

Adventures



Piercing the Night

This scenario was inspired by, and is partially based on, ideas in an adventure seed called "Eye For An Eye" on page 131 of *Marienburg: Sold Down the River*, written by Anthony Ragan and published by Hogshead Publishing.

The dial was twisted a fraction of a degree and the image swung into focus. Tiny blood vessels stood out against the white background, appearing as large as the Drakwasser River. "Drat and damnation, they're all exactly the same.", said a voice weary with the frustration of many wasted hours. The desk shook as the owner of the voice stood up abruptly, shuffled across the room and threw himself down onto his bed. Within seconds, his eyes were closed and he was in deep sleep, dreaming... dreaming... dreaming that night were day, that his gaze could penetrate through shadow and gloom as though it weren't there...

A physician by training, an alchemist by hobby, Jakob Kelden is a man with a dream. Unlike many other alchemists, the Elixir of Life has no real interest for him, his mind is on a much different goal - night vision!

Jakob's childhood was spent in the capital, Altdorf, the only son of doting middle class parents who provided the best schooling they could afford. His father was an

astronomer at the University and Jakob grew up with as scientific a background as one can have in the Empire. Expressing an interest from an early age in medicine, he became apprenticed to Wolmar Toepplitz, an established physician, who was actually the family doctor. One winter during his apprenticeship, Jakob suffered the terrible loss of both parents to tuberculosis. He had his own suggestions for treating the disease but, of course, was over-ruled by Wolmar who, after all, had far more experience and insisted on following the conventional wisdom and made Jakob's parents sleep in their backyard, despite the terrible snow, believing that the cold would rid them of their ailments, this being commonly accepted as the most effective treatment of the day.

Upon qualifying as a full physician, Jakob continued to work under Wolmar, though he disagreed with him often and started to develop his own methods and treatments. His scientific approach made him sceptical of many popular treatments as he could see no basis for their effectiveness and instead he tried to understand the physical causes of illness and cures. Of course, in the eyes of many Old Worlders, the line between biological science and necromancy is very fine so Jakob had to be very careful in his investigations, often working alone, at night and hiding the evidence of his activities. Of course, Wolmar became aware of his younger employee's activities and, confronting him in his office late one night, caught him in the act of dissecting a corpse. A violent struggle occurred but the strength of the younger man prevailed, leaving Wolmar with deep scalpel cuts and Jakob escaping into the night.

By dawn, Jakob was on his way north to Middenheim, determined to continue his vital research, hoping to advance medical science by his pioneering work. He didn't stay too long in Middenheim, reasoning that it was too obvious a destination from Altdorf and that, if Wolmar chose to pursue him, he'd be better off away from the beaten track, so he continued his travels to Bergsburg. Jakob decided against working as a physician, after all, he had enough savings, and his inheritance from when his parents died, to allow him to work on his research full time. Away from the daily pressures of active employment, he found time to indulge in alchemical research in addition to medical studies, though always in terms of discovering potions and compounds which he might use to treat various ailments. In time, he became a respected member of the Alchemists Guild in Bergsburg and was well known by various physicians, apothecaries and pharmacists as a source of new but usually effective remedies and medicines.

A chance encounter resulted in the determination of Jakob's life goal. Leaving his offices late one night, he was accosted on the street by a common thug, who suddenly pulled Jakob down a dark alley in an attempt to mug him. It was an overcast night and the shadows in the alley meant that the mugger's face was hidden from Jakob.

In the struggle that followed, Jakob was never sure if there might be more than one attacker, or if his assailant was simply much stronger than he was. They grappled clumsily, arms flailing, fists trying to seek their target despite the dark. Each never saw the other's features, but they were well aware of the ragged sound of their breathing as they exerted themselves, and of the smell of sweat, fear and adrenaline. Jakob concentrated solely on escape while his attacker attempted to force him into submission so that he could relieve him of his wealth.

As suddenly as it had started, the fight was over, the mugger collapsed on the floor in front of Jakob. A cultured voice sounded in the darkness in front of him, "I doubt he'll be troubling you again for a while". Jakob felt an arm grasp his shoulder and lead him back to the street where, in the dim light shining from a nearby tavern, he was able to make out the fine elven features of his rescuer. "Don't worry about that one, he'll wake up in the morning with a sore head and a bruise to show for his troubles, but no lasting damage. Glad to have been of service.", and with that, the elf had disappeared into the night.

As he hurriedly made the rest of his journey home, still shaking from his ordeal, Jakob got to thinking about the events of the night, and how amazingly well the elf must have been able to see in the dark - the alley had been virtually lightless as far as he was concerned, and yet the elf must have been able to see the struggle from the main road and had been able to land a stunning blow with great accuracy. Just think if there was a way for humans to see like elves, think how much safer the town would be if the City Watch had that capability (or think how much more dangerous it would be if the criminal element discovered it first).

From that day on, Jakob suspended all his other research and concentrated solely on penetrating the secrets of eyesight and night vision. His initial investigations were purely of relevant literature and treatises. He made journeys back to Middenheim to visit the universities and libraries there, spending huge lengths of time researching obscure tomes of knowledge. A few half-truths and speculative passages were gleaned and hinted at in the pages and texts he labouriously pored over, but no solid facts.

His investigations moved on to more practical nature. Paying students for their time, he measured how well they could see by candlelight, moonlight, lanternlight and daylight, by the size of lettering they could make out on a blackboard placed a fixed distance away. Despite his

scepticism, he investigated folklore and common knowledge, such as giving his subjects carrot juice and repeating the exercises, but with no discernible improvement in the results. He even managed to persuade a couple of non-humans to perform the same test, to help calibrate his results. Still, despite clearing up a few common fallacies, he had no fresh information on the workings of the eye.

After much thought and study, he reached the conclusion that the only explanation must be something relating to the physical nature of the eyeball. Having near exhausted his previous avenues of research, Jakob decided to progress to a more direct approach - dissection. Replaying the events of the night he was mugged, Jakob was struck by the resemblance between the eyes of his elven saviour and those of a cat. Large numbers of stray cats could always be found roaming around the poorer areas of town, feeding from street refuse and waste, Jakob reasoned that a the existence of a few more or, more accurately, a few less wouldn't be noticed. He took to carrying a sack and some titbits of food around with him on expeditions to Helmsberg and was often rewarded for his efforts with a few specimens struggling in his bag as he made his way home again.

Feeling a bit guilty at first, as the cats meowed plaintively when confined, and displayed their displeasure with their claws when he released them, Jakob was forced to temporarily halt his research on vision and spend time brewing a potion suitable for subduing his experimental feline subjects. After a couple of false starts, Jakob could return to his proper research. He was able to work with renewed speed, and his conscience assuaged, as the sedated cats no longer disturbed him as he operated on their eyes. After a few weeks however, his laboratory beginning to stink like his fleabitten specimens, Jakob was no closer to uncovering the secret of night vision than he had ever been.

Perhaps he had been pursuing a blind alley? After all, perhaps the similarity in the appearance of an elven eye and a cat's eye was purely coincidental? After all, why then could elves and dwarfs, so different in appearance and nature, have such similar capabilities in the dark? The only way that Jakob could envisage proceeding in his research, was to obtain some more suitable physical specimens and to dissect them instead. His mind clouded by his ambitions, desperation setting in, thinking he might never succeed otherwise, it seemed only a short step to Jakob, the transition from cat to elf or dwarf. All would be justified if he could just obtain his goal, by whatever means necessary.

After frequenting the southern, seedier side of Bergsburg, making discrete enquiries, passing on bribes and holding clandestine meetings down dark alleys, ironically similar to the one that had started him on his current path, he was able to find someone who could supply what he required.

Erwin Zimmerman worked a coachman for Hochland Crossing on the Middenheim run, but the meagre wages weren't enough to cover his gambling habit, so he had taken to smuggling various illicit substances between Middenheim and Bergsburg to support his lifestyle. He knew a contact or two in Middenheim who would be able to obtain what Jakob required, for a handsome price and an easy profit of course. After a nervous few weeks between placing his order and paying a substantial fee upfront, Jakob received a quiet knock on his door one evening and a shifty looking Erwin quickly shoved a parcel into his hands and, after a grunted "Same again next month", was hurriedly on his way.

Jakob locked and bolted the door and retreated to his laboratory to ponder best the way to proceed. Upon unwrapping his ghoulish parcel, he was immediately presented with a problem. The four pairs of eyeballs seemed in good condition, certainly the goods were fresh, so to speak, but how was he to know which race each had come from? Jakob cursed himself, such a simple thing. He made a mental note to speak to Erwin before the next delivery, but he would have to make do with what he had. He'd requested samples of human, elf, dwarf and halfling eyes, so surely three out of the four would display similar properties with the odd ones out therefore being human. With trembling hands, he started his exhaustive study of his specimens, leaving his house only once in the whole month, to pass on express instructions to Erwin to identify the sources of next month's delivery.

Six weeks after receiving the parcel, the first specimens rather shrivelled and deteriorated from where slivers were chopped out for examination under a microscope, Jakob was at somewhat of a loss. All his best attempts had failed, as far as he could tell, no systematic physical differences existed between the different eyeballs. Exhausted and disappointed after so much hard work with nothing to show for it, Erwin was late with the next delivery and Jakob had reached an impasse in his research.

Clutching at straws, in a last desperate attempt to use the eyeballs before they totally decayed, he set them brewing up in a retort into a foul-smelling potion. A nauseating aroma spread through the laboratory, swamping everything with the sickly sweet yet salty stench of the half-rotten eyes. It took another day for Jakob to work up his courage to even contemplate his partially congealed potion. After soaking a handkerchief in smelling salts and tying it across his face, and gulping a large glass of brandy to fortify himself, he approached the revolting beaker. Steeling himself, he picked up and drained the glass in one swift motion, knowing that the slightest hesitation would prevent him from acting.

He was rewarded for his courage, and amazed and astounded, because he could suddenly see far better in the gloomy laboratory than ever before. The dark recesses of his workplace were suddenly home to long forgotten boxes, manuscripts and spiders. He ran out into the night,

gazing in rapture at detail normally masked in deep shadow. After a couple of hours the effect had worn off and the night-blanketed town resumed its normal, shadowy appearance, but Jakob hypothesised that, with fresher ingredients and a refined technique, he'd be able to brew a more potent version! Now he really needed that next shipment...

Enter the PCs

Of course, no adventure would be complete without something for the PCs to do! As is typical of such things, they are sat in a tavern or hostelry of their choice when they are approached with a request. A tired-looking man, with slumped shoulders but with an inner fire gleaming in his eyes, pulls up a seat at their table and asks if they can assist him - he's paid for a delivery of alchemical ingredients from a supplier in Middenheim and that the delivery person has vanished without trace. The ingredients were rare and expensive, so he'd like the PCs to try and track down this delivery person and recover his possessions. He offers a full description of Erwin and a suitable fee, maybe 100GC (tailor it according to the financial needs of your PCs). He will be vague and non-specific about the nature of the ingredients.

The PCs should quickly be able to determine that Erwin was a coachman for Hochland Crossing and that he'd recently returned from Middenheim. Questioning his workmates, they can discover that Erwin was a single man who enjoyed a game of cards and that his favourite hangout was Bernie's in Sudentor. They may also discover the address of his home, a dirty and squalid shack near the waterfront, not far from Bernie's. Questioning the bar staff or croupiers at Bernie's, they find them to be tight-lipped unless GCs are subtly involved, in which case they can discover that Erwin hasn't been in for a week or two, last time he'd been in he'd got in a big argument with "Big" Joachim, another gambler, and that presumably Erwin hadn't come back as he was avoiding him.

The PCs will have to tread carefully if they try and question Joachim about Erwin - on the night in question, Erwin had accused Joachim of cheating in a game of cards and they'd got into a big argument, which was finally resolved after a fight in the alley out the back, where Joachim had knocked Erwin out with a mighty blow to the head and Erwin, covered in trash and refuse, had died from a brain haemorrhage. Joachim will admit to arguing with Erwin in the gambling den but the PCs will have to be very persuasive for him to admit to fighting Erwin outside. Joachim isn't actually aware of Erwin's death, he assumed that he'd have come round sometime in the night and had been avoiding him since.

If the PCs check the alley where Joachim said the fight took place, they will become aware of motion under the piles of refuse and debris littering the alley. Approaching carefully, they will disturb a swarm of rats frenziedly feasting on something. The presence of food

will make the rats much bolder than usual and the PCs will have to determinedly chase the rats away - a flaming torch probably being the most effective method. Maybe one or two particularly large and bold rats will attempt to bite PCs who get to close. Once the rats have been dispersed, the PCs will be greeted with a grisly sight - the rat-chew corpse of Erwin barely recognisable for what it is. Don't allow the PCs any respite - at the slightest sign of a gap, a rat or two will sneak in and attempt to bite one more morsel of food from the corpse, the PCs will have to remain vigilant if they are to keep the remainder of the corpse intact. Cool tests and Insanity Points could well be in order for all PCs witnessing such a horrific scene.

The pouch of eyeballs may be on Erwin's corpse (assuming the rats haven't got to it yet), or it may be stashed in his house, depending on what you think. If the PCs can stomach searching such an obviously manky corpse then perhaps you could reward them with finding the pouch in an inside pocket (and maybe hand out a couple more Insanity Points at the same time). Alternatively, or if the PCs don't manage to find out what happened to Erwin, the pouch could be concealed somewhere in his house. This will involve a break-in-and-enter job on the PCs' behalf, but shouldn't attract much attention in the crime-ridden and desperate area of town that Erwin's house is located in.

What happens regarding Joachim is up to you - the PCs may report him to the City Watch for murder, perhaps he will decide to kill the PCs to shut them up, or maybe all will be swept under the carpet...

