

Mitch Burner

LUKAREJEC

BURNER EDITION



I'm coming to find you
I'm coming to get you
I'm coming to take you away
You witches are evil
You worship the devil
So listen to what I say
Come peacefully from out of your huts
Or I'll have you witches pray
I must destroy you
Must play and toy you
And watch you wither away

Witchfinder General
"Witchfinder General" - *Death Penalty* (1982)

Witchburner is a tabletop RPG adventure that takes an intimate, claustrophobic delve into a small town beset by witchcraft. It deals with the topics you would expect with a title like *Witchburner*: magic, suspicion, fear, torture, fire, people burning.

It casts the heroes in the role of witchfinders—whether witting or unwitting—whom the town of Bridge expects to find the witch threatening their town and burn her.

If this is not your cup of cake, then walk awake. Or away.

It is effectively system neutral.

This is the free burner version of *Witchburner*. If you are not yet a supporter of *WizardThiefFighter*, you are welcome to join at <https://www.patreon.com/wizardthieffighter>.

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The
fire
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Witchburner

This free sample of **Witchburner** covers the first
seven days and seven citizens of Bridge.

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The Town

LIMESTONE GRAVEL CRUNCHED under the iron-bound wheels with a hollow sound, like bones snapping. The Rightmaker had come.

"Who summoned justice?" asked the clerk.

The Mayor walked forward. Her fur stole quivered as she lowered herself for the regal official.

"The council of the Bridge of Saint Cleareyes begged me, the Mayor, to summon justice," she said.

The clerk regarded her for a long minute, before walking back to the black carriage with the red triangle.

He bent to the latticework window and murmured, "Lord Rightmaker, the Mayor and her council are here to bend their necks and summon justice."

The carriage rocked and was still. The clerk nodded and returned to the front of the entourage.

"The lord accepts your summons. Lead the way to your square of three truths."

Edna scrambled up, beads of sweat sparkling in the fox fur, as she stumbled across the ancient bridge that gave her town life. Her flock of terrified councilors flapped after.

The carriage rolled after them, clerk and beetling soldiers flanking it. It stopped again besides three stones supporting a fourth. Two soldiers ran forward with a portable stair as the clerk opened the side door.

A hush fell on the square; even the birds in the lindens lost their song.

"The Lord Rightmaker takes the stones of the Bridge of Saint Cleareyes and brings the truths of sky, earth, and underworld to the sinful flock!" intoned the clerk.

Supple leather shoes and silken robes swirled as the lord descended onto the stones. She surveyed the small crowd with her empty sockets and the red stone of her third eye.

"My friends, good citizens, I have listened to your list of calamities, and I understand your plight," her voice was warm, "you have a witch."

She looked around and said, "You have a witch, and we're going to burn the bitch."

The folk call it Bridge.

The clerks call it Saint Cleareyes.

Built, burnt, and rebuilt. There has always been a town at this opalescent bridge. Its metal struts resist the weight of years though the river below shifts from swift flow to murky mire and back again carving its way to the sea.

The town has always been small. Important but limited by geography to always be the pawn, at best the rook, of either the Western City or the Eastern City.

When the burners come the natives fly to the thick-wooded hills like carrion crows from their carcass at the coming of a catamount.

Always the burners leave and the natives return.

Always some stain of the old days remains in the brooding woods, in the buckled mountains, in the banshee caves.

Always the witches remain.

Remain, and sometimes return. Like this October.

The fish of the river floated upturned upon the water, handprints burned into their putrefying flesh.

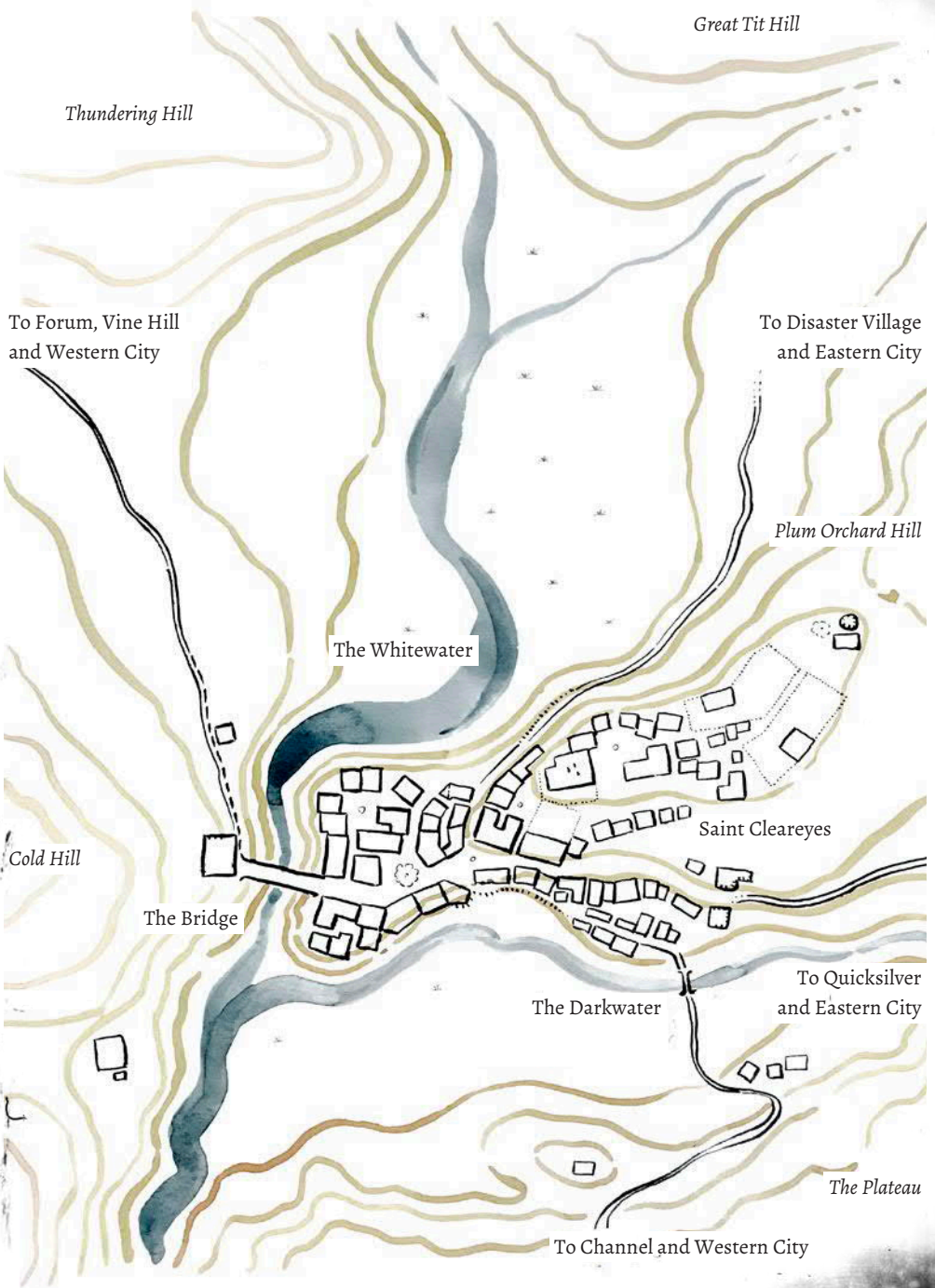
A black cat was found, gutted and nailed upon the doors of the Schoolhouse.

A child was born with a third eye, and when he cried, he cried, "Amimam!" —Eater of Virility. The council put the monster spawn to death, as is proper.

The buckwheat wilted black in the fields and the pumpkins bled red under Plum Orchard Hill. It was going to be a hungry winter.

Winterwhite is a dangerous god, and a wise mayor does not play games with the granaries. It is time to

burn the witchburner.



Thundering Hill

Great Tit Hill

To Forum, Vine Hill
and Western City

To Disaster Village
and Eastern City

Plum Orchard Hill

The Whitewater

Saint Cleareyes

Cold Hill

The Bridge

To Quicksilver
and Eastern City

The Darkwater

The Plateau

To Channel and Western City

The Offer

THE MAYOR PATS down her forehead with a napkin and looks left, then right. The councilors arranged around her in their finery nod assent. She looks down at the motley witchfinders, spoken for by the Lord Rightmaker.

“Our request is simple. Find the witch before All Saints’ Night, before the month ends, and we shall

pay you 3,000 cash.”

The shadow-skinned councilor smiles, “And the council will cover your stay at my inn.”

The bushy-haired priest looks uncomfortable, “Now go, find that witch, before she brings Winterwhite’s hunger on us all!”

How to Run Witchburner

Referee!

This section is for you alone and contains spoilers for the adventure. Sure, players reading the previous part might have learned about the treasures and such, but that’s no big deal.

