

A Secret Inheritance

By Steve Cumiskey

A Secret Inheritance is set in the town of Eisental in Ostermark, sheltered in a valley in the midst of the Gryphon woods, but it could be moved to another town or village of comparable size anywhere in the north or the east of The Empire if need be. The adventure has been designed with relatively inexperienced characters in mind, but can easily be adapted to suit more seasoned campaigners; a session or two should be enough to resolve the story.

It begins with the PCs making their way through the depths of a great forest. The promise of a particularly savage storm causes them to break their journey for a few days and take shelter in a small town. There, they get drawn into a local struggle for control of a guild.

While a certain amount of combat is almost inevitable, much of the story revolves around investigation. The game will play very differently depending on the composition of the PC group; they may find themselves hired by one of the guild factions to stop their rivals, they may feel the need to investigate events that smack of chaos (although there are no cultists here), or they may simply be motivated by a desire to help an innocent.

Investigating key locations and NPCs should give them a picture of the true situation; how they resolve it is up to them. Notes are provided at the end to help you stage a suitable climax.

Running the Game

The beginning of the adventure follows a fairly set pattern, but once the PCs arrive, they are free to investigate the town and its inhabitants in any order they wish to. In addition, the composition of the party will make the factions in the town react to them in different ways.

To make it easier to keep track of, there are three reference sheets for the GM at the end of this adventure. The first sheet, *the protagonists*, provides some notes on the factions in the town and how they might react to the PCs. The second, *The Cast*, provides a list of all the NPCs described in the adventure, alongside a few short notes as an aid to memory. The third, and final sheet takes the form of a *map* of the town with key locations marked, and a few brief notes to help run each encounter.

It would be a good idea to have a copy of *The Cast* to hand for reference before reading any further – it provides a short introduction to each of the characters involved.

Background

The story begins seventy years ago, when Mandred Lang returned to Eisental from his studies in Altdorf. A student at the colleges of magic, he was forced to leave after causing an accident in which another student was killed. Ravaged by guilt and depression, and lacking in money and a sense of purpose, he was forced to work for

his younger brother as he struggled to maintain a merchant's guild on the edge of bankruptcy.

Then, one night in his decaying lodgings, inspiration came to Mandred's increasingly diseased mind and he conceived of a way that he could help his brother. Working in secret, he began to research into daemonology, finally summoning a daemon and binding it to an antique chain of office. Whoever held the chain that bound the daemon could control its actions; in triumph, he presented it to the ruling council of the guild.

They were horrified.

Mandred found himself imprisoned as a madman. The existence of the daemon was never revealed for fear of the Witch Hunters becoming suspicious of the guild masters themselves. But as their needs grew, reluctantly at first, the masters decided to use the daemon. Gradually, the guild became powerful again. Knowledge of the daemon's existence was passed down through the masters of the guild until the present day.

Recent Events

Over the years, the guild masters have had to avoid promoting the kind of people who might react badly to their secret benefactor, or worse, would start to use it more aggressively. Unfortunately, that's just the sort of person that would have enabled the guild to prosper. Instead, it has languished under the leadership of increasingly staid and overcautious men, slipping slowly into decline once again.

With total collapse looming, the leadership finally relented and appointed one of their more decisive members – Albrecht Reise - to the ruling council. Unfortunately, he had some understanding of magic, and so could read Mandred's ancient diaries. Instead of concentrating on revitalising the guild, he began to research into how to use the daemon for his own ends.

The situation came to a head, as one of the guild leaders, aided by a priest of Morr, tried to destroy the daemon. In the resulting struggle, the guild house burned down, the guild master and priest were killed and Albrecht Reise badly burnt.

Unsure of who else might be plotting to kill him, Reise hid himself with a lowly guild member, Lothar Hoch. From Lothar's attic he began to plot to gain control of the guild.

Unable to leave his hiding place, and unable to trust the already nervous Lothar with his plans, he has been forced to use Gernar, Lothar's fifteen year old son – an intense, bookish loner who reminds Albrecht of himself as a youth.

Gernar carried out Albrecht's orders to the letter, moving the daemons resting place, then using it to kill the town's only other priest. So far, there is a stalemate; Albrecht is still too weak to reveal himself, while the surviving guild masters, the Brothers Lang, don't know where he is and can't start searching, for fear of the daemon.

But, unknown to Albrecht, Gernar has also begun to relish the power the daemon gives him over the people who have hurt him in the past, and the people he sees as rivals for the attention of a local girl, Amelie.

The Arrival of the PCs

The PCs arrive in town two weeks after the burning of the guild house. On their journey towards the town they'll have the opportunity to learn about life in the town from a couple of fellow travellers. Once there, it should quickly become clear that something is wrong.

There is an atmosphere of fear in the town, and young people in particular seem curiously wary, almost all scrupulously avoiding a young girl serving in the local inn.

More disturbingly, there are no priests, both having been killed in the last two weeks. Without the priests, the bodies of anyone killed in the last two weeks remain unburied, preserved by a local rag picker, paid to keep them packed in ice until a new priest arrives. Even a cursory glance reveals an unusually large number of people who have had 'accidents' recently.

If the players are priests, witch hunters or other natural trouble seekers, the current state of the town is likely to be enough to pique their interest. Even if the PCs aren't moved to start investigating on their own initiative, their arrival is likely to throw the delicate balance between Albrecht and the guilders into chaos.

