of the island, they can find the Joyous One's 'palace' of branches and reeds, the anathema hut and the shallow graves where the lepers slain by the guardian priests were buried. If they dare force a confrontation with the Joyous One immediately, they can do so. Alternatively, you can have the Templars arrive early, sending the characters from the frying pan to the fire.

## The Templars Recapture The Joyous One (Night of Day 8)

On the night of day 8, following Jerome's ritual in the church of St. Jean, two dozen Knights Templar ride to the Leperserie des Deux Eaux. Jerome's magic led the knights here in search of the fugitive spirit. They too have heard rumours about a strange cult in the leper colony, so the knights have no compunction whatsoever about dispatching everyone on the island.

The knights' mighty steeds plunge into the shallow waters of the river and struggle across to the island. There is no subtlety to this attack, no cunning or subterfuge – who needs such things when you have two dozen armoured knights? They charge into the little community and put everyone they find there to the sword. The Joyful People laugh and sing hosannas of praise even as they are butchered. Of the 70 or so followers of the Joyous One on the island, more than two score are killed by the Templars.

Jerome leads his knights confidently into the Joyous One's palace, chanting a defensive spell to ward off the spirit's blandishments. They pull down the walls of the palace and surround Jacques Taillebois. Jerome regards the Joyous One for an instant, then orders his knights to seize the demon. They wrap Taillebois in chains and carry him off to the Chateau du Paynes. The knights put the place to the torch as they leave.

## The Aftermath (Day 9 and later)

If the characters visit at the leper colony after Day 9, then the signs of devastation are clear long before arriving at the island. A pall of black smoke hangs over the place, as the ashes of the burnt huts smoulder. There are only a handful of Joyful People left and they are all confused by the events of the previous night. Questioning them elicits only more confusion.

*'He was taken by the knights...the knights took Our Lord. They just rode in and killed everyone... he said we would never die but they killed us... where are His prophets now? Where are the smiling ones? He promised there would be no more tears, no more sorrow, only joy everlasting and I want to laugh and make merry as he told us to but I can no longer see the wonders he showed us. Look you at his palace... yesterday, it was all towers of ivory topped with shimmering gold and it was more beautiful than the dawn! Now, it seems to me... have I gone mad?... it seems to me to be nothing but a pile of rotten branches! Oh, please give Him back to us! Are these the times of tumult He promised, when all the world would be turned head over heels? Where is Our Lord of Misrule?'*

An Easy (+40%) Track test shows up signs of multiple heavy horsemen who rode in from the direction of Troyes and then headed north towards the Chateau du Paynes.

## Joyful People

These are the ordinary followers and servants of the Joyous One; some are lepers but most are poor peasants and serfs from the surrounding lands.

		<b>1D20</b>	<b>Hit Location</b>	<b>AP/HP</b>	<i>Combat Actions</i>	2
<b>STR</b>	<b>10</b>	1-3	Right Leg	-/4	<i>Damage Modifier</i>	+0
<b>CON</b>	<b>7</b>	4-6	Left Leg	-/4	<i>Magic Points</i>	11
<b>SIZ</b>	<b>9</b>	7-9	Abdomen	-/5	<i>Movement</i>	8m
<b>INT</b>	<b>9</b>	10-12	Chest	-/6	<i>Strike Rank</i>	+8
<b>POW</b>	<b>11</b>	13-15	Right Arm	-/3		
<b>DEX</b>	<b>8</b>	16-18	Left Arm	-/3		
<b>CHA</b>	<b>10</b>	19-20	Head	-/4		

*Armour:* None

*Equipment:* Club or Dagger

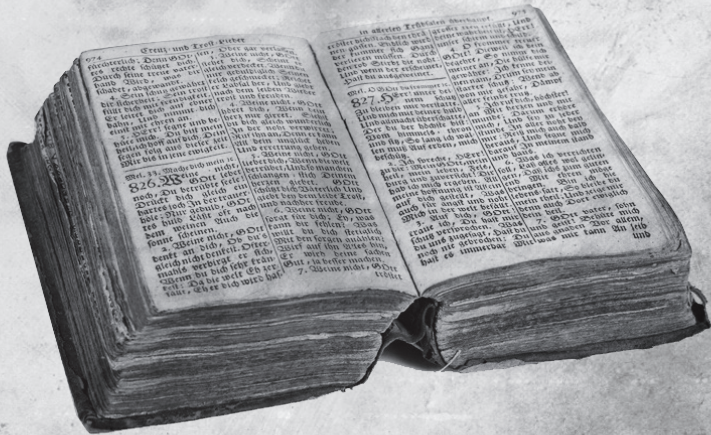
*Notable Skills:* Athletics 25%, Perception 40%, Persistence 25%, Resilience 35%

### WEAPONS

<i>Type</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Reach</i>	<i>Weapon Skill</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>AP/HP</i>
Dagger	S	S	30%	1D4	6/8
Club	M	S	30%	1D6	4/4

Verse 3.7

# THE CHATEAU DU PAYNES



This castle was the home of Hugh du Paynes, one of the founders of the Poor Knights of the Order of the Temple. It passed into the Order's possession more than half a century ago and the knights have been diligent in their building work. Today, the Chateau is a formidable fortification, consisting of an inner keep surrounded by two sets of walls and a moat. The red cross of the Templars flies from the battlements and the badge of the order – two poor knights sharing a single horse, symbolising poverty – is engraved on every gate and tower and overflowing golden coffer in the chateau.

Visitors to the chateau (of which there are few) note the curious round tower that stands all alone in the inner courtyard. Those illuminated in the ways of the occult recognise this tower as being the key to a mystical lock. The moat and the configuration of the walls forms a magical barrier, a ward drawn in stone that deflects hostile magic and dissipates it harmlessly in still water.