When you run *Witchburner* the first critical resource you have to manage is the passage of **time**. Within a month things will come to a fever pitch and whatever happens, happens.

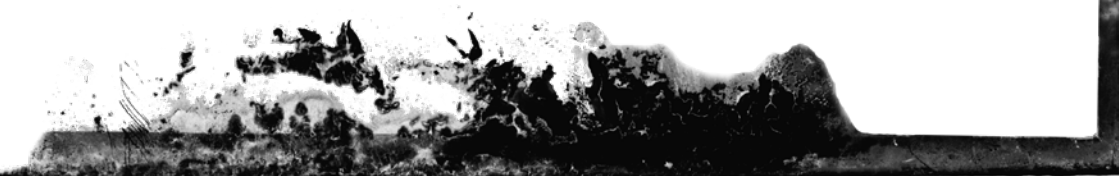
30 Days To Burn is here to help you track the passing of time. Time is divided into **watches**, each roughly six hours long. For simplicity’s sake, the party of heroes can visit and thoroughly investigate one location or person per watch.

To paint impressions of the weather and natural environment think of October in the Alps.

The second resource you track is the **attitude** of key non-player characters—how much individual townspeople love or fear the witchfinders (the heroes). Keep track of their interactions with the NPCs and note it in *30 Citizens*.

The townspeople, their stories, fears, and loves are the heart of *Witchburner*. Each of them, along with dependants, houses, treasures, and secret lore, is detailed further in *The People of Bridge*. This is the true heart of *Witchburner*.

There are also three tools to help you create a suitable ambience: *Alcohol and Love, Fear, and the Mob* cover how social interactions work in *Bridge*. *30 Calamities* lists random events attributed to witchcraft by the townspeople—feel free to add more of your own, as the passage of time requires. Finally, *Stats and Strength* provides a series of stats you can use for the creatures and people which populate the town and the mountains and the woods.



How to Win

Spoiler alert.

Witchburner is a social adventure where the heroes are hired or chosen or appointed to find the witch bringing calamities to the Bridge of Saint Clearwater. How they wound up in this situation is up to the referee.

The important thing is they are here and, for good or ill, the mayor is glad they are.

Pumpkins have been cut open only for teeth to spill out instead of seeds; while the barn swallows are flying south too early, portending a harsh winter.

People are scared, and in a world of forces too powerful for mere mortals to control or comprehend, they are looking for a simple solution.

Something must be causing these ill omens.

That something must be a witch.

Therefore, the witch must be found.

And purified by fire.

There is one catch: **there is no witch**. All the calamities are coincidences. Every last one.

But the townspeople are convinced there must be a witch—after all, they live in a fantasy world with real magic and witchcraft. They will not be satisfied unless one is found. Man or woman, it matters not; either will burn quite nicely.

The heroes have a very simple solution available: frame an innocent townspeople. Whether your game uses alignments or not this is evil. However, if the councilors are convinced everything is ok, the heroes will be paid their bloody 3,000 cash.

As referee use the heroes' actions: persuasion, bribery, trickery, torture, and threats to decide if the

council agrees with the heroes.

To add to the moral tension keep the calamities happening even after the 'witch' has been found and burned except the townspeople ascribe them all to happenstance.

If no witch is found or the heroes refuse to frame an innocent the townspeople eventually decide that the witchfinders must be witches. A mob forms and comes after them, determined to torture confessions out of the foreigners and burn them (p. 14).

As referee make it clear to the players before the mob forms that unless the heroes hurry up and find something to appease the townspeople they will be in grave danger.

The mob is convinced that if they do not capture the witch(es) and destroy them Winterwhite will starve the whole town to death and bring an end to them. They are desperate and numerous and the only options seriously open to the heroes are capture, flight or an exceptional bloodbath that forces the townspeople to retreat.

Whether your game uses alignments or not fireballing desperate civilians—even if they're trying to burn you as a witch—is kind of evil.

There is also the murderhobo solution: after scoping out a few houses and important people in the town, rob them blind, set their houses on fire, and flee. This is probably the least evil option.

How the game world and the heroes change after the events of this adventure I leave up to the individual game group to decide.

Bringing A Witch To Trial

There are four major social groups in the town:

The Lodge Members represent the artificial trades and are organized around rituals and magic to appease and supplicate the Firebringer. The Inn-keeper is the current mistress of the lodge, and the lodge meets in a back room at the inn. The lodge supports the Three Avatars wholeheartedly, but is more progressive and will openly 'assent' to other religions from the cities. The lodge will only resort to violence if absolutely necessary.

The Cult Members represent the natural professions and are focused on the Waterdrinker. The Priest is the leader of the cult which meets in the holy caves of Black Goat Pool. The cult fanatically supports the Three Avatars but is traditionally hospitable, though it becomes markedly colder in the face of proselytation. The cult will resort to violent assassination in the backwoods if pushed.

The Councilors are the town's leaders including representatives from both the lodge and the cult. They represent diverse views and often bicker but are united in their desire to preserve the town and local customs. The councilors abhor violence unless overwhelming public opinion demands it.

The Outsiders are 'strangers,' 'foreigners,' and any people outside the town's informal moral network. Even people who have lived in the town for twenty or thirty years may be considered outsiders. The outsiders are a diverse group, united by dependence on the goodwill of the lodge and cult. Their position is precarious and they will quickly side with the group that looks likelier to protect them. However, if they are accused, few people will move to protect them.

How to convince the town that the heroes have, indeed, found the true witch?

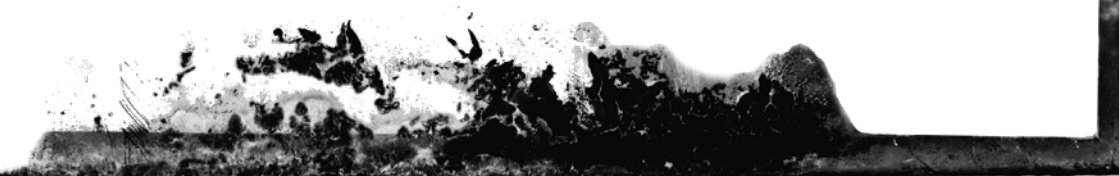
The key is (usually) to convince the councilors but they are not fools and will not just accept a simple accusation. **The councilors need proof.** Convincing the councilors in a closed audience takes one watch and the proof may involve:

- Occult items found in the witch's possession.
- Trustworthy witnesses attesting to the witch's deeds.
- Marks found on the witch's body.
- Confessions, even those produced by torture.
- Planted evidence of witchcraft.

If a majority of the councilors are convinced they will approve a burning. If exactly half of the councilors are convinced there is a 4 in 6 chance the council may approve torture for outsiders and a 2 in 6 chance they may approve torture for other townspeople.

As a rule the councilors demand at least two pieces of proof before moving to a trial. However:

- If the Mayor is accused they demand six pieces of evidence.
- If a fellow councilor is accused the others demand five pieces of evidence.
- If a lodge member is accused other members will demand four pieces of evidence while cult members will demand three and vice versa.
- If a family member or a friend of a lodge member is accused lodge members will demand three pieces of evidence. Cult members will demand the same for the friends and family of cult members.
- If the fool, a child, or somebody obviously simple-minded is accused the councilors will demand one piece of evidence more.



Additionally:

- Councilors who love the heroes will demand one piece of evidence less.
- Councilors who fear the heroes will demand one piece of evidence more.
- If a councilor is blackmailed there is a 5 in 6 chance they will demand two pieces of evidence less. However, if the attempt fails, they denounce the heroes and refuse to accept any evidence in future while all other councilors will demand one piece of evidence more.
- Surreptitiously killing a councilor makes convicting a witch easier.

The weight of public opinion will also sway the council. If eight non-councilors love the heroes they push the council to accept one less piece of evidence. If sixteen non-councilors love the heroes they push the council to accept two pieces of evidence less.

Remember: if many townspeople fear the heroes this may trigger a mob calling for their heads (p. 14).

If more characters become important enough through play add them to this tracking list.