So, by one way or another, the PCs have the pouch for Jakob. They might just hand it straight to Jakob without another thought, in which case the adventure comes to a premature end. However, if the PCs behave anything like normal, they will at least want a peek at the "rare and expensive alchemical ingredients" they've just spent a few days tracking down and should be quite shocked at what they find. Now this is where things can really get complicated, rather than having a single outcome, below are outlined various possibilities depending on what the PCs do:

Go to the Authorities

Rather than getting deeper involved and hence possibly implicated, the PCs may decide to pass the information straight on to some form of authority, such as the Watch, the Temple of Morr or even Witch Hunters (if they suspect necromancy). This may lead to a swift conclusion with Jakob being found guilty of necromancy and death by hanging.

Or perhaps Jakob will have smelt a rat or been tipped off, and done a runner, much as he abandoned Altdorf all those years ago. Bounty Hunter PCs may be happy to track him down, leading to fresh adventures across the Empire as they follow his desperate flight.

Or perhaps Jakob will plead innocence, claim not to know the PCs, or that they're trying to frame him. In fact, if the authorities inspect Jakob's laboratory there isn't a single hint of necromancy, instead being a typical alchemist's place of work (evidence of the first shipment of eyes will be long since disposed of). The various Guilds of Alchemy, Physicians and Pharmacists will all support Jakob, describing him as a model member and the PCs may find themselves with some fast-talking to do if they want to avoid jail themselves.

Confront Jakob

The PCs may decide that they'll get a bigger reward if they apprehend Jakob themselves and confront him at his laboratory with the eyes. He may deny all knowledge of them, claiming that they weren't his "alchemical ingredients". Or maybe he'll break down and confess, but explain why he needed the eyes and what he was attempting to achieve. What happens next will probably decide on the morals of the PCs - they may turn him in to the authorities as above or perhaps they'll agree to assist in his research in return for the secrets of any resulting potion of night vision.

Of course, violence is another option. If the PCs act rashly then be sure to let any knowledge of a potion of night vision die with Jakob. Otherwise, Jakob's notes may be sufficient to allow another alchemist to take over his research from where he left off.

Raid Jakob's laboratory

PCs of an appropriate nature may decide to burgle Jakob's laboratory in order to gain further evidence or information. If they are expecting a "typical" necromancer's lair then they will be hugely disappointed. Instead they will find a very plain and functional residence with a well equipped and orderly alchemist's laboratory in the basement. Various texts and treatises on aspects of medicine, anatomy, biology, alchemy, etc will be lined up on shelves - some of which may be sufficient to condemn Jakob in the eyes of particularly conservative Witch Hunters or Solkanites, but there is nothing obviously heretical or evil to be found. Depending on the timing of the break in to other events, observant PCs may find some residue in a flask which contains various gooey substances which might be the remains of boiled up eyeballs.

After confronting Jakob or raiding his house, the PCs may know a thing or two about the secret of night vision. Depending on where their loyalties lie, they may think to the benefit such a potion could bring to the forces of law and order or alternatively to the criminal element - or perhaps they will think solely of how they might best use such a potion themselves, keeping it a secret. Perhaps the PCs cannot accept the use of eyeballs in the potion's manufacture, no matter what the potential benefits or maybe PCs in suitable careers would be interested in pursuing research of their own to refine the technique,

possibly investigating the effects of eyes from other nocturnal creatures in similar potions - the potency of such brews should depend on the thoroughness of the research and GM's discretion.

Either the Watch or the Thieves Guild will express an interest in a potion of night vision, at least until the source of active ingredients is realised - in such cases the Watch would definitely arrest the PCs. Perhaps the most prudent route the PCs could take would be to keep the formula a secret and only supply finished potions, though that means that they would have the task of collecting ingredients themselves and brewing the potions. For sure demand would far exceed supply and a spate of murders in the elven, dwarven or halfling population would attract attention. The PCs might also find themselves targeted and hassled into revealing the method of brewing the potion by customers dissatisfied with the high cost and determined to make their own potions.

Finally, if you really want to confuse your players, try running this scenario alongside "The Eyes Have It" as detailed in the Shrine of Ranald and Elizabeth Siewider...

Conclusion

The multitude of PC choices based on their careers and moral outlooks make definite conclusions hard to draw. The most probable outcome may involve the death of Jakob (at the hands of the PCs or the authorities). The PCs may find themselves in possession of a great scientific discovery which, with a bit of work and a lot of intrigue, could prove financially rewarding in various ways, though it will prove tricky to manufacture substantial quantities of a night vision potion unless additional research reveals a less controversial source of ingredients. Experience rewards should be proportional to the amount of thinking and debating the PCs do - if they take the simplest options and wade in with drawn swords then don't reward them much. If they carefully investigate and research into matters and consider the implications of their actions then reward them more fully, no matter how the situation finally resolves.

If Jakob escapes alive, perhaps he could become a recurrent NPC in the campaign, associating himself with more grotesque and vile deeds as time progresses, sinking into an abyss ending in full-blown necromancy. Perhaps the PCs will end up cursing themselves that they didn't deal with him when they first had chance to, before his power grew. Maybe the PCs will hear news of a distant town, plagued by a series of unnatural deaths, followed by a dream of Jakob, grinning madly, wielding his scalpel. This could be used to goad them on, to get them travelling where you want them, only to find Jakob one step ahead of them again.

Alternative Storyline

For an alternative scenario, rewind to the part where Erwin delivered the first shipment of eyeballs to Jakob.

Erwin, being a nasty piece of work, increased the price of the eyeballs substantially before agreeing to hand them over, he then forced Jakob to explain what he needed them for, threatening not to bring any more eyeballs and to tip off the authorities if Jakob didn't co-operate. Of course, foremost in Jakob's mind was his research so he was willing to agree almost any terms if it meant he could continue his work.

Seeing an opportunity, Erwin then spoke to the Thieves Guild, passing on what knowledge of Jakob's research he had, in exchange for a fee. Continuing the theme of double-crossing, the Thieves Guild arranged an accident for Erwin, possibly at the hands of Joachim in the alley behind Bernie's as above. The Thieves Guild then snatched Jakob and imprisoned him somewhere within their criminal empire with a lab full of alchemical equipment and access to a wide range of "ingredients" for his research.

Depending on how you play Jakob, he could either be a willing prisoner, grateful for the opportunity to carry on his research with such good resources. Or perhaps he is resentful and is trying to sabotage his work to prevent the thieves gaining access to it.

The PCs are approached this time by the Alchemists Guild, who are concerned for the safety of one of their members who's been missing from his house for a couple of weeks. The PCs can then uncover the web of deceit spun by Erwin, eventually leading to the Thieves Guild and possibly a dashing rescue. They'll need some friends in high places to help them pull this off and will almost certainly wind up with some powerful enemies...

Some Pseudo-Science

One possible explanation for night vision could relate to the cellular structure of the eye. Humans eyes contain specialist cells called rods and cones, which are sensitive to light intensity or colour respectively, and these work together to build up the image the brain sees. Creatures with night vision could have a third type of specialist cell (spheres?) which allow them to see in the dark. These could be sensitive only to very low intensity light and also to portions of the infra-red spectrum - they take over reception where rods and cones fail. Quite how consuming a brew of such cells would affect a creature's existing eyesight is hard to imagine, somehow the consumed cells cluster in the eyes and grant additional night vision - put it down to the influence of magic altering biological and physical laws and don't worry about it any more than that!

Potion of Night Vision

A trained person using fresh ingredients and a fully equipped laboratory can produce a Potion of Night Vision by following Jakob's method. This will extend the range of night vision by 10 yards (e.g. a human would just gain 10 yards night vision whereas an elf would have a total

Jakob Kelden

Male Human

Journeyman Gold Wizard (ex-Apprentice)

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
28	25	36	32	50	53	50	39

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	6	3	3	4		8	

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Magic, Chemistry), Channelling, Common Knowledge (the Empire), Evaluate, Gossip, Magical Sense, Perception, Prepare Poisons, Read/Write, Speak Arcane Language (Magick), Speak Language (Reikspiel, Classical)

Talents: Aethyric Attunement, Arcane Lore (Cardinal Chamon), Petty Magic (Arcane), Lesser Magic (Magic Alarm, Silence), Meditation, Savvy, Surgery

Armour: None

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0

Weapons: Dagger

Trappings: Black bag containing medical instruments, Dagger, 20 Crowns, Various text books on Anatomy, Alchemy and Medicine

Insanities: Healthy paranoia would be a good description of Jakob's state of mind. He knows that what he's doing is technically wrong but he is so focussed on his goal that he is prepared to ignore the unwholesome aspects of his work. Following his experiences in Altdorf, he maintains his guard and is cautious and suspicious, not wanting to draw attention to himself or his work.

range of 40 yards). The potion will last for a duration of 1 hour per pair of eyeballs used and will require a preparation time of 15 minutes boiling in a retort per pair of eyeballs. A foul smelling aroma will escape from the flask, depending on just how fresh the ingredients were. The eyeballs must be from creatures which can naturally see in the dark, such as elves. A Cool test may be required when drinking the potion - failure may result in the PC refusing to drink or alternatively the gain of 1 Insanity Point.

For fewer moral dilemmas than present in this scenario, orcs' eyeballs may work, though maybe with

less effectiveness (orcs have only 10 yard night vision compared to 30 yards for an elf) or perhaps orcish biological material is poisonous to humans. The WFRP Bestiary lists various other creatures with natural night vision, which might also make alternative sources of ingredients.

Jakob Kelden

Jakob has no specific religious loyalties, though in his role as a Physician, he pays lip service to Shallya, though she would not approve of his current research!

Jakob's face is a contrast - large bags have formed under his eyes from too little sleep, yet his eyes burn with an inner fire and dart about the place in a lively manner. His dark hair is greying at the temples and his clothes, though generally well made, are grubby and threadbare from a lack of care.

Blue Lines

About six months ago Hilde Kuller met Boris Wertheim and realised he was a potential source of great wealth. She got him addicted to Blue (a Slaaneshi drug, see Hilde's description) and extorted money from him. As Boris was not at all wealthy until he could inherit a share of the Wertheim und Sohnen Company from his father, and ever more desperate for a glimpse into the Eyes of Slaanesh, he formed a plan to use forged Gold Receipts to get several thousand crowns.

Boris ended up killing Theo Flensche, the forger, but he was observed by Abdullah Khalidjaffarali who also stole one of the Receipts. (These events are detailed in The Three Kings and Wertheim und Sohnen.) The Three Kings have since been trying to get their hands on the rest of the Receipts.

When Boris handed over the receipts to Hilde, he expected to be in line for a lifetime's supply of Blue. However, Hilde had other plans and decided to dump Boris and take the money. Hilde went to cash the Receipts at the Goldfeuer Banking Company. At the bank she went to see the ill-fated Frederick Von Klincker. He realised that the Receipts were forgeries, but taken by Hilde's great beauty and sexual attraction, decided to string her along and take what he could get from her, while concocting stories about how much time it takes to clear the Gold Receipts and how keeping on his good side would help speed up the process. He expected to exploit her for a couple of months and then have her thrown in jail for fraud. Hilde had an idea of Frederick's plan but knew she could use the influence of Blue to get the Receipts cleared, even if it would take a few weeks.

The Baron knew that he must cover his tracks to account for the time he planned to spend exploiting Hilde.

To this end he decided that he would hire some 'investigators' to make it seem like he was making an effort to trace the origin of the Receipts. He was quite happy to pay them for several weeks work of doing nothing. However, the last Blue trip he took changed his mind. Under Slaanesh's malign influence he realised that the PCs must die. Slaanesh showed him a house in Sudentor that he should send them to. (Von Klincker thinks the PCs must die, Slaanesh will be happy for them to defeat the Demon that they are sent to.) The Baron also sent a letter to that address warning them of the party's imminent arrival (See Loose Ends). NB If the GM does not wish his players to have to undergo this encounter, which is dangerous and involves protagonists the GM might decide are not suitable for their view of Bergsburg, then the The Wounds of Knowledge can be played straight after Get a Job with few minor changes.

After the encounter described in The Wounds of Knowledge, Hilde went back to the Von Klincker house to work her ugly charms. This is where it all went wrong for her, and him. When the power of Blue was getting too strong for the Baron, Hilde looked for the Faxtoryll to slow down its influence. She could not find it. The Baron entered a state of severe paranoia and began to attack her, Hilde decided to make a swift exit and leave the Baron to his terrible fate. The Baron eventually could take no more of the sheer terror induced by the Blue and his heart gave in.

Hilde realises she has been observed by agents unknown since she came by the Gold Receipts, although she doesn't realise the source of this attention is The Three Kings. When the party attacks her home in Gruber Weg, she decides that they are the agents behind this and they know a lot more about the situation than they actually do. She thinks that if she can turn one of the members of this party towards Slaanesh then the realisation of her plans will be close.

This adventure is not necessarily designed to be played through seamlessly. The party may have lots of time between some of the episodes, Hilde may lie low for a while and it may be a matter of months before they chance upon her again. In fact it is not unlikely that the adventure may fizzle out with no climactic resolution. The party should be free to go their own way during these quieter periods and it should not be a problem to have loose ends dangling around. No significance should be placed on the events of A Couple of Months Ago and the party need not be encouraged to follow this up, although they may wish to of their own accord.

If the party fail to stop Hilde Kuller, then it is quite probable that she will turn up again, this time she will have the added resources of the money from the Gold Receipts she has finally got hold of. She may seek to gain influence with someone of great power in Bergsburg and she may not forget that the party once tried to thwart her.

There is no reason at all to play A Couple of Months

Ago or The Bogeyman. The mysteries therein are not supposed to be solved at that time. If the GM likes frustrating his players then they are useful for that. The events can be used just as rumours to add atmosphere, or they need not be mentioned at all. The events of The Bogeyman happen at roughly the same time as Get a Job.