The castle is home to some 30 knights and 40 servants; in times of war, or when the knights muster forces, their numbers are swelled by hundreds of footmen, armourers, squires, farriers, cooks and camp-followers. The castle is supposed to be a monastery, as the Templars are monastic knights and they do eschew rich décor or blatant luxuries. However, the chateau is moderately comfortable and extremely well supplied to withstand a siege.

## The Castle Wards

The magical wards of the Chateau du Paynes block hostile spells from affecting the castle or those within. It can block spells up to Magnitude 5 and can block a total of Magnitude 50 in any 24 hour period. The wards also block spirits from entering the castle; it can stop spirits of 30 POW or less. Divinations spells, including Hoffman device readings, are similarly blocked. The wards must be maintained with regular infusions of Magic Points by the Templar custodians.

The wards only affect spells coming into the castle from outside. Most spells cast by those in the castle are unaffected, although especially delicate sorceries can be disrupted by the wards (hence, Jerome goes to Troyes to cast his divination spell). Spells that are absorbed by the wards trigger an alarm inside the keep.

## Sneaking Into The Castle

The Templars take their security seriously. There is only one gate in the outer walls and it is kept sealed except when someone is entering or leaving the castle. Watchmen patrol the walls both day and night. The best way into the castle is to scale the walls at night, avoiding the guards through stealth.

There is a secret escape tunnel leading from the castle dungeons to a small hunting lodge in the woods but finding this passage is impossible unless the characters capture and interrogate a Templar.

## Storming The Castle

Good luck, unless you have a sizable army with you.

## Jerome of Aquitaine

For the last four months, the Chateau du Paynes has been under the command of Jerome of Aquitaine, an elder Templar mystic. The Temple desires magical weapons that can be turned on the Saracen foe and Jerome is one of few knights who are both brave and wise enough to plumb the depths of the occult.

In a dusty cavern near Jerusalem, a shepherd found a cache of scrolls and jars. He sold the location of this secret cave to the Frankish knights. Jerome's divinations confirmed that the jar contained something powerful but experimenting with it in situ was too dangerous. The masters of the Temple agreed that the secure walls of the Chateau were the best place for the jar, so Jerome and a few trusted knights brought their prize back to Europe.

The jar was kept in the central tower, while Jerome laboured to translate the inscriptions and the associated scrolls. Finally, he dared to open the urn, after taking precautions to ward himself against possession. The Joyful One was freed from the jar and escaped.

Not only did this mean the Templars had lost a potential weapon but the renegade spirit would also certainly sow chaos among the common folk. Jerome resolved to recover it before the Order or the Inquisition got wind of the Templar's error.

Jerome knows that he is responsible for any evil the spirit does, and that he will be killed if he fails to make good on his mistakes. He is not a cruel man but he will kill to protect his own life. He believes that the Joyous One is the key to the reconquest of Jerusalem and the ultimate victory of Christendom over her enemies.

## Visiting the Templars (Before Day 8)

If the characters visit the Templar castle before Day 8, they receive a frosty welcome. Those claiming to be merchants, pilgrims or wandering monks are told by the doorkeeper of the Chateau to move on to Troyes; those claiming business with the Templars are told to report to Audal in the commandery in Troyes.

If the guardian priests use their Blessed Rings to compel the Templars to let them in, then Jerome will receive them in the keep – but he keeps half-a-dozen armed guards with him at all times. He offers them bread and cheese with a little watered wine to wash it down and tells the characters that the Chateau is indeed a place where the Templars study methods of sorcery and magic. If the characters are especially conciliatory, he may even show them some of the scrolls and notes from the cave in the Holy Land. He denies that his experiments could have anything to do with this mysterious Heresiarch but promises to report anything he discovers to the characters. They are not under any circumstances permitted to tour the castle or examine the tower, as such things are secrets of the Templars. The Blessed Ring means that he must aid the characters, not that he must indulge their curiosity.

## The Sealed Castle (Day 9)

If the characters arrive at the castle during the brief period when the Templars have the Joyous One in custody, then there is no way into the castle. The gate guards refuse to admit anyone, even if the characters wave their Blessed Rings. Jerome ordered the gates sealed and the Pope could show up with St. Bernard or the risen Christ or God Himself and still the gates would remain sealed.

A Difficult (~20%) Perception test detects strange lights flickering around the tower, as Jerome wrestles with the Joyous One. Before the characters can reach the tower, the Joyous One overcomes Jerome's binding circle and blasts the Templar and all his knights with utter madness. The whole castle collapses into chaos as the Templars turn on each other.

## The Templars as an Enemy

Especially belligerent or unwise characters may anger or alarm the Templars so much that Jerome decides they are a threat. In such a situation, the Templars order the characters to leave the Chateau and will even attack them if they refuse. Jerome may also send six Templar Knights riding after the characters, with orders to kill the guardian priests and bury the bodies in the woods.

Jerome also moves his plans forwards. If the characters arrived on Day 7 or earlier, then Jerome rides to Troyes as soon as he can to cast the divination spell. The events of *The Templars Recapture the Joyous One* therefore happen earlier and the whole timeline of the scenario advances by a day or more.

Within an hour, almost everyone in the castle is dead.

The Joyous One slips out via the secret escape tunnel. Jerome puts on one of the leather masks and staggers off to Troyes. He too has been given what he desired

## Chaos and Madness (After Day 9)

After Day 9, the Templar castle stands empty of life. The doors remain closed, so the characters will have to force open the gates or else scale the walls. Inside, they find a scene of devastation and woe. The corpses of Templar Knights lie scattered around the keep and courtyard. The whole place stinks of butchery. It is clear that the knights killed each other but what is really shocking is the brutality of the whole affair. There are knights who obviously crawled up stairs after having their legs chopped off, knights who tore the throats of their foes out with their teeth, knights who bludgeoned each other to death with gauntleted fists, knights who were hurled off the battlements or tramped by maddened horses. The cobblestones of the courtyard are drenched in blood.