Councilors:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------|
| 1. The Mayor (leader) | love / fear | ♥ / ☠ |
| 2. The Notary | | ♥ / ☠ |
| 3. The Priest (cult) | | ♥ / ☠ |
| 4. The Tinker's Wife | | ♥ / ☠ |
| 5. The Doctor | | ♥ / ☠ |
| 6. The Innkeeper (lodge) | | ♥ / ☠ |

Lodge:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| (6.) The Innkeeper (lodge mistress) | ♥ / ☠ |
| 7. The Blacksmith | ♥ / ☠ |
| 8. The Tinker | ♥ / ☠ |
| 9. The Carpenter (master emeritus) | ♥ / ☠ |
| 10. The Watch Captain | ♥ / ☠ |
| 11. The Tailor | ♥ / ☠ |
| 12. The Miller | ♥ / ☠ |
| 13. The Storemaster | ♥ / ☠ |
| 14. The Schoolmaster | ♥ / ☠ |

Cult:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------|
| (3.) The Priest (leader) | love / fear | ♥ / ☠ |
| 15. The Priest's Daughter | | ♥ / ☠ |
| 16. The Butcher | | ♥ / ☠ |
| 17. The Cheesemaker | | ♥ / ☠ |
| 18. The Littlewater Cook | | ♥ / ☠ |
| 19. The Beekeeper | | ♥ / ☠ |
| 20. The Midwife | | ♥ / ☠ |
| 21. The Baker | | ♥ / ☠ |
| 22. The Milkmaid | | ♥ / ☠ |

Ordinary Townspeople:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------|
| 23. The Woodcutter | love / fear | ♥ / ☠ |
| 24. The Old Mayor | | ♥ / ☠ |
| 25. The Blacksmith's Boy | | ♥ / ☠ |

Outsiders:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------|
| 26. The Doctor's Husband | love / fear | ♥ / ☠ |
| 27. The Town's Uncle (fool) | | ♥ / ☠ |
| 28. The Wild Child | | ♥ / ☠ |
| 29. The Woodcutter's Wife | | ♥ / ☠ |
| 30. The Town Stranger | | ♥ / ☠ |

- | | | |
|-------|-------------|-------|
| _____ | love / fear | ♥ / ☠ |
| _____ | | ♥ / ☠ |
| _____ | | ♥ / ☠ |
| _____ | | ♥ / ☠ |
| _____ | | ♥ / ☠ |
| _____ | | ♥ / ☠ |
| _____ | | ♥ / ☠ |
| _____ | | ♥ / ☠ |
| _____ | | ♥ / ☠ |
| _____ | | ♥ / ☠ |

Citizens Who Love the Heroes:

Fearful Citizens (start at 3):

Alcohol

FOUR SMART BORDERERS marched up to the white-washed farmhouse and carefully took the heavy stone stairs up to the main entrance above the root cellar. The first one, with the lieutenant's green piping on her collar, stepped forward and rapped the door with her horn-tipped rod.

The door opened and the master of the house peered out, flustered and a little nervous.

"Siro Goodwater, we are here on official Western City dispatch to assess winter stocks in the border marches."

"Oh, yes, the stocks. The winter. Yes," the red-faced man waddled back and gestured that his house was all theirs.

The three footsoldiers marched in, doffing their felt hats courteously and setting their rifles by the kitchen door before they spread around the house.

The master shifted from one foot to another, put his hands together on his flower-embroidered vest and said, "Ahem, siro, will you and your men accept a small something in welcome?"

The lieutenant smiled, "Don't fret, siro, we're your folk. Of course we'll have a drink."

Alcohol is the glue that binds the folk together, it is drunk to welcome guests, to celebrate good fortune and bury misfortune—and often, just for fun.

Every time the heroes pay a social call on a townspeople they will be offered alcohol. Every watch the heroes drink they get more drunk. If they

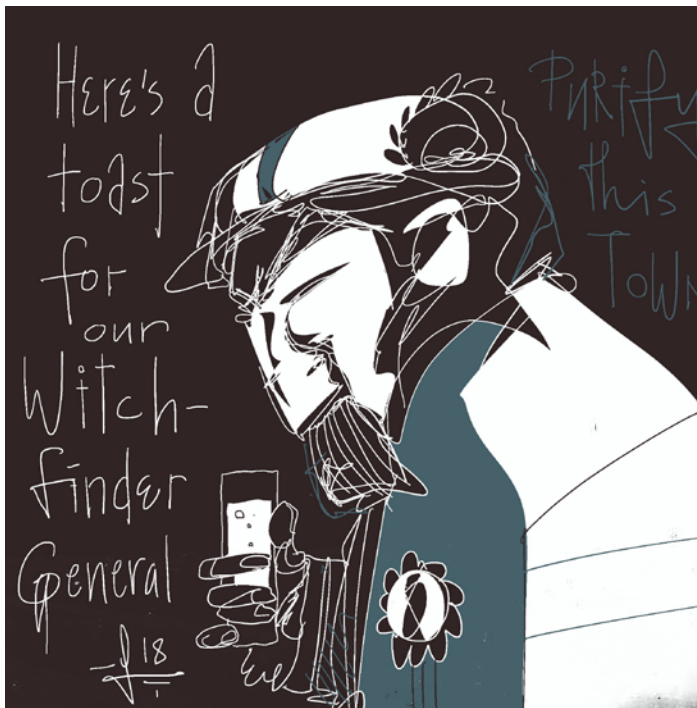
refuse, they must make a Charisma save or their host is offended (and fears them).

Every watch they do not drink the heroes sober up one step.

Option: the referee can require Constitution saves for getting drunk and/or sobering up but it really doesn't make much difference and with so much drinking it might get annoying.

Jolly Drunk Track

0 drinks:	No effect.
1 watch of drinks:	Advantage on social checks, disadvantage on physical checks.
2 watches:	Disadvantage on all checks.
3 watches:	Disadvantage on all checks, disadvantage on saves, movement halved.
4 watches:	Incapacitated.



Love, Fear, and the Mob

In *Witchburner*, the heroes are to investigate the evil happenings afflicting Bridge and to find the witch. The townsfolk will either love what they are doing or fear them.

Initially most townspeople will be coldly curious towards the heroes, uncertain what to think of these interlopers. They will sneak glances when they think the heroes aren't looking but generally stay polite and formal.

Being polite to townspeople, drinking their wine, sharing their meals, complimenting their morals, giving bribes, and promising to protect them will make the NPCs love the heroes. Note this in the tracking list.

Townspeople who love the heroes will generally support them, offer tips and advice, and more readily believe them when they, for example, offer evidence that they have found the witch.

Threatening townspeople, refusing to drink their schnapps, ransacking their homes, belittling them, torturing their friends, or demanding bribes will make the NPCs fear the heroes. Note this too.

Townspeople who fear the heroes will sullenly comply but spread rumours about them behind their backs, distrust them and readily hide or obscure evidence when they can. At the start of the adventure randomly choose and note three citizens who fear the heroes.

Fear of a Cold Winter Night Drives the Mob

Once more than half the townspeople fear the heroes roll 1d100 each evening. If the result is lower than the number of townspeople who fear the heroes (e.g. if 16 citizens fear the heroes and the result is 1–15) they organize into a mob clamoring for the Mayor to burn the foreign witches (the heroes).

The Mayor Talks To The Mob (d6)

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1: | The mob grumbles and disperses for 3 days. |
| 2–4: | The mob grumbles and disperses for the night. |
| 5: | The mob's clamor moves the Mayor who orders the heroes imprisoned. |
| 6: | The Mayor claims to be indisposed and the angry mob goes on a rampage, seizing the heroes to burn them that night. |

The Mob

The frightened townspeople stand there, torches, pitchforks, rifles, sabres, and pikes raised, shouting and yelling. Their total number is double or triple the number of people who openly fear the heroes—opportunists and thrill seekers swell their numbers.

HD: number of citizens who fear the heroes (ex.: 20)

Attack: HD+2 (+22) divided into up to five attacks

Saves: half HD rounded down

Damage: HD+2 (22) divided into up to five attacks

Hit Points: HDx3 (60)

If the mob loses more than half of its hit points it disperses, leaving a third of its number on the ground bleeding or dead. All the remaining townspeople who loved the heroes are now indifferent to them. All the indifferent townspeople now fear them.

If the mob reforms after having been dispersed it attempts to seize and attack the heroes by surprise. It is now also equipped with old grenades and stunners, so things are certain to get messy.

Stats

This entire adventure is essentially free of game statistics. This is on purpose as it is first and foremost a social game.

However, the role-playing game you are using likely has combat abilities and stats and your players are likely to have their heroes draw swords and shotguns, ready to kill.

I assume approximately 3rd level characters of some variant of the oldest TTRPG. Use the following tables, if you wish to randomize the stats of the opponents your players will face.

Civilian Non-combatants (d6)

1-3: AC 9, HD 1, clueless

4-5: AC 10, HD 1, very average

6: AC 11, HD 2, lucky

Civilians With Combat Experience (d6)

1-3: AC 10, HD 1, skilled

4-5: AC 12, HD 2, strong

6: AC 13, HD 3, tough, canny

Soldiers (d6)

1-3: AC 12, HD 1, tough, organized

4-5: AC 14, HD 2, armored, veteran

6: AC 16, HD 4, deadly, patient

Wild Animals (d6)

1-3: AC 13, HD 2, pack, hunting

4-5: AC 12, HD 3, charging, tough

6: AC 11, HD 5, mauling, large

Holy Monsters (d6)

1-3: AC 10, HD 3, eerie, unearthly

4-5: AC 13, HD 7, nightmarish, horrible

6: AC 11, HD 11, lethal, alien

Also use these for undead, forest spirits, witch familiars, and other messed up things.