A Couple Of Months Ago

A couple of months ago a body was fished out of the river by local stevedores working on the Ostkai near St Skulda's Bridge. A grappling hook was still stuck in its skull. The decomposed flesh made it seem like the body had been in the water for three or four days. A crowd gathered and one or two of them thought they might recognise the victim. He could be Theo Flesche, a small time crook who hangs out in Sudentor. The City Guard was called and the body carted off to the Temple of Morr.

Investigation at this time would not have been very fruitful. If the right tongues were loosened it might be discovered that Theo was a good for nothing who drank what little money he could earn as an occasional hired muscle. He was also an opportunist burglar and mugger and had spent a year in Bergsburg prison. It might also be discovered that Theo fancied himself as a forger, but at this he was barely competent and only those ignorant of the ways of Bergsburg's underworld, or those with little money, would hire him.

Anyone finding Theo's dwellings would discover it to be already cleaned out and a family of ignorant new arrivals from a nearby village to be living there.

Theo Flensche did mention to someone that he had a lucrative job for "some rich idiot, paying a bucket full for a load of signatures."

Here, the trail probably went cold.

The Bogeyman

Don't go out behind your mother's back

Along will come the bogeyman and put you in his sack

He'll take you home for dinner, or just eat you as a snack

So don't go out behind your mother's back

The Bogeyman has come to Sudentor. Two young sisters disappeared a couple of days ago. Their parents and friends spent the night and the next day searching the area, but could find no sign of them.

The next evening a three-year-old boy went missing.

On the third night some boys, members of the

Sparrows, saw a cloaked figure struggling with a ten-year-old boy, trying to force him into a large sack. They shouted and the figure began to run. The Sparrows chased him but eventually lost sight of him.

If the PCs know Katrin Spiegel then she will tell them how concerned she is about this and ask the party to try and find the culprit. Otherwise, the party will just hear rumours about the Bogeyman and people's wildly exaggerated opinion about him.

The Sparrows, seeing how the Bogeyman ran from them, are disappointed that he isn't the powerful figure of myth and are determined to find him and bring him to justice. They are on the lookout for him, and a lone outsider acting suspiciously in Sudentor could attract their attention. They will call to anyone nearby for help, and soon a large group will form that could turn into a lynch mob.

Get A Job

The PCs, more through luck than anyone's judgement (unless the GM has a good reason why his players were especially chosen), are approached by a minor official of the Goldfeuer Banking Company and asked to attend a meeting with Baron Frederick von Klincker at the Bank. It will be suggested to them that only one or two of them need attend and that they should dress smartly, or at least as smartly as they can manage.

The Baron is a big portly man who seems to have a faraway look in his eyes. Although it is stressed that their mission is very important to the banking company, he seems to be preoccupied with other matters and the PCs may get a sense of that he is simply going through the motions. The Baron is long-winded and his sentences often wander off into an officious banking tone that sounds like he is reciting a formal letter. If they ask detailed questions about their new job, he will answer them swiftly and without too much thought. Von Klincker clearly feels that dealing with these low-lives is beneath him and the moment when they must leave his office cannot come too soon.

The Baron explains to them that some forgeries of apparently valuable documents have been brought to the bank's attention and that it will be their job to gather as much information on them and, if possible, identify the forger involved, and whether any more such documents exist. To his regret, the Baron cannot supply them with examples of the documents, nor can he give information as to their content.

Payment is generous (up to GM) and not dependent upon success. Because of the sensitive nature of the business, the Baron will allow the players to name a suitable inn where payment can be made in a week's time. It is quite beyond bank policy for any advance payment to be made.

This deal may seem too good to be true, to the players. That's up to them. Maybe its time they had a little good fortune for a change. There is so little to go on, that the players may decide to do nothing about this during the week and then turn up for their payment. If they do decide to investigate, they will find out nothing of relevance, though they may hear some news of The Bogeyman.

Get A More Dangerous Job

The PCs will probably turn up at the appointed inn wondering what the catch is. Von Klincker will arrive and listen to their report, feigning interest when he remembers to. He will then pay them the agreed amount.

He will then explain to them that the bank has received some information that leads them to suspect the location of the forger's workshop. If the PCs are willing, for a similar fee, they should go to the workshop and try and procure evidence that the bank's suspicions are correct. The Baron apologises that this may unfortunately involve no little danger on their part.

During the time they are talking together, if this time is at all lengthy, the PCs who met Von Klincker before may well notice a marked change in his demeanour. Other PCs may also notice something strange about the way he acts. He seems to go through phases of being utterly relaxed and almost strung out, then a creeping anxiety will build within him and as this reaches its zenith he appears on the verge of violence. Then suddenly this will subside and he will be relaxed once more. The Baron does not notice this of himself, and as far as he is concerned he is behaving quite normally.

The Baron will agree to meet the PCs at the same time, same place, in two days time. And then he wishes them the best of Bergsburg luck.

Dropping In

Hermann Straub, a cultist of Nurgle, has been charged by his superiors to look after a demon of Nurgle that has been summoned to the cellar of a house in Sudentor. He is roaming the streets at night, looking for children to feed to it. The demon has no agenda of its own except to eat human flesh. Hermann had a close shave whilst looking for the demon's dinner a few nights ago (see The Bogeyman). He recently received an anonymous letter explaining a number of people would be paying a visit to the house and that he should be ready for them. He still has the letter and sees it as a sign of Nurgle's providence.

The address leads to a normal looking house in one of the least salubrious parts of town. The area is smelly, of course, but there is a distinctly unpleasant, if vague, miasma coming from the house itself. Hermann has ensured that the house is quite dark. All the shutters are shut and heavily bolted and the door is locked. A trap door has been constructed in the floor about six feet from the front door. It requires the weight of two or more

average sized men to make it drop. There is a lever near the far wall which will make it drop also, or can be used to reset it. Anyone falling through the trap door will land in the cellar after a 2 yd fall. In this light, the trap is hard to spot, even if someone is actively searching for it.

In the cellar is Klur'aoght, a demon of Nurgle. It is wallowing in its own filth and dreaming of the next time it will taste human flesh. It is surrounded by the excreted remains of its young victims. The demon eats everything it gets, only the bones, teeth, shoe buckles, etc are not digested. While in the cellar, the demon is not subject to instability.

There is some evidence in the rest of the house to point to what has been happening. There are blood stains on the trap door and the floor near the front door. There is a knife in the kitchen with traces of blood on it. There are some sacks in the kitchen with blood and vomit inside. There is a rag in one of the bags which came from one of the victim's dresses. There is nothing in the house to link it to Hermann Straub. Hermann will be in the house when the PCs call, upstairs. He will quickly leave, out the window if necessary, if he feels things are not turning out as he would like. If he is captured, Hermann will not reveal anything about his cult or his mission.

NB. The reasons behind the demon's summoning and other mysteries can be found in the forthcoming scenario, 'The Hungry Earth'.

Wounds Of Knowledge

Although Frederick von Klincker has no expectation of seeing the PCs again, he realises that his innocence in the matter of their slaughter is supported by his appearance at the pre-arranged meeting. Unfortunately, he has forgotten, or rather, saw no need to bring, their payment. When he does see the party he will do his best to hide his surprise and he will eventually get around to asking if they have found any of the evidence he was seeking. If the PCs ask for payment he will make some technical banking excuse and ask them to come to his house at nine the next day.

If the PCs question him about the information that led them to the house in Sudentor he will explain it away as a tip off, "out of the blue." If the party are not convinced the Baron will promise to look into it in the morning. He will explain that he has to meet another client soon, but he will pay the barman for two rounds of drinks of the player's choice and insist they enjoy themselves. The players may notice that the baron is looking particularly tense at this time. They may also notice that the tension does not seem to be connected with the PCs.

The Baron will go to another corner of the inn where he greets a woman. The PCs do not have a particularly good view of her, she has her back to them, and no reason to wish to inspect her more closely. She has long dark hair and her leather attire seems somewhat exotic, perhaps.

A man, bedraggled, in once fine robes, enters near to the PCs, sees the Baron and his 'client' and shouts across the floor. "Hilde, Hilde!" He is almost euphoric. He rushes towards them. He is smiling, then his countenance changes. He eyes the Baron suspiciously and hate flows to his eyes. "Hilde", he cries, now with venom. He is probably only thirty, but looks older around the eyes, a hard life, perhaps, hardship that does not tally with his finery. The Baron looks embarrassed and shrinks into his chair and puts a hand to his forehead. The woman rises.

Knowing locals shrug and get back to their beer and their stories. This age old tale holds no interest for them, they think. Caught with his trousers down, as it were, happens to the best of us.

If the PCs want to get involved, and why should they, this is apparently a minor domestic dispute, some huge bloke crosses their path with a large tray of drinks. If the PCs cause him to spill it he'll want speedy redress and some of his mates are pretty huge, too. An altercation with him will mean the rest of the scene will be harder to observe.

Suddenly, the mood changes. If this is a domestic dispute, it's a strange one. "Hild...", the young man begins to cry again and his hand goes to his scabbard. But he is stopped suddenly. The woman raises her hand, a few inches from his face. Her hand makes a kind of fist, as if she is holding something, a dagger perhaps, but her hand is empty. Her arms are strapped with many bands of orange leather, something strange is written on them. The man bows his head and she grabs the hair on the back of his head, pulling his head back. He has shut his eyes. As she turns her face to whisper in his ear, you catch sight of her face, for a moment.

If you could dwell on that moment, you could savour that exquisite second. You could rethink the contours of her cheekbone, the delicacy of that fine chin. Can you think of her eyes, beneath that heavy make-up, can you remember the smooth curve of her nose, and the flick of dark lashes?

Think back to the split second you saw her face, the multi-coloured flash of bright eyes, and the shine of her skin in that dark room. You can concentrate in silence, it's on the edge of your perceptions, but you can't remember, can you; such beauty is beyond your imagination. But you do remember she was stunning, you were stunned. And you know you want to see her again.

The woman bends to whisper in his ear and one of her orange bound hands squeezes his upper arm, purposefully. Then he begins to sob and collapses to the floor as she lets go of his hair. Quickly, she pulls her dark cloak around her, grabs the baron's arm and they make for the exit. He has a bemused expression and shrugs at you. The entire incident was beyond him. The PCs could follow, but that fat bloke is still in the way, struggling with that tray.

The younger man is left, wrecked on the floor. The PCs could help him up and give him a drink. He mumbles to himself and they don't catch much of it. "Draw forth my blood. Hilde, Colour (Kuller?) Blue, Dreams. Poison. Sweet pain. Look into his eyes. The wounds of knowledge." What was he twittering on about? "The Wounds of Knowledge?" He's probably a bit of a nutter, but his ex was pretty tasty. Soon, he remembers himself, where he is. He pulls himself together and goes out into the night.

Once he has collected himself, the man suddenly seems less weak. He will give his name only as Boris. He will be polite and thank the party for any help they may have given him. But he is suddenly not vulnerable and an aristocratic air has returned to him. The party is an embarrassment to him now and he will seek to dump them at the earliest opportunity.

Asking around nobody can be found who has seen the woman or older man before. The younger man has been seen around a few times over the last couple of months. It might be said that he always seemed like he was looking for someone or something.

Finding The Body

The party should turn up to their arranged meeting with the Baron at 9am the next day. The Baron has told none of his staff to expect them. Most likely, if they are convincing, they will be shown to the trademan's entrance and told to wait in the kitchen. If the party are smartly dressed then they will be asked politely to wait in the reception. Either way they will be fed and watered. In the reception they will be left alone for a time. In the kitchen, they will have to listen to the incessant natter of the two halfling cooks, Trude Bluebell and Daisy Hog.

A party still waiting for an audience in the Baron's reception, or kitchen, at 10am will hear a scream as the maid (Guillette Rutter) discovers the baron's body in his bed. Amid the confusion it will be possible for the players to get into the room and have a look round. The Watch, however, know which side their bread is buttered and will be in attendance very soon. Although the first of the Watch to turn up will be uninspired footsloggers, the PCs may require another convincing story.

The room is of course opulent, but it has been wrecked. Nearly everything that can be moved has been taken to a corner of the room away from the doors and windows. Two tables have been turned on their side and they have been rested against chairs as if to form a wall. Drawers, a coalscuttle, blankets, drapes, pillows, paintings have all been piled onto the wall to make some bizarre nest, or more likely, fortress. Behind the wall lies the body of Baron Frederick Von Klincker. It is naked, slightly cyanosed, lying in its own faeces. His face is contorted into a look of utter terror. On his upper right arm are five deep cuts in various stages of healing. One of them is very fresh. If closely inspected, the tissue around

these wounds can be seen to be stained blue.

If the adventurers are lucky they might spot on the carpet next to the bed a small vial of clear liquid. It is full and smells vaguely flowery. If an expert herbalist or pharmacist or physician inspects this they should realise it contains Essence of Faxtoryll (see SoB p36). Essence of Faxtoryll is an expensive coagulant. It is used, not commonly, to help stop blood loss from deep wounds. That vial would cost about 40GC.

Any group of adventurers seen hanging around the Von Klincker house that morning will be prime suspects in the murder. They will be arrested by the watch and questioned thoroughly by Faustus Asprill himself. Even if he doesn't consider them guilty he'll be happy to throw them into jail for a few days, just in case he needs to speak to them again. If the party are already known to Faustus, and on good terms, he will probably give them the benefit of the doubt. Baron Von Klincker is a very important member of Bergsburg society and the watch will pull out all the stops in order to bring the perpetrator to justice.