The characters can search the castle for clues as to what happened here. The important clues are in the central tower, where Jerome was conducting his experiments. See the sidebar on *Searching the Castle*.

As the characters explore the castle, they will run in to the few surviving Templar knights. Roll on the Templar Castle Encounter Table to see what they find.

## Audal and The Templars Arrive (Day 10)

On the evening of the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the adventure, the Templar Audal arrives at the castle, having heard no word from Jerome or the Chateau in several days. The Templars stand outside the closed gates of the castle for a few minutes, shouting for anyone inside to come and open it. When that fails, Audal and two other Templars ride to the hunting lodge and use the secret passage to enter the castle.

The sight of the disaster inside makes Audal a lot more willing to talk to the guardian priests. If the characters make contact with him, he tells them virtually everything he knows:



- Jerome found a treasure in the Holy Land and the Templars were experimenting with it here in the Chateau.
- He does not know *what* the treasure was but he does know that something went wrong about six weeks ago. Jerome claimed that he would soon repair all his errors and told Audal to say nothing of any problems.
- Jerome had a set of notes in the central tower of the chateau – those notes may shed light on the situation.
- Audal also mentions that Aribert the Keeper of the Fair has been asking about the state of the Templars and is probably on his way. If the characters want to keep the events at the Chateau secret, they must act to do so immediately.

Roll (d6)	Encounter
1	A dying knight, who spits and curses the monks as he passes.
2	A dying knight holding a crossbow, who fires one last desperate shot at the PCs as they enter the room.
3	A crazed and badly wounded Templar (only 1d3 Hit Points remaining in each location) who charges to attack the PCs as soon as he sees them.
4	A catatonic knight who attacks if threatened.
5	A pair of knights battling each other, locked in mortal combat.
6	A mob of 1d4+1 templar knights who attack like savage beasts, loping forward on all fours.

## The Coded Notes

Jerome wrote his notes about the Tomb of Solomon down in code. Handout #3 is the coded version; Handout #4 is the decoded version for your reference.

The coding system is a relatively simple Caesar cipher, where each letter is shifted a number of places in the alphabet. The only added complexity is the fact that the shift changes with each paragraph. The shifts are derived from the Second Book of Kings, verses 37 and 38, which read:

- 37 In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of Jehovah laid, in the month Ziv.
- 38 And in the eleventh year, in the month Bul, which is the eighth month, was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it. So was he seven years in building it.

Each number mentioned is a shift. The first paragraph is shifted by 4, the second by 2 (Ziv is the second month), the third by 11, the fourth by 8 and the last by 7.

## Templar Knights

These are battle-hardened veterans of the crusades, ready for war. If encountered after the Joyous One has escaped from the tower for the second time, then the knights will have suffered wounds before the PCs meet them; reduce the knight's Hit Points by 1D6 points in 1d3 random locations.

		<b>1D20</b>	<b>Hit Location</b>	<b>AP/HP</b>	<b>Combat Actions</b>	2
<b>STR</b>	<b>15</b>	1-3	Right Leg	5/6	<b>Damage Modifier</b>	+1d2
<b>CON</b>	<b>14</b>	4-6	Left Leg	5/6	<b>Magic Points</b>	13
<b>SIZ</b>	<b>14</b>	7-9	Abdomen	6/7	<b>Movement</b>	8m
<b>INT</b>	<b>10</b>	10-12	Chest	6/8	<b>Strike Rank</b>	+10 (+2 in armour)
<b>POW</b>	<b>13</b>	13-15	Right Arm	5/5		
<b>DEX</b>	<b>10</b>	16-18	Left Arm	5/5		
<b>CHA</b>	<b>10</b>	19-20	Head	6/6		

*Armour:* Chain & Plate

*Equipment:* Longsword, Heater Shield

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 55%, Brawn 50%, Influence 46%, Language (Arabic) 20%, Language (French) 50%, Lore (Christian Theology) 40%, Persistence 30%, Resilience 48%, Ride 43%

### WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Sword	M	L	65%	1D8	6/12
& Shield	L	S	65%	1D4	6/12

## Jerome of Aquitaine

The scholarly master of the Templars of Troyes, Jerome plans to use the secrets of the urn uncovered in Syria to destroy the armies of the Saracens and retake the Holy City of Jerusalem. As such, the blame for the sorrows and madness that engulf Troyes must fall squarely on his shoulders.

		<b>1D20</b>	<b>Hit Location</b>	<b>AP/HP</b>	<b>Combat Actions</b>	3
<b>STR</b>	<b>13</b>	1-3	Right Leg	-/4	<b>Damage Modifier</b>	+0
<b>CON</b>	<b>16</b>	4-6	Left Leg	-/4	<b>Magic Points</b>	16
<b>SIZ</b>	<b>12</b>	7-9	Abdomen	-/5	<b>Movement</b>	8m
<b>INT</b>	<b>15</b>	10-12	Chest	-/6	<b>Strike Rank</b>	+13 (+6 in armour)
<b>POW</b>	<b>16</b>	13-15	Right Arm	-/3		
<b>DEX</b>	<b>10</b>	16-18	Left Arm	-/3		
<b>CHA</b>	<b>14</b>	19-20	Head	-/4		

*Armour:* Chain

*Equipment:* Longsword, Dagger

*Spells:* Banish, Curse (POW), Enhance (POW), Intuition, Magic Resistance, Mystic Vision, Protective Ward, Revelation, Spirit Resistance, Telekinesis