Strengths

HD (or hit dice) maps more-or-less directly to hit points and combat ability. Adjust them to taste and use descriptive adjectives to determine abilities.

HD to Combat Ability Converter

HD	Good / Poor Bonus	Damage	Hit Points
1	+3/+1	1d6	5
2	+4/+1	1d8	9
3	+5/+2	1d10	14
4	+6/+2	1d12	18
5	+7/+3	1d8+5	23
7	+8/+4	1d12+7	32
11	+11/+5	1d20+11	49



30 Calamities

These are all the calamities from *30 Days To Burn* in a single table. With each calamity the townsfolk grow more worried about the power of the witch.

1. A brown and white calf is born with two tails at the Golden Goat ranch.
2. Purple salamanders blotched red and yellow fall from the sky like rain.
3. Red snails that reek of brimstone appear in the gardens of the little folk.
4. The Notary is afflicted with pustulent boils that leave her bedridden.
5. The Blacksmith's Boy falls asleep at the bellows and falls onto a hot poker.
6. The Tinker's Wife was attacked by a pig-faced demon on her way back from the market.

16. A dirty, naked child—the Wild Child—walked out of the woods, speaking in strange tongues.
17. The full moon appeared to drip blood and the Trucker's goat gave birth to a hedgehog.
18. A bear was found among the beehives, her body intact but her head a skull. The bees had made honey inside it.
19. The Priest found his holy triangle broken and smeared with excrement.
20. The Midwife discovered a rotting placenta stuffed with dead kittens nailed to a scarecrow.
21. The Watch Captain and the Baker were found unconscious and covered in inexplicable scars.
22. A carrot grew in the Innkeeper's garden shaped like a male appendage with a screaming cherub's face.
23. The Tailor woke up to find a livid red handprint across his chest.
24. Cloven sooty footprints appeared crossing Cleareyes bridge leaving off a whiff of smoke.
25. The Tavern was covered in a foul-smelling yellow sludge and stunk with a stony poisonous cherries.
26. Frogs came from the main road, devouring one another and filling their hundreds in some kind of mad patriarchal battle.
27. The Old Man rushed into the inn, singing in a high pitched voice and weeping with unholy gusto, before falling over stone dead.
28. The Milkmaid found three old dolls with red hair and long black hair in the stables. Some of the dolls' faces had been pierced with
29. The Milkmaid found a doll with a face like a pig.
30. The Milkmaid found a doll with a face like a snake.

The Mayor's Husband fell asleep by the old lych and disappeared for three days. He has not yet returned.

The Tinker's dog began to vomit worms in the street.

The Notary was killed by three Truths.

The Blacksmith's Boy was killed by stinging pain in the back of his head from needles were stuck into his back.

The Tinker's Wife was killed by a demon on the way home from the market.

The Milkmaid's teeth had turned black and she was found dead in the street.

The Trucker's goat was found wrapped around a tree.

The Priest found his holy triangle wrapped around a tree.

The Midwife discovered a rotting placenta wrapped around a tree.

The Watch Captain and the Baker were found unconscious and covered in inexplicable scars.

A carrot grew in the Innkeeper's garden shaped like a male appendage with a screaming cherub's face.

The Tailor woke up to find a livid red handprint across his chest.

Cloven sooty footprints appeared crossing Cleareyes bridge leaving off a whiff of smoke.

30 Days To Burn

THE LAST DAYS of an Indian summer kept mellow as the birches and the beeches began to yellow. As the moon turned the folk grew nervous. The Lord Rightmaker confidently strode from one pillar of the community to another asking questions. Swallowing up words with those dark sockets, the comfortable smile never wavering from her lips.

Strange events continued. More people saw the rack and the chair and the cactus cushion. Whispers flew, crowds gathered, torches were lit.

The **30 Days** section is the Referee's core tool for managing the adventure. It breaks down Witchburner by watch along with events and calamities marked with bullet points. Calamities will be repeated in *30 Calamities* (p. 19). Some events will require random townspeople—mark those Citizens 'W,' 'X,' 'Y,' and 'Z' on your trial tracker (p. 11).

The townspeople are labelled as belonging to the cult, the lodge, the council, or some other smaller groups. None of these groups are secret; they are merely those citizen's social affiliations.

As the heroes get in over their heads, or once they've made more than half the townspeople fear them events may spiral out of control. If the whole town ends up burning by day 7 that's perfectly fine. If an event makes no sense, ignore it or replace it with your own.

Referee! One of the best solutions (morally) for the heroes is to steal some loot and book it. You can use moral pressure from the townsfolk to sway them but don't railroad them into staying.

Unless, of course, you really want to make it a trap. Then put the town in a more remote mountain location with a single good road and have the heavy rains on the sixth day wash out the road and awaken some ancient forest horrors that will fade away in a few weeks.

1st Day - Friday - Yulia (saint's day name)

Morning: fog curls in the valley, cool.

- Greet councilors, meeting with Mayor.

Afternoon: the sun blazes yellow, swallows gather in the great linden tree, hot.

- Visit mortuary to see hand-marked fish.
- **CALAMITY:** Red snails that reek of brimstone appear in the gardens of the little folk.

Evening: lazy crickets and some final mosquitos bother the town, pleasant.

- The Notary offers to take the heroes on a boozy tour of the town.

Night: the moon blazes, cool.

2nd Day - Saturday - Bogomil

Morning: fog lies thick, cool.

Afternoon: a few scudding clouds, a great flock of swallows heads south, hot, humid.

- A townspeople comes forward with the gift of a baked gander and a tip-off that Citizen Z dabbled in witchcraft mere years ago to make their garden grow better.

Evening: thunder rumbles, cool, damp.

- **CALAMITY:** A plague of hairy caterpillars devours the town's prize rose hips.

Night: lightning cracks, shy moon, gusts of wind, showers, cool.

1st Week

3rd Day - Sunday - Theresa

3rd quarter ◐

Morning: fog, cool.

- A townsponser suggests that Citizen Y dabbled in witchcraft when they were young.

Afternoon: cloudy, humid, oppressive.

Evening: slight wind, cool, humid.

Night: still and cloudy, cold.

- **CALAMITY:** The Notary is afflicted with pustulent boils that leave her bedridden.

4th Day - Monday - Franz

Morning: fog as thick as a brick, cold, damp.

- The wisewives whisper that Citizen X has gone missing unexpectedly.

Afternoon: blazing sun, last swallows fly south, hot.

- **CALAMITY:** A sudden hailstorm strikes out of the blue, damaging the plum trees and devastating the fig harvest.

Evening: wind from the west, some moonlight, chilly, humid.

Night: clear, harsh stars, cold.

5th Day - Tuesday - Marcel

Morning: clear, windy, cold, humid.

- **CALAMITY:** The Mayor wakes up to find two of her teeth had fallen out.

Afternoon: strong wind, clouds gather above the Western Ridge, warm.

Evening: clear sky, ice chip stars, cold

- A group of six concerned citizens builds a bonfire in the townsquare, praying and wailing all night that the light of the Firebringer may bring purification. They are all tired and grumpy the next day.

Night: cruel stars, wan moon, cold.

6th Day - Wednesday - Vera

Morning: clear, gusty wind, scent of ozone, cool, humid.

Afternoon: thunderstorm, hot.

- **CALAMITY:** Purple salamanders blotched red and yellow fall from the sky like rain.

Evening: clouds and rain, torrents swelling, cold.

- Citizen X returns from an ordinary trade trip to Forum, they say. Citizen Z approaches the heroes with proof that they are no witch.

Night: heavy rain, rivers rising, cold.

7th Day - Thursday - Mark

Morning: light rain, cool, damp, rivers rising.

Afternoon: cloudy, humid, rivers full.

- Citizen Y approaches the heroes with a pie and suggests that Citizen Z is the actual witch.

Evening: cloudy, cold, damp, rivers falling.

- **CALAMITY:** The Butcher was afflicted by stabbing pains in her feet and knees as though iron needles were being driven into her joints.

Night: pitch dark, dank, cold.

8th Day - Friday - Brigitte

Morning: grey skies, cold, humid.

- The Doctor's Husband disappears on his walk.
- All the citizens who fear the heroes meet at the temple and petition the Priest to quickly find the witch.

Afternoon: broken clouds, cool, damp.

Evening: light rain, frogs, cold.

Night: pitch dark, thick fog, slick, cold.

- **CALAMITY:** A dirty, naked child (the Wild Child) walked out of the woods, speaking in strange tongues.



The Notary—Petra Inksblood

Councilor

Scarred, rich, noble, haughty, afraid.

