

Ars Magica

Antagonists



by Ferguson, Gronosky,
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Antagonists

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Chapter One

Introduction

Welcome to *Antagonists*. This supplement for *Ars Magica Fifth Edition* contains ten characters who can take the role of antagonist in your saga.

The antagonist characters provoke conflict to which the magi of your saga must respond. Antagonists draw the magi of your saga into stories. Some of the antagonists might directly attack your covenant. Other antagonists create political turmoil that threaten your magi, your covenant, or even the entire Order of Hermes.

Each antagonist character is a recurring opponent whose influence will take several stories to resolve. Some antagonists will be active for a number of years or decades, so you might like to intersperse the antagonist's stories with other stories (or even the stories of another antagonist). However, you probably will not want to use all the antagonist characters from this book in a single saga. You could consider each antagonist to be a comprehensive example of a Covenant Hook, although the stories of some antagonists could involve many covenants. Of course, it is not a problem if your troupe does manage to satisfactorily resolve an antagonist's conflict with a single story.

Most of the details of the antagonist characters are intended to be initially obscure to the player characters. Thus, it is recommended — once you have chosen to introduce an antagonist character to your saga — that the troupe allocates a single player to be the story-guide for that antagonist's stories, with the other players refraining from reading the details. This strategy will also help to keep the motivations and actions of the antagonist consistent among stories. On the other hand, the antagonists are still usable even if the players are well-versed in the details. For example, if the player characters are over-

whelmed by an antagonist, the saga could continue with a new set of player characters responding to the devastation of the original covenant. You might also like to re-use an antagonist in an unconnected second saga; how might another group of characters respond?

The antagonists themselves have a variety of motivations. Some are supernatural creatures, other are mundane nobles and churchmen. Some antagonists are not really aware of the Order of Hermes, and their actions only incidentally impact upon the magi. Other antagonists are all too aware of the Order, and deliberately provoke the magi. The following summaries describe the basic idea of each antagonist and can be safely read by the whole troupe when discussing how the antagonists might be used in your saga.

Baron Geoffroi D'Arques

Baron Geoffroi D'Arques is a wealthy noble, initially concerned with little more than the success of his lands and providing for his family. But his interest in the supernatural is suddenly piqued, and he starts upon a journey that makes him by turns ally and enemy to the covenant. He starts to attract conjurers, charlatans, and all manner of hedge wizards to his court, eager to learn about magic and turn it to the betterment of his lands. Geoffroi's activities are rarely directed toward the covenant, but as he opens his court to others practiced in magic, the complications make themselves felt upon the covenant

and its resources. The gathering of hedge wizards and the baron's continued quest for more magic will make it impossible for the covenant to ignore him forever.

Baron Giraud Le Cornu

Baron Giraud Le Cornu holds a manor adjacent to the covenant's land. He looks on the magi with deep suspicion: they have men-at-arms and perhaps a castle, but they refuse to swear fealty to any noble. Their strange powers make them an object of fear. He sees their self-proclaimed autonomy as a rebellion against proper authority and a threat to the social order of Mythic Europe.

As an antagonist, the baron shows how the Order of Hermes doesn't really fit well into medieval society. He can steer the covenant toward a more stable relationship with mundane nobles, but at the cost of upsetting the Order's entrenched attitudes about mundane relations. He also shows how much trouble mundane intrigue can cause for a covenant.

Father Joseph of Napoli

Father Joseph is a papal legate sent on a mission to the Order of Hermes. He proposes that the Order of Hermes reinvent

itself as a true religious order: headed by a Grand Master, endorsed by the pope, and established as an appendage of the church. Obviously, there are potential problems aligning this proposal with the traditional Oath of Hermes. On the other hand, the legate's proposal might be met with approval by many Christian magi. Your characters can either support or oppose Father Joseph.

As an antagonist, Father Joseph represents the church meddling with the Order of Hermes. He does not directly attack magi or covenants. He provokes political stories that may spiral into violence or even a new Schism War. The father is a threat because he creates conflict within the Order.

Bishop Orris

Bishop Orris is a man convinced that magic is evil. He has heard the theological and philosophical arguments against this viewpoint, but the fact remains he can smell the filthy stench of pure wickedness whenever he is close to magic. To make matters worse, his diocese contains the characters' covenant, and eventually he will be exposed to them and their "evil" ways.

As an antagonist, Bishop Orris poses a dilemma. He has the potential to make life particularly difficult for player characters, and yet all his actions are for the sake of the best interests of those he has a duty to protect. His intentions are pure, even if his actions are misguided.

Galerius of House Guernicus

Galerius is a Quaesitor who sees it as his personal crusade to punish magi who do anything that potentially endangers the Order of Hermes. His idea of what endangers the Order is extraordinarily broad, and he gets so personally invested in his cases that his judgment sometimes

becomes clouded. He believes it is better to risk punishing the innocent than to allow the guilty escape.

Galerius' zealous pursuit of Hermetic justice means that he may be a threat to even very legally conservative covenants. The smallest hint of indiscretion will be enough to provoke a thorough intrusion into the covenant's affairs. Of course, if there is actually anything for him to find...

The Infatuated Diabolist

Lust can take many forms, and lust for power and lust for a player character combine to drive this antagonist to seek power for the darkest of all sources. In madness, the cost of one's soul can seem a small price to pay.

This antagonist demonstrates the perils of diabolic antagonists, but also their weaknesses. They can be exceptionally strong with sufficient preparation, but have none of the immediate firepower of a Hermetic magus. The diabolist must therefore carefully plot the ensnaring of the reluctant lover, and plan the character's eventual downfall when the attentions of a devil-worshiper are, inevitably, spurned.

A Demonically Inspired Cult

A single powerful demon is a terrible foe, but when two begin similar schemes, and one draws the other into his service, the seeds of an epidemic are sown. When more demons are drawn to the misery the first two have caused, corrupting the people who attempt to mitigate the plague, all of Mythic Europe may be shaken. Can the player characters defend themselves, as the schemes of several demons intertwine, pouring death, madness, and diabolism along the roads of Mythic Europe?

The Divine Abbot

After an act of great courage, the abbot of a local monastery has been replaced by a creature of the Divine. It desires to strengthen the Divine aura of the land by bettering the living conditions of the general population, increasing their faith, and giving greater glory to the power of God. A more potent Divine aura means weaker Magic and Faerie auras, diminishing vis sources and conflicts as other mythic creatures suffer the loss of habitat. The magi are certainly threatened, but can a Divine abbot really be an enemy?

The Queen of Gold and Glass

The Queen of Gold and Glass is a potent faerie who challenges magi with a series of tests. She does not care if they fail or succeed, and may aid them to survive the attacks of other enemies. The Queen is playing a deeper game, and one which, if she is left undefeated, will have alarming consequences for the player characters.

The Waimie

The Waimie is a magical serpent who craves vis. She sends out her numerous brood to gather it for her, and has recently learned that magi can be a potent source. Not only do they hoard it, but they make regular forays to collect it from jealously guarded sites. All she needs to do is have her children follow them whenever they leave home.

The Waimie is a relatively direct antagonist; it is less suited to a major saga theme, and more to a set of interlinked stories occurring close together. The Waimie's brood start small, but they get bigger and more challenging.

Chapter Two

Baron Geoffroi D'Arques

"I have been to the Holy land and I have seen the armies of God and our enemies massed in numbers beyond counting, but this ... this is beyond comprehension. It brings an ache to my mind. And yet I must have more of it."

– Geoffroi d'Arques

This chapter presents the Baron Geoffroi d'Arques, a mundane knight and landed noble who becomes fascinated with all things supernatural. His fascination soon turns to greed and jealousy, and he sees little difference between the forces of the Divine, Faerie, Magic, or

the Infernal. He gradually turns his court over to supernatural forces, filling his woodlands with magical beasts captured from afar, replacing his loyal servants with those gifted with supernatural abilities, and inviting magicians of all kinds to serve as his counselors.