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 45%, Courtesy 60%, Grimoire (Key of Solomon) 85%, Influence 70%, Insight 60%, Lore (Occult) 70%, Manipulation 50%, Perception 40%, Persistence 70%, Resilience 40%, Ride 40%

## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Longsword	M	L	85%	1D8	6/12
Dagger	S	S	60%	1D4	6/8

## HANDOUT 2

*Herein I set down my thoughts on the Urn of Palmyra. The seal is unquestionably that of Solomon, son of David and King of Israel, who raised the Temple and was accounted wise and powerful beyond measure. It is said that by virtue of his magical ring, Solomon did bind certain demons and evil spirits and lock them away where they could harm none. This jar is assuredly one of these prisons.*

*Primus, I must determine if the prisoner remains incarcerated. As per the writings of the Key of Solomon, there are certain tests that must be performed. I place a lodestone by the jar and it is drawn to it. Next, I place another jar, containing a few moths, by the jar and I leave it overnight. If the moths survive the night, then the jar is empty despite the intact seal.*

*The moths are dead.*

*There can be no further doubt. I have one of Solomon's spirits in my possession. Praise be to the Lord, for leading His faithful knights to this treasure. The spirit shall be as a sword to smite our foes, or a beast of burden to be tamed and tethered. With the power of this spirit, we shall retake the Holy City and restore the cross and the Temple to their rightful places, for the greater glory of God!*

*I must not be over-hasty. Such spirits are malicious and crafty. It will try to seduce me or mislead me. Lord, grant me the strength to resist the devil's charms and the wit to see through its lies. Our struggle begins on the morrow.*

*It says its name is the Joyous One and avers that it wishes only to serve me. It claims to be a spirit of joy and that it will grant me my desires if only I free it from the circle that traps it. Its voice is like the plaintive weeping of a child, for it is very weak. The little vitality it stole from the moths can hardly sustain it. It begs me for life, for a dog or some other living thing to feed upon, or for a little part of my own power. It is so small and weak it seems almost harmless but I am not deceived. Such spirits wax strong quickly.*

## HANDOUT 2 CONT...

*The spirit remains confined but it grows more cunning. I found a dead mouse a handsbreadth from the binding circle this morning. Its reach is longer than I assumed and I fear that it is testing the strength of its prison. To occupy it, I demanded that the spirit aid me in translating the scrolls we found with it. One bundle of scrolls is an original text of the Key of Solomon, the very holy book I studied to learn the art of binding and commanding.*

*The other scrolls speak of*

*I shall not write it down here. To commit such things to open writing is unwise.*

*\*Disaster. The spirit has escaped. One of the stableboys crept into my tower while I slumbered and broke the circle. The spirit took him in an instant; I slew the boy but the spirit escaped. I believed it would take the thing longer to extricate itself from the boy's corpse but it moved swifter than the wind.*

*It cannot have gone far. I kept it starved, so it must take on human flesh in order to survive. Killing the host was my error - while bound in flesh, it is trapped until the host dies. Damn me for my foolishness! Lord, forgive me.*

*The spirit is not the true prize and I must remember that. What is one sword, when you have found the key to an armoury containing many thousands?*

*I have perfected a method of finding the spirit, should it still remain on this earthy plane. The wards of this castle baffled my earlier attempts, so I must go to Troyes immediately to perform the rite. This night, I shall make good on my earlier failings or die in the attempt.*

*Once more, the Joyous One is in my power. The unfortunate soul of the leper must have been harrowed clean of sin and gone straight to Heaven, so I can do what must be done to the body to force the spirit to talk. With the spirit's help, I shall find the missing pieces of this puzzle.*

## HANDOUT 2 CONT...

*Tricked I saw the doors of the tomb and stepped over the threshold it was the circle it is free again I am free free on this day all prisoners shall be set free says the LORD I burn like a fever god forgive me it is free again he laughs in my head and I can hardly think write*

*Troyes will burn now that the time of misrule is come and I shall be the abbot of unreason and I will brook no rivals in my domain. I shall be a voice crying in Christendom and I shall make the path crooked for the Lord of Misrule.*

*I was blind and now I see.*

## HANDOUT 3

*Like the masons who built Solomon's temple in the Book of Kings, I have toiled long over these words. I beg you to commend the builders of the temple and the time they laboured to the paths of your memory as you read and turn with them.*

WSPSQSR XLI OMRK FYMPX XLI GMXC SJ XEHQSV MR XLI HIWIVXW SJ  
XLI IEWX. DIRSFME VYPIH XLIVI ERH MR XLI.

UKZ KU VJG PWODGT QH VJG HCKVJHWN CPF UGXGP CTG JKFFGP KP  
VJG UGCN. VJG ITGCVGUV QH VJGUG KU VJG VQOD QH UQNQQQP.

QCZX ELOXZC QTYO ESP DZYD ZQ ESP DPGPY SFYOCPO HSZ LCP JPE  
QLTESQFW LYO MP RFTOPO MJ ESP WTRSE ZQ ESP DFY TY L STRS AWLNP.

MVBMZ BPM BWUJ IA WVM LMIL NWZ BPM OIBMSMMXMZA IZM  
EIBKPNCT.

MVSSVD AOL WHAO MYVT RPUN AV JYVDU HUK MPUK AOVZL DOV  
RLW HUK AOVZL DOV HYL RLWA.

*Like the masons who built Solomon's temple in the Book of Kings, I have toiled long over these words. I beg you to commend the builders of the temple and the time they laboured to the paths of your memory as you read and turn with them.*

SOLOMON THE KING BUILT THE CITY OF TADMOR IN THE DESERTS OF THE EAST. ZENOBIA RULED THERE AND IN THE GREEK TONGUE IT IS CALLED PALMYRA.