TALL AND GRACEFUL, Petra dreamt of becoming a royal concubine but her mother had other ideas.

“No daughter of mine, as smart as you are, will be taken to the Beloved City, the Eastern City, to pander to that usurper’s wanton heresies,” she said as she carved the marks of the Firebringer and the Waterdrinker into Petra’s teenage cheeks and forehead.

Her blood mixed with tears as her mother closed her future off.

“There’s ink in her veins,” says an old flame, “no passion at all.”

Her library is thick with crusty legal tomes. Their noble blue leather bindings hide steamy romance novels and poems.

Her locked diary is full of torrid and graceful poetry, much of it about the town’s handsome Stranger, Oleg Waterwatcher.

House

Inksblood House is a graceful Imperial with delicately decorated double-sash windows and glazed yellow and green tiled roof. Petra recently installed a very modern floor heating system in the mustard velvet drawing room.

Treasures

In a **hidden safe** a small fortune in Republican and early Imperial jewelry (10,000 cash). In the **study** a small horde of coin and promissory notes (500 cash). Decorative Imperial statuary (5 sacks, 2,000 cash). A poignant tapestry of the resurrection of the Firebringer (3 sacks, 1,000 cash). Fine furnitures accumulated over several generations (20 sacks, 5,000 cash).

Household

Brother: Michael Inksblood, a half-wit.

Lackey: David Bentsabre, a kind and devious fellow with a foxy air.

Cook: Clarice Ironbutler, a rake-thin connoisseur of clams and seafood.

Gardener: Victor Blacktemple, a jolly mustachioed know-nothing.

The Blacksmith—Irving Staffsend

Lodge Member

Gruff, iron-haired, frustrated, sad.

IRVING'S FISTS CLENCHED and released, clenched and released. His jaw champed at his scrimshaw-and-oak pipe, gnawing another lip to the bit. His ice-chip eyes glared. He didn't say a word.

With one hand like a vise he gripped the tongs, holding the swordbar in place, with his other hand he lifted the smithing hammer. The boy pounded the bellows and looked on in awe.

Irving nodded. Some spirits aligned, some stars shone favorably.

The hammer struck. Again. Again. Sparks flew like damned souls exploding into nothingness in the dark lake of the Waterdrinker.

Again.

The hairline crack. Doctor Love's crack.

With a wordless cry of anguish, Irving flung the hammer, knocking another hole in the north wall's plaster.

"Go to bed boy, go to bed," he sobbed, "We're done for the night."

The boy snuck away quietly, leaving the weeping smith to put the swordbar back into the ore pile.

"He hasn't been right since the Tax Prince came through two years ago and took away his daughter," nod the wisebeards by the linden tree.

(Referee! The wisewives and the wisebeards function like a Greek chorus. Scatter them on a couple of benches under the Elder linden tree, spying and commenting on everyone.)

On a mantel place Irving keeps seven paintings of his wife in her younger years with an urn of her ashes.

In a locket around his neck he keeps a humble prophecy that the perfect sword will bring his daughter Linda back to the Bridge.

Under the anvil he has buried four charms to help him make the perfect sword. A glass blade for the Firebringer, a porcelain sherd for the Earthbeater,

an aquamarine wrapped in a virgin's hair for the Waterdrinker, and the skull of a black hawk for the Devil's Grandfather.

House

The Robber's House where the blacksmith lives with his family is an old thing of heavy beams, river stones, and plaster with an even older chimney of summoned stone. It was old when the Republicans were still a twinkling in the eye of the Rebellion and nobody had yet thought of the Empire.

Treasures

Hidden behind a false stone in the **chimney** Irving keeps 1,000 cash baked into three clay bricks. In a small chest **under his bed** he keeps coins and jewelry worth 200 cash.

Secret Lore

The Metal Whispers in the Dark (Metal Wizard)

Ability: Irving can tell with a touch what weaknesses there are in a metal and where. He acquired this ability after winning a wrestling match with a fairy one night by the Iron Duke's Mound.

Effect: Advantage on smithing checks and checks to break chains or bars.

Household

Sister: Irma Staffsend is a grim spinster, a shield-maiden of the Republic in her youth.

Son: Vili Staffsend is serious beyond his years, haunted by the loss of his mother to the Silent Plague, and his grand-mother's loss of speech.

Mother: Isis Bearbreaker smiles gladly, but cannot speak anymore.

The Blacksmith's Boy—Leo Dukesget

Apprentice, Bastard

One-eyed, surly, wary, kind.

"WHO WROTE THIS ... embarrassment ... on the blackboard?" asked the schoolmaster.

Silence. Thick as the oak floor boards.

A small golden-haired cherub of a boy raised his hand.

"Yes, Prentice Oldson?"

"It was the bastard, siro," piped up the boy.

"Again?"

"Yes! Yes," a chorus from the gaggle of boys in the classroom, soon joined by a few of the girls.

"Was it you, Leo Dukesget?"

Leo said nothing, looking down at his dirt-stained hands.

"Silence is assent. Come up here, Leo Dukesget."

Leo got up heavily and trudged forward to the iron-bound lectern. The Schoolmaster's spectacles flashed as he look down at the boy, then down at the rest of the schoolchildren.

Leo held out his hands, thin scars white on his dark skin.

The schoolmaster raised his ruler of office and the children began to chant, "Three truths and four directions."

Whack.

"Gaze clear, do not lie, nobly justice bear."

Whack.

"Past and future, man and wife, death and life."

Whack. Whack. Whack.

Leo fiercely loves the Blacksmith, Irving, who took him under his wing three years ago, but he never says this, afraid of losing Irving. He was always jealous of the smith's daughter, Linda.

He has the makings of a great smith but is afraid of seeming too competent, fearing that his apprenticeship would end too soon.

Leo is terrified of the fairy mounds and always carries a chunk of star metal in his pocket, to keep the fairies away. When he was five a blind-eyed girl told him in a voice that was not her own, "your father was a fairy spawn, I smell it on you, flower meat, that's what fairies call you. Tasty, tender, trembling."

House

Leo has no house. His mother was cast out when she showed signs of her embarrassment and her name was struck through in the Ledger of Families.

Treasures

Leo has saved ten cash in a **tree** in the town graveyard.

Family

Mother: Vera Namelost makes her living in the Western City. "Whoring herself," mutter the wisewives.

Sister: Irena Dukesget, Leo's twin sister, is buried under the Bastard Tree in the graveyard.

Bird: Sakan is a shockingly intelligent green and red parakeet. It found Leo half a year ago.

The Doctor's Husband—Jonah Prizepeace

Outsider

Slender, raven-haired, melancholy, flustered.

JONAH'S INK-STAINED HANDS trembled as he held the notes. His masterpiece. The essence of his beautiful, plump muse distilled into four soaring songs. The Quartet of the Springtime of Amusement.

Tomorrow he would take them to the Master of Saint Gelda's Court just as he had promised. His music would raise the hearts of everyone in the Western City.

There was a knock on the door. Timid.

"Yes?"

The door cracked open and a grey-faced school clerk stood there.

"Yes, what is it, man?"

"Siro Prizepeace, you are invited to a college wake at Saint Gelda's Court this Saturday. The Master has died."

Jonah's hands went still.

In a leather satchel with silver lion head clasps Jonah has kept his quartet neatly packaged, ready for delivery to his dead master.

Every night he composes new songs, every midnight he crumples them up and throws them away, more terrified than ever that they might kill somebody. Every morning his wife quietly retrieves them and stores them in a heavy ghost-bound chest.

He wears a glass amulet with a tiny gold scroll, wherein he melodramatically promised his soul to the Devil's Grandfather in exchange for an immortal song.

Jonah is convinced the Devil's Grandfather has tried to steal his soul many times so he visits the priest and the temple Fourface and the Three Avatars religiously.

House

Southcomer's massive house is his home in Bridge, but in the Western City he claims a fine Postimperial apartment on the Utz' Imperial.

Treasures

Most of his songs are absolute rubbish, but thirty-six of them are sublime operatic meditations on the tragic glory of a man's strivings in the face of a reckless universe (5,000 cash to a connoisseur). Indeed, they are so transcendent they might well have been written by a different person than the melancholy rake the townspeople know and grudgingly accept.

Friends

Dog: Lionheart is a good dog, surprisingly intelligent, and absolutely devoted to Jonah.

Rogue: Vladimir Oathborn misses their days of carousing after the opera in the Western City. When the greensmoke dreams grow melancholy he sends money and pleading letters to Jonah, begging him to return and paint the town red.

The Carpenter—Reheboam Wolfson

Lodge Master (emeritus)

Old, gnarled, pot-bellied, slow-spoken

THE CARPENTER SETTLED back in his massive wooden throne carved and whittled with unsettling Southlandish designs of crawling centipedes and horse-headed humans. He took up a cedar splint and lit it in the wrought iron lamp and studied it with cloudy blue eyes.