Unlike some of the other antagonists in this book, Geoffroi starts as, and retains the potential to be, a valuable ally. But his hunger for knowledge concerning things beyond his own world is dangerous and proves likely to bring trouble to the covenant's door time and time again.

Background

Baron Geoffroi d'Arques is a wealthy nobleman holding lands surrounding his birthplace of Arques in the Duchy of Normandy in addition to those closer to the troupe's covenant. His upbringing was typical of a Normandy noble, and he is steeped in politics and war. His father built a fortune by backing the winning side when King John lost his French holdings, but Geoffroi is astute enough to know his limitations: he is no great politician, but he is a superb soldier and is known on the tourney circuit throughout France.

He is married, with several children (both legitimate and illegitimate) and few enemies. The lands he holds are split between Arques and a few sizable manors near to the troupe's covenant. Having ignored these distant manors for some time, he is keen to exploit them financially and provide the proper oversight and governance as befitting a baron. It is this effort that brings him into contact with the covenant.

So far, Geoffroi has not knowingly encountered the supernatural except in story and song. He has always held a firm faith in the Lord and is a naturally God-fearing man. But faeries and unicorns? He has so far seen them as idle distractions for children and troubadours. All that is about to change.

Relocating Geoffroi d'Arques

As presented here, Geoffroi d'Arques is a lesser baron holding 10 manors and owing service for 10 knights and 100 infantry men. These lands are split between



Baron Geoffroi d'Arques

The statistics below represent Geoffroi at the beginning of his journey, just as his fascination begins. As a mundane opponent he poses little personal threat to magi and his Ability scores change little throughout their entanglements, with the notable exception of his increasing knowledge of the supernatural realms.

Characteristics: Int +1, Per 0, Pre +1, Com 0, Str +1, Sta +1, Dex +2, Qik 0
Size: 0

Age: 32 (32)

Warping Score: 0 (1)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Landed Noble, Knight, Wealthy, Driven (Learn all there is about the supernatural), Oath of Fealty, Reckless

Personality Traits: Driven +3, Brave +2, Chivalrous +1

Reputations: Prudhomme +3 (nobles of England and France), Excellent soldier +2 (the continental tourney circuit), Lord of Arques +2 (Normandy population)

Combat:

Dodge: Init -2, Attack N/A, Defense +2, Damage N/A

Fist: Init -2, Attack +5, Defense +3, Damage +1

Lance and heater shield (mounted): Init +0, Attack +14, Defense +12, Damage +6

Long sword and heater shield: Init +0, Attack +12, Defense +11, Damage +7

Long sword and heater shield (mounted): Init +0, Attack +15, Defense +14, Damage +7

Great Sword: Init +0, Attack +13, Defense +8, Damage +10

Soak: +11

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Animal Handling 3 (falconry), Area Lore: Arques 3 (nobles), Artes Liberales 2 (arithmetic), Athletics 2 (running), Awareness 3 (battle), Brawl 2 (fist), Charm 2 (first impressions), Chirurgy 1 (sword wounds), Etiquette 3 (noble), French 5 (giving orders), Great Weapon 4 (great sword), Hunt 4 (deer), Intrigue 4 (noble courts), Latin 3 (church ceremonies), Leadership 4 (in battle), Music 2 (singing), Ride 5 (in combat), Single Weapon 5 (long sword), Survival 1 (forests)

Equipment: Superior quality (+1 soak) full chain armor, Superior quality (+1 attack) long sword, Superior quality (+1 defense) heater shield *, Great sword, an appropriate horse for every occasion

Encumbrance: 3 (4)

Appearance: Smart, clean-shaven, erect, and conspicuously wealthy, he wears the finest of everything, from his armor to his traveling clothes, from the sword at his waist to the gold rings upon his fingers. He also ensures that his horse is second to none along with its saddle, tack, and barding.

Geoffroi has the Wealthy Virtue, which allows him three seasons a year to spend as he wishes. This translates into a total of 20 experience points each year, which is gained as follows:

- Two seasons of being taught, assuming a quality of 7, for a total of 14 experience points across one or two Abilities
- One season of practice, assuming a quality of 4, in one martial Ability
- One season of exposure, giving 2 experience points in an Ability appropriate to running his estate, such as the local language, or in Order of Hermes Lore as he begins to learn more about his Hermetic neighbors.

After improving his grasp of Latin, he gains tuition in the four realm lore Abilities as soon as he is able, which requires suitable tutors. But one thing he *cannot* do is learn any of the Supernatural Abilities that his guests bring to his court. It is a source of frustration to him, but he contents himself by retaining those with gifts so that he may call upon them at will. In truth, as driven as he is to learn about magic, he is too much the master of his domain to serve as the apprentice that the various initiations demand. And so they fail.

* The bonuses for superior arms and armor have been factored into the combat statistics above.

Ability Block (Supernatural)

The Ability Block Flaw prevents a character from learning Abilities of a given category, such as martial or academic. Applying it to supernatural Abilities is a potentially contentious use of the Flaw as the learning of supernatural abilities normally requires one of two things: a Virtue such as The Gift or True Faith, or an Initiation to grant the character the Virtue associated with the desired Ability.

For characters with The Gift, this particular Flaw could prove too restrictive, while for others with no intention to learn Supernatural Abilities, the Flaw provides no penalty at all. As such, use of this Flaw should be carefully considered by your troupe.

In Geoffroi's case, this restriction is integral to his character. He attempts a number of Initiations but gains no ben-

efit, largely through being unwilling to fully commit to the change in outlook and behavior implied by the Initiation — remember, his status means that he is not good student material. You may decide that this is an appropriate use of the Ability Block (Supernatural) Flaw, in which case you should balance it with the Temporal Influence Virtue to represent his political clout.

Useful Resources

Geoffroi's story provides troupes with the opportunity to explore material presented in a range of supplements. Of particular relevance to Geoffroi himself is *Lords of Men*, which, as well as exploring the lives of the nobility, contains a chapter discussing Hermetic interference in lordly affairs. And as Geoffroi is intent on bringing wizards, sorcerers, and beasts from all of the realms to his court, each of the realm supplements and *Hedge Magic Revised Edition* can be used for these workers of magic. In addition, *Art & Academe* presents material supporting mundane

experimental philosophy and astrology and the works of supernatural artists, while *City & Guild* supports magical craftsmen.

Given the number of different hedge traditions available in *Ars Magica Fifth Edition*, storyguides should use as much or as little as they like from these resources, or indeed any of the Tribunal books. Geoffroi provides an opportunity for troupes to explore these traditions as any character touched by the supernatural would likely find a place within Geoffroi's court, from a faerie-blooded fisherman to a Levantine sahir.

his original home in Arques and his manors near the troupe's covenant. Geoffroi has not yet been resident in his new manor for long enough to learn the local language. If your saga is set in Normandy or near Arques, then simply move Geoffroi's original holdings elsewhere.

However, given the far-ranging political connections enjoyed by the nobility, Geoffroi may feasibly appear as a noble almost anywhere. There's a degree of flexibility in what rank Geoffroi enjoys, where he's based, and how much power and influence he commands. But at minimum, he should be wealthy enough that he can devote time to his newfound pursuits, secure enough in his lands that he need not be concerned about his neighbors, and hold lands both locally and some distance away, in order to allow for frequent periods of absence.

The lands near the covenant may have only recently fallen into his hands: as a dowry from his marriage that he has yet to exploit; inherited from his father or an uncle; or won through right of conquest or tourney. For whatever reason, the lands have recently become important to him, and Geoffroi is now keen to exploit them.

Although Geoffroi's story plays out over a number of years, Geoffroi can easily be added into existing sagas. All that's needed is for him to inherit some land near the troupe's covenant and decide to take an active interest.

Geoffroi's Family

Both Geoffroi's current and future success among the local nobility depend in large part upon his family. He has made an advantageous marriage and fathered several children whom he can marry off when they reach maturity to consolidate his power and wealth. But family can also be a liability, especially as Geoffroi incautiously pursues his supernatural fascination.