SIX IS THE NUMBER OF THE FAITHFUL AND SEVEN ARE HIDDEN IN THE SEAL. THE GREATEST OF THESE IS THE TOMB OF SOLOMON.

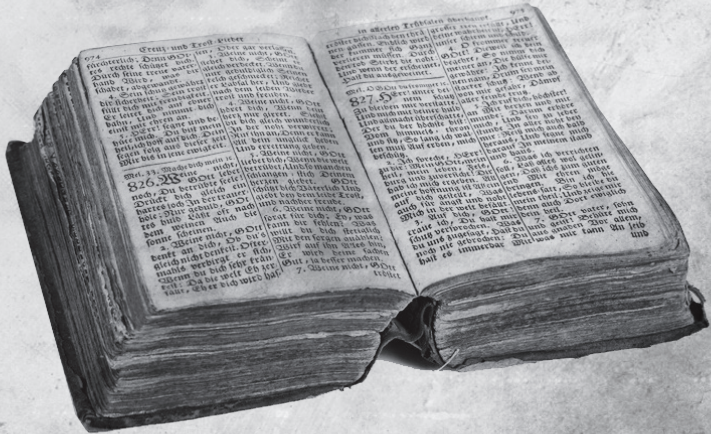
FROM TADMOR FIND THE SONS OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED WHO ARE YET FAITHFUL AND BE GUIDED BY THE LIGHT OF THE SUN IN A HIGH PLACE.

ENTER THE TOMB AS ONE DEAD FOR THE GATEKEEPERS ARE WATCHFUL.

FOLLOW THE PATH FROM KING TO CROWN AND FIND THOSE WHO KEEP AND THOSE WHO ARE KEPT.

Verse 3.8

# DEMON SLAYERS





This is the final encounter with the crazed guardian priests. The encounter can happen whenever the characters are travelling around the countryside near Troyes, either on the way to the Templar castle or the leper colony.

There are two ways to run the encounter. If the players have already worked out that the other guardian priests are not actually in Hell, but were bewitched by the Joyous One, then run the encounter from the Player Characters' point of view: they are travelling through the woods when suddenly they are attacked by the other monks.

However, if the players are still confused by the fate of the first guardian priests, then you can run this encounter from the point of view of the insane enemies. In this case, collect the player's character sheets and give out the pregenerated copies of Claude and his companions. Let the players battle their own characters until they realise what is going on, at which point you should swap the characters around again.

## The Reality

*You are travelling along the lonely road, when suddenly a number of bizarre figures emerge from the undergrowth and brandish weapons at you. Their faces are so gaunt and drawn you can see their skulls and their burning eyes bulge from the sockets. They are filthy, dressed in tattered rags that were once black robes. You can scarcely believe they are still standing, given how emaciated and injured they are. Madness alone drives them on and they have murder in mind.*

## The Delusion

*For an eternity, you have struggled with the forces of Hell. Countless demons have fallen to your blades. You have faced down the fallen angels themselves and survived – but still you cannot find the way back to the mortal world.*

*Now, in this trackless wilderness, you spy a number of demons, the vilest you have yet seen. These horrors resemble men made of maggots, clad in the flayed skin of infants and with the heads of flies. A sudden divine intuition strikes you – if you can only slay these horrors, the spell will be broken and you will be transported back home. Only a single good sword-thrust stands between you and the gate out of Hell!*

## Running the Encounter

Blood-thirsty players can play this as a straight combat encounter. The other guardian priests are likely wounded and lacking resources after their previous battles, so the characters should be able to defeat them, given luck and the expenditure of some Fate Points.

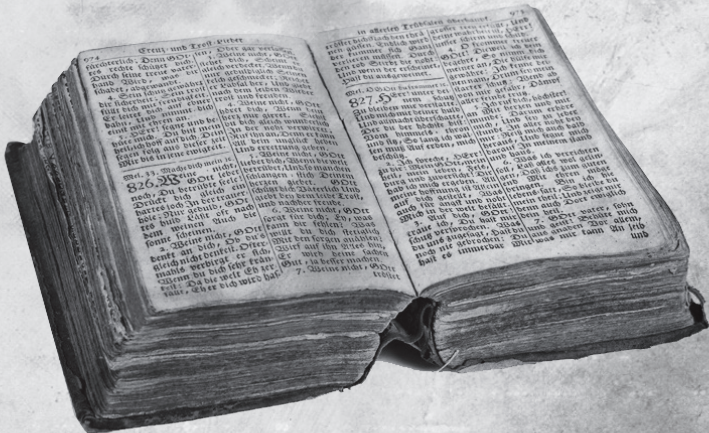
- Claude's tactics are simple – charge into the fray and attack lightly-armoured foes with his Crusader Blades. If any of the characters use ranged weapons, and assuming he still has a smoke bomb left, he uses his bombs to block line of sight for missile fire.
- Renaud uses his automatic crossbow to fire any remaining explosive bolts, then attacks with his warsword. If possible, he uses the explosive bolts to stun a dangerous foe's sword arm.
- If Victor still has his choking dust, he will hurl it at the characters before the battle begins. He then advances into the fray, using his bolt sword at point-blank range.
- Andrew's only offensive spell is Hinder, so he casts that on the PCs. With his Manipulation of 80%, he can easily increase the spell's range to POW x 5 metres and target five PCs. Furthermore, his Sorcery score lets him affect up to 21 SIZ per target and every three points of excess SIZ increases the movement reduction by 1 metre. Applied to average PCs, this should reduce the victims' movement to one metre per round. Once he has cast Hinder, he joins the fray.