“Will you support my candidacy, siro?” asked the younger man with the green lodge apprentice cap.

The carpenter brought the splint up to his unlit cigar stub and puffed once, twice, thrice. The fermented tobacco ends caught the flame and guttered into a yellow glow as smoke wreathed his canyon-lined, clean-shaven face.

“Siro, I have the backing of ten men in the lower town and of the whole of Disaster Village.”

The carpenter swiveled his eyes to look closely at the young man with chubby stubble-specked cheeks and thinning hair.

“Baltezar Knockwood, have you seen the slugs this summer? They’re everywhere. They come out in the dark and destroy my garden. Eat my wife’s lettuce and despoil the vines I planted twenty years ago. Look! There’s one now.”

A bright red slug, long as a hand, was making its slimy progress across the veranda.

The carpenter got up slowly and reached over to a tool stand withdrawing a long pair of scissors. Baltezar looked on, confused. The carpenter lifted up the slug with one scissor blade. The startled invertebrate curled around, its foot gripping the cold steel.

“There seems to be no end to them.”

The carpenter clenched his hand and the scissor blades around the pivot neatly snipping the slug in half. The bisected slug plopped to the ground and writhed feebly, white foam and intestines bubbling from its open ends.

“Look, there’s another one.”

The carpenter snipped the second slug. His rangy yellow dog padded up from under his wood-

to sniff at the dying mollusc. The carpenter sat down once more.

“Now, Baltezar, you said you wanted to join the Waterdrinker Society?”

Reheboam’s father died in the Western City’s army far to the east when Reheboam was a child. He always meant to go visit the Giving Fields where his bones lie but now he knows he will never manage.

He loves his dog, but his wife hates it. Says it’s the devil’s own spawn.

“He changed when he turned thirty-three,” says the Mayor, “Before, he preached revolution then he settled down and built the Waterdrinkers into what they are.”

House

Whitewasher’s House is a large, rambling building, with a massive barn converted into a workshop. Old chestnuts grow about it and wooden gangways ramble around the sides of the house.

Treasures

In his wine **cellar** Reheboam keeps a clay urn baked shut with all his father’s jewelry and gold, he does not know how much it is worth (500 cash). In a massive **bedside** table carved with a Southland version of the Waterdrinker he keeps his coins (200 cash) and title deeds to woods and a sawmill up the valley. Seventeen dogs carved from precious woods line his **mantelshelf** (170 cash).

Secret Lore

Giving Away The Sin (Purifier)

Ability: Reheboam can suck the memory and karmic repercussions of a deed from a person and transfer it into a trusting animal such as a dog.

Effect: The memory, guilt, and spiritual effects of an act are wiped away.

Household

Wife: Maria Princebrewer is thin and bent with a sense of humour and a love of bad news.

Eldest Son: Kaspar Wolfson left to join the Western City army. He sends letters.

Second Son: Mikel Wolfson left to join the Eastern City army. He sends money.

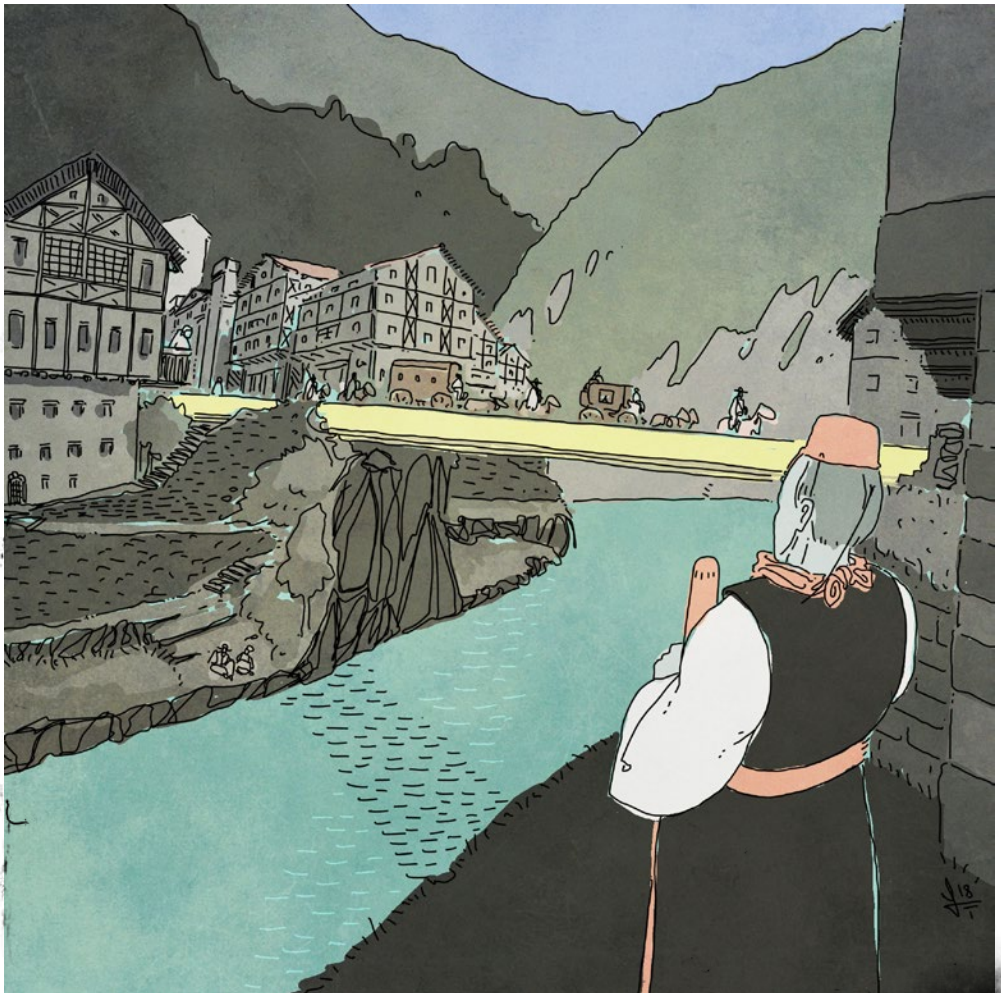
Third Son: Irving Wolfson is looking forward to inheriting the carpentry workshop. He is a poor carpenter and loves drink.

Fourth Son: Viktor Wolfson is an excellent carpenter, currently working as an assistant to a rival of Reheboam's in Channel Town.

Assistant: Yuri Bentbirch is a quiet fellow who lost his tongue in the war and follows Reheboam like a loyal dog.

Foster Child: Ines Warsget is a slim, shallow girl on the cusp of adulthood.

Dog: Jaqa is a good dog, lean, tough, and always hungry. So hungry.



The Cheesemaker—Bernarda Warsmaid

Cult Member

Pallid, poxy, golden-haired, gentle

“**THANK HEAVENS, YOU’VE** come back in time!” Bernarda said.

The tall, serious young man twitched slightly in his borrowed blue suit, and the short, round girl reached up to adjust his white rose. She pricked her finger and a bit of blood welled up.

“Oh,” she murmured.

“I couldn’t abandon you in your time,” he said.

“Oh, I love you Albert,” she let her blood color the heart of the white rose, “and today we will be wed. Father is so happy you have come. He was worried, what with the war and all. Come.”

Bernarda grabbed his sun-bronzed hand in her skin, the color of the rose petal, and led him to the four-fold portals that had been set up on the Bridge for the wedding. Father stood there, grimly proud, arms crossed, a smile his broad, pink face.

As they walked through the portals towards the priest and priestess, she whispered, “We shall go to the Western City for our honey moon, shan’t we? I’ve always dreamt of seeing it.”

“Yes, yes we shall.”

“Good. After the war, when you are back, we will go.”

She never visited the Western City.

“She’s a strong one, that. Runs the town dairy all by herself, you won’t pull a fast one past her,” nod the wisebeards.

“Best cheese you’ll get, runny or hard,” smiles the Innkeeper.

“Every day she comes to the bridge, gives a rose to the Waterdrinker,” sighs the Priest.

House

Highbarn House is an old Republican recently refreshed with the money from Bernarda’s dairy. Next to it is a white-washed barn built of solid brick with beams of fine larch to keep it strong. Still, there is an air of sad devotion around the place.

Treasures

Bernarda keeps a **strongbox** with 1,000 cash, but her biggest treasure is her cows and flocks of sheep, spread out over six pastures during the summer but returning to the valley in late autumn. Her son’s copious **notes** and research on cheese are bearing fruit and are already very valuable (4,000 cash).

Household

Son: Albert Warsmaid is a somber, studious man who went to the Eastern City to learn more about cheesemaking.

Dead Husband: Albert Sunkeeper died of a plague after the war.