The *Lords of Men* supplement provides a way to randomly generate a character's living children (page 9). Using these rules as a base, Geoffroi has the following offspring at the start of his story:

- An *illegitimate* son aged 12 by a woman of low birth. His existence is openly acknowledged and he has a Loyal trait of +2 in Geoffroi's favor. Named Guillaume, his education is currently taking place on the Normandy tourney circuit.
- An *illegitimate* son aged 10 by a married woman of rank. He has a Loyalty trait of 0, probably resulting from the resentment of his mother toward Geoffroi. Named François, he is a member of his unknowing stepfather's household. Geoffroi and the boy's mother suspect the truth of his birth, but they cannot be sure.

- A *legitimate* son of seven years of age with a Loyalty trait of +2, which may change when he is older and understands his place in relation to his brothers. His name is Alenard and he is as demanding a young prince as can be found.
- Two *legitimate* daughters, ages 5 and 3, who for their formative years can be considered to have a Loyalty trait of +2. Their names are Joie and Violette.

Mother to the legitimate children, and very much part of Geoffroi's household, is Ysabeau. Statistics have been provided for Ysabeau below.

It may be important to track the ages of the above children as details of Geoffroi's family have the potential to provide unscrupulous or cunning characters with leverage with which they can influence Geoffroi's behavior.

Geoffroi's Court

Geoffroi's court at first looks much like the courts of other nobles of wealth and rank. But even before his obsession with magic, it is clear that he has an eye for the unusual. His arms and armor, for instance, are of superior quality, an indication that he is prepared to pay for the best.

The key theme for this antagonist is the accumulation of magical resources. As such, every time Geoffroi is introduced into a story after his initial encounter, either as antagonist, protagonist, or supporting character, he should have some obviously new magical accoutrement to which he is keen to draw attention. Geoffroi himself will certainly draw parallels with Sicily: scholars from multiple cultures — or in this case magical traditions — welcomed and working within the same court.

The two key mundane members of Geoffroi's court are his steward Claude, and Geoffroi's wife Ysabeau. Claude is loyal to his master to the bitter end and cannot be turned by mundane means. But Ysabeau's primary concern is for the safety and prosperity of her children and she could potentially be a weak link to be exploited by the player characters.

The Magical Court

As the years pass, Geoffroi's court comes to be dominated by those who know a little about magic, have supernatural abilities, or are members of a hedge tradition of some form. The culmination of this is an eclectic mix of magicians, each keen to learn from strange and unfamiliar traditions. For the most part, since each hedge tradition either requires an individual's Gift to be opened in a particular way or for the individual to undergo ritual Initiations, this is restricted to exchanging knowledge of the four realms, knowledge of the Order of Hermes, and the history and capability of each member tradition.

Most of the members of Geoffroi's council are unGifted members of their traditions. This is simply due to the negative social implications of The Gift. But there may be one or two who benefit from the Gentle Gift Virtue, and these would likely take prominent and guiding roles within the council.

However, as enlightened as the council sounds, its prime communal concern is

extracting as much from Geoffroi as possible. They act as his counselors and guide him, but at the same time they manipulate him and ensure that he sees the world as they wish him to see it. As long as they provide him with trinkets and baubles he provides them with security and resources with which to expand their arts; they enjoy the effects of the Wealthy Virtue while members of his court, which brings with it an extra season to spend in study.

Sample Hedge Wizards

There are more potential hedge wizard characters than can be accommodated in this chapter, but some sample ideas along with some specific goals are presented here. Each of these hedge wizards, and each of those not listed that you might introduce, brings their own resources and creates yet more at Geoffroi's request. You can assume one average-quality tractatus on Magic, Ferie, or Infernal Lore for each practitioner at court. You can also assume that astrologi-

cal inceptions and philosophical formulae will be developed at a rate of one or two each year. Some hedge wizards have the power to enrich objects of virtue, and you can assume a new enriched object once per year. Other enchantments may take longer, so assume 10 levels of enchantments per year. Specific examples are provided at the end of this chapter.

LEARNED MAGICIAN

Ádhamh Brathair (EWE BRO-hur) is a learned magician from Hibernia with the lofty aim of developing a unified theory of magic built on sound philosophical principles. He applies himself to researching the magic of his fellow wizards and to the breakthroughs needed for his new grand theory.

GOETIC SORCERER

Desperate to escape a dark fate, Dominici Viterbo tries to hide himself within the council. But he cannot outrun the de-

The Lady Ysabeau

Ysabeau is Geoffroi's loyal wife and mother to his three legitimate children. As a minor supporting character she has few Virtues and Flaws listed but storyguides should feel free to enhance the character if they want to make her more prominent.

Characteristics: Int +1, Per 0, Pre +2, Com +2, Str -1, Sta -1, Dex +2, Qik -1

Size: 0

Age: 25 (25)

Warping Score: 0 (0)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Gentlewoman; Educated, Privileged Upbringing, Temporal Influence; Dependent; Humble

Personality Traits: Humble +2, Protective +2, Honest +1

Reputations: Geoffroi's wife 3 (within the county)

Combat:

Dodge: Init -1, Attack N/A, Defense -1, Damage N/A

Fist: Init -1, Attack +2, Defense -1,

Damage -1

Soak: -1

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Animal Handling 1 (horses), Area Lore: Arques 2 (personalities), Artes Liberales 2 (music), Awareness 2 (alertness), Carouse 2 (staying sober), Charm 5 + 1* (first impressions), Etiquette 5 (nobility), Folk Ken 2 (nobles), Guile 3 (avoiding offence), Latin 4 (church ceremonies), Leadership 2 (servants), Local Language 3 (local dialect), Music 3 (sing), Norman French 5 (Arques dialect), Organization Lore: Household 3 (personalities), Ride 3 (recreation)

Equipment: Elegant Gown, superior quality gold necklace

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: Ysabeau is an attractive

young woman who carries herself with confidence around her staff but is both humble and demure in front of her husband and visitors to the court. She is always dressed elegantly and one of her favored possessions is a superior quality golden necklace, a recent gift from her husband.

Throughout the covenant's dealings with Geoffroi and his court, Ysabeau's priority is the protection of her children. She loves her husband but as his obsession with the supernatural gathers pace she can be persuaded to favor her children's future over that of her husband.

Ysabeau knows of Guillaume, Geoffroi's eldest illegitimate son, but does not know of Francois.

* The +1 bonus is granted by the superior quality gold necklace she wears. This applies to all first impression Charm rolls.

mons of his past and they soon find him. In teaching others, perhaps he can make right the mistakes he made and cleanse his own arts of corruption.

THE DIABOLIST

Hannelore, a student of the Maleficia, brings her own infernal magic to the council seeking protection from Hermetic enemies that she made in the past. Wanting a direct route to influence, she looks to supplant Ysabeau in Geoffroi's affections.

ITINERANT SAHIR

Jabir Al-Qazwini is an Arabic magus who has traveled from afar in search of the "council of the wise" promised to him by a

powerful spirit of the sands. Believing he has found it, he stays to learn but seems oblivious to Geoffroi's decline and the growing power of the council.

DISGUISED FAERIE

A faerie in the guise of a wise woman, taking the name Dorothy Anning, using pretenses and powers in place of magical ability, infiltrates the council to learn how the world of men uses its power for the betterment of others.

FAILED APPRENTICE

Denied his rightful place within the Order, Carles Peregrinus, a failed Hermetic apprentice, finds new friends in

Geoffroi's growing council, a council he intends to dominate with his strong *Entrancement* power.

THE ELEMENTALIST

Edwin Locke views meeting practitioners of other traditions with academic interest. He is the most likely candidate to approach other wizards and attract them to Geoffroi's court.

ADDITIONAL CONCEPTS

Others touched by magic, but less powerful than those above and unlikely to have a place within the council, may include:

Claude de Fécamp

Claude is Geoffroi's steward, a trusted retainer tasked with many of Geoffroi's affairs. The players are often as likely to encounter Claude as they are to encounter Geoffroi himself.