Anyone involved with the Daemon is likely to see any outsiders as a potential threat and act accordingly; equally, the remaining guild masters may seize the opportunity to have a group with no provable connection to themselves seek out and destroy Reise for them before he has a chance to fully recover.

In addition, any male PC showing overt concern for Amelie's situation is likely to find himself the target of Gernar's rage; any merchant's guild members may also find themselves becoming the target of Reise's paranoia.

Journeying to Eisental

The adventure begins with the journey through worsening snow, towards the town of Eisental. Ideally, the PCs should be sharing a carriage with Ernst and Magda Beyer, a couple of merchants from the town. If the PCs have their own mounts, then have the merchants travel in the same way.

The purpose of this scene is to provide a means for the PCs to find out some basic information about the town. The Beyers have been away from the town since before the guild house fire, and so are unaware of the changes that have occurred since that night. Their descriptions of life as it normally goes in the town as it normally is should make the changes in the town more readily apparent. Descriptions of the dark, brooding forest lining the road as they travel, combined with the ever-worsening snow storms should also serve to emphasise the need to take shelter in the town.

What the Beyers know

The information the Beyers can provide to the PCs can be summed up in the following points:

- The town is sheltered in a valley, and so provides an ideal place to wait out the storm.
- The ruler, Margrave Hermann Mach, is absent, as are most of the troops of the town garrison; gone to fight beside the Emperor against Archaon's hordes. The town under the control of his steward, Gilbrecht Gut, until his return.
- The town is something of a regional meeting point for merchants, and is home to the Eastern League merchant's guild, an organisation with a network of guild houses throughout the province of Ostermark. The Beyers are not members, but know many of the more prominent members socially.
- In the great religious divide, the town comes down on the side of Ulric, but also has a temple to Morr.
- The Gryphon's Crest inn is the most popular establishment in town, but should have plenty of room at this time of year.

Ernst and Magda Beyer

A middle-aged, couple who's partnership in marriage coincided with a marriage in business. They have been running a successful wine business for over twenty years, combining the fortunes of their two families into one, powerful trading house, independent of the local guild. They have been in the provincial capital since before the guild house fire, and so are unaware of recent events.

Reasonably friendly with strangers, and curious about the world outside their own region, they are intended to be the perfect people to introduce the PCs to what the town is normally like, and their startled reaction to the changes wrought since their last trip home should provide an equally valuable insight into how things have changed in such a short time.

Ernst Beyer, Burgher

Career: Burgher

Race: Human

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
36%	35%	34%	39%	39%	46%	37%	45%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	11	3	3	4	0	0	0

Skills: Common Knowledge (The Empire), Speak Language (Reikspiel, Kislevan), Gossip, Drive, Evaluate, Read / Write, Haggle, Perception, Search

Talents: Coolheaded, Savvy, Dealmaker, Suave

Armour: None

Armour Points: None

Weapons: Dagger, Hand Weapon (Sword)

Trappings: Good Quality Merchant's Clothing, 8gcs

Magda Beyer, Burgher

Career: Burgher

Race: Human

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
37%	22%	29%	30%	38%	40%	31%	39%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	10	2	3	4	0	0	0

Skills: Common Knowledge (The Empire), Speak Language (Reikspiel, Kislevan), Gossip, Drive, Evaluate, Read / Write, Haggle, Perception, Search

Talents: Hardy, Resistance to Disease, Dealmaker, Suave

Armour: None

Armour Points: None

Weapons: Dagger

Trappings: Good Quality Merchant's Clothing, 14gcs

***Note:** If you have Sigmar's Heirs the profile for the town taken from the Ostermark section may prove useful at this point, note that only 10b/40c of the original garrison are not off with the Margrave.*

All seems normal as the PCs enter the town, late in the evening, but as the carriage moves through the streets, the Beyers should begin to seem surprised by a few of the more obvious changes. The townsfolk in general appear more muted than usual, rushing through the streets to wherever they need to go, giving the town a strangely deserted feeling; in the graveyard, a shabbily dressed youth can be seen shovelling snow into an open crypt, where a foot can clearly be seen poking out; the sight of the burnt-out guild house produces an obvious look of shock on the faces of the Beyers.

The Wolves

Once in the inn, the PCs may bid farewell to their fellow travellers. At this hour, the PCs would be well advised to remain indoors and talk a little with some of the locals. If any decide to do a little late night investigation, then follow the references for each location shown below. The important thing to note is that, Amelie, a former servant in the guild house, Wulf, a friend of Amelie, and Gernar are all present, as is Horst Teuber, chief servant of the Lang Brothers. Gernar can clearly be seen staring at Amelie as she moves through the inn, serving customers.

As the bar begins to empty, the PCs hear screams from the street outside. If any investigate, they witness Wulf being attacked by a pack of five wolves. It should be clear to any resident of the Empire that wolves do not normally enter settlements in this way; it should also be clear that they are singling Wulf out, from any other people present.

Gernar has used Sulminatus to summon a pack of wolves to kill Wulf; the daemon is visible at the edge of the light spilling from the open inn door, but he will quickly vanish from sight if anyone sees him. Nobody in the town will know of anyone who matches his description. To stop the attack, the PCs must kill the wolves, drag Wulf inside and bar the doors until the spell wears off, or use an equivalent spell to control the beasts themselves.