Lots of information can be found out from the various staff of the Von Klinckers, especially if they are questioned subtly away from the Watch. He had been seen a couple of times with a strange looking woman. His wife is taking the air at the countryside estate of her brother near Hergig. She's been gone for over six months and they are both happier for it. The Baron started acting strangely a few weeks ago, he stopped eating much and seeing his old friends. One of the maids heard him coming in last night. It was very late and she thinks there was someone with him. He took a private cab last night, when he left the house at dusk.

No one will have heard of the PCs wages or particularly believe that they are owed money. There are accounts of his dealings with them at the bank though this will take many weeks to unearth. Eventually, out of the blue, as it were, the PCs may get a summons to the Goldfeuer Bank and be presented with their wages. But if I was them, I wouldn't hold my breath.

Looking For Boris

The party may come up with a clever way of finding Boris. If they have good contacts that they've worked hard on one of these might have heard what happened at the tavern and point the party in the right direction. They might have to spend money on bribes for the same information.

The party might wish to return to the same tavern at the same time. This will work. Boris is desperate to find Hilde and that's the best plan he can think of as well.

Boris will be happy to talk about Hilde once he has had a few drinks. He will not however speak about his addiction directly and he will talk in metaphors of desire

and love etc. He has bored a few barkeepers to tears in the last couple of months with his forlorn whining and so can slip into a sick-making monologue of lost love with ease which will get worse the more he drinks.

If it is pointed out how strange their meeting was the night before or how unnatural their relationship might be, Boris will easily deny this. He talks of the relationship in terms of love and not his physical addiction and will be completely believable. He is in fact deluded and believes this himself.

When told about Baron Von Klincker's death, (he genuinely didn't know of the death and didn't recognise him last night, even though they have met briefly several times), he will simply shrug and say something like "Love hurts", or "The first cut is always the deepest", and give a wry, if not tortured, smile.

Boris will be happy to get drunk and bore the party to death for the rest of the night. The party will also be able to get information on who he is, where he works etc. Of course he can't help them find Hilde. If they get confrontational or press him too hard for information he will get into a sulk and disappear into the night.

Boris is paranoid his embezzlement may be discovered. If anyone mentions anything like this or anything that sounds like it might be referring to it he may fall into a fit of rage and attack one of the PCs or do something equally daft. An accusation of this sort is just as likely to be ignored, at the GM's discretion.

During the evening, members of the party might get an inkling that they are being watched. But their observer is a master and they will not see him and they won't be able to follow him. For much of the adventure, the Three Kings will have someone keeping an eye on the party. It could be one of a number of suitable subjects. It may be Kerr Rudbeck. If one of these shadows are discovered and caught they will not let on about the Three Kings. They will more than likely just say they were casing them for a mugging or something similarly mundane.

A Visit With Royalty

The next morning a note arrives for the party requesting their presence at a business lunch with His Excellency Abdullah Khalidjaffarali, Sultan of Mirabel at the royal suite of the Rolling Stones Tavern.

At The Rolling Stones, when it is made known that the party are there to see the Sultan, they will be respectfully asked to leave their weapons at the door and shown to a large banquetting suite upstairs. Abdullah will appear shortly together with a non-descript aide, Gerd Bueller.

The table is laid out as if for an arabyan feast, all the food and drink is excellent and Abdullah invites them to tuck in and talks to them after a while as they eat. He is extremely polite but his table manners are atrocious and the party should be lead to believe this is the norm for

Arabyans. He starts off with small talk such as anecdotes about himself and the Sheik Feyd the butcher of Bagdahli and other such exotic characters. His stories are amusing and although obviously exaggerated they should be fundamentally believable.

"And now down to business, my friends," he will say. "A series of throws of the dice of fate has brought me to this green land. And I have now achieved respect among the community of Bergsburg, approaching the respect and love I was afforded in my own beloved land of Mirabel. I cannot love the weak sun's watery haze disappearing behind mist-shrouded forests like I love the brilliant rainbow hued sunset over the mountains of Ararararar. I cannot love the sanctified waters of the Drak like I love the majestic flow of the Euphragris. But, I love the empire and I love Bergsburg for the spirit and fairness of its business. The word of a Bergsburger is his honour's bond and so its people thrive. The people of this town may have many barbarous and primitive practices but in business it is the pinnacle of civilisation. Which is why," Abdullah now looks into the eyes of each party member one by one showing them deep sincerity, "I know you will help me."

Whatever response the players now give (within reason) Abdullah will thank them heartily for their time, make an exaggerated and ostentatious bow before them and leave them with Gerd Bueller. Gerd Bueller is very direct and business-like, if a bit officious. He gives the impression of perhaps being the Sultan's lawyer or financial adviser. "Understand," he will tell them, "the Sultan is a very powerful man and he has great influence in this town. If you carry out what we will agree, then his benevolence will shine on you."

"The Sultan has had some valuable items stolen from him. Unfortunately these items were in the care of a mutual acquaintance, a certain Herr Boris Wertheim. This theft has upset Herr Wertheim a great deal and The Sultan, kindly, does not wish to see him troubled over this matter in future. Understand?" This last bit is clearly a threat but has been put so politely that Gerd pauses here to make sure the full implication of this sinks in.

"I understand you are interested in bringing to justice the perpetrator of a rather nasty incident that occurred yesterday morning. As a gesture of good will, the Sultan has decided to make known to you the whereabouts of said perpetrator in return for a smaller favour. Are we agreed?"

Gerd has reasoned that the PCs will eventually agree to this arrangement before the favour is revealed. It may take time, but Gerd is adamant that they must agree before he reveals the location or even identity of Hilde Kuller. He cannot be intimidated, and the room is alarmed so any violence will bring the bouncers and others running to the room. If this turns into an impasse then the adventure could end here or the Three Kings, the party and the GM will have to think out a different way of proceeding.

Once agreement has been reached, Gerd will reveal the condition. "It is now our understanding that the stolen items belong to The Sultan and they comprise of a number of Gold Receipts guaranteed by the Wertheim und Sohnen Metallurgy Company. Any Gold Receipts you find must be returned to me. Any knowledge you may acquire as to the whereabouts of said Gold Receipts must be conveyed to me, by way of message left in the reception of this establishment, post haste. More importantly, and as a courtesy to yourselves, the Sultan has generously instructed me to inform you that the perpetrator carries about her person, items of an extremely, I repeat extremely, dangerous nature. The authorities will be unsympathetic to the discovery of said items, and they are much too dangerous to simply be left on her body. Therefore he has offered, no insisted, that you must return these items to me so that I may dispose of them safely."

Of course, the party has already agreed to these conditions and Gerd reminds them of this fact and thanks them for being so understanding and reminds them that the discretion of both parties is imperative. Lastly he will name the perpetrator as Hilde Kuller and reveal that she is currently living at 11 Gruber Weg in Helmsberg.

11 Gruber Weg

Hilde lives on the top floor of this small three storey building in the heart of Helmsberg. The lower two floors are taken up by a band of footpads and cutpurses. Hilde has already killed their leader and they live in fear of her. She took over the top of their building and suffers their presence as an effective first line of defence. Any noise that the party makes getting rid of the cutpurses will warn Hilde of their arrival and she will have time to plan an effective defence or escape. Hilde will take notice of the party and will carefully choose a member to seduce first later.

The cutpurses are Ranald, Gulka, Wolf and his girlfriend Rita. Rita despises Hilde instead of just fearing her like the men, and if she is captured she will be happy to tell everything she knows about Hilde.

Ranald and Gulka are probably downstairs playing cards when the party arrive, Wolf and Rita may be upstairs. If the party stake out the dwelling then they will see the various members leaving and arriving and also the odd visitor. Hilde has decided to lie low for a while and so the chances of seeing her leaving or arriving will be slight. Of course it is not easy for outsiders to stake out somewhere in the poorest and most dangerous area of town, they are bound to attract unwanted attention.

Ground Floor

The main door to the building is necessarily very strong and thick, made of reinforced hard wood. The lower floor of the building is basically a single room which serves as a living and sleeping space. About a

quarter of the floorspace is walled off to form some kind of kitchen area, where some turnips are being stewed, with a doorway but no door between the two. There is a ladder that leads up to the middle floor.

Middle Floor

The next level is a single room and is Wolf and Rita's living/sleeping quarters. The floor is half the size of the house, the other half is just a gap that overlooks the ground floor. There is another removable ladder here that leads to a trap door in the ceiling. One of the windows in this room overlooks the porch roof of the next house. It would not be a difficult matter to jump out of the window onto the porch and then to jump from there to the ground and make an escape. All this could be done out of sight of the front of the house.

One of the planks of wood that Wolf and Rita use as their bed is in fact two pieces of wood that fit together perfectly. Sandwiched between the two is a credit receipt from the Wertheim und Sohnen Metallurgy Company for the sum of 100 Crowns in Gold. Wolf managed to steal it from Hilde a while ago and he suspects that it might be valuable. He is aware of the peepholes in the ceiling and he is too scared of Hilde to get it out while she is still in town, but when she is gone he thinks his fence might give him a few gold crowns for it.

Top Floor

This is the room Hilde is using as her base at the moment. It is clean, Spartan and functional. She will not leave anything incriminating lying about and what she generally needs she can carry with her. Several peep holes have been bored in the floor. Two of them manage to give a decent view of part of the ground floor, including the front door. There is also a hole in the part of the floor that overhangs the outside of the front door. A small window in the sloping ceiling leads out onto the roof and it can be heavily bolted from the inside.

The trap door leading to the floor below can be trapped with a crossbow mechanism. The cross bow can be rigged to fire when the trap door opens to about four inches. The crossbow is aimed from the side straight for the bottom of the gap.

Anyone opening the trap door and having a peak will get the bolt right through their ears. If the door is pushed up by the edge with a hand then the bolt may hit the wrist. The bolt is poisoned with manbane. Because of the point blank range of the crossbow and the fact that the tip of the bolt has been hollowed out, a hit will introduce two doses of manbane into the victim.

The cross bow will hit with a BS of between 20 and 80 depending on the way the player opens the door. Any double (hit or miss) means the trap misfires. It causes a S4 wound in the appropriate location in addition to the poison damage.

In a full-on confrontation the cutpurses will fight with some organisation and discipline but will be quick to realise when they are beaten and will flee for their lives, finding refuge among the dangerous and narrow alleyways of Helmsberg.

Hilde is most likely to observe the fight through the various peepholes she has created in her loft. When the cutpurses start to lose she will pull the ladder up, set the trap on the trap door and make her way onto the roof where she knows several efficient escape routes. If she notices anyone following her she will hide and wait for him, then attempt to sneak up behind him and slit his throat.

Although she has a number of safe places to find refuge, Hilde will probably hang around and spy on the party to find out where they live etc. Then she will attempt her seduction, when the hunters become the hunted.

If the party does well and manage to stop Hilde escaping, then they deserve this success, although it should not be easy to achieve.

Seduction

Hilde will next try to seduce any likely member of the party (possibly all of them) This will be attempted when the PC is alone, of course, but should also be attempted when the player is alone, if possible. This would make things a lot easier. The GM should try his best to make this a success. Hilde will use all her wiles and charm with promises of wealth, knowledge power, a quick shag, whatever pushes the players or PCs buttons. Hilde is a master of this and thinks that if she can get a player addicted to Blue then she will have more or less won.

The GM may wish to role-play the whole seduction issue, or he may wish to use the dice. The PC may have to make a series of WP and/or Int tests to resist the wonderful temptations of Hilde Kuller.

Once the player has taken Blue, then he must pass a series of WP tests to avoid an overwhelming desire to take more, as described later under Blue.

Hilde will give an address in Fulstrasse, Osttor, which the PC will go at pre-arranged times, when he needs Blue. Once a PC is addicted to Blue she will instruct him to murder one of his fellows. If the PC has an antipathy towards the victim then he will carry out her instructions willingly. If GM decides this is very much against the PCs nature then a WP test will have to be made. If the PC fails then he must carry out her instructions. If he succeeds then it is up to him what action he takes. This will probably result in a trap being laid for Hilde and a conclusion to the adventure.

Once one PC has been murdered, Hilde will allow the PC another night of ecstatic debauchery and then insist another PC is killed in order for him to get more.

Eventually the PC will be such a pawn of Hilde, in her attempt to get the money for the Gold Receipts, that he will be better off rolling up a new character.

Crossroads

At this point, the scenario can take a number of different directions.

When Hilde approaches one of the party with a view to seducing him, she might make a mess of things and end up dead. The victor will end up with a supply of Blue, the means of finding out the truth of the situation from Boris, if they should stoop that low.

Hilde may fail to seduce any of the party. In which case the party will not see her for a while. This would not be a very satisfactory way to end things. It also leaves the question of the Gold Receipts. The party's best bet from here would be to pay a visit to Gerd Bueller and get some more information. They might have the inspirational idea of trying to find out who now holds Von Klincker's old position.

If Hilde does manage to seduce a member of the party, then it will get very messy. If the party cannot find a way of suppressing his addiction, they should now slay him, or end up slain. They might find a way of getting information from him and perhaps set a trap for Hilde in Fulstrasse.

Another Meeting With Gerd Bueller

A meeting can be arranged with Gerd by leaving an appropriate message for him at the Rolling Stones. Of course, if the party can get access to 'the big game' then they will be able to talk to him there. Although the conversation will be done in private, he will certainly not discuss this across a card table.

When Gerd learns of their failure he will be sympathetic, if a trifle condescending. He will offer more information 'that has just come to light', but in return he insists the party will owe him a personal favour. If they agree, he will tell them that Hilde Kuller has been seen with Manius Grundends, also of the Goldfeuer Banking Company. "I'm sure you don't need any more information than that," he will tell them. "Remember, now you owe me a favour." The last sentence somehow sounds ominous. A small debt to a nondescript lawyer is not the impression he manages to give.

Following Manius Grundends

If the party gets information that Hilde may be at Fulstrasse without having to follow Manius, then they can arrive there when both are present.