Players may also try to rescue their fellow guardian priests from their delusions. This can be accomplished through roleplaying (*'You're not in Hell! The Heresiarch tricked you!'*), or by using non-lethal attacks to incapacitate the crazy monks without killing them.

Play this encounter as a warning to the players of what will happen to them if they are unable to defeat the Joyous One. The first guardian priests were more experienced and better equipped than the PCs and they were utterly overcome by the spirit's powers.

Verse 3.9

# MURDER AT THE CATHEDRAL



After being driven insane by the Joyous One, Jerome – now the Heresiarch – is determined to spread the word of the Joyful People and to drive away competing faiths. He will begin by turning the city upside down by murdering the Bishop of Troyes in front of the whole congregation.

If the cathedral is destroyed and the bishop slain, the faith of everyone in the town will be shaken, making them much more receptive to the preaching of the Heresiarch.

There are several ways the characters can become involved in this event.

- The cryptic notes left by Jerome as he went mad certainly suggest that he intends to target Troyes' religious leaders.
- If the characters are in Troyes and are watching the streets, then they may spot unusual numbers of people moving towards the cathedral. If they visited the leper colony and saw the healthy followers of the Joyful People, then they may even recognise some of the faces in the crowd.
- If the characters have contacts among the Fair Guards, then they may hear rumours of Aribert's strange behaviour – see *Aribert the Insane*.
- If all else fails, the characters can be alerted by screams of alarm from the cathedral.

## The Cathedral

The current cathedral in Troyes is 50 years old and built according to the Romanesque style. The walls of the cathedral are massively thick, the windows long, thin and pointed and inside the apse is lined with pillars. The cathedral is in the shape of a Latin cross – the long west-east nave runs for 100 metres from the main door to the rounded eastern end, while the shorter transept is 40 metres wide. The walls are three metres thick. Two tall towers rise from the cathedral's west face, flanking the main doors. There are smaller doors at the north and south ends of the transept.

The main altar is at the eastern end. It is here that Bishop Manassé will celebrate mass at noon. There are no pews or seats – the congregation stands, facing the priest.

The square outside the cathedral is crowded with market stalls and traders; this is the fringe part of the Champagne Fair, so most of the stalls are selling simpler goods like fish, meat, vegetables, animals and basic clothing. Some of the stalls sell cooked meats, others sell lamp oil. These two items will shortly become very important.

## The Heretics' Plan

Thanks to the insane machination of Aribert, the cult's agents were able to enter the town without being noticed. The cult's numbers are greatly depleted after the Templars sacked the leper colony but the new Heresiarch has been busy recruiting more. Bands of masked Joyful People swept out across the countryside last night, grabbing peasants and driving them insane with the Heresiarch's powers. Between these new recruits and the people recruited in the city earlier, there are more than 100 cultists in Troyes, of which more than three dozen are armed fanatics.

The best of these fanatics, including several Templar knights from the chateau, are in the cathedral. They have both weapons and leather masks in their possession. They plan to make their way through the crowds and attack the bishop at the height of the mass, while loudly proclaiming that the Joyous One is coming and the world will soon be redeemed.

Meanwhile, less suicidal cult agents are waiting outside. When the commotion starts inside the church, they will grab braziers of hot coals and lamp oil from the market and throw them into the nave of the church, then close the massive doors. Other agents will shut the side doors. The coals heat and ignite the oil, setting the cathedral alight. With the doors shut, the panicked crowd inside will be unable to escape for a few frantic moments, giving the assassins time to kill the bishop, remove their masks and blend into the crowd.

## Fighting in a Burning Cathedral

Each round, roll 1d6 and add the number of rounds since the fight began.

Roll	Event	Smoke Penalty*
1	None	0%
2	Surging crowds knock prone any character who fails to make a successful Athletics or Brawn test.	0%
3	A shower of sparks shoots through the cathedral. Any character wearing cloth has a 5% chance of being set alight by the sparks.	0%
4	One of the cathedral's great windows shatters, sending glass shards flying everywhere.	0%
5	A gout of flame licks out of the bonfire by the west door. Any characters nearby may be caught in the fire and take 1d4 damage to a random location.	0%
6	One of the flasks of oil thrown in from outside explodes, splashing anyone nearby, causing 1d4 damage to all locations.	0%
7	A panicked citizen grabs one of the characters and demands that the character help him escape. He will do anything to survive!	10%
8	Terrified people start climbing to the windows. A child slips and is about to fall - can the characters save him in time.	10%
9	A cult assassin tries to attack one of the PCs, emerging from the crowd and stabbing the PC in the back.	10%
10	One of the supporting pillars falls. One PC must make an Evade test or suffer 2d6+2 damage.	20%
11	A man on fire runs through the cathedral, screaming in agony. Unless put down, he will spread the fire even faster.	20%
12	A crazed templar rampages through the crowd, slaughtering anyone who gets in his way.	20%
13	A wave of heat washes through the cathedral; all characters must make a Resilience test or suffer a -10% to all future rolls in the cathedral due to the lack of air.	40%
14	A chunk of the roof caves in. All characters must make Evade tests or take 1d6 damage.	40%
15+	The church is now an inferno. All characters in the cathedral take one point of damage to the head and chest every round.	40%

\*: The penalty from smoke applies to all attacks at Medium reach or longer. It is doubled for ranged weapons.

If all goes according to the plan, the heretics will murder the bishop and burn down the cathedral with only a few casualties of their own; the sheer size of the crowds at the cathedral and in the square outside should let the heretics melt away into the city.

## Timeline of Events

This list of events assumes the players do not intervene.

11.45: People start crowding into the cathedral for mass. Some of these are cult assassins.

12.00: Mass begins

12.15: Cult assassins, including crazed Templars, begin to push through the crowd.