Head Shepherd: Megan Woodhoof is a rangy woman, tough as boot leather.

Cousin: Zackary Warsmaid is the town Schoolmaster.

The Littlewater Cook—Pepi Oldson

Cult Member

Bluff-faced, strong-calved, jovial, neat brown beard

PEPI YAWNED AND rubbed the sleep from his eyes. With practiced speed he turned the condenser aside as the fruity aroma started to lose its sweetness, separating the tails from the heart. The last of the littlewater dripped from the copper funnel into the last round bottle. Plink. Plink. Pl-ink.

Done.

The smell of pear was thick in Pepi's distillery but none of it burned his eyes. With each breath he took, with each move he made, his father and his uncle's spirits were with him here. He banked the fire under the pot still, leaving it to cool, stood up and stretched. His joints popped with a rippling crackle.

A staccato knock at the little black door.

The latch fell open and in stepped darkness.

"Hello, my old friend."

Pepi smiled, "Elvir, it's been many years since Mother let you through the chaos door."

"He's a gay 'un. But that's okay," chuckles the wisewife, "so long as he keeps cooking that brandy."

Pepi is older than his body; his spirit remembers other bodies and other times.

Pepi is missing a toe, a tooth, and a testicle. He offered them to the Three Avatars on a stone altar in a weeping cave. They accepted them and granted him a stone, a skull, and a spider. He keeps them wrapped in the skin of a lynx beneath his distillery.

Once, during the Great Hunger, he disappeared for three years and returned grey-haired.

House

Mother's house is a rambling Royalist building extended and rebuilt so many times that it looks more like a natural outgrowth of the Whitemarked oak than anything else. It creaks and sighs like a friendly grandmother.

Secret Lore

The Angel's and the Devil's Share

Ability: Pepi knows ancient secrets that let him distill drinks that are stronger than should naturally be possible. Indeed, some of his littlewaters are so powerful even a whiff can make a man drunk.

Effect: Pepi's drinks can have incredible socially lubricative or physically debilitating effects.

Treasures

Secreted about Mother's house, behind odd pictures, under loose floorboards, behind cranky cupboard, Pepi has **secreted** 1,500 cash like some demented human squirrel. His **still** and his distilled notes on distillation are worth 1,000 cash (2 sacks). His **casks** of aged brandy are valuable (10 sacks, 4,000 cash).

Household

Assistant: Lev Easterborn has been Pepi's doting and loyal servant since Pepi returned ten years ago. He is so devoted he even sleeps in Pepi's bedroom!

Adopted Daughter: Izolda Oldson née Warsget is an orphan of adventurers who disappeared hunting the Wry Wyrms. She is a laughing, witty child.

Father: Gavril Oldson is dead but his skull remains on the drawing room mantelshelf to keep Pepi company.

Oldest Uncle: Imre Oldson died of a septic wound in the war.

Youngest Uncle: Harald Oldson runs a popular inn in the Eastern City. He visits once a year to buy Pepi's aged brandy.

The Priest—David Slingstringer

Cult Leader, Councilor

Petite, bushy white beard, deep-eyed, athletic

DAVID BREATHED DEEP. Dark brown soil and crumbled leaves beneath his bare feet. A hint of mist from the waterfall. The smell of burning beechwood with a hint of rosemary smoke. He waited, breathing slowly, until he heard a robin pipe up. He opened his eyes as the equinox dawn sun hit the Skybrother.

He walked down to the pool where the thrum of the waterfall grew to a roar as it tumbled into the bowl of Black Goat pool. He stripped off his flower-embroidered white robe and unbound his flowing black hair streaked with iron grey. His skin tightened as the icy waters embraced him and with a final exhalation he embraced Waterdrinker's gift.

David stayed there, visions swirling through his suffocating brain, before Olga and Ursula dragged his twitching body back to the shore. They pounded his heart back to life and by the beechwood fire he vomited the holy water of the Black Goat into the bronze cauldron Pepi held for him. Everybody looked at the swirls of blood in the water, seeking to discern what they said.

"Not today," gasped David, "Not this year. The Three Avatars do not claim payment yet."

"The priest castrated himself after his wife died," cackle the wisebeards, "Then he planted a walnut tree over his parts and her ashes. Now he eats his nuts over and over."

David refused to teach his daughter the ways for Fourface and the Three Avatars for ten years until she threatened to join the school of Doctor Love in the Western City.

David has a secret library where he has the *Sevenfold Volumes of Doctor Love*. To know the enemy.

House

Holyman's house is a wing abutting the ruins of Threedomes Temple built in an eclectic style mixing old Royalist and modern Imperial with whimsical stone-carvings by the fairy-watcher Zlatimir Stormrider. If a national heritage organization existed it would list it.

Secret Lore

Dream With Dead Eyes

Ability: David can approach the final dissolution of the spirit freeing his personality to approach the Three Avatars and petition them for knowledge. He knows that each time he asks he might die the final death.

Effect: David can learn what one of the Three Avatars thinks and knows about events in the world.

Treasures

David is the custodian of the humble treasures of the Three Avatars: winterbird feathers, thunder stones, lightning rods, waterdrinker bowls, and more. All are humble objects of no great value. However, thankful townspeople have supplied Holyman house with lavishly carved **reliquaries, chests, caskets, paintings, and lamps** (10 sacks, 20,000 cash). The small public **library** is quite nice (2 sacks, 500 cash) but the **secret library** of the true rituals hidden at the end of a chthonic passage beneath the black birthing pool under Holyman House is a true treasure (3 sacks, 30,000 cash).

(continues overleaf)

Household

Daughter: Stella Slingstringer is a wild-haired woman, taller than a man and wiser than a raven.

Dead Wife: Ismaela Inksblood died on a cleanup mission to the old front lines under Holy Mountain, killed by a magical mine that terminally translated her body through time and space.

Adopted Son: Izidor Slingstringer is a one-armed young man whose silence conceals no wisdom.

Servant: Lika Waderbird gave her tongue to the Firebringer in exchange for long life. She is old.

Holy Slave: Aldus Blackwater is covered in sacred scars and three-colored tattoos. He only answers questions.

Dog: Burger is a fluffy mutt who'll do anything for a bone and likes to play with cats.

Sculptor: Sigismund Longstocking is a bas relief sculptor the town hired from the Eastern City. For the last year he has been working on a grand carving of the birth, death, and rebirth on the ruined temples New Wall. Sigismund is tall, sinewy, and temperamental.

The Priest's Daughter—Stella Slingstringer

Cult Acolyte

Tall, wild-haired, wise, smiling

THE SOLDIER WAS trying hard to grow a moustache and trying just as hard to pull his head back into his uniform like a turtle. Sweat pricks stood out on every fine downy hair on his tanned cheeks.

He had just brought the news that Stella's mother had died at the Holy Mountain front with half of her volunteer crew.

She looked at her father, standing still as the stones in front of the ruined temple.

Seconds passed. Minutes. The soldier in the heavy brown military coat sweated nervously in the hot afternoon sun of autumn.

A pale yellow birch leaf tumbled playfully in a sudden gust and stuck the the soldier's cheek. He twitched spasmodically and her father nodded.

"Alright, you've done your duty and you're right by the Waterdrinker. You could have done no more," he reached out and held the soldier's shoulder, "you did your best. You will do better. You will be alright."

The soldier wilted and saluted, a slack, sickly relieved look washing over his face. "Thank you, siro. Thank you."

Father nodded again. The soldier turned to go, turned back, bowed, turned again. He got as far as grey stone flags of the street before he turned to bow a second time and was gone, hooves clattering as he continued with his sad duty.

Her father turned to her.

"It's alright Father, I saw her last night, singing in the moon. She is still with us."

His nut brown face crumpled. Silently he went to the pantry, took out two bottles of Pepi's blackroot and in the dying light he climbed slowly to Black Goat pool. When he returned the next afternoon, carrying two empty bottles and taciturn with a hangover, his beard had turned completely white.

“She has her mother’s eyes,” complain the wise-beards. “Can see right through your soul.”

Stella secretly copied the skull and heart key to the library of true rituals and has been studying them without her father’s knowledge. They whisper to her, comforting her, telling her that her mother still watches over her. This is true.

Stella is an amazing flute player and wants to start a band but she’s worried people would think that was inappropriate for a priestess in training.

House

She has her own room in the attic of Holyman’s house covered in cheap prints of great musicians from the Eastern and Western Cities.

Secret Lore

Guardian Ghost

Ability: The gently dissipating ghost of her mother, Ismaela Inksblood, protects her, looking out for her and warning Stella when danger threatens.

Effect: The gentle ghost makes it hard to catch Stella unawares or break her concentration. Could it manifest more potently?

Treasures

Stella’s greatest treasure is a pearl and coral prayer **necklace** she inherited from her mother (400 cash). She also has a solid collection of workmanlike **flutes** (100 cash) and her **notes** on the true rituals, hidden under her bed, are not without value (300 cash).