Unusual as the attack is, it creates an extreme reaction in the townsfolk, who flee for their homes, leaving only Amelie, the PCs and a very nervous innkeeper to look after Wulf's injuries. If the PCs ask about the reaction of the townsfolk, they will be told about the fate of the priest of Ulric (see the temple of Ulric below) and that they are beginning think that their town is cursed.

Amelie Meyer, Guild servant

A servant in the guild house since childhood, Amelie has been forced to find shelter and work at the inn. Her unconscious observation of etiquette and fine clothing make her stand out from the rest of the servants, more used to serving beer to trappers, than wine to merchants. The accidents that have befallen anyone who seems to be getting too close to her have left her isolated; of the younger villagers, only Wulf still speaks to her.

Amelie could provide valuable insights into the working of the guild, and would likely confide in anyone who helped in the attack on Wulf or simply seemed sympathetic – she didn't know about the daemon, but couldn't help but be aware of a forbidden room in the basement ...

Career: Servant

Race: Human

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
38%	31%	35%	35%	38%	36%	33%	36%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	12	3	3	4	0	2	0

Skills: Common Knowledge (The Empire), Speak Language (Reikspiel), Trade (cook), Blather, Dodge Blow, Search, Haggle, Gossip, Perception, Read / Write

Talents: Acute Hearing, Cool Headed, Sixth Sense, Etiquette, Very Resilient

Armour: None

Armour Points: None

Weapons: Dagger

Trappings: Good quality clothing, 7gc, marked with the livery of the guild, token of devotion to Ulric

Wulf Kuhn, Woodsman and Friend of Amelie

A woodsman from the hills around Eisental, Wulf is one of the few remaining followers of the old religion of Taal and Rhya in the area. An independent, resourceful individual, he spends much of his time alone in the vast forests, in the hills surrounding the town. Isolated as he is from much of the events in the town, he doesn't share the growing sense of unease that his fellow townsfolk have about Amelie; in fact, her vulnerability makes her more attractive to him, and he will do whatever he can to help her. If the PCs rescue him from his attackers, he will not forget his debt to them either.

Career: Woodsman

Race: Human

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
44%	34%	42%	39%	37%	30%	46%	31%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	14	4	3	5	0	1	0

Skills: Common Knowledge (The Empire), Speak Language (Reikspiel), Gossip, Concealment, Set Trap, Scale Sheer Surface, Secret Language (Ranger Tongue), Secret Signs (Ranger), Silent Move
Talents: Very Resilient, Night Vision, Fleet Footed, Rover, Specialist Weapon Group (two handed)
Armour: Light Armour (Leather Jack)
Armour Points: Body, Arms (1pt)
Weapons: Two-handed Axe, Dagger
Trappings: Ranger's clothing, 6gc, Antitoxin kit, token of devotion to Ulric

The investigation begins

Over the course of the following day, the investigation begins to take form. If the players are somewhat roguish in appearance, they will be approached in secret by Horst Teuber, on behalf of the Lang brothers, with an offer of a reward for finding the chain that binds sulminatus; naturally, they won't be told the purpose of the item; if something were to happen to the one they think is holding it, Albrecht Reise, then that would be good too.

The exact amount of money involved depends on the nature of your campaign; making such a mercenary group too rich might unbalance later adventures. Each GM should judge the amount for himself, but 50gc seems reasonable.

Groups containing characters with a religious career, witch or vampire hunters and troll slayers will have been noticed by everyone except Reise, who will be told by Gernar. The factions will carefully watch them, but won't take any action until they can assess the situation. If they begin to investigate the goings on in the town, they may find themselves coming under attack from animals or paid footpads and bandits.

If the PCs helped during the attack on Wulf, Amelie will likely seek their help. In this case, only Gernar is likely to notice early on. If he thinks that any male PCs are getting too close to Amelie, that character is likely to find themselves attacked in much the same way as Wulf was; the other factions will only notice their presence if their investigations take them into contact with them.

Locations

The following section describes the locations marked on the GM's map, along with any characters or clues associated with them. The encounters can be approached in any order; the GM will have to use good sense to adjust each encounter to reflect the effects of previous actions.

The Inn of the Gryphon's crest

The Inn of the Gryphon's crest is a sprawling structure made up of a series of rooms of varying size linked together, each of these rooms tends to attract it's own class of client, with the merchants in one, the foresters in another, and so on; despite the unconscious divisions, the drinkers in each are reasonably open to strangers and are a good source of town gossip. The walls are stained by countless years of pipe smoke and the beams supporting walls and ceiling bend alarmingly. The guest rooms are on the first floor, and are surprisingly warm and homely.

As the only inn of any significance in the town, most of the NPCs described in this adventure will be here at one time or another; the only exceptions being the Lang brothers and Reise.

Clues: Gernar's strange manner, the attitude of the townsfolk to Amelie, history of the town and recent rumours, absence of the most powerful guilders, Amelie's former employment in the guild house.

The Guild house

In its normal state, the guild house was a three story, half-timbered structure whose upper floors projected out above the main thoroughfare of the town. Now, the structure is little more than a burnt-out husk, none of the surrounding buildings were seriously damaged, and any rubble that fell beyond the boundaries of the structure have been cleared. There is no evidence of how the fire started, and the bodies of those killed in the fire have been removed from the site.