12.18: One of the Templars, a knight named Maurice, draws his sword and charges towards the altar, screaming 'death to sorrow! Joy is coming!' He is blocked by Father Daison; the priest is mortally wounded.

12.19: The cultists bar the south door; a fight breaks out between cultists and townsfolk at the north door. At the western entrance, the cultists begin the work of setting fire to the cathedral.

12.20: The western entrance catches fire. A riot breaks out in the square; cultists and innocents alike are hurled into the flames.

12.21: Maurice is brought down by the crowd but in the confusion, Bishop Manassé is trampled to death.

12.22: A masked cultist scales one of the pillars and starts screaming that the Joyous One is coming and there will be an end to all things. He remains there until the cathedral roof collapses on top of him.

## Foiling the Plan

The characters should not be able to foil all of the cult's plans - at the very least, try to ensure that the cathedral sets on fire. If they learn of the assassination plot in advance, they can possibly save the bishop, or at least take down many of the cultists.

## After the Fire

If the characters succeeded in saving the bishop, then the townsfolk rejoice in this miracle. They take Bishop Manassé on their shoulders and parade him through the streets, shouting that he was delivered from the very heart of the flames by angels. The bishop dies of a heart attack en route but no-one notices for some time and it is declared that he was taken up into Heaven anyway.

If Manassé was killed by the cult, then a black mood of despair sweeps over Troyes. People speak openly about the possibility that the end of the world is coming and some say that only the Joyous One can save them from the forces of Hell who assuredly burned down the cathedral. The stage is set for the coming of the Heresiarch.

Either way, a few cultists were captured by the authorities during the struggle. If the characters interrogate these prisoners, they learn that the Heresiarch is coming to the Fair tomorrow and he will bring the salvation of the world...

# Inspired Templar

This is a crazed Templar knight, driven mad by the Joyous One or the Heresiarch. As such, the Templar has been granted increased strength and speed but at the cost of sanity; the players may be able to use the knight's madness against him.

		<b>1D20</b>	<b>Hit Location</b>	<b>AP/HP</b>	<i>Combat Actions</i>	2
<b>STR</b>	<b>19</b>	1-3	Right Leg	5/6	<i>Damage Modifier</i>	+1d4
<b>CON</b>	<b>11</b>	4-6	Left Leg	5/6	<i>Magic Points</i>	13
<b>SIZ</b>	<b>14</b>	7-9	Abdomen	6/7	<i>Movement</i>	8m
<b>INT</b>	<b>10</b>	10-12	Chest	6/8	<i>Strike Rank</i>	+12 (+5 in armour)
<b>POW</b>	<b>13</b>	13-15	Right Arm	5/5		
<b>DEX</b>	<b>14</b>	16-18	Left Arm	5/5		
<b>CHA</b>	<b>14</b>	19-20	Head	-/6		

*Armour:* Chain & Plate

*Equipment:* Longsword

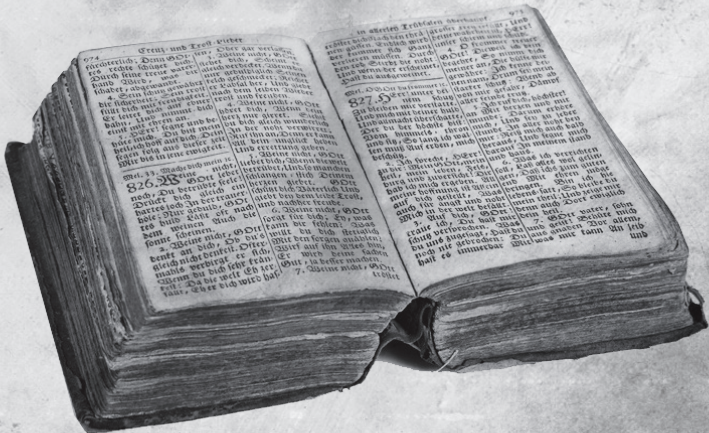
*Notable Skills:* Athletics 80%, Brawn 50%, Influence 61%, Language (Arabic) 20%, Language (French) 50%, Lore (Christian Theology) 40%, Persistence 55%, Resilience 63%, Riding 43%

## WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Longsword	M	L	100%	1D8	6/12

Verse 3.10

# AT THE CHAMPAGNE FAIR





The Heresiarch is coming to Troyes to preach at the Champagne Fair. If he succeeds in addressing the crowds and spreading his heresy to the masses, then containing this outbreak will be impossible. From interrogating the prisoners captured at the attack on the cathedral, the characters should know that the Heresiarch is coming. Even if they missed out on this opportunity, they should realise that the cult is targeting the Champagne Fair.

The next day is the end of the wool fair, so a great many important deals have to be finished today. Aribert has sent out orders for the Templar Commandery to be reopened at noon – the Templars have a monopoly on wool-weighing and without their scales the wool market has ground to a halt. A huge crowd is expected to gather outside the Commandery – and the Heresiarch will preach to them.

There are three ways that the characters can foil the Heresiarch's plan:

- If they find the Heresiarch before he preaches, they can eliminate him quietly.
- If they assassinate him when he reveals himself, but before he preaches, the danger can also be averted.
- If all that fails, they can disrupt the whole Fair to stop the Heresiarch.

## Finding the Heresiarch

A Difficult (–20%) Streetwise or Influence roll picks up some useful rumours:

- The Keepers of the Fair have ordered the Templar commandery to reopen tomorrow, thank God. Now we can finally sort out the wool market. (True)
- Aribert returned from the Templar castle this morning, in the company of three Templar Knights. (True; the 'knights' were Jerome and two of the insane Templars)
- Those madmen who attacked the bishop are coming back! There is a whole crowd of them gathering outside the north gate! (False)

The characters can also use a Hoffman Device or other magic to divine the location of the Heresiarch – in such close proximity, give the characters a +20% bonus to Lore (Occult) rolls for detecting Jerome's presence.