The party will have to do the laborious footslogging concerned with finding out who Manius is, finding out what he looks like, following him around etc.

When the GM is ready, they will follow Manius to a lodging house in Osttor, once Hilde has checked that the coast is clear, i.e. Manius is not being followed. If the party does it badly, Hilde might just back stab (with blue blade venom, of course) one of the party there and then, and lie low for a while.

Hilde has chosen Manius as her next victim because he has just been promoted to Von Klincker's old position. She believes he may know where the Gold Receipts are, or he will be able to find them. They are in fact at the bottom of his desk, although he doesn't know it yet.

The seedy lodging house has a communal front door that leads to a steep narrow staircase. On each landing are two doors that lead to simple bed/sitting rooms. Manius has gone to the one on the right at the very top (3rd floor). If he is interrupted a while after Hilde arrives, he is probably in the middle of his first Blue session. Of course interrupting the proceedings could have devastating consequences for him.

Hilde is certainly, this time, not ready for any interruption. There is a skylight in the ceiling of the room and she may try to flee through this (if the party didn't learn from her previous exit). If necessary, she will, like any good Slaanesh cultist, fight on to the very end.

If the party manage to let Hilde escape again, they probably don't deserve to finish the adventure with any success at all.

If the party manage to kill Hilde then just about now Manius will be going through a huge overdose; his state of mind will not have been helped by the melee that just took place around his bed. The party will need to take action with the Faxtoryll immediately and hope for some good luck or they will be left with a madman on their hands as well as a body and a load of Blue. And still no sign of the Gold Receipts.

Loose Ends

The Gold Receipts

The Gold Receipts are currently lying at the bottom of a desk drawer in Von Klincker's old office, Manius Grundends' new one, at the Goldfeuer Banking Company. With the death of the Baron, nobody now knows where they are. Soon, however, Manius (if he is still sane/alive) may discover them and be only too willing to hand them over to Hilde. Astute PCs may guess at their location and seek to steal them. How successful they will be at eventually getting reimbursement for the receipts will be up to the GM and how the party go about cashing them in.

The Three Kings

The Three Kings will be expecting good information as to the whereabouts of the Gold Receipts. They also think that 'that blue stuff' might come in useful sometime.

As they have helped out the party, they will be expecting favours from them shortly. If the party tries to double cross the Three Kings, then they will make it their business to bring the PCs to their knees in a colourful and ingenious way.

Boris Wertheim

If the party can get hold of some Blue and find Boris again (this shouldn't be too difficult, they can probably find him in the original tavern), then they can get the full story of everything he has done. Of course, the party is not expert at administering blue and so Boris could well end up a gibbering paranoid wreck at the end of it, at best. This will not please the Three Kings and they might require a high price to pay them off, all the Gold Receipts, and more. Boris has about forty 'Blue Lines' all over his upper arms. Attempting to administer the blue to Boris or anyone else, may well earn the PCs an insanity point, if it all goes wrong.

The Letter from von Klincker

Dear sir,

it has been brought to my attention that a certain group of young men will pay a visitation upon your dwelling in the near future. Please ensure that you are ready to receive them in the manner I might expect of someone in your position. Yours sincerely,

A Friend

Hilde Kuller

"Let me take you where you never dreamed existed. Let me share with you some of the greatest secrets. Let me give you forbidden knowledge. Are you man enough to come?"

Hilde Kuller, is remarkable for her great beauty and sexual appeal. She dresses in exotic leathers which only enhance this. The many coloured leather straps which she wears all over her body have strange symbols written on them. Only one greatly versed in the ways of Slaanesh will realise that these are prayers to the Keeper of Secrets. Under her leathers, she wears a highly ornate piece of jewellery which, at first glance, appears to be of a butterfly. It is in fact a symbol of Slaanesh, dominated by a teardrop shaped dark blue gem, which symbolises the drug Blue. It was fashioned specially for her by Luther Nitche.

Hilde's main tool in her ambitions for money and power is the drug Blue. She is an expert at seduction and suggestion and also at the administration of Blue. She is without mercy and enjoys nothing more than the power trip she gets when controlling a victim of this dangerous hallucinogen.

Hilde Kuller							
Female Human							
Cat Burglar (ex-Rogue, Entertainer)							
Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
55	54	48	43	57	49	55	68
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	17	4	4	6			
<p>Skills: Academic Knowledge (Poisons), Charm, Common Knowledge (the Empire), Concealment, Gossip, Perception, Ride, Secret Language (Thieves' Tongue), Secret Signs (Thief), Silent Move, Shadowing, Sleight of Hand, Speak Language (Reikspiel), Trade ((Exotic)Dancer)</p> <p>Talents: Alley Cat, Ambidextrous, Disguise, Etiquette, Fleet Footed, Suave, Strike to Injure, SWG (Throwing)</p> <p>Armour: Leather</p> <p>Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 1</p> <p>Weapons: Dagger</p> <p>Trappings: 3-8 Phials of Blue, 1-2 Phials of Faxtoryll, 2-4 Phials of Manbane, 4 Long, Sharp Daggers, Exotic Leathers, Flask of 'Dark Wine', Praxis Jewels.</p>							

Hilde's main two motivations are the spreading of the will of Slaanesh through Blue, and money. It is up to the GM which is her priority and which she uses as a tool to further the other. Either way, she has become a bit obsessed with retrieving 'her' Receipts. Instead of taking a step back and working on a different plan, she has decided she has come too far down this path to be thwarted now.

It is also up to the GM whether she has powerful contacts and followers of Slaanesh in Bergsburg or elsewhere or she works for herself. It is up to the GM what nefarious forces Hilde was influenced by. She may have been after the money purely for herself or she may have been working for more powerful forces. Where does she get her supply of Blue? The ramifications of this may come back to haunt the party. Or, she may have been working independently and paid for the Blue herself and the party will have to suffer no consequences.

Blue (The Eyes of Slaanesh)

The Eyes of Slaanesh, known commonly as 'Blue', is a deep and almost shiny thick blue liquid. It is one of the most powerful and deadly narcotics known. It is generally introduced to the body via a bleeding wound. If not carefully controlled and introduced gradually it is simply a deadly poison. It is used as a blade venom by some warrior followers of Slaanesh. However, if introduced gradually it becomes a profound and deeply mind-bending hallucinogen the effects of which have been described as staring straight into the eyes of Slaanesh himself. It is to this end that it is often applied together with essence of Faxtoryll, which can be used on the wound to slow down the rate at which the narcotic enters the blood stream.

Because of the helplessness of the user during the drugged state, it is not possible to take the drug alone. An accomplice is always needed. Even for a very experienced supplier of Blue, the introduction of the drug is extremely difficult and it is usually only a matter of time before a user will descend into an abyss of pure terror and paranoia from which he could not hope to return with his mind intact.

Once Blue has been taken, the victim will undergo a series of hideous and beautiful hallucinations that last for about 6 hours, although time is meaningless during this period. It could be said that the effects of Blue are only a reflection of the subconscious of the user. On the other hand, it is possible that certain visions are affected directly by the will of Slaanesh. These visions may present knowledge to the user that appears helpful and significant to his current needs. In reality though, they are warped by Slaanesh and their apparent benevolence is in fact a delusion that coerces the user to do Slaanesh's bidding. A further 3-4 hours will be required to recover from a session.

There is a basic 50% chance of an overdose that will lead to 2D6 insanity points. This can be modified by 20% if Faxtoryll is being used and up to another 25% for the skill of the accomplice. Note the overdose does not depend on the amount of Blue being used; this affects the length of a trip. The overdose depends on the rate at which the Blue enters the body, which is extremely difficult to regulate.

Every time Blue is taken, a CI test must be made. If it is failed, an insanity point is earned. After a session on Blue, provided he didn't suffer an overdose, for roughly a day, the user will be dazed and contented with the visions and seem somewhat detached. For the second day he will behave approximately normally. On the third day he will start to suffer flashbacks and be generally irascible and prone to fits of temper. By the fourth day he will be desperate for another fix.

On the fourth day he should take a WP test at -20. If he fails, he will begin to get desperate for more Blue. He

will do almost anything he can to get it. If he needs to do something greatly at odds with his character, he may be allowed another WP test at -10.

If he gets more Blue, then the next time he starts to withdraw, similar tests must be made at -20 etc. Once the modifier cancels out his WP score then he will be hopelessly addicted and will literally do anything to taste once more the forbidden fruits that only Slaanesh can bring.

If, for whatever reason, an addict cannot get any Blue then he goes into withdrawal. This involves bouts of paranoia, fits of temper and manic depression. For every day of withdrawal make a CI test. Each time one is failed the addict gains an insanity point. After ten CI tests have been passed, this withdrawal passes.

The vague desire for more Blue, will however, haunt the character for the rest of his life. At times of stress, the desire for Blue may overcome someone previously addicted to it (make a WP test modified as thought appropriate due to months, years etc passed), and he may have to go to great lengths to secure more. Although the yearning may reduce as time passes, once you have looked into the eyes of Slaanesh, you are never free from his malevolent will. Mwah ha ha ha haaa.

Baron Frederick von Klincker

"It has been brought to my attention, regarding your behaviour of the previous week, that indeed, I am satisfied with your efforts and hereby make the agreed payment, forthwith."

The von Klinckers are an old Bergsburg family, although not as old as they would have you believe, who made their money several generations ago in an early gold rush. They now have influence and interests in several businesses and financial institutions in Bergsburg. Baron Frederick works part time as a consultant, for the Goldfeuer Banking Company. He and his family live in a grand town house in Harzel. This is common knowledge to those who take any interest in the higher echelons of Bergsburg society.

The Baron is respected in Bergsburg banking circles and has provided good service to many of the institutions. No one has a particularly bad word to say about him. Now that he has semi-retired, he spends most of his time at home or at his cousin's country estate, but he enjoys banking and likes to work at The Goldfeuer when he can.

Hermann Straub

"Here my baby, come to daddy, daddy's got a surprise for dinner, look, a little baby for my big baby's dinner."

Hermann is a chaos cultist of Nurgle. He has contracted 'Yellow Pig's Ear' a nasty, painful disease that makes his skin fall off in corn-coloured flakey chunks. Thus, he wears a loose dirty robe, with a large hood, and not much else. He has been charged by his cult to look after Klur'aoght, which he considers is as good a thing as any to do, while he waits for his joyful death.

Klur'aoght

This demon is a terrible sight to behold and may cause anyone looking at it to gain an Insanity Point. It appears somewhat slug-like but is about eight feet long. Its flesh is black and slightly translucent. Each slithering movement it makes sends quivering waves along its flesh. It is amoebic in the way it can change its shape. It has a torso of sorts, which is nothing more than a large gaping maw lined with several rows of sharp yellow teeth. It has no sensory organs that can be discerned. Around its mouth are four sticky, three-foot long tentacles that whip through the air at great speed. If one of its tentacles is severed it will grow back almost instantly.

The demon exudes a strange soporific scent. This will make anyone in close proximity feel drowsy. Anyone within smelling distance, up to 10 yards in an enclosed space, must test against T or lose 10/1 from each stat. The effects disappears after a couple of minutes away from the smell.

Baron Frederick von Klincker							
Male Human							
Scribe (ex-Burgher)							
Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
31	44	32	38	27	45	37	35
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	12	3	3	3		10	
Skills: Academic Knowledge (Law), Common Knowledge (the Empire), Consume Alcohol, Evaluate, Gossip, Read/Write, Speak Language (Reikspiel)							
Talents: Etiquette, Super Numerate							
Armour: None							
Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0							
Weapons: Dagger							
Insanities: Mandrake Man (Addicted to Blue)							

Hermann Straub
 Male Human
 Burgher

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
35	24	32	55	32	23	35	15

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	12	3	5	4		12	

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire), Dodge Blow, Gossip, Read/Write, Speak Language (Reikspiel)

Talents: SWG (Entangling)

Armour: None

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0

Weapons: Dagger

Trappings: Letter from von Klincker, Big Sack, Knife, Rope

Insanities: Wheel of Dread and Pleasure

It attacks with its four tentacles each round. If it hits with a tentacle, it does no damage, but manages to get a hold on its victim. One held victim per round may be attacked with an extra S10 bite attack. Any tentacle holding a victim does not attack, but does an automatic S4 constricting hit. To free himself from a tentacle's hold a victim must pass a strength test. In combat the demon's enemy may choose to attack a tentacle or the body. Any damage to a tentacle will sever it and the tentacle may not attack during the next round while a new tentacle is grown. This does not do any actual damage to the demon, however (Although the PCs should not realise this).

Manius Grundends

"I really don't think a man in my position could possibly get involved in a situation like that, do you?"

Manius is a stuck up middle-class boy who thinks he has made it big in the world by biding his time and licking arse at the Goldfeuer Banking Company. His rise through the bank has not been fast, but it has been inevitable, due to his lack of imagination and his well-judged crawling to anyone in a position of power. His immediate underlings generally despise him.

Klur'aoght
 Lesser Demon of Nurgle

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
60	40	45	60	48	10	89	10

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
4	40	4	6	3			

Skills: Scale Sheer Surface

Talents: Fearless, Natural Weapons, Night Vision, Terrifying

Armour: None

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0

Weapons: Tentacles, Bite, Scent

Manius Grundends
 Male Human
 Scribe

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
27	24	33	37	33	37	39	35

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	10	3	3	4			

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire), Gossip, Read/Write, Secret Language (Guild Tongue), Speak Language (Reikspiel, Classical), Trade (Calligrapher)

Talents: Etiquette

Armour: None

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0

Weapons: Dagger

Trappings: Letter from von Klincker, Big Sack, Knife, Rope

Insanities: Wheel of Dread and Pleasure

Ranald, Gulka, Wolf, Rita

The cutpurses are connected with the Kreuzers of Helmsberg. They pay their dues to the gang when required, although they are by no means important to them and anyone slaying the cutpurses should not have to suffer the wrath of Magnus. (Unless, of course, the GM wishes them to.)