Talking to the neighbouring burghers will reveal little. Most were only wakened by the shouts of the town watch as they rushed to the site of the fire. Due to the secretive nature of any guild, the neighbours know little of its inner workings.

There is a secret chamber, still largely intact beneath the rubble. The PCs are unlikely to find it, even with quite a thorough search, but Amelie will mention its existence if they gain her confidence. Access to the chamber can be gained by smashing or cutting through the floor with suitable tools.

The chamber itself is largely clear of anything too obviously daemonic (so no incriminating pentagrams), but there are enough oddities here to give the room a sinister cast – manacles built into the walls, Old blood stains on the floor, or even fragments of bone. If this is brought to the attention of the authorities, the Lang brothers will attempt to explain it away, saying the guilders had no access to the room and that it dates back to the before the time of the guild, or even that it was exclusively used by the now-dead guildmaster.

Clues: Remains of the basement chamber where Sulminatus was kept.

The Graveyard and Temple of Morr

The temple of Morr has stood neglected since the death of the priest. Until a new priest can be summoned, the dead must remain unburied. To prevent the spread of disease and the onset of decay, a local rag picker, Jorn, has been employed to place the bodies in a vacant crypt and surround them with fresh snow.

There's little to be learned from the temple, but Jorn may prove a useful tool to the GM to provide hints to the PCs, but any such hints should be couched within a layer of superstition and fantasy. With the exception of those who died in the fire, all of the bodies show signs of having been killed by animals; the fate of the priest of Ulric is particularly unsettling for this very reason (see the temple of Ulric, below). The guildmaster's body shows signs of violence inflicted before the fire; the other bodies are too badly burnt for a cause of death to be determined. Careful inspection (or even a quick count) will reveal that Reise's body is not here, nor has it ever been.

Jorn, Corpse handler

Almost every village has a man who the gods have deserted; no family, no trade, few talents or friends, surviving on low cunning, the good will of the townsfolk and a stoicism in the face of constant defeat; for Eisental, Jorn is that man. As such, he seemed the ideal person for the job of corpse handler. He needed the money and didn't seem to mind too much. Being generally ignored by the better off (and for him, that's everyone), Jorn knows quite a few of the town's secrets and would be more than willing to share them over a good mug of ale (or even a pretty poor one). PCs using him should beware though; he tends to ascribe supernatural causes to almost any event, and is something of a fantasist, adding extra details to make his stories more interesting ...

Career: Bone Picker

Race: Human

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
38%	33%	29%	39%	36%	22%	37%	35%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	12	2	3	5	0	5	0

Skills: Animal Care, Gossip, Drive, Common Knowledge (the Empire), Evaluate, Haggle, Perception, Search, Speak (Reikspiel)

Talents: Night Vision, Fleet Footed, Street wise, Resistance to Disease

Armour: None

Armour Points: None

Weapons: Hand Weapon (axe)

Trappings: Cart, sacks and digging tools, 1gc

Clues: Large numbers of 'accidents', the fate of the priests, misleading rumours.

The Temple of Ulric

The temple of Ulric lies abandoned at the edge of the town. The door still stands a little ajar, revealing the signs of a struggle – bloody handprints still stain the door, and a pool of dried blood sits just inside the door; animal tracks can be detected by a character, using the track skill. Following these tracks will reveal that the animals only became a pack within sight of the temple, coming from far and wide to meet there. A close inspection of the area will reveal a fragment of the cloak of Sulminatus, snagged on a branch. Any other tracks are too old to be of much value.

Fearing that a priest could be a danger to him, Reise had Gernar bring Sulminatus here to kill him. Sulminatus used his powers to summon a wolf pack to kill the priest; his death in the jaws of his patron animal has caused the townsfolk to conclude that the priest, and perhaps by extension, the town is under a curse from Ulric for some transgression.

Clues: Bloodstains, animal trails, a piece of the cloak of Sulminatus.

The Margrave's Townhouse

The Margrave's townhouse combines a stately dwelling for the town's ruler and a barracks for the local garrison, all surrounded by a high wall and gate. Despite appearances, the building is all-but deserted – the majority of the troops and servants

having accompanied their lord to war with Chaos. The remaining guards fulfil their duties as best they can, but are hampered by a lack of leadership from the steward. Characters will find it extremely difficult to gain access to Gut, as the guards are aware of his failing health and are loath to bother him. It will take good evidence, or great ingenuity to get past them.

Gilbrecht Guth, Steward of Eisental

The Gilbrecht Guth that lies in the margrave's townhouse bears little resemblance to the grave, but vigorous man who for years has been his lord's greatest asset. With the Margrave's departure to fight against the hordes of Archaon, Gilbrecht was forced to defend the town with a severely depleted garrison. During a skirmish with bandits deep in the forest, he was thrown from his horse and badly wounded. Carried back to the town by his men, he has spent the weeks since then languishing in pain, beyond the ability of the town's best physician to heal.

While in this state, he makes an ineffective ruler, and it will require some ingenuity on the part of the PCs to see him at all, and a great deal of proof to force him to act.