Characteristics: Int +2, Per +2, Pre -1, Com 0, Str 0, Sta +1, Dex -1, Qik -1

Divine Resistance: 15

Size: 0

Age: 28 (28)

Warping Score: 0 (4)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Clerk; Guardian Angel; Clear Thinker, Sharp Ears, Strong-Willed; Oath of Fealty; Missing Hand, Noncombatant, Temperate, Weak Characteristics

Personality Traits: Loyal +3, Taciturn +2, Frivolous -1

Reputations: Geoffroi's right-hand man 2 (within Geoffroi's court)

Combat:

Dodge: Init -4, Attack N/A, Defense -4, Damage N/A

Soak: +1/+6*

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Area Lore: Arques 3 (personalities), Area Lore: Local 1 (geography), Artes Liberales 2 (logic), Profession: Steward 4 (noble manors), Church Lore 3 (personalities), Local Language 5 (local dialect), Etiquette 2 (nobility), Folk Ken 3 (nobles), Guile 2 (discerning lies about his master), Intrigue 2 (alliances), Latin 4 (academic usage), Leadership 2 (household staff), Norman French 5 (County of Rouen dialect), Philosophiae 2 (moral philosophy), Theology 3 (biblical knowledge)

Equipment: A simple habit in the style of a monk, wooden crucifix, pouch of money usually filled with sufficient for most expenses.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: Claude is of average height and slight build. His head is shaved clean and his face is long and dour. But his most distinctive feature is his right arm, missing at the elbow. He wears his habit with the right sleeve folded and pinned to fully contain what remains.

Claude de Fécamp was schooled at a Benedictine monastery, but has been part of Geoffroi's household for the last six

years. His first year with the baron was a troubled time, and Claude resented both his master's wealth and his own subservient position. He angered many, treated others with contempt and scant regard, and made few friends. One evening he was set upon by persons unknown. He was severely beaten and would have been killed but for Divine intervention. An angel enfolded him in its light and confronted Claude with the mistakes that had brought him so low.

This event changed Claude's life forever. He reaffirmed his loyalty to Geoffroi, put aside his wayward habits, and dedicated himself to his duties. And in return, the angel promised that Claude would be protected from the world so long as he remained true. Those in Geoffroi's household now barely remember Claude as he was and only pay respect to the man he has become: loyal and temperate.

* Claude's soak score includes the +5 bonus granted by his guardian angel. This same guardian angel also grants Claude a magic resistance of +15 aligned with the Divine while he acts in accordance with God's inflexible will.

- A **mundane astrologer** and philosopher skilled in the creation of astrological inceptions who wants to learn true magic.
- A **blind beggar cursed with prophetic visions** that haunt his dreams. What he would give for one sight to be exchanged for another.
- A **young boy who sees ghosts**, and the mother who spirited him away from their frightened village.
- A **faerie-touched armorer** with exceptional skill, who needs somewhere to work, funds to refine his workshop, and someone to deal with the faerie that continually tries to steal back its tools.

Aims and Motivations

Geoffroi wants to learn everything he can about the supernatural world. Having had his eyes opened to the possibilities that exist, he wants to explore the things that his peers ignore, he wants to embrace ideas that others find disturbing, and he wants to support practitioners of arts that other nobles and churchmen consider dangerous.

His motivations for this are threefold. First, there is simple curiosity. For most people, of any social standing, the supernatural is only a source of stories and folklore alone. And although almost everyone has had some kind of brush with the supernatural, few take an interest and most do their best to avoid it. But Geoffroi is an intelligent and inquisitive man, blessed with large secure estates, and the time and resources to devote to his interests.

Second, nobles should be seen to use their wealth in displays of conspicuous consumption. Nobles often sponsor artists, build castles, or fund churches and cathedrals. All these things provide projects in which a noble can invest and produce a lasting legacy. For Geoffroi, the art of magic is no different. He sees sponsoring a magical craftsman to be more prestigious than a mundane artist, creating an enchanted painting rather than a thing of dull and lifeless materials. As Geoffroi sees

it, a noble who can command the work of an enchanter or wizard can become famous. He could provide unusual or even magical items as tournament prizes, generous gifts to political allies. He can also maintain a subtle threat to those who count themselves as opponents.

And third, there's the sheer utility of funding the work of magicians. Geoffroi believes that he can direct their work for the good of his estates. If he can find the right magician, his crops could grow faster and stronger. Find the right astrologer, and the thoughts, intentions, and weaknesses of political opponents can be laid bare. And by employing the right craftsman, he can secure victory on the fields of tournament and battle by using enchanted arms and armor.

First Encounter

The first encounter with Geoffroi is intended to introduce him as a reasonable, curious, and educated man. It should affirm his role as a strong and secure landed noble, but also make clear his lack of experience with the supernatural. The encounter should also conclude in such a way that Geoffroi is left to ponder the possibilities of the supernatural world. He does not need to part company with the covenant as an ally, but neither should he be an immediate enemy.

Sample First Encounters

The following ideas are all suitable for early interactions with Geoffroi as he starts to understand that there are worlds

Story Seed: The Ambitious Medicus

An itinerant doctor, skilled in the elemental arts, enters the noble's court and makes himself very much at home. None seem to have a bad word to say about him and a sense of levity spreads throughout the court. Of course, they've all been brought under his spell as he manipulates

their humors, inclining them toward the sanguine and ingratiating himself into the bargain. Even when the noble's riches start going missing, none suspect such a good friend of the court — apart from the phlegmatic steward, who resolves to find someone who will listen to him.

beyond his mundane comprehension. The storyguide should select one of the following encounter ideas to be the first encounter with Geoffroi, and then decide which of the others can be used to explore Geoffroi and his lands.

- A magical stag flees Geoffroi's woodland chase and arrives at the covenant, pursued by Geoffroi and his hounds. It is not powerful enough to overcome the covenant's Aegis and so is trapped, unable to reach safety and unable to outrun the noble's dogs. The stag has little to offer to the magi, given its low might and lack of power, but can the magi stand by and watch while the noble kills a beast from the magic realm? Geoffroi, of course, demands the return of the stag. But he is curious as to why the beast ran to the covenant, who the strange scholars are, and what kind of arrangement they might reach.
- A case of demonic possession is suspected in one of Geoffroi's manors, and every priest and monk available has been unable to release the poor victim. Geoffroi goes looking for specialists in the field, but once the magi from the covenant have been brought in, it is soon apparent that the demonic spirit has moved to a new host. The magi must find the demon and deal with it before its plan reaches fruition, and it is taken inside the covenant by an unwitting grog.
- A farmer in Geoffroi's estate was woken one night by a great crashing sound coming from his hayloft. He found the roof caved in, and the walls battered almost to the ground. As he searched for the cause of the damage, he found a large stone, as smooth and as rounded as an egg. But he could not



chapter, but at least one from each category is recommended, to show a progression in Geoffroi's story. Many of the items can be repurposed as news updates to keep an interested covenant council informed as to his actions; the information may gained through infiltration, intrigue, or magical scrying.

Geoffroi's Magical Research

The following events represent Geoffroi's growing interest in and connection with the supernatural.

THE LIBRARY

The first stage in Geoffroi's growing interest is to accumulate books discussing, and artifacts from, the four realms. He approaches the covenant in order to buy books or copies of books to stock a growing library. In particular, he is intent on acquiring books of spells, believing that all he need do to cast them himself is to learn them. The following events can be used to show Geoffroi's acquisitions:

- The noble attempts to buy works from the covenant, commission new works, or acquire a tutor to teach him about the magic realm. If the covenant refuses, though he is angered, he asks that he be recommended to another school of wizards, in the hope that they might help him.
- Geoffroi has made contact with a merchant in the city who claims to be able to acquire magical texts. But the noble, mindful of his inexperience, asks the covenant to act on his behalf in verifying the authenticity of the texts. He is prepared to pay a handsome sum for genuine works, but needs a skilled eye to evaluate them. The merchant does indeed have texts to sell, but they discuss Infernal Lore. Do the magi really want these to fall into Geoffroi's hands? In fact, do they want them to fall into anyone's hands? And how did they come into the merchant's possession?

lift it. Nor could his neighbor. And nor could a team of oxen tethered to the stone. Geoffroi was called to see the stone, but has no answer. He cannot simply leave his tenants to deal with the problem, and so must seek people who might have some experience in such matters. What is the stone, who or what left it there, and how can it be safely moved?