Ranald, Gulka, Wolf, Rita							
Human							
Rogues							
Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
44	34	32	37	37	35	28	33
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	11	3	3	4			
<p>Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire), Concealment, Gossip, Secret Language (Thieves' Tongue), Secret Signs (Thief), Silent Move, Speak Language (Reikspiel)</p> <p>Talents: Alley Cat, Flee!, Street Fighting</p> <p>Armour: None</p> <p>Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0</p> <p>Weapons: Dagger</p> <p>Trappings: Dagger, Small Amount of Money, Turnips, One Gold Receipt</p>							

House of Games

This scenario revolves around the Rolling Stones Tavern and the Three Kings.

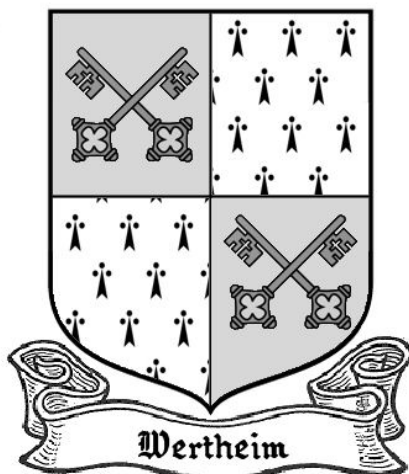
This adventure is a blatant rip-off of the David Mamet film of the same name. Watching the film (2 or 3 times) will help in your GMing immeasurably. If your players have seen the film then they will probably realise what is going on (the first episode of the scenario is virtually identical to the first part of the film). The adventure will work best with a small group, even a single player, and will not work at all with a group who resort to violence at any opportunity. It is also necessary that the party has a certain amount of wealth and standing. The players should be made to feel they are taking an active and effective role in the story, in reality they are being taken for a ride by just about everyone they come into contact with. The Three Kings can achieve this because of their huge influence in their own circles and everyone knows better than to cross the them.

Hook

In this section the players will be introduced to the Three Kings. It may seem like the Three Kings are trying to sting one of the party for a small amount of money, but this is a device for a much longer con. All they wish to achieve is that the players realise they are con-men and that the players will earn their respect for thwarting their con and they will become allies.

Someone the party has befriended will come to them, encounter them in a bar, etc and be utterly distraught. Eventually he will compose himself enough to explain his plight. He has been gambling heavily and has got himself into serious debt with a certain Jan Berger. Berger is beginning to insist that this debt is payed off immediately. This will leave him bankrupt. He begs the party, who are of some standing, to go to the Rolling Stones Tavern and negotiate a better way with Berger. The debtor explains that they must go to the tavern and ask to see the 'accountant'. They will then be given access to the gaming hall on the top floor where Berger is often to be found.

In the gaming room, if they ask for Jan Berger, the bouncer or another gamer will disappear through a doorway at the far end and return shortly saying that the party must wait for a few minutes. After some time, Berger will appear and introduce himself. When the party make their complaint, Berger will look disgusted and insist that they should not waste his time, the loser lost his money fair and square and should pay his debts. If the party pursue this, and they should, he will say that he's got an important game going with lots of money, he doesn't have the time. Then he will suddenly seem to have an idea. Berger will choose one of the party (hopefully the most gullible) and ask him to do him a small favour. The



player should agree to it, on condition that his friend's debt is sorted out. Berger will wave this aside impatiently. "Yes, of course. If you do me this favour then (name's) trifling debt will be waived."

"Listen. I'm playing for big money in there. The guy I'm playing is winning big. But he's got a tell. He's got a tell and I can take him. But he now knows I know he's got a tell." The player should ask what a tell is. Berger will explain by giving them a small coin and asking him to make him guess which hand it's in. (This can be acted out) but the point is Berger guesses the correct hand every time. "How do you do that?" the player will ask. "You've got a tell," he will explain.

"Now listen, You're gonna come into the big game with me. I will introduce you as a friend from Middenheim, and you're gonna sit at the table. When the right hand comes along, I'm gonna leave the room. Now, if this guy is bluffing, when I leave the room he will play with the ring on his left hand. When he's bluffing he plays with the ring on his left hand. But he caught me looking, so he won't do it when I'm there. Do you understand?"

"When I come back, if he's been playing with the ring I want you to tell me. If you do that for me, then your friend can keep his money." The player will obviously agree.

While one player (or both if there are only two in the party) goes to the big game, the rest of the party can amuse themselves at the gaming tables here. There is a dice table and a card table and the party will be welcome to join in.

The big game is played in a small room away from the main gaming room in the top floor of the tavern. Around the table are Gerd Bueller, Abdullah Khalidjaffarali and a couple of other despondent looking gamers, but no names will be given. Abdullah has been winning big and everyone else is nearly wiped out. When Abdullah is described it should be made clear he is an extremely powerful and dangerous magic user. During the next few minutes the other two gamers will lose all their money and leave the room. Only the Three Kings and the PC will be left.

Sure enough, after about half an hour, the tension begins to mount and the stakes are raised. Everyone else is out of the game and Abdullah has a huge pile. Berger seems to consider whether he wants to put all his money into the pot. He then says he needs a few minutes and leaves the room, giving a clandestine look to the player. The player can be asked to make some I rolls but anyway he will notice Abdullah become increasingly tense and begin to play with the ring on his left hand. When Berger returns the player should make a subtle, positive signal.

Berger will immediately begin to look more confident in himself and proceed to gamble every penny he has on the hand, then write an IOU for a huge amount of money (Coincidentally, just about the same amount the party could

afford to lose, easily). Abdullah will refuse to accept the IOU, saying Berger is not worth that kind of money, and an argument about this will ensue. Berger will look for support on this from the other gamers around the table but he will not get it. The GM should be very clever and play this so that the player will cover the bet. Other players from the party might discourage this, but the GM should not let them influence anything as they are in a different room. If the player will not back the bet, even though he should be very confident of winning the hand, then all is not lost. Don't let the player put the money on the table, but just give his word that he has the money and the bet will be covered.

Berger will lose the hand and suddenly turn on the player, "You told me he played with his ring. You told me, you lied to me...", etc. Abdullah will interrupt and insist he is paid. There should be a stand off and the tension should mount but the player will probably be reluctant to hand over the money, and Abdullah will look increasingly like he might use his powers. Then, Gerd Bueller will step in to try and calm things down, Abdullah will raise a finger and Gerd will fall down, seemingly dead. Now, Berger will appear to lose his nerve and start to beg the player to pay up. Abdullah will begin to raise his finger once more. Just as the player is about to pay, or about to categorically refuse to, depending on which way he is thinking, Gerd will sneeze loudly from his deathbed. This sneeze can happen after the GM rolls a few dice, giving the impression that it was not inevitable and the player was saved from his losses by the generosity of the GM and/or a lucky dice roll.

On hearing the sneeze, Abdullah will begin to laugh and Berger will join him. Then, Gerd will explode into giggles on the floor and gradually get up and dust himself off. This should all be done with such good nature that the player will be more amused than angry. The Three Kings will discuss what happened and Gerd will make his excuse that the floor was dusty. They will seem pleased with themselves even though the sting did not work. They will be open with the player and offer to take him and the party downstairs for a drink.

Over their drink the Three Kings will tell tales of their cons and reveal some trade secrets, even demonstrating simple ways to get some money off unsuspecting 'marks'. A good night should be had by all.

The party will get the impression that the adventure is finished and they were saved embarrassment by a bit of luck, or even self discipline. They will also have gained skilled allies who they will work with to mutual benefit over the next few months. The Three Kings will be willing to train any of the party in any of the skills they might require or even initiating them into a new, appropriate career (such as Gambler, Charlatan etc).

NB It will not matter if everything does not go to plan. The Three Kings will think on their feet and bring the situation round to one that can be resolved amicably. If

the PC, for example, decides that he is being set up, early on, and refuses to back Berger's stake, Gerd will interrupt with something like, "I told you this one was too bright to fall for something like that. Well done, you're the sort of man we can do business with." If the PC actually tries to attack Abdullah, then Berger will restrain him and then say calmly, "Control yourself, you must have discipline. If you're gonna make a great player, you need discipline." Then the drinks will be bought as planned, while the Three Kings reveal some of the tricks of their trade and seemingly take the players into their confidence.

Line

After this, the party may wish to hang out at the Rolling Stones for a while. Anyone with the Gamble skill might be allowed into the Big Game. They will be used as accomplices by one of the Three Kings to win a lot of money from another player. The plan will be similar to the one used against Abdullah but this time it will work without difficulty, provided the player acts as he should. The GM may wish to role-play the entire event and bring in a subtle 'tell' for his losing NPC which the player should be encouraged to try and spot himself.

The party will also be asked to run a simple errand for Berger. This should not be without danger but shouldn't end up a total disaster and the PCs will be paid well for their trouble. The errand may be as simple as taking a large and inconvenient load from one end of the city to another, in the dead of night, say from Sudentor to Rolandsbrucke, while the Watch are on the lookout for it. They will not be able to cross either of the bridges, unless they have a good plan for disguising the load, and so will have to improvise some way of crossing the Drakwasser with it. If the party fail in this mission, the Three Kings should be sympathetic but should manipulate the situation so that the party will feel they 'owe them one'.

The party will not see the Three Kings for a while, perhaps they go on an out-of-town adventure for a few weeks. When they do meet Berger again, he will be depressed. He will explain that he had to go to Middenheim to sort out a business deal which went badly. He has paid his debts and now is next to broke. He will reluctantly ask if he can borrow a small amount of money from the PCs (a sum they will not care less about, this is just to drive home the message that Berger is really broke and will make sense of his next plan). If the party refuse to lend the money, this will not be a problem, although they should be made to feel guilty about it.

Sinker

What the Three Kings wish to happen in this episode, is for trouble to break out in the rooms above the tavern. (Abdullah is hovering about in the background somewhere, out of his costume and unrecognisable. He is ready to enter the action if he feels he is required; he will also be responsible for breaking the window and retrieving the chest when this becomes necessary). This

trouble should be caused by the incompetence of the players, but if they do their job well it will occur anyway. In the confusion, the rooms will be evacuated and a chest of gems, hopefully, will be overlooked. If this does not happen, any PC leaving the tavern with the chest will discover it to be the dummy chest. The chests should change hands several times during this episode and it should be difficult for the PCs to keep track of who is in charge of them.

The rooms above the tavern involve a large living space with two smaller bedrooms off it. All the rooms have windows overlooking the alley behind the tavern, and one of the bedroom windows can be used to reach the lower roof opposite and from there, the alleyway.

The next time they meet Berger, he will be full of his old enthusiasm. He will be accompanied by Gerd Bueller and they will be dressed extremely smartly, like the wealthiest merchants. If the party lent him the money, he will thank them for the contribution towards the new clothes. They should be in the north of the city and within hearing range of the evening lament. Gerd is carrying a small wooden chest. Berger and Gerd will take the party into a dead end alleyway or niche for some privacy and reveal to them the contents of the chest.

The chest is full to the brim with the finest gemstones, diamonds, rubies and sapphires etc. From what the party know of Berger they will probably assume the stones are fake. But Berger will insist they are real (for they are) and any player with the appropriate skill will find them to be absolutely genuine and of the highest quality. When asked about it Berger will say 'Hofenbachs!' and shrug as if this were a necessary evil. (It is important that the PCs know emphatically that they should not mess with the Hofenbachs. The GM can change this to any other crime gang that the players are aware of and whose wrath they fear.) Gerd will add that they borrowed it for the day. He will look skyward and say "Ranald protect us, if they don't get it all back safely."

Berger will begin to explain that they have a beautiful sting planned and tonight they will be rich men and the money the PCs lent them can be paid back in triplicate. He will be interrupted by the Evening Lament emanating from the minaret of the Shallya temple. "Damn, we're late," he will say. Gerd will snap the chest closed and hurry around the corner. He will then turn around and come back saying, "He's coming. He's coming." Berger will compose himself and say to the PCs, "OK, listen. You're our hired bodyguard. Just stand there and look like bodyguards. Don't you dare say anything that we haven't invited you to say. Don't volunteer anything. Don't blow this for us." It should be clear that Berger never intended the party to be involved in this and that their poor time keeping has led them to adjust their plans.

Two men will come round the corner. One is Horst Randall, immaculately dressed and middle-aged, who speaks with a very aristocratic accent. It will become clear

to the players that he is an expert in fine gems and has lots of money. He is actually not carrying much money, the payment in the cover-story will be made later, but the PCs are not to know this. The other, though smart, is just a bodyguard. Horst and Berger will greet each other cordially and after a bit of small talk, Berger will lead the way to a nearby tavern where a private suite, on the top floor, has been arranged. Gerd will hand the chest to one of the PCs and state clearly and loudly, "Guard this with your life, man."

When the suite is entered, Berger will order one of the PCs to stand guard outside the door. Horst will become suspicious for a moment and order his man to do likewise. After a while the two guards will fall to idle chatter. The talk starts off innocently but if the PC does not answer the bodyguard's questions quickly and convincingly, then he will grow more suspicious and his queries will be more searching. Anything the PC gives away here, or any suspicions he raises in Horst's bodyguard can be used against the party later.

Inside the rooms Horst and Berger will get down to business. Gerd will beckon one of the PCs to help him check the bedrooms and the alleyway. In one of the bedrooms Gerd will silently point out the identical dummy chest beneath the bed, he will also point out the escape route that can be used if necessary. When they return to main room, Gerd will pull out a brace of small pistols, check them and cock them, then place them on the desk. Horst and Berger will ignore this as they examine the gems.