Career: Steward (ex-Valet)

Race: Human

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
30%	27%	35% (25%)	35%	42% (22%)	69%	47% (25%)	54%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	14 (7)	3 (2)	3	4	0	1	0

(numbers in brackets show the effects of his illness)

Skills: Common Knowledge (The Empire), Speak Language (Reikspiel), Gossip, Academic Knowledge (Genealogy / Heraldry, Law), Blather, Evaluate, Haggle, Perception, Read / Write, Search, Charm, Command, Haggle, Intimidate, Ride, Trade (Merchant)

Talents: Luck, Super Numerate, Suave, Dealmaker, Etiquette, Public Speaking,

Armour: None

Armour Points: None

Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword), Dagger

Trappings: Noble's Garb, 35gc

Clues: Absence of the majority of the garrison and the town ruler, Gut's ineffectiveness.

The Slaughter yard

The slaughter yard is a maze of ramshackle buildings, in various states of repair from the reasonably new to the dangerously derelict. It is in this little used part of the yard that Gernar has established a base for Sulminatus. By day he roosts among the rafters, moving out with the dark to feed on the offal and meat in the great silos at the heart of the building.

The disappearance of this meat has not gone unnoticed, but for the moment has been blamed on wolves; this has led to an attempt by the slaughtermaster to fence off access to the forest – an attempt that may attract the attention of observant PCs. And then there are the deaths. In the last two weeks, two slaughtermen have met with accidents while working in the derelict part of the yard.

If questioned, some of the workers may mention Gernar. None of them know his name, but he has long made the derelict section his haunt as a place to avoid contact with his father, and others of his own age.

If the PCs search the derelict section early in the adventure, Sulminatus will easily avoid them. Their biggest concern is likely to be the risk of injury in the filthy, unstable ruins.

Emil Fehr, Chief slaughterman

Massively built, with veins pulsing across his bare-shaven head, Emil Fehr is an imposing figure, especially when dressed in his leather apron and carrying his massive meat cleaver. A practical man, he spends very little time amongst the merchants of the town, preferring to spend his time at the slaughterhouse. Despite appearances, he is as troubled as the rest of his men by the recent accidents in town, especially those of his own workers. He has taken to avoiding the derelict sections of the slaughterhouse, which he is beginning to believe to be haunted ...

Career: Burgher (ex-Tradesman)

Race: Human

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
39%	35%	47%	38%	41%	35%	43%	33%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	14	4	3	4	0	0	0

Skills: Common Knowledge (The Empire), Gossip, Speak Language (Reikspiel, Kislevite), Animal Care, Drive, Haggle, Evaluate, Perception, Read / Write, Search, Secret Language (guild tongue), Trade (Farmer, Tanner),

Talents: Very Strong, Resistance to disease, Savvy, Dealmaker

Armour: Light Armour (leather Jerkin)

Armour Points: Body (1pt)

Weapons: Hand Weapon (cleaver)

Trappings: Burgher clothing, 15gc, or filthy work clothes

Sulminatus, the daemon in the slaughter house

Whatever its true appearance, while bound by the chain of office, Sulminatus takes the appearance of a tall, pale, hairless man with long fingers and matt-black eyes, dressed in a shaggy coat of black wolf-pelts. He never speaks (he may even be incapable of doing so), simply listening to orders from his master in attentive silence. Sulminatus needs to feed on a regular supply of blood to remain in this world. When based in the guild house, his needs were catered for by some of the guilds' less moral servants, (most recently, Teuber), but are now sustained by the waste of the slaughterhouse. If the PCs were to find a way to free him from his binding, he would likely seek to destroy his former masters, before turning on the rest of humanity.

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
50%	0%	50%	45%	50%	60%	60%	40%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
2	20	5	4	5	3	0	0

Skills: Dodge Blow, Follow Trail, Silent Move, Shadowing

Talents: Acute Hearing, Daemonic Aura, Frightening, Night Vision, Will of Iron

Special Rules:

Beastmaster: The daemon can use some of the spells of the lore of beasts, with slight modifications: The daemon may use the Claws of Fury spell at will, without having to roll to cast it, and can maintain the spell for as long as it desires. When it uses the Master's Voice spell, it can use it to control one animal for every ten points of will it possesses, for up to ten minutes. It can use the Crow's Feast spell as written.

Armour: None

Armour Points: None

Weapons: None

Trappings: The clothing of a merchant and winter furs

Clues: Missing meat, deaths of workers near the derelict parts, Gernar seen here.

Reise's House

Reise's house is a well appointed, two story building in the heart of the town. The house has stood abandoned since the fire, without servants since Riese dismissed them when he began his studies. The house has clearly been ransacked (by the priest and guilders on the night of the fire), and little remains of any evidence. A thorough search reveals only a fragment of parchment with writing in code (this was Mandred's personal code, indecipherable without the rest of the book), and Reise's old priests robes.

Clues: Evidence of a search, old priest's robes, a page of strange writing.

The Townhouse of the brothers Lang

The brothers' townhouse resembles that of Reise, except that it is clearly occupied. The house has a look of fortification, with all windows barred and doors shut; the few servants visible move swiftly on their errands with instruction to talk to no one. In their current state, the brothers expect attack at any moment, and as such, any attempt to force entry is likely to be met by violence from hired guards. The brothers will be extremely reluctant to see anyone, especially if they have commissioned them to attack Reise.