These clues may lead the characters to Aribert's townhouse. The moneylender's home stands on the Rue du Temple, directly opposite the Commandery. It is a magnificent four-storey structure, with a balcony over the street on the fourth floor. When the crowds gather at noon for the re-opening of the Commandery, it is from here that the Heresiarch will preach.

Aribert's household consists of the moneylender himself, his wife, two sons, a half-dozen servants and – as of last night – Jerome and two insane Templars.

## Assassinating the Heresiarch

If the characters wait until the Heresiarch reveals himself, then they need to kill the preacher in front of the whole crowd. The Heresiarch casts *Magic Resistance* on himself before emerging from Aribert's house and will use *Telekinesis* to swat any characters who try using ranged weapons or who try climbing the rooftops. There are two Templar Knights in the house behind him and a number of Joyful People in the crowd, all of whom will attempt to protect the Heresiarch from attack.

## Fighting Madness With Madness

There are other ways the characters can deal with the Heresiarch. They could, for example, contact Count Henry and have him clear the square, or try to infiltrate the cult and discredit it, or just start a huge fire that guts half of the city but prevents the Heresiarch from speaking.

## Complications

When the characters are approaching the final confrontation with the Heresiarch, roll against each of the cult's factors as described on page 103 of *Deus Vult*. If the roll is successful, then the cult gains an added advantage in this confrontation.

- **Subversion:** An important NPC – Alix, Gerner, Audal, Count Henry or some other trusted friend – has secretly converted to the cult and will betray the PCs at an inopportune moment.
- **Fanaticism:** If the characters defeat the Heresiarch, his followers burn themselves alive and run through the crowd, causing a huge panic.
- **Concealment:** The cult has hidden guards and archers around the area near the Commandery, waiting for someone to attack the Heresiarch.
- **Force:** There are four Templar Knights guarding the Heresiarch, not two.
- **Supernatural:** The Heresiarch gains the Neutralise Magic spell.

## Death of a Heresiarch

When – and if – the guardian priests deal a mortal blow to Jerome, read the following.

*The Heresiarch crumples as your blade plunges through his chainmail and into his guts. Hot blood gushes over your hands. The leather mask falls from his face.*

*'The madness is gone... forgive me!'*

*He clutches you and hisses into your ear with his dying breath.*

*'It's still loose... find it...keep it trapped... before it frees them...'*

Jerome dies free of the Joyous One's unholy inspiration.

## Aftermath

The death of the Heresiarch ends the heresy in Troyes. There may still be Joyful People in the town but without the inhuman charisma of the Heresiarch, the cult fragments and fades over time. The new bishop will, in time, invoke the Inquisition to eliminate any lingering traces of the taint.

The revelation that Jerome is the Heresiarch may confuse the players. Point out that there is no way that Jerome could have been the original Heresiarch – the Templar must have been subverted at the Chateau du Paynes. The real threat has not been defeated.

On Jerome's body (or in Aribert's house), the characters find a scroll, a pendulum and a small fragment of the urn that once held the Joyous One. A successful Lore (Occult) test identifies this as a spell for locating a spirit – it is the ritual that Jerome used to find the Joyous One several days earlier. Casting this spell nudges the pendulum to point south-west.

The Joyous One is still out there.

## Cleaning Up In Troyes

If she is still well disposed to the characters, Alix promises to write to Rene in Paris and ask for his help in dealing with the last of the cult, freeing the characters to go after the Joyous One. She will also suggest using the ritual if the players fail to do so.

## Jerome, The Heresiarch of Troyes

Having been touched with the greater inspiration of the Joyous One, Jerome is now the Heresiarch. He is the prophet of the time of upheaval and misrule that is to come.

The Lesser Inspiration of the Joyous One gives the recipient a feeling of constant ecstatic joy and fills him with devotion to the spirit. The recipient's Strength, Dexterity and Charisma are all increased by +1D6 and he gains a +25% bonus to Athletics, Evade, Influence, Persistence, Resilience and combat skills. Maintaining the inspiration costs the Joyous One one Magic Point per day and permanently reduces the recipient's Constitution by one point each day.

		<b>1D20</b>	<b>Hit Location</b>	<b>AP/HP</b>	<i>Combat Actions</i>	3
<b>STR</b>	19	1-3	Right Leg	5/6	<i>Damage Modifier</i>	+1d4
<b>CON</b>	13	4-6	Left Leg	5/6	<i>Magic Points</i>	13
<b>SIZ</b>	12	7-9	Abdomen	5/7	<i>Movement</i>	8m
<b>INT</b>	15	10-12	Chest	5/8	<i>Strike Rank</i>	+16 (+9 in armour)
<b>POW</b>	13	13-15	Right Arm	5/5		
<b>DEX</b>	16	16-18	Left Arm	5/5		
<b>CHA</b>	20	19-20	Head	5/6		

*Armour:* Chain

*Equipment:* Longsword, Dagger

*Spells:* Banish, Curse (POW), Enhance (POW), Intuition, Magic Resistance, Mystic Vision, Protective Ward, Revelation, Spirit Resistance, Telekinesis

*Notable Skills:* Athletics 70%, Courtesy 60%, Grimoire (Key of Solomon) 85%, Influence 95%, Insight 60%, Lore (Occult) 70%, Manipulation 50%, Perception 40%, Persistence 95%, Resilience 65%, Ride 40%

### WEAPONS

Type	Size	Reach	Weapon Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Longsword	M	L	110%	1D8	6/12
Dagger	S	S	85%	1D4	6/8