- A strange leper from a distant land passed through Geoffroi's holdings not long ago. He claimed to be on a pilgrimage, and was seeking alms and the kindness of strangers to support himself. Geoffroi ordered that he be driven from his estates, and that no man, woman, or child give the man aid. They say that the leper cursed Geoffroi as he left, and his son has since taken deathly ill, with seemingly no cure to be had. And then Geoffroi was told of some scholars who may be able to help. Can the magi of the covenant lift the curse? Or do they need to track down this leper (in truth, a wandering magus of House Tytalus)

and force him to end whatever strange magic he has woven?

The first encounter with Geoffroi should leave him wanting to know more about the worlds beyond the mundane, but with a feeling of distrust toward his Gifted benefactors, and a sense that perhaps there might be others more amenable.

Methods

The methods Geoffroi uses to conduct his search for magical knowledge include acquiring books, tutors, items of virtue, faeries, and so forth, as well as introducing new arrivals to his court. But this focus on the supernatural is balanced by a growing neglect of his mundane responsibilities. In developing Geoffroi and his story, it is important that story seeds from both sides are represented.

Storyguides should not feel obliged to run all of the stories suggested in this

- Geoffroi's messengers start collecting stories of magical auras and regiones. He then decides to visit one. He is gone a week before his steward Claude approaches the covenant for help in finding his master, who is eventually tracked to the court of a powerful faerie. Geoffroi finds himself locked in a game of chess, with the lives of his companions at stake. Can the magi save the noble and teach him not to meddle in things that don't concern him?

At the end of this first period of Geoffroi's interest, he has started a collection of grimoires, bestiaries, and strange and unusual objects. This collection could be studied as individual books or as realia (*Covenants*, page 102) by enterprising magi.

THE HUNT

The hunt is a key leisure activity for the nobility, so it is an obvious choice when Geoffroi looks to bring magic to his court.

- Geoffroi asks the covenant to supply him with, or breed on his behalf, a pack of hunting dogs with unnaturally sharp hunting skills. As ever, he is willing to pay. If he has had contact with any of the covenant's familiars in the past, he is unwilling to take no for an answer, and is likely to become belligerent.
- If Geoffroi and the covenant have clashed over the previous event, he approaches the covenant again in a more conciliatory manner. Having heard stories of a sounder of wild boar, apparently touched by the faerie realm, he invites the magi on a hunt with the intention of capturing as many of the animals as possible. By this stage, Geoffroi has learned that wizards do sometimes prize certain parts of magical animals, and he offers them the first choice of cuts. If the magi refuse the offer, the hunting party eventually returns, having suffered casualties and lost one of their number in the woods. Can the magi now be persuaded to help?
- Recognizing the danger of facing magical animals on their own territory, he intends to capture some alive, and stock his own estate with them.

He casts around for news of beasts of virtue or of legend, and then offers a bounty for any brought to him alive. Does the covenant have any beastly allies that might be endangered by his actions? Do they have any vis sources that might be put at risk? On the other hand, are they happy instead to use Geoffroi's resources to hunt one of their own deadly foes?

- A young man claims sanctuary at a local church, having run from Geoffroi's lands. After staying under the protection of the church for several days, he pleads with the priest to help him reach the nearby covenant. Geoffroi's men stationed outside the church will not let him leave unmolested, claiming that he is a thief and a murderer. The priest asks the magi for help in protecting the man. Once in the covenant's protection, the man confesses that he is cursed to take the form of a wolf upon the full moon, and that Geoffroi intends him to be the prized quarry in a magical hunt. Eventually, Geoffroi arrives demanding the release of the accused into his custody.

At the end of this series of encounters, the magi should be under no illusion that Geoffroi is taking his interest a little too seriously for comfort. While not yet dangerous to the covenant, he is becoming a nuisance.

THE TOURNAMENT

The tournament is where a noble can truly show off his wealth, popularity, and influence. As an entrant, the noble can take to the field at the head of a large retinue and team of knights fighting under his colors. But as a sponsor and patron of the tourney, he can dictate the terms of the event, decide upon winners and losers, and demonstrate his largesse by awarding sumptuous prizes. For this purpose, Geoffroi commissions a number of prizes from the covenant magi. He asks for an enchanted sword, a golden cup of grandeur, a horse of virtue fit for riding, and a magical hawk, though he is also open to suggestions for alternatives. He also inquires about magically enhanced entertainments, so that he may present the most unusual and surprising feast to his guests. He is willing to pay handsomely for any assistance.

Where and When is the Tournament Held?

Geoffroi plans his tournament a year in advance, which should give the magi time to work on any laboratory projects that they choose to undertake on his behalf. It is likely to take place in the spring or summer, to take advantage of the finer weather.

If your covenant is in the Stonehenge Tribunal, or another where tournaments are looked down upon by the

kings and princes of the land, then Geoffroi will ask the magi what he must do to secure favor with the king and gain permission to host the tournament. This is an outright request to use magic in order to spy on a powerful noble of the realm. If the magi refuse or are unable to find out for him, Geoffroi will approach an astrologer who will help through horoscopes and astrological inceptions.

Story Seed: The Magical Swordsmith

The tournament is an opportunity to show Geoffroi beginning to find his own magical resources with the introduction of a magical swordsmith. He will introduce the smith to the covenant, and ask that he be permitted to work within the "beneficial air" inherent to the covenant. The swordsmith is happy to discuss his

art with learned men, though he himself is a peasant and somewhat daunted by the wealthy, especially those with The Gift. Is there anything that the Hermetic magi could learn from the craftsman? Having seen his art in action, are they happy to release him back to Geoffroi, or could they find another use for him?

Nearer to the time of the tournament, he also asks for specific aid for his own team of knights. And of course, he offers the covenant an invitation to enter the tournament under their own banner.

But being seen to help Geoffroi in this manner may prompt his rivals to ask the same of other wizards, Hermetic or not, which may create new rivalries (friendly or otherwise), or raise even more accusations of interfering in the mundane world.

Storyguides may find the material presented in *Lords of Men* (page 64) useful if the covenant chooses to become involved in the tournament.

THE COUNCIL OF WIZARDS

Geoffroi finally assembles a council of wizards within his court. Some are destined

to be transient, passing through after performing some service for the noble, but others remain to enjoy his ongoing patronage. The council has the potential to pose significant problems to the covenant in its own right, so the covenant gains the Rival External Relations Hook (*Covenants*, page 22).

- Geoffroi extends an invitation to join his council to the covenant's magi. He describes a utopia of shared learning and peaceful understanding — under his direction, of course. He offers the support and funding of his court if the magi share their magic with his council. Could pride or Hermetic Law permit such a relationship?
- Attracted by the talk of a land conducive to magic, one of the cunning folk (*Hedge Magic Revised Edition*, page 101) is drawn to the area. But his magical air

and strange foreign ways upset some of the locals, and he is held as a witch. The covenant and Geoffroi's court hear of the event at the same time, and both are intent on investigating.

- The hedge wizards send representation of their own to the covenant, eager to learn Bonisagus' theory of magic from the foremost users of magic in Mythic Europe. In exchange, they offer insights into their own unique gifts. The insights they offer could expand Hermetic magic in valuable ways, but when the magi refuse to teach the hedge wizards the *Parma Magica*, what do they offer in its place?
- Geoffroi promises his son Alenard to one of the magicians at his court. The Lady Ysabeau reaches out to the covenant, through a trusted messenger, to plead for their assistance in preventing

Edwin Locke, the Elemental

Edwin Locke is an academic from the north of England, and is a prominent and well-known tutor at York's cathedral school.