There is little evidence to be found here, as the brothers have meticulously destroyed any incriminating evidence in their possession; intimidated servants may reveal that in the days leading up to the fire, the brothers were approached by the guildmaster and the priest of Morr – these meetings always ended in arguments with the brothers finally instructing the servants not to admit them again.

Hermann and Ruprecht Lang, Guildmasters

The Lang family took part in the founding of the guild and have served on its ruling council ever since. The twins are identical, and bear a strong resemblance to the portraits of their more illustrious ancestors that once hung in the guild house; tall, dark and imposing. Unfortunately, they also share the characteristic over-cautiousness that had laid their guild so low. As action against Reise became inevitable, they preferred to remain hidden in their discretely fortified townhouse; which is where they still remain.

Career: Guildmaster (ex-Merchant, ex-Burgher)

Race: Human

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
39%	35%	42%	49%	35%	63%	46%	49%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	18	4	4	4	0	4	0

Skills: Common Knowledge (The Empire), Gossip, Speak Language (Reikspiel, Kislevan), Drive, Evaluate, Gossip, Haggle, Perception, Search, Read / Write, Ride, Secret Language (Guild Tongue), Trade (Merchant, Farmer), Academic Knowledge (History), Charm, Command

Talents: Luck, Sixth Sense, Savvy, Dealmaker, Super Numerate, Etiquette, Linguistics

Armour: None

Armour Points: None

Weapons: Pistol, Hand Weapon (Sword), Dagger

Trappings: Powder and shot for 10 shots, 30gcs on hand, well-to-do Merchants clothes

Horst Teuber, Valet to the brothers Lang

Richly dressed in the livery of his employers, tall and rake-thin, Horst has been the loyal servant of the Lang family since he was a small boy. He owes his rise in the ranks of the family servants to keen observation and a talent for manipulation. While mostly employed to run the twins' household, Teuber's more flexible morality has made him a useful connection between the brothers and some of their less savoury contacts in neighbouring cities. He is one of the few who knows of the existence of the Daemon, because he is one of the few who could be relied upon not to reveal what he knows.

Career: Valet (ex-servant)

Race: Human

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
43%	33%	33%	29%	42%	38%	45%	40%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	14	3	2	4	0	0	0

Skills: Common Knowledge (The Empire), Speak Language (Reikspiel), Trade (cook), Blather, Dodge Blow, Search, Haggle, Gossip, Perception, Read / Write, Academic Knowledge (Genealogy / Heraldry), Evaluate.

Talents: Cool Headed, Luck, Etiquette, Very Resilient, Dealmaker

Armour: None

Armour Points: None

Weapons: Dagger

Trappings: Good quality clothing, 10gc

Clues: The unusual reclusiveness of the brothers, but little else.

The Houses of Manholt and Kummel

The townhouses of the two dead guilders contain little to interest the PCs, as all of the crucial discussions leading up to the fire happened either in the home of the Langs or in the temple of Morr. Servants will have become aware of the worsening relationship between the guilders and Reise, but will be unable to be any more specific.

Clues: The priest of Morr met the merchants here, arguments, the involvement of the Langs.

The Hoch House

The Hoch residence consists of a freestanding town house next to a granary and windmill. The house is two stories high, with an attic room above, from which a faint light shines at night. The workers at the mill will have noticed the increasingly strained relationship between Gernar and his father, as well as Lothar's increasing short temper and paranoia. The Hochs have a maid and cook, but both have been sent away to their families for the time being – odd in itself. Lothar reacts with alarm if anyone attempts to go to the upper floors. Reise sits in the shadows above, unable to leave, due to his injuries. The only way to see into the attic would be to enter it via the access trapdoor.

Albrecht Reise, Master of the Eastern League Merchants Guild

Reise started life as a priest of Morr, apprenticed to the order by his parents in gratitude for the survival of their more favoured elder son from a disease. Abandoned by his parents and with little time for gods, only his magical studies interested him. Even then, he had some interest in dark magic, but the austere discipline of the order drove him out before he could make much progress. Out in the world, he put his intense ambition and not inconsiderable charisma to work, as a merchant. Working his way rapidly up through the guild, he came to the attention of Tilman Manholt, who recognised in him the ambition and intellect necessary to save the guild from bankruptcy.

Reise is a tall man, once thin but now running to fat. A keen judge of character, he has so far been able to hide his rages and darker obsessions with magic and power from most of the people who know him. The attack has left him with burns scarring the left side of his face and hands. The attack has begun to unhinge his mind even further, and even less in control of his rages than normal.

Career: Guild Master (ex-Initiate, ex-Priest, ex-Burgher, ex-Merchant)

Race: Human

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
38%	38%	32%	37%	33% (27%)	57%	48% (30%)	61%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
2	14 (7)	3	3	4	1	5	0

(The numbers in brackets reflect Albrecht's injuries)

Skills: Common Knowledge (The Empire, Kislevite), Gossip, Speak Language (Reikspiel, Classical, Kislevan), Academic Knowledge (astronomy, theology, History), Charm, Heal, Perception, Read / Write, Channelling, Magical Sense, Ride, Speak Arcane Language (Magick), Drive, Evaluate, Haggle, Search, Secret Language (Guild Tongue), Trade (Merchant).