When they are finished, Berger will close the chest and hand it to one of the PCs. Later, while Horst and Berger are negotiating, Gerd will remark that it is hot in here. He will try and open a window but it has become stuck. He will beckon the PC who was given the chest over to help him open the window. If the PC helps then he cannot reasonably say he had the chest all along so the GM can assume he put it down. The GM should not ask him about the chest.

Berger and Horst will get down to some seriously quiet and convincing negotiation about the price of the gemstones. After a few minutes the window in the bedroom without the dummy chest will smash loudly. Horst will run to see what is happening, Gerd will encourage the PCs to do the same. This is when, if necessary, the chests can be switched by Berger and Gerd.

While Horst is inspecting the window he will talk to the PCs, doing his best to make them expose themselves as charlatans. He will not seem overly suspicious but will ask questions like how long they have worked for Berger? Where did he get the gems from? Did they go with him to Talabheim... or was it Middenheim? (The correct answer if they have been paying attention is Middenheim). Horst will return from the bedroom with the view that the broken window was smashed by a bird or an act of god.

Now the disturbance will occur. The Three Kings wish for one of the PCs to shoot either Horst or his bodyguard with the pistols on the desk. The pistols have powder in them but no shot, so they will make a loud noise and the victim will play dead with the help of some goats' blood he is carrying. If the Three Kings cannot manage to get the PCs to shoot one of them, they will shoot one of them themselves. The Three Kings and their accomplices are playing things by ear so will act in the way the GM thinks best to achieve the required result. Horst and Berger may get in a violent argument about the price of the gems and knives might be drawn.

Horst may get suspicious about the answers he received from the party when they went to check the window. The bodyguard may get suspicious about the PC he is guarding the door with. Horst may agree a final price with Berger but may require one last look at the gems, opening the chest to discover it is the dummy one and filled with coal.

As a last resort, Horst's bodyguard will check downstairs in his boredom, or go and get the PC a drink if they are getting on well. He will run back up shouting "Watch! Watch!" at which point everyone will panic and head for the emergency exit out the back. The main idea is to create a situation whereby everyone goes out the back window as quickly as they can leaving at least one of the chests behind (it doesn't matter which, they could have been switched without any of the PCs noticing.)

Once they have all reached the alley someone will shout "Split up" and that should happen. Eventually, everyone should all meet up again, probably at the Rolling Stones. The GM should decide which of the PCs was the most guilty of losing the chest (remember someone was asked to guard it with their life at the beginning) and the Three Kings will be expecting them to have the gems safely secured.

When this is found not to be the case, they will be distraught, convinced of their imminent death at the hands of the Hofenbachs. They have no money themselves and those gems need to be paid for by tomorrow evening. If the players can be convinced to give up their money for this then I congratulate their GM.

Perhaps if they don't, then a few days later rumour will get round that Berger was found face down in the Drakwasser. Gerd can come to the party and say that one of them will be next, and eventually we'll all be dead. The Three Kings can then arrange to have one of the party followed around for a few nights and maybe a fake attempt on his life may occur. The other two will be reluctant to resort to murder, but Berger will have no problem arranging for his friendly assassin, Kerr Rudbeck to kill one of the party, the one who is most opposed to giving up the money.

Epilogue

If the party do give up their money, then perhaps a couple of weeks later, a PC will recognise one of the cast of the scam, walking around as a different person. If Horst Randall 'died' during the adventure, he would be perfect for this. This should alert the PCs that all is not as it seems and they can investigate from there. Some GMs may prefer to leave the spell of the Three Kings unbroken.

This is a difficult adventure for the GM to play with lots of work needed to subtly convince the party of their actions. The GM should take this as a challenge to fleece the party of as much money as he can by manipulating the PCs and without, it should be emphasized, manipulating the players. It is important to remember that the Three Kings (not the GM) are manipulating the PCs. The scenario will also require good role-playing from the players as most players would rather have a good fight and feud with a powerful gang of thieves, even if it means certain death, rather than pay them the money they are owed. None of the sums of money involved are specified as this is a very important part of the scenario and the money floating about in different campaigns varies wildly. The GM should pitch these sums as high as he can get away with, but not too high that the party is put off.

The Kin of the Tower

A Cult of the Horned Rat

"Oh blimey! That's torn it!"

- The Doom of Kavzar

The Kin of the Tower is a small society of Bergsburg citizens who have chosen to devote themselves to the Horned Rat. Unusually, the reasons for this have a philosophical and intellectual basis, rather than fear, blind faith or desperation. These beliefs are shared to a greater or lesser degree by all members, although the more educated are inclined to give them more consideration.

History

The Kin of the Tower had its origins 15 years ago, when Johanna Warens was a 20 year old initiate in the Temple of Verena. In the course of her calling she suffered a private crisis of faith that led her to an existential crisis. She began to question the point of existence and the worthiness of pursuing truth relentlessly, as all it seemed to reveal was the hopelessness of the human condition. Deep in despair, she spent a great deal of time in the temple library studying history and philosophy to find a reason for existence. Her studies only highlighted the wretchedness of humanity - an endless parade of wars and suffering, alleviated only

by brief periods of light amidst the darkness. Worse still, the human gods, both good and evil, were part of the same process, endlessly playing out the same cycles of incursion and recovery over the centuries. Johanna began to think that only a great transforming cataclysm would put an end to this recurrent historical process - but that humans were doomed to never succeed in bringing it about as they were the cause. It would require action from outside the human race....

In looking for historical accounts of cataclysmic events, she came across a battered copy of Erich Toller's translation of 'The Doom of Kavzar', an ancient Tilean epic which tells of the fall of a forgotten city after the humans and dwarfs who were resident there built a huge tower, which when finished by a mysterious grey-cloaked stranger brought ruin upon the city and led to the birth of a race of twisted ratmen. Tracing the history around the epic, Johanna found a trail of vague references to these ratmen throughout human history - always working to undermine humanity in service of an unnamed god. It was also apparent that belief in the ratmen was inconsistent - the authorities of some periods identified them as a genuine threat, whereas in other eras they were dismissed as a subclass of beastmen or the fears of an ignorant and superstitious populace.

Johanna used her status as a Verenan tutor to travel to Middenheim and continue her research into the Skaven there. She discovered more on their activities and became slowly convinced that it was they who would bring about the end of human history, ushering in a new order in which the rats would rule. Moreover, she detected a keen intellect behind the actions of the Skaven, rather than the crude ebb and flow of beastman activity. Not only was this intellect working to further the demise of human dominion, but it was also working to conceal the machinations of the Skaven from the cultures which they were undermining. Poring over crumbling tomes in the Verenan library in Middenheim, Johanna had an epiphany... if she was to hasten the end of human history by collaborating with the Skaven, she would be spared the fate of her compatriots and would end the pointlessness of human existence.

She knew that her first act must be to destroy the books that led her to her understanding of the ratmen - to help maintain their continued status as rumour. In burning the books, she effectively proved her renunciation of Verena and her devotion to the Horned Rat and his servants. The city of Middenheim is riddled with subterranean tunnels, in which dwell a colony of Skaven who monitor the activities of the men above, and Johanna's burning of specific titles attracted the attentions of a Grey Seer resident in the city, who contacted her through human agents and arranged a clandestine meeting. At first shocked at meeting one of the creatures which she had previously only read of, after subsequent meetings she grew used to the Seer's company and spent many hours discussing her personal philosophies with him.



The Seer was as cunning as his creed tend to be and he fed back to Johanna everything that she wanted to hear, knowing that she could prove a useful agent. By the time she left Middenheim, she was enthused by the meaning to her life and knew what she must do.

Johanna set up the Kin of the Tower in the city, named for the tower which brought doom to the forgotten city of Kavzar. She had means of communication with the Skaven of Middenheim, using dead letter drops and other clandestine means, and it was through them that she recruited and assembled the cult. They have been active in the city ever since.

Beliefs

Building on Johanna's philosophy, the Kin of the Tower believe that humanity is trapped in an endless cycle of suffering, brought about by the meaningless struggle between chaotic and non-chaotic humans.

They believe that the only way to break from this recurring process is for another race to intervene and cause a cataclysm - and that this cataclysm will be the coming of the Horned Rat.

They believe that it is their role to revere the god and aid his ratmen servants in all their endeavours to undermine human society and bring about its demise. In doing so, they assume that they will be given a special place at the side of the new rulers of the Old World.

They do not want to be skaven themselves (as some human Horned Rat cultists wish), nor are they wholly pessimistic - taking a cue from Johanna is having a certain manic energy in bringing about the apocalypse.

They embrace the horror that the world to come will bring as punishment for humanity's complacency.

Although eager to fulfil their roles, many of the Kin are solemn and have tendencies towards self-hatred. Discrete flagellation and self-punishment are common, including the secret wearing of rat hair shirts to cause permanent discomfort in honour of the Horned Rat.

The Kin do not revere chaos in any other form and are opposed to the actions of chaotic humans as being part of the problem, rather than the solution.

Structure

There are only ever 12 members of the Kin of the Tower, to reflect the sacred number of the Horned Rat, where the 13th member is the Horned Rat himself - a deliberate echo of the Lords of Decay who rule over Skaven society. All are restricted to the city of Bergsburg and its immediate vicinity. The leader (or "Exalter") is Johanna Warens, while the remaining members come from various walks of life with the city*. Eight are from Bergsburg's educated classes, who embrace Johanna's philosophy and take a bizarre comfort in its depressing conclusions. The remainder are from lowlier backgrounds, grasping the main tenets of the Kin's beliefs but worshipping the Horned Rat more through personal reasons of desperation, survival or insanity than intellectual reasoning. Lacking direction elsewhere in their lives, at present all members are loyal to Johanna, with some verging on hero worship.

The Kin meet in great secrecy once a month in locations that change every time - instructions are left in dead letter drops or as graffiti across the city, with cyphers and locations changing frequently. Meetings are presided over by Johanna, dressed head to toe in tattered robes edged with white rat fur, bearing a staff topped with a likeness of the Horned Rat. The other members don grey, black or brown cloaks made from rat skins. During the meetings they offer prayers to the Horned Rat and make an offering in the form of stolen grain or other food supplies. Johanna then passes on the tasks for the Kin - sometimes directly from her Skaven masters, while at other times she commands them to act according to her own initiative.

Activities

The Kin of the Tower perform a role as the eyes and ears of the Skaven in Bergsburg. They are charged with watching and listening for any information that the ratmen want for their own ends, as well as discovering to what extent the people of the city know about the Skaven's existence. They are charged with destroying any information or individuals who 'know too much' or produce appropriately doctored forgeries of materials pointing to their existence. They also perform various tasks to help the Skaven as they are commanded - smuggling warpstone through the city, stealing particular objects (maps, blueprints, diaries etc.) or foiling the activities of rival groups.

A year ago, the Grey Seer who had been Johanna's sole contact was assassinated in an inter-clan intrigue. Knowledge of the Kin within Bergsburg was reduced to one of his apprentices, who passed on the information (through torture) to several other Skaven. One of these was Chief Observer Morslik, who is based at the hidden Skaven observatory to the north. Armed with this knowledge, he has made contact with Johanna and begun to direct the activities of the Kin to his own ends. Johanna has met with Morslik, but is not aware of the existence of the observatory - Morslik using her ignorance to paint himself as far more important than he really is.

Influence

Although small in number, the Kin of the Tower can call on significant resources and influence within the city. Amongst the members are two senior merchants (one with extensive contacts throughout northern Hochland), one priest, two important guildsmen and at least two academics (including Johanna). Two members are relatively well connected in the Bergsburg underworld, while one is a farmer close to Krudenwald.

Johanna Warens

"History goes in self-perpetuating cycles. There is no progress, direction or reason to human endeavour."

Historian, Philosopher and Cultist

Johanna is 35 years old, but looks ten years older. Depending on her mood, she can look melancholy and burdened, furtive and twitchy or frantic and excitable. Her hair is mousy brown and greying, while her face would be relatively pretty if it wasn't for her drawn cheeks and sharp chin. Her clothes are practical but well made.

Personality Johanna is a manic depressive and as such she can vary between being extremely personable and full of energy to being a world-hating recluse. Worship of the Horned Rat has given her an over-riding goal that established some stability (and the retreat of the suicidal feelings of her teens), but she still suffers from wild mood swings.

Johanna Warens

Female Human

Scholar (ex-Student)

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
41	46	34	28	46	52	49	41

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	13	3	2	3			

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Cryptography, Theology, Flora, Astronomy, History, Runes), Common Knowledge (the Empire), Gossip, Magical Sense, Read/Write, Speak Arcane Language (Magick), Speak Language (Reikspiel, Queekish, Tilean, Classical)

Talents: Flee!, Linguistics, Sixth Sense, Super Numerate

Armour: None

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0

Weapons: Dagger

Trappings: Smart but not showy City Clothes, Knife, Writing Equipment

Background: Johanna comes from a wealthy family of Bergsburg merchants, the Warens, who have made their trade in leather goods for many years, working from an office in Viehstadt. As the second daughter, she felt neglected by her parents and grew moody and difficult through her childhood. Always bright, she was sent to the Bergsburg Academy, from where she moved into the position of Initiate within the cult and worked as a tutor within the Temple. Johanna was not unpopular, but her wild mood swings made it difficult for others to get along with her for very long and at the age of 20, she sunk into a deep depression.

In the depths of despair, Johanna found her intelligence working against her, working to undermine anything that she believed in and triggering an existential crisis. It was this that led to her discovery of the Skaven and a burst of manic energy that drove her travel to Middenheim and ultimately found the Kin of the Tower. Sadly, it was pure accident that she came to the conclusion that the Skaven were humanity's only hope - had a different book come to light, she could have just as easily become a devotee of the works of the Elves or Dwarfs.