Locke has been created as an un-Gifted Mythic Companion and may take four more Virtues, which must be balanced by a further two Flaws.

Characteristics: Int +1, Per 0, Pre +2, Com 0, Str 0, Sta +2, Dex 0, Qik 0

Size: 0

Age: 40 (40)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 1 (8)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Magister in Artibus; (Theurgical) Summoning, (Theurgical) Controlling; Clear Thinker, Elementalist Air, Elementalist Earth, Elementalist Fire, Elementalist Water, Luck, Puissant Controlling; Overconfident; Weak Elemental Resistance, Ability Block (Martial), Mentor (Walter de Gray)

Personality Traits: Authoritative +2, Ordered +1, Choleric +2, Melancholic +2, Phlegmatic +2, Sanguine +2

Reputations: Tutor at York Cathedral School (among academics) 2, Elementalist of Repute (among elemen-

talist societies) 1

Combat:

Dodge: Init +0, Attack N/A, Defense +0, Damage N/A

Fist: Init +0, Attack +0, Defense +0, Damage +0

Bludgeon: Init -1, Attack +2, Defense +0, Damage +2

Soak: +2

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Artes Liberales 5 (grammar), Carouse 2 (games of chance), Charm 3 (being witty), Etiquette 1 (the Church), Folk Ken 2 (townsfolk), Greek 3 (prose), Latin 5 (academic usage), Leadership 2 (students), Magic Lore 2 (spirits), Order of Hermes Lore 1 (history), Philosophiae 5 (natural philosophy), Teaching 4 (Philosophiae), Area Lore: York 1 (personalities)

Arts: (Theurgical) Controlling 15 +3, (Theurgical) Summoning 15

Difficult Arts: Elementalist Air 4, Elementalist Earth 3, Elementalist Fire 4, Elementalist Water 3

Equipment: Philosophical texts, astrolabe.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Vis: 4 pawns each of Aquam, Auram, Ignem, and Terram vis in the form of glass-like crystals. They are kept within small bottles of a preservative oil and contained within a custom-made wooden case.

Appearance: Locke is a man well into his middle age, with thinning gray hair. He has the look of a confident and determined man, and carries himself with the bearing of one constantly left unmused by the antics of errant students.

Locke doesn't so much hide his magical knowledge from his colleagues and students as simply not discuss it. He is sure that some know or suspect, but he is content to live two lives: one within the cathedral sphere, and one in the world of spirits and supernatural beasts. It is fair to say that he knows little of the supernatural realms themselves, but does understand that there are other magical traditions. He has heard of the Order of Hermes, and recognizes their prominence.

He views the chance to meet other practitioners of magic as an intellectual challenge.

her son being subjected a magical apprenticeship; by rights, he is his father's heir. This situation proves the extent to which Geoffroi has lost perspective.

- With word of this council of wizards having reached neighboring counties, the covenant finds itself the subject of a Quaesitorial investigation into the support they have been showing this mundane noble and his court wizards. But the Quaesitor, and the magi she brings with her, seem to be taking the opportunity to settle old scores against the covenant.

STOLEN RESOURCES

Feeling secure under Geoffroi's patronage, the council of wizards starts to exert its influence. The following events may be employed to represent their growing audacity.

- Some of the covenant's vis sources are stripped bare, perhaps with the potential to damage them in the long term. The trail leads back to a hedge wizard working in Geoffroi's court. The wizard enjoys the protection of the court, and while apologetic, he cannot return the materials as they have been used. Geoffroi offers to mediate, and suggests that, if all of the covenant's resources were known to him, he could ensure that they too enjoyed his protection. Can an accommodation be reached?
- Emboldened by Geoffroi's support, the council of wizards decrees that any supernatural auras, beasts of virtue, or Gifted children found within Geoffroi's lands belong to them, and them alone. This comes just as one of the covenant's magi hears about a child exhibiting signs of The Gift. A contest over the child would bring the covenant and Geoffroi's court wizards into open conflict.
- A delegation from a nearby covenant arrives to remonstrate over the actions of Geoffroi and his band of wizards. It appears that their own vis sources have been raided and, given Geoffroi's apparent connection to the player covenant, they are being held responsible. The other covenant wants reparation for their loss and Geoffroi brought to account.

THE THEFT OF PARMA

In a move that is bound to endanger both the covenant and Geoffroi's council of wizards, one of the wizards in Geoffroi's court conceives of a plan to learn the Parma Magica. Can the hedge wizards abduct a magus of the Order and force him to teach the Parma Magica? Does this constitute the will of the council, or are there rogue elements present?

Assuming that the teaching of Parma Magica to these hedge wizards is even possible (The Gift is necessary to use it, so most of them cannot), how much of an Arcane Ability do you need to learn before you can practice? A score of 1 is probably the minimum that the student needs to be taught by a teacher. This is something that can be achieved in a single season. But the rogue hedge wizards need first to identify a target, and then somehow force him to teach one of the hedge wizards for a full season. An apprentice may appear an easy target, but a swift response is sure to follow, regardless of who is taken.

This story idea provides an opportunity to play things from the other side. Given a set of hedge wizards from Geoffroi's court, how do the players go about abducting someone from their own covenant? Can they plan around the obvious magic resistance provided by Aegis and Parma? And how do they cover their tracks and keep their mark safe and servile for a season?

The prospect of the Parma falling into the hands of hedge wizards is a significant threat to the Order, and the Order would stop at nothing to stop such a thing from happening. Doing so could bring swift retribution, followed by a larger debate to identify those responsible and decide upon their punishment. This is perhaps one reason for the troupe's covenant to deal with the matter quickly and quietly, before word gets out.

The Neglect of Geoffroi's Manors

As a wealthy noble, Geoffroi need only spend one season each year overseeing his estates. But when even this is in-

terrupted by his magical studies and the company of his court wizards his people begin to suffer.

FINES AND TAXES

Geoffroi begins to tax his people hard in order to fund his growing interest in the supernatural, particularly by levying frequent and costly tallage. This causes hardship across the region, as those buying, selling, or moving goods are forced to pay exorbitant tolls and taxes.

- The general hardship can be used as a rationale for sending the troupe on brief stories elsewhere. For instance, when the covenant finds supplies hard to come by, they may be tempted to attend the fair that has just sprung up on the other side of the county. The hardship felt by the covenant can also be represented through the Wealth & Poverty rules in the *Covenants* supplement. If you are using these rules, increase the points cost of each type of inhabitant (as per the table on *Covenants*, page 63) by 1.
- A diversionary tale suited to grogs and companions sees them investigating the theft of crops or other goods from the villages under the covenant's protection. The evidence leads back to one of Geoffroi's estates, where the new tax collector is extracting more from the starving locals than they can possibly pay.
- Others have been driven to outright banditry and, having successfully captured a Redcap messenger, the bandit leader is enjoying her own taste of magic with the Redcap's enchanted devices. Tales of a bandit leader wielding powerful spells may at first lead the covenant to Geoffroi's court. But once the truth is discovered, how long can the stolen devices help the bandit avoid capture before the magi close in on her?

A POOR RULER

It is not just the covenant that suffers the expanding effect of Geoffroi's excesses. His neighbors suffer the same rise in banditry

and theft originating in Geoffroi's lands. This can be represented by the following events.