Talents: Strong-minded, Sixth Sense, Lightning Reflexes, Public Speaking, Suave, Master Orator, Petty Magic (Divine), Strike to Stun, Dealmaker, Super Numerate, Dark Lore (Chaos).

Insanities: Blasphemous Rage

Armour: None

Armour Points: None

Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword) and Dagger

Trappings: 21gcs, Fire-damaged Merchant Finery.

Lothar Hoch, Grain merchant and father of Gernar

A tense, nervous man rapidly approaching middle age, Lothar Hoch is a man with a lot to worry about. He owes the survival of his business to the night that Albrecht Reise made his biggest business rival disappear. That act has left him with a debt, which he is paying by hiding Reise in his attic. Weak willed and fearful, he is unable to act as his son falls further under Reise's influence.

Hoch appears older than his thirty-six years, with a mop of greying hair and a moustache. He tries to dress like the successful merchant he would like people to believe him to be, but is permanently stained by patches of flour and granary dust. He is not physically brave and so will tend to flee from a fight, after discharging his prized pistol, which he carries with him everywhere as a symbol of his wealth and (imagined) martial prowess.

Career: Merchant (ex-Burgher)

Race: Human

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
37%	34%	29%	41%	46%	41%	27%	61%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	16	2	4	4	0	2	0

Skills: Common Knowledge (The Empire), Gossip, Speak Language (Reikspiel, Kislevan), Drive, Evaluate, Gossip, Haggle, Perception, Search, Read / Write, Ride, Secret Language (Guild Tongue), Trade (Merchant, Millar)

Talents: Hardy, Resistance to Disease, Suave, Dealmaker, Super Numerate, Specialist Weapon (Gunpowder)

Armour: None

Armour Points: None

Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword), Knife, Pistol (rarely carried)

Trappings: 12gcs to hand, Moderate Merchants Clothing, Mill house and stock.

Gernar Hoch

Unlike his father, Gernar has a body almost entirely devoid of fat, with angular features to match his skeletal frame. He disguises this by wearing some of the baggier styles of slashed doublet popular in the Reikland. Over protected by his always-nervous father and bewildered by the death of his mother, Gernar took to books as few other children of the Empire do; he might, in fact, have made a good Wizard's Apprentice, had his father not been swayed by a superstitious fear of magic and a desire to build a dynasty.

Gernar is driven now by the possibility of escape from the stifling atmosphere of his home village, and the possibilities of more power to come, that the Daemon represents. He won't give up his newfound freedom without a fight, and thanks to the feelings of detachment from his fellow citizens fostered in him by his family life, it will cost him little sleep to kill anyone he perceives to be a threat. Only Amelie, who he has admired and idealised, may be immune, but even she is likely to become a victim in the end.

Career: Burgher (Because of his age, Gernar has yet to acquire all the skills and talents of his career)

Race: Human

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
39%	36%	25%	34%	29%	45%	37%	28%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	11	2	3	4	0	4	0

Skills: Common Knowledge (The Empire), Gossip, Speak Language (Reikspiel), Drive, Evaluate, Read / Write, Perception, Search
Talents: Savvy, Strong-minded, Dealmaker
Armour: Light Armour (Leather Jerkin)
Armour Points: Body (1pt)
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword), Dagger.
Trappings: 7gcs, Moderate Merchants Clothing, Sulminatus Fetch

Clues: The strange behaviour of the Hochs, no one allowed in the attic.

Ending the Adventure

Because there are so many ways in which to approach the investigation, the GM will have to decide when to bring matters to a climax. The key to doing this well is to make sure that you are as familiar as possible with the NPCs and their motivations, this will help you to judge how they would react to the situation as it develops during the game. The information provided in the adventure should give you a pretty good idea of the resources available to the NPCs.

The obvious climax to the game would involve the PCs confronting Reise in the attic and disposing of Sulminatus, either by destroying the chain, or by killing him in combat. Nevertheless, it's just possible that a particularly rash group of characters may charge straight into the attic as soon as they start to suspect Gernar.

Even if they kill both Reise and Gernar early in the game, it's unlikely they will have destroyed Sulminatus too, and will have no idea about the chain. In that case, the Lang brothers will be likely to make an attempt to gain control of the Daemon again.

Use natural breaks in the game such as tea making or phone calls to take stock of the situation and plan the NPCs next moves. Don't let the pace of the investigation rush you into a hasty decision.

Only the most bloodthirsty group are likely to wade in without being fairly sure about what's going on, so don't overplay the clues offered by the NPCs, instead, decide how much information to release based on how you want to pace the adventure. Ideally, the NPCs should begin the adventure cautiously, but gradually become more desperate in their actions as the adventure progresses.

Remember, these people are merchants, not Orcs, and so are likely to try to make deals to preserve their position before resorting to violence. Sulminatus should be saved until the players have a good idea about what's going on, as his appearance is likely to prove a challenge, and his destruction is likely to radically change the focus of the NPCs actions. The struggle for control of the chain, as sulminatus wreaks havoc with his magic would form a satisfying climax, as would the PCs convincing Guth to act against the factions; but be careful in this case, to avoid the PCs becoming mere spectators.

It's a good idea to make sure that either the chain, or sulminatus is destroyed by the end of the adventure; unless you like the idea of an unscrupulous group of PCs going around with a daemon under their control.