She served as a tutor with the Temple for a year longer before becoming private and taking work in the homes of the merchants of Harzel and Rolandsbrucke. Now she has sufficient funds to live alone in Verenenstadt and teach occasionally, spending the rest of her time writing philosophical and historical treatises under the name 'Taresimus of Hochland'. These are a diluted and more academically acceptable version of her personal beliefs and some have been distributed amongst Middenheim and Ostland scholars with an interest in similar matters.

Meeting Johanna: During a manic phase, PCs could encounter Johanna in the taverns and shops of Verenanstadt, as well as in the home of a merchant who pays for her services as a tutor. They could meet her in any of the city's libraries or be directed to her by any academic as someone who has an extensive understanding of history and philosophy. She could also be met while she visits her family in Viehstadt. When depressed, she tends to stay shut up in her home and admits visitors extremely reluctantly. Of course, another way to meet her would be to stumble on a meeting of the Kin of the Tower.

Adventure Hooks

Loads! See 'Activities' above...

References

Erich Toller's translation of 'The Doom of Kavzar' is taken from 'The Loathsome Ratmen and their Vile Kin' published by the Black Library

The 'tip of the iceberg' Skaven background comes from various sources, but primarily the WFB4 Skaven Army Book etc.

The 'Skaven don't exist' official line is a recent WFB development that I particularly like

*with the exception of Johanna, we have deliberately chosen not to name the remaining members, allowing GMs and contributors to tailor membership to their own requirements.

Mondstille Karl

A seasonal adventure in the spirit of christmas ghost-stories

It's the day before Mondstille and all through Diehaus not a creature is stirring. The whole world lies silent and holy under a deep and crisp and even blanket of snow. The inhabitants of rural Hochland are nestled down for the long winter, preparing for the Mondstille feast that marks the nadir of winter and brings hope for the coming year.

It's rural Hochland but the folk aren't so backwards that they don't appreciate Sigmar, Ulric and Shallya. Each of these cults will mark Mondstille and Hexentag in their own ways, especially Ulric, for whom the depths of winter has special significance.

But many still remember the old days and the old ways. They know well of Rhya and Taal. They know how to ensure the people and the land get through the darkest days of the year and how best to prepare for the spring.

The locals will be out looking for the perfect Taal-log. When they find it, they will cut it down and drag it back to the village and prepare it for the Mondstille celebrations. The women of Diehaus are busy preparing for the feast, stuffing the goose and making Mondstille pudding. The children are looking forward to their traditional Mondstille gift, and know they won't be able to get to sleep tonight in the excitement of expectation. And hints and rumours are flying about that this year the Mondstille presents will be the best ever.

Diehaus

Diehaus is a small Hochland village, on the way to the mountains, in the middle of nowhere, home to only ten families, with a population of about 60. There is a great hall in the centre of the palisaded village where the festivities will take place. The headman of the village (no one bothers to call him mayor) is Piotr Lanek, but he rarely decides anything without chatting to his brother Stefan Lanek and old Vilma Flussbach.

Getting There

Well, the PCs get lost and it's getting very cold and they stumble on the settlement. Or they're heading off to some other location and this is on the way and they decide to spend the night. It's unusual to be travelling over Mondstille, but PCs are unusual people so it's likely they can be given a decent excuse to end up in Diehaus. If their mission isn't too urgent it is hardly likely they will prefer to leave the village and be off, when they can spend the time feasting on the best (and most) food of winter in the bosom of a welcoming community, and honouring their gods in the correct way. They will smell a rat of course, but since when do they not?

The people of the village will extend the season's greetings to a bunch of PCs. It is the tradition of this time of year, and strangers at Mondstille are always to be treated well. And the people of Diehaus are 'good people.'

Also, there is the story of when Sigmar was lost in the mountains over Mondstille and he was welcomed in by a family who offered him all their precious food. And, the story goes, they were rewarded when all they had offered to their unknown guest was returned to them eightfold. Of course, the PCs should not abuse the hospitality. They should extend the goodwill of the season right back to the villagers.

Mondstille Eve

The Taal-log, dressed with fir and brandy and spices will be lit in the great hall and the entire village will gather round and eat and sing and talk. This is good food. It's not the Monstille feast, which is to come the next day, but it's traditional for the feasting to begin the night before. You won't get any goose or pudding, but various cakes, sweetmeats, nuts and fruit will be offered.

Jakob Brintt will get out his fiddle and Lisl and Greta Schlipppers (ten years old, angelic twins) will sing traditional songs. Everyone else eventually joins in over the course of the night.

Then there will a traditional ghost-story (this is usually connected to Hexentag, but round here the tradition is it is told on Mondstille Eve). The PCs will be offered the chance to tell a ghost story to the assembled village. If they decline then Stefan Lanek will tell one.

Lanek's story is a tale of a wealthy merchant of Altdorf called Ebenezar Screugel who didn't believe in the spirit of Mondstille. He was visited by Rhya to show him ghostly events of a Mondstille in the past, then by Shallya to show him Mondstille present and then by Verena to show him a future Mondstille after he is gone. The events shock him into embracing the true spirit of Mondstille and putting on a huge Mondstille feast for the whole neighbourhood.

If the GM is telling it to his players, then ham it up and make it as verisimilitudsiponipilisinous of the event as possible, crack open the eggnog and mince pies and belch occasionally. Or just gloss over the whole thing.

Things that can Happen

Lukas Lanek (son of Stefan) can start chatting to any military PCs about his time in the Bergsburg Handgunners. He mostly enjoyed it, but they were underfunded and had to carry out lots of peace corps work which was fairly tedious, and he didn't ever fire his handgun in anger.

Viola Dafburger can make the acquaintance of a likely PC. She has three young children and her husband, Lothar, died (or rather went missing in the summer). She wants nothing more than to find a new husband and sees the PCs' arrival as her best opportunity yet. She will save a couple of satsumas and some wine for any PC who shows her special interest. She will also (if she senses they like children) introduce them to her brood, Klaus, Dimitri and Anna. Cute kids.

Vilma Flussbak and Piotr Lanek will pick the brains of any PC with the appropriate expertise about the rites for the coming spring. Conditions seem to be getting harder. Fewer lambs are born, and more are taken by wolves. The SoC (if you have this) has caused them to overfarm and the yield for last year was particularly poor. And, various

other factors have caused them to get erratic prices for their goods at the local markets recently (they blame interference from the OWA (Ostland Wares Authority)). It's not looking particularly good for next year, even though the Mondstille festival is supposed to be largely about optimism and hope.

Taallein Merk (a seven year old boy) will be conspicuously sad throughout the whole evening. He is gutted because (to his best knowledge), all the other kids will be getting special presents this year, but his family is too poor to buy him one. He doesn't know the details.

Mondstille

Normally the day will proceed with the opening of presents, and the children will be excited and play all morning while the men crack open the first drinks of the day. The women will cook the meal.

Karl							
Male Human							
Cult Magus of Tzeentch (ex-Trader)							
Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
35	28	33	42	33	45	45	33
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	14	3	4	4	2	6	1
Skills: Academic Knowledge (Daemonology, Magic), Animal Care, Blather, Channeling, Common Knowledge (the Empire, Middle Mountains), Evaluate, Gossip, Magical Sense, Perception, Drive, Search, Speak Arcane Language (Magick, Daemonic), Speak Language (Reikspiel)							
Talents: Aethyric Attunement, Dark Lore (Tzeentch), Dark Magic, Fast Hands, Lesser Magic (Move, Skywalk), Petty Magic (Chaos), Ritual (Create Wi Wi), Stout-hearted							
Armour: Heavy Coat							
Armour Points: Head 1, Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 1							
Weapons: Dagger							
Trappings: Red Hooded Coat, Cart/Sled, Wares, Hidden Symbol Medalion							
Mutation: Pure White Beard and Hair							

None of this actually happens in Diehaus, though, because come Mondstille morning most of the children of the village start eating their parents' brains.

Karl

Karl (who knows his other names?) is an agent of Tzeentch who settled in the woods not far from Diehaus in the summer. He was an itinerant tinker who had a few bits and pieces to sell and made a small living. The villagers didn't really think there was much wrong with him settling down, and he seemed to keep himself to himself. He was even invited to the Diehaus Mondstille feast, but declined.

Karl has settled in a small abandoned hovel in the woods which he has turned into his workshop. The man has quite a distinctive look, having a large bushy white beard. He also dresses in a distinctive red, fur-lined coat. He has a cart which he still uses to get about, pulled by an old pony.

Guided by his dark lord, Karl began creating and enchanting small dolls, especially for Mondstille gifts. He called them Wi Wi. The dolls were made from the twigs of a hanging tree. (Karl hung Lothar Dafburger from a nearby willow for several days while torturing him and slowly killing him to make the hanging tree especially

potent.) They were then enchanted with blood and wrapped with guts. Karl then performed a ritual to bring daemons from the warp to inhabit the bodies of the dolls.

The Wi Wi look quite attractive and doll-like. A viewer must pass a Hard Perception Test to see them as the bundle of blood and guts they actually are. But even then would not necessarily have an inkling that anyone sees them any differently. Those with witchsight might see fetid Ghar weeping from the Wi Wi and dripping off into dark sinister pools, where things wither and die.

By use of clever marketing techniques, Karl managed to convince the villagers that Wi Wi were *the* Mondstille gift to have this year. He told them that availability would be limited and they should get to his house early on the day (a couple of weeks ago) he put them officially on sell. Some of the parents even camped out all night to be sure of getting their hands on a new Wi Wi for their child.

Unfortunately, Karl did not make enough and so Hilde Merk, who has a bad leg and heavy limp, was not able to get one for her son Taallein.

The Children

So, come Mondstille morning all the children of the village got up early, while most of the parents slept, and opened their presents. The Wi Wi bided their time until they were close enough to their child that they could jump into their mouth, climb into their brain and take control of the child's body. The Wi Wi then begin their brief spell in the world by trying to eat as much brain as possible before their inevitable eventual return to the warp.

After eating the child's brain the Wi Wi use the body to gain access to more brains. They can use the child's body to do all the things the child could do, wielding weapons and running around, and causing mayhem, etc. It is clear to an observer, however, that something is wrong with the child, it just looks kind of not all there, and its eyes are dead, and although the body moves almost normally, the head sort of hangs to the side limply.

The PCs will probably wake in the midst of all the mayhem. There are 16 children affected; Taalein Merk is the only child unaffected. The children would have picked up whatever weapons (knives, scissors, cleavers, clubs, scythes, pitchforks, etc) they could find and attacked their parents and all others nearby, stopping only to feast on the brains. They should now be covered in blood and brains, and the village will be pandemonium.

It should not be too easy for the PCs to attack the children's bodies, even if they are sure that they are already dead and being possessed. The GM should bring up specific children the PCs have already met in order to bring home the reality of the situation. The GM should also consider giving out IPs for this.

The children can be destroyed normally, but they will

Wi Wi							
Daemon of Tzeentch							
Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
20	00	10	40	50	70	70	50
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
2	4	1	4	5			
<p>Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire), Concealment, Gossip, Secret Language (Thieves' Tongue), Secret Signs (Thief), Silent Move, Speak Language (Reikspiel)</p> <p>Talents: Daemonic Aura, Frightening, Natural Weapons, Will of Iron</p> <p>Armour: None</p> <p>Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0</p> <p>Special Rules: Possession: A successful hit against a prone or already OW opponent or an attack against a Helpless opponent means they can jump into the victim's mouth and inhabit their brain.</p>							

Possessed Child							
Zombie							
Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
30	30	20	20	30	70	70	00
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	8	2	2	4			
Special Rules: Possessed Carcass: Will continue to function until brought to -10 W							

fight on when heavily damaged. The child will need to be brought to -10 Wounds to cease to function. When that happens, the child's body will fall to the floor, the Wi Wi will lose control of it. The Wi Wi will then attempt to flee the scene (through the child's mouth or other handy orifice) and find another body to inhabit. It will be at this time that the Wi WI itself can be attacked. Remember the Wi Wi are small (about 12 inches high) and look like sticks and stuff, so they are perfect for hiding themselves around the village and dropping on unsuspecting victims, and climbing into their mouths.

Once the PCs have dealt with the Wi Wi they should be able to piece together, from accounts by the survivors (especially Taallein Merk) that it had something to do with the dolls purchased from Karl the tinker.

Meeting Karl

Because of the heavy snow Karl has temporarily converted his cart to a sled. Also, to his regret, his old pony had recently died of cold. Ever resourceful, Karl went into the woods and captured a local reindeer, which he has forced to pull his sled. It was quite a battle of wills, and Karl had to punch the reindeer several times in the face in order to get it to obey. Thus, the reindeer's nose, at the moment, is all red and swollen.

If the PCs come for him, he will make his escape, up the chimney of his hovel, using his Climb spell and then board his sled, forcing the reindeer to pull him as fast as it can. If the PCs do have a way of gaining on him, then he will use his Enrage Beast spell to get the reindeer to run as fast as possible.

If the PCs have trouble keeping up with Karl's sled, then the enraged reindeer may crash into a tree and spill the sled and its contents. Or the reindeer may, being quite intelligent and tired of Karl's mistreatment, deliberately throw the sled (what the hell, it's Mondstille), leaving Karl in a pile on the snow, from where he will be forced to make a last stand in the name of his unholy lord.

Back In Diehaus

While the PCs are gone, unless they have very compelling evidence otherwise, the surviving villagers will have come to the conclusion that the mess was all the PCs' fault and they will not be welcome back in the village. Just seeing the PCs fighting the Wi Wi is not enough to convince them it isn't their fault. Word will also spread to surrounding villages that the PCs are a bad lot and should be avoided at all costs.

Happy Mondstille.

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