- The Lady Ysabeau is sent to one of Geoffroi's outlying estates. Her daughters are sent with her, but her son remains with his father. She has been banished from Geoffroi's side after daring to argue with his decision to give the boy to one of his magicians. The covenant's grogs, patrolling their master's border, encounter Ysabeau and her daughters being taken under guard to her confinement. Having picked up some understanding of the arcane, Ysabeau manages to pass an Arcane Connection to herself to the grogs. Do the magi take the bait and use it to find out what's going on?
- Magi, companions, or grogs traveling into lands neighboring Geoffroi's are stopped by men wearing the colors of a noble rival to Geoffroi. They want to search the party for anything suspicious that might be sign of harmful intent toward their own lord.
- The covenant is mistaken for being part of Geoffroi's magical court, and is held responsible for leading him astray. Agitators are stirring up the local population and directing their anger toward the covenant. Is someone taking advantage of the situation simply to cause trouble for the covenant? If so, what are the magi being distracted from?
- A large number of serfs, including simple day workers, farmers, and families, turn up at the covenant asking to serve them as their own lord has treated them too harshly. But Geoffroi's steward Claude arrives soon after with a host of armed men and demands that the serfs be returned to his master's lands. He promises that only the ring-leaders will be punished.

THE EXPULSION OF CLAUDE

Blind to the virtues of his loyal steward, Geoffroi expels Claude from his court and replaces him with a steward gifted in the magical arts, perhaps the elemental Edwain Locke (detailed earlier). Claude returns to Normandy and retires to a mon-

astery, but he takes with him knowledge of the magicians at Geoffroi's court that the magi might find useful. In particular, he has learned enough to collect Arcane Connections from them, some of which are still active. He intends to keep his own counsel on matters, but he could be persuaded to part with the connections if he thought it was in Geoffroi's interest.

THE PEASANTS' REVOLT

The growing anger within Geoffroi's estates starts to spill over into neighboring lands, including those belonging to the covenant. The peasant classes look upon the harsh taxation and the unwillingness of the other nobles to rein in this errant baron, and the seeds of revolt are sown.

But the revolt is being fueled by countless demons of resentment, ambition, and jealousy, and somewhere in the middle of the mob is one of the covenant's companions. Overcome by Infernal forces, he is possessed by a demon, and is apparently planning and leading the mob's actions. A manor house is burned down, a mill ransacked and destroyed, a chapel looted, and soon farms, barns, livestock, and granaries are targeted — all things designed to hit the peasantry hardest.

Unless the covenant intervenes, it gains the *War Zone* External Relations Hook (*Covenants*, page 22).

Investigation

The encounters described in the previous section all naturally lead back to Geoffroi's court, and in that respect, there is little investigation required to discover the cause of the covenant's problems. But there is still much to learn that may be useful to the covenant when deciding how to deal with Geoffroi. As mentioned earlier, the story seeds are presented such that a story arc is suggested: Geoffroi starts as a positive figure, but then starts to become obsessed, ultimately becoming a danger to himself, his vassals, and his neighbors.

The covenant understands the potential for problems, but so far they may not un-

derstand what his aims are. The following sections present options that the covenant may use to gain insight into why Geoffroi is doing what he does, who is most influential with him, and what options they have for bringing the obsession to an end.

Infiltrate the Council

The covenant may choose to infiltrate the council of wizards and gain firsthand knowledge of its members and its workings. This can be done quite openly, and any members of the court will be afforded the respect owing to their status and power. But the council is expected to act, at least partly, upon the wishes of its patron. What happens when the magi refuse, citing their Hermetic oath? Are they able to come to an arrangement that maintains their obligations under the peripheral code and still serves Geoffroi's court?

Scrying and Spying

While the infiltration option above involves sending someone in openly to become part of the court, this option uses magic and the art of intrigue to keep the council under observation.

Infiltration allows the covenant to learn more of the openly discussed plans, both those discussed with Geoffroi and those concerning him. But spying or magical scrying may allow the covenant to learn more secret plans. These may include alliances within the council: who sides with whom, who is tolerated, who is considered weak or dangerous, and which traditions might be attracted to join — all things discussed and plotted outside the council chamber, in quiet cloisters and darkened rooms.

This information could be used to cause division within the council, ultimately making it easier to deal with.

Arcane Connections secretly taken from individuals or from places within Geoffroi's manor allow the magi to listen in on and even directly affect or control members of Geoffroi's court. Magi may wish to design new spells to improve their capability in this regard.

The Lady of the Manor

Near the end of Geoffroi's story, the Lady Ysabeau does not like what her husband has become. She is scared for her children, concerned for those who live under his rule, and worried that he will lose his lands either to the wizards he consorts with or other knights come to pick over the bones of his failed estates.

Ysabeau wants to protect her son from magic and the influence of magicians, but Geoffroi wants Alenard to learn all there is to know. Geoffroi intends to give much of his land to his illegitimate eldest son Guillaume as *appanage*, or land held until Guillaume's death. He also sees magic as an acceptable pursuit for Alenard; as he himself retorts when confronted on this, "I have other sons." Geoffroi is clearly fulfilling his own ambitions through his son. He may already have struck a deal with one of the wizards at his court to take him as an apprentice and initiate him into their tradition. And it could be this that prompts the unwilling Ysabeau to consort with yet more magicians.

But what if Geoffroi discovers that Ysabeau has spoken to the covenant behind his back? By the time of Ysabeau's removal from his side, his trust in her has failed, so he may have one of his astrologers judging her loyalty daily. There are a number of threats that could be leveled against her. Does he send her to Normandy if she is discovered? Does the council of wizards undertake magical means to enforce her silence? Is she threat-



ened with the removal of her daughters?

The covenant could learn from her the fate Geoffroi intends for Alenard, including the hedge tradition and its practitioner intended to take him. She can also disclose that, despite attempted initiations, Geoffroi himself has been completely unable to learn even the simplest piece of magic.

Resolution

Resolving the problem with Geoffroi involves neutralizing the magical threat. The troupe has a number of options, from persuading him to give up his obsession to taking more direct action against the noble or his magical allies.

What Counts as Interfering with Mundanes?

Hermetic magi are constrained by clauses within the Code that prevent them from bringing ruin to their sodales within the Order. Principally, this applies to interfering with mundane affairs. But the events surrounding Geoffroi blur the lines between magical and mundane. Can a magus who acts against a hedge wizard be considered to be interfering in mundane affairs? The hedge wizard is arguably aligned with the supernatural world, but is still closer to the mundane world than those of the Order. What if the hedge wizard is working for or against a

mundane village, town, noble, or cleric?

These are the ambiguities that are disputed when cases are brought to Tribunal. There is no hard line here that a magus of the Order crosses; each case is individual. Overzealous Quaesitors, like Galatea described elsewhere in this book, would see interference in most encounters. But most magi recognize the realities of life and judge each case upon its merits. This is not a matter for storyguides or troupes to rule upon, but rather for the magi within their sagas to debate at Tribunal.

Let Sleeping Dogs Lie

The magi may well close their doors to Geoffroi and simply ignore the issue. In this case, Geoffroi continues to lose control over his lands, and competing nobles, including Geoffroi's illegitimate son Guillaume, vie for these estates. At this point, Geoffroi himself ceases to be the problem, and the state of war of the covenant's doorstep — or the court wizards themselves — become the challenge facing the covenant.

Ysabeau and Geoffroi's daughters return to Geoffroi's other lands near Arques. If he has been freed from the council's influence,

Alenard goes with them, and his resentment of his father's manipulation grows.

Geoffroi himself is overcome by his desire to learn magic, driven to spend his time reading anything he can find on the subject. He signs whatever papers are put in front of him, and is oblivious to his declining health. Eventually, he dies in poverty, his wealth usurped by those around him.

Persuading Geoffroi

Perhaps the most direct approach is to simply persuade Geoffroi to turn his back on his magical pursuits and return to governing his lands as he had been doing before. One way to do this is to threaten his family. Although he may have lost perspective by the time the magi choose to deal with him, he is a father and a husband, and will respond to threats against them. Remember, he has illegitimate sons still in Normandy, one of whom (François) knows nothing of his true parentage. If this were made public, Geoffroi would find his lands in Normandy threatened by a vengeful cuckold. But this action could draw the covenant into conflict with the noble and his allies, as they assert themselves in a show of force to prevent extortion and blackmail.