If the PCs were working for the Lang brothers and completed their assignment, the brothers will only pay-up if they have to. Any surviving NPCs will attempt to disassociate themselves from the whole affair as quickly as possible, and while they don't have quite the same power as they would if they were nobles, the PCs should be made aware that there is a real danger of money changing hands to make sure they get the blame for anything suspicious going on, if they threatened to talk.

GM's References

GM's reference 1: The protagonists

1. **The Brothers Lang:** The brothers Hermann and Ruprecht Lang are currently hiding out in their townhouse, waiting to see what Reise's next move will be. Ideally, they would like to see him dead, and the Daemon either destroyed, or under their control. The last thing they want is to be exposed to the authorities, and so may accept a compromise that will save their skins.
2. **Albrecht Reise:** Reise is currently hiding in Hoch's attic, unable to go out in public until his strength is restored and he feels secure. Ideally, he would like to see the Lang brothers under his control, running the guild to provide him with money to continue his magical researches. He intends to make Gernar his apprentice, but may not take the news of his unauthorised activities well.
3. **Gernar Hoch:** Gernar has control of the Daemon and is currently the only one who knows where it rests. He has already considered using the Daemon to kill Albrecht and the Lang brothers, but, ignorant of the extent of Albrecht's powers, he is afraid to act. If he were to learn how easy it would be to destroy him, he would do it without hesitation. Gernar's long-term plans are hazy at best, and so for the moment, he uses the Daemon merely to satisfy his desire for revenge, and to kill anyone he sees as a threat.
4. **Lothar Hoch:** Never the bravest of men, Lothar now lives in fear of both Albrecht and his own son. He doesn't know about the Daemon, but has a good idea that both are involved in the recent deaths in the town. He still believes that his son could be redeemed if he could get him away from Albrecht, but his attempts have proved useless – his son no longer listens. He would be prepared to help someone against Albrecht, but only if he was assured of the safety of both his son and himself.

GM's Reference 2: The Cast

The Guild

- Albrecht Reise: 48, injured guildmaster and daemonologist.
- Hermann and Ruprecht Lang: 41, surviving guildmasters and twins.
- Horst Teuber: 35, Valet to the Lang brothers.
- *Tilman Manholt: 49, guildmaster killed in the attack on Reise.
- *Heinrich Kummel: 28, guild member killed in the attack on Reise
- Lothar Hoch: 36, Mill owner and guild member. Father of Gernar.
- Gernar Hoch: 15, Son of Lothar, and master of the Daemon.
- Amelie Meyer: 16, former guild house servant, working at the inn.
- Sulminatus: The Daemon.

Townsfolk

- Ernst and Magda Beyer: 45 and 38, Burghers of Eisental.
- Gilbrecht Gut: 56, Steward and ruler of the town in the absence of the Margrave.
- *Reiner Baumann: 41, Ulrican Priest, killed by wolves under the command of Sulminatus.
- *Viktor Weber: 34, Priest of Morr, killed in the attack on Reise.
- Emil Fehr: 32, Chief Slaughterman.
- Wulf Kuhn: 18, Woodsman and friend of Amelie.
- Jorn: 17, rag picker, hired to look after the bodies of the recently deceased.

* These characters are dead by the time the PCs become involved.

GM's Reference 3: The Map

The map is contained in a separate file; the following text is the captions to be placed onto it. A separate, rough map will indicate precisely where the caption should be placed. Try to keep the text to the edges of the map, with arrows pointing to their locations

The Inn of the Gryphon's crest

Accommodation and a source of gossip

Contacts: Amelie Meyer, Wulf Kuhn, Horst Teuber, Gernar Hoch

Clues: Gernar's strange manner, the attitude of the townsfolk to Amelie, History of the town and recent rumours, absence of guilders, Amelie's former employment

The Guild house

The ruins of the guild house, destroyed by fire

Contacts: None

Clues: Remains of the basement chamber where Sulminatus was kept

The Hoch House

House and mill sheltering Reise

Contacts: Lothar Hoch, Gernar Hoch, Albrecht Reise, mill workers

Clues: Strange behaviour of the Hochs, no one allowed in the attic

Reise's House

Abandoned house of the guildmaster

Contacts: None

Clues: Evidence of a search, old priest's robes, a page of strange writing

The Graveyard and Temple of Morr

Abandoned temple and a crypt filled with bodies

Contacts: Jorn

Clues: Large numbers of 'accidents', the fate of the priests, misleading rumours

The Temple of Ulric

The abandoned site of a murder

Contacts: None

Clues: Bloodstains, animal trails, a piece of fur

The Margrave's Townhouse

Almost empty seat of power

Contacts: Gilbrecht Gut

Clues: Absence of the majority of the garrison and the town ruler, Gut's ineffectiveness

The Slaughter yard

Haunt of the daemon

Contacts: Emil Fehr, Sulminatus

Clues: Missing meat, deaths of workers near the derelict parts, Gernar seen here

The Townhouse of the brothers Lang

Hiding place of the guildmasters

Contacts: Horst Teuber, the Lang Brothers (only with difficulty)

Clues: The unusual reclusiveness of the brothers, but little else

The Houses of Manholt and Kummel

Houses of the dead guilders

Contacts: servants

Clues: The priest of Morr met the merchants here, arguments, the involvement of the Langs