Family

Father: David Slingstringer loves her and wants to protect her from the cosmic dangers of priestly life.

Guardian Ghost: Ismaela Inksblood, her mother’s ghost, is fading, but her piercing tawny eyes are still clear. She is rarely seen.

First Lover: Arpad Summerborn is a geologist and prospector from the Western City, scion of a powerful bourgeoisie family, who has been spending more and more time in Bridge, nominally to explore tales of an ancient quicksilver mine from before Royalist times.

Second Lover: Zenobia Clockmaker, the tinker’s youngest, scholarly daughter, has also been pursuing a secret relationship with Stella.

Dog: Darling is a massive black bitch, the size of a small pony. She slobbers.

Appendix I: Gods and Faith

Firebringer—the avatar of sun and sky. A dangerous and loving, virile deity.

Waterdrinker—the avatar of underworld and river. A loving and deadly, fertile deity.

Earthbeater—the avatar of the crops and earth. A nurturing, destroying deity.

The Eater of Virility, 'Amimami'—the messenger of age and impotence, the castrated god.

The Devil's Grandfather, The Dark Beggar—the thief of light and bringer of confusion, the giver of forbidden knowledge, the permissive one.

Miss Netmaker—a trickster spirit, lady luck.

Doctor Love—the avatar of temptation, the city god of the Eastern and Western Cities, the denier of the old truths of the town.

Saint Cleareyes—the prophet who received enlightenment in the Cave of the Wanton Mother and brought buckwheat and plum to the People of the Fields.

Winterwhite, 'Lady Deadfingers'—the avatar of ice and death and visions, a dangerous god and bringer of hunger.

Northwind—a hungry wind, who chases away the Eater's rots but brings pains, aches, and windlung in its wake.

Bridgespirit—the avatar of perseverance, long life, and stability. The spirit of the Bridge is a good god to ask for blessings, as she asks little in return.

Fourface, 'Worldwatcher'—the god of the turning seasons, the directions of the sky, the cycles of the birthing and dying couples. A remote, cruel, yet tender god.

Temple of Fourface and the Three Avatars—an old and stolid double henge with plaster walls enclosing the Twelve-faced Stela of Saint Cleareyes. Heart of the Bridges faith.

Green Sun—the child of the Firebringer and the Earthbeater, the Green Sun is an ambiguous deity, the creator and destroyer of humanity.

Appendix II: Cities and Places

Eastern City—a former Imperial provincial capital, it sits where the sea road crosses the wide, slow Drowned River at the Bridge of Glass Gargoyles.

Western City—a former Imperial provincial capital, it sits where the three roads meet at the fabulous natural harbor of Market Bay.

Disaster Village—a smaller town, some ways up the Whitewater.

Forum—a slightly larger town, built on the ruins of an old fortress straddling a gorge, about a day's journey away to the north-west, past Disaster Village.

Channel—a smaller town, some ways down the Whitewater.

Quicksilver—a mining town, about a day's journey away to the east.

Vine Hill—a slightly larger town built entirely under the curling, thorny boughs of a massive bioengineered rose bush colony, about a day's journey south-west.

The Whitewater—the large, violent river that flows under the bridge, from north to south.

The Darkwater—the smaller, limpid river that flows into the Whitewater from the east, just after the bridge.

Poet's Cave—a grotesquely cork-screwing series of galleries thick with speleothems and ancient runes half submerged in the dark.

Bear's Head—the skull of a bus-sized bear petrified in place between two sheer, moss-thick cliffs.

Goat's Castle—a pre-Royal ruin glowering atop a hill, home to ghosts and goats.

Mother's Cave—a holy site of Fourface and the Earthbeater, thick with suggestive stones.

Black Goat Pool—a holy site of the Waterdrinker, in a stone womb hidden in the mountain-side, with barely any sky above.

Firewatch Mountain—a white mountain thick with the black ruins of burnt trees, holy to the Firebringer.

Woodbridge—a man-made bridge several hours up the valley, often damaged by the Whitewater, it is held by either the Eastern or the Western borderers.

Appendix IV: Music

All Them Witches - album - Lightning At The Door (2013) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-C6O4OlHE8Q>

Ancient Vvismom - "We Are Damnation" - Sacrificial (2014) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ljmn-fApszsE>

Black Sabbath - "War Pigs" - Paranoid (1970) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LQUXuQ6Zd9w>

Black Widow - "That's When Evil Touched Me" - Sleeping With Demons (2011) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=68wYE7uRUvO>

Blood Ceremony - album - The Eldritch Dark (2013) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tU9LDakggAg>

Blues Pills - "Devilman" - Bliss (2012) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KMYDYQmqgA>

Coven - album - Witchcraft Destroys Minds & Reaps Souls (1969) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-n31rnq8eTc>

Danzig - "She Rides" - Danzig (1988) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OA8RG96QViA>

David Bowie - "Heroes" - Heroes (1977) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBuwC4Vji5o>

Dead Can Dance - "Wild in the Woods" - Dead Can Dance (1984) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2CKukuzgdw&index=8&list=PLfimm-waZdumjHOPQz3m4ysn8rffYjHqb>

Devil Electric - "Hypnotica" - Devil Electric (2017) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9CSWbeRiY>

Diablo Swing Orchestra - "Voodoo Mon Amour" - Pandora's Piñata (2012) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2mZVodojWY>

Diamond Head - "Am I Evil" - Lightning to the Nations (1980) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVid_fLzN5g

The Doors - "The End" - The Doors (1967) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JSUIQgEVDm4>

Dvořák - "Vodník" - Symphonic Poem, Op. 107 (B. 195) (1896) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FID-Tah3SvCU>

Earth - album - Hibernaculum (2007) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6hGghVqabW8>

Ennio Morricone - "Il Giardino Delle Delizie" - Il Giardino Delle Delizie Original Soundtrack (1967) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pO7Us9cQknc>

Gabor Szabo - album - Dreams (1968) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=groXWmEbiMQ>

Ghost - "Cirice" - Meliora (2015) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAo4t_feoI

Giuseppe Tartini - "Il trillo del diavolo" - Sonata per violino in sol minore, B.g5 (c. 1749) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zl9FTlKKieo>

Goblin - "Suspiria Theme" - Suspiria Original Soundtrack (1977) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pinsiy0XAa0>

Heilung - "Krigsgaldr" - Lifa (2017) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QRg_8NNPTD8

Immortal - "Call of the Wintermoon" - Diabolical Fullmoon Mysticism (1992) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VBdAY8eA9w>

Jess and the Ancient Ones - "Astral Sabbat" - Astral Sabbat EP (2014) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hgWxb1bXkE>

Jethro Tull - "Hunting Girl" - Songs from the Wood (1977) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibDLL-DOYfmY>

Johnny Cash - "Hurt" - single (2003) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vt1Pwfnh5pc>

Lucifer - album - Lucifer I (2015) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rs8QdGziFfM>

Orchid - "Sign of the Witch" - Sign of the Witch (2015) https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=9&v=lreXQQEPbdY

Pink Floyd - "Free Four" - Obscured by Clouds (1972) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPSb5OjgiAc>

Pink Floyd - "Echoes" - Pink Floyd: Live at Pompeii (1972) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-E7-VHLvkE>

Purson - "Electric Landlady" - Desire's Magic Theatre (2016) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=boscR_9EE5Q

Rezső Seress - "Szomorú vasárnap (Sad Sunday)" (1935) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0kUd4IZHEo>

Saint Vitus - "I Bleed Black" - V (1989) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OhjP96dKYIU>

Santana - "Black Magic Woman" - Abraxas (1970) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=thkPgKpozH8>

Silent Kingdom - "Reflections of Fire" - Reflections of Fire (The Journey) (2006) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4OxE2bUmHdc>

Sisters of Mercy - "Marian" - First And Last And Always (1985) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8m1nRzsOJM>

Stribog - "Morana" - U Okovima Vječnosti (2010) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iuSWGAU9cU>

Stray Train - "Wander Man" - Just 'cause you got the monkey off your back doesn't mean the circus has left town (2016) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9T_INQziDQ

Type O Negative - "Black No. 1" - Bloody Kisses (1993) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFwYJYl-5GUQ>

Uncle Acid & The Deadbeats - "I'll Cut You Down" - Blood Lust (2011) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kSpsffboOAc>

Urborg - "Winter Void" - single (2014) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2bMAR7gAAo>

Witchcraft - album - Witchcraft (2004) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEQQyuEQGe4>

Witchfinder General - album - Death Penalty (1982) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fPYdUdp87GQ>

Woods of Ypres - album - IV: The Green Album (2009) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sduc-QbGm_dU

Appendix V: Credits

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