Alternatively, the covenant could offer themselves as a viable replacement. The magi of the covenant could replace the magi on Geoffroi's council, providing him with some tuition in arcane lore but setting distinct boundaries. Why would Geoffroi accept what could be a lesser deal? If the magi could prove his council untrustworthy or uncover a direct plot or crime against his lands, then Geoffroi would be inclined to consider an alternative. But the council would be likely to take umbrage at this, and its members may look for ways to retain their position, either through their own politicking or by taking direct against the covenant in some way.

Lastly, the covenant could distance itself from the situation but manipulate or direct others to do the work for them. Rival nobles threatening Geoffroi's lands abroad would divide his attention and force him to divert resources to defending them. Alternatively, nobles friendly with or supportive of Geoffroi could be

persuaded to intercede and make him see sense. Involving the Church is an option, though this may bring scrutiny too close to the covenant for comfort.

Eliminate Geoffroi

If Geoffroi's heir, whomever the magi decide that may be, is of age, then eliminating Geoffroi may be an option. Murder seems to be a direct contravention of the Oath and the peripheral code, but that just means that the magi intent on carrying out such an act must work harder to cover their tracks.

There are more ways for an Hermetic magus to murder a mundane than can be discussed here — even a mundane protected by a council of hedge wizards, some of whom may be able to detect the lingering presence of magic and trace it back to the covenant. The magi should be cunning and, unless they are sure of acting with impunity, make the event appear as natural as possible.

Of course, the marshaling of the court after Geoffroi's death is as important as the death itself. The Lady Ysabeau, no friend to the hedge wizards, must be protected from the designs of hedge wizards and allowed to preside over her husband's lands. And his son and heir must be guarded against the influence of the hedge wizards to ensure that they have no place at the heir's new court.

If murder seems too harsh a punishment, then Geoffroi could be made prematurely infirm, thereby necessitating a regent to manage his estates while he either recuperates or lives out his long dotage. If the magi take this course of action, they will need to account for the efforts of Geoffroi's court wizards, as they either take control or seek to cure their patron of his malady.

Persuade Geoffroi's Wizards to Move On

Murder may not be the most subtle or desirable way to deal with the problem and mindful of the Oath, and the covenant may not want to interfere directly in

Geoffroi's actions. But the members of the council themselves can be approached, threatened, bribed, or bargained with.

The threats are easy to imagine, ranging from destruction of the council's magical resources to an implied or overt offers of violence. As hedge wizards, unless they have prepared for the eventuality, this is likely to be enough to make them consider their positions at court. Clumsy attempts at persuasion could see the hedge wizards appeal to Geoffroi and rely upon his protection.

Bribery could range from a direct payment of money, vis, books, or enchanted artifacts to an offer to work with the magicians and increase their understanding. And beyond this, a more profitable bargain for both sides would see an open sharing of resources. Remember that the hedge wizards could also be seen as a resource for the covenant. Each has specific gifts and techniques that could provide sources of insight for studious magi; they each present an opportunity to enhance Hermetic understanding and take Hermetic magic forward in new ways.

Eliminate Geoffroi's Wizards

If neither bargaining nor bribery have removed the problem and the hedge wizards have not responded to threats, then it is time to act upon those threats.

Some workers of magic brought to the noble's court may be Gifted, but the majority will be unGifted, possessing little more than supernatural talents — no match at all for Hermetic magi. Still, the covenant may not have to eliminate them personally, of course. There could be any number of Tremere Vexillations, Flambeau magi seeking glory, or Hoplites seeking practice who would be happy to resolve the issue with utmost prejudice.

But then there's the response from within the hedge wizard traditions to consider. Eliminating such a unique council, which on the surface appears progressive, may result in retribution against arbitrary Hermetic targets. And when the root cause of the violence is tracked to the covenant, there may be some hard politicking to do.

Geoffroi may exact his own revenge

by increasing mundane pressure on the covenant's resources, making travel to and from the covenant more difficult, persuading neighbors not to trade with them, or inciting a fear of wizards among the local peasants.

Induct the Wizards

House Ex Miscellanea explicitly accepts members of hedge traditions into its community. While they have most often been Gifted and of considerable talent to begin with, there is little preventing the covenant from trying to persuade Ex Miscellanea to absorb the members of Geoffroi's court. Those same members may need a little persuasion, but the benefits of membership could be made clear, especially when presented in contrast to the implications of refusal.

Once members of the Order, the hedge wizards are bound by the Oath and must moderate their behavior.

A Tribunal for All

Perhaps the most audacious resolution of all is to take Geoffroi's vision to its ultimate conclusion and found a new Order. The First Tribunal — that fateful gathering of Bonisagus, Trianoma, and a host of other magi destined to found the Order of Hermes — took great determination to arrange. Distrustful magi from many different traditions chose to gather in one place and discuss the future. That Tribunal brought into existence the Order of Hermes and its Code, by which all members have since been bound. One of the key precepts of the Order is that magi should not involve themselves in the affairs of the mundane world, lest they bring ruin upon the Order or its members.

But members of those Traditions outside the Order of Hermes have no such code, at least not one that binds them all. But if a code *could* be negotiated, a code that moderated their actions and limited their involvement with the mundane rulers of the world, then the hedge traditions could be bound by the same limitations as the Order of Hermes.

Would the Order be supportive of such a move when it is a single noble at the heart of the problem? Could the covenant find visionaries from within House Bonisagus to support the idea? House Tremere in particular, charged with protecting the Order, would likely level a strong and unified objection: fostering a rival order, no matter how weak, is just creating problems, not solving them. Could this become the central issue at the upcoming Grand Tribunal?

Sample Spells, Devices, and Formulae

Many of the hedge wizards you may want to introduce use distinct spells, devices, or other effects. The following sections present a few examples of the kind that Geoffroi would be particularly interested in. Where appropriate, the required Ability scores or laboratory totals are included to help design characters who can create these effects and meet Geoffroi's exacting expectations.

Experimental Philosophy

Those knowledgeable in Artes Liberales, Philosophiae, and Medicine are able to exploit their knowledge to produce a range of effects that, to the uneducated, appear supernatural, although they are not magical in origin. The following effects use the rules presented in Chapter 5 of *Art & Academe*. If you are not using *Art & Academe*, you can ignore much of the design detail in the formulae below and just concentrate on the effects.

ASTROLOGICAL INCEPTIONS

The following are astrological inceptions, or insights gained through observation of the stars and calculations based on the bodies of the zodiac. They provide

information, usually reliable though occasionally flawed. The effects are not magical. You can assume that the astrologer already knows how to create each inception, and spends a season in creating one or more copies on request. Once created, a copy can be completed with the casting of horoscopes for the intended target(s).

The use of N and NA in the inceptions below allows the astrologer to fill in the names of the targets upon casting the horoscopes and learning what the inception has to tell.

Has N Betrayed the Confidence of NA?

Inception Level 5

Detail: Binary

Reveals whether the first named individual is likely to have revealed a secret about the second.

If Geoffroi is given reason to suspect that Ysabeau has betrayed his confidence, he will have his astrologer cast this inception to confirm it.

(Base 4, +1 past)

Is N the Father of NA?

Inception Level 5

Detail: Binary

Given Geoffroi's suspicions concerning François, he will have an astrologer determine the truth at last.

The identity of François' father is a current persistent quality of François, so this inception does not look into the past, but rather queries the present state of the boy.

(Base 5)

ALCHEMICAL REAGENTS

Reagents have the power to transform base substances in a range of ways, but most often to express an inherent property and improve the substance.

Glass of Uncommon Purity

Reagent Level 20

Alteration: Substantial

Glass is an expensive luxury, so of course Geoffroi wants the finest he can find. This reagent purifies the glass as it is

Story Seed: The Stolen Ring

The magi are approached by a Jewish craftsman and his apprentice who ask for their help in finding a ring that has been stolen. The goldsmith reveals that he is able to burn magic into his craft, and that the ring was designed for Baron Geoffroi d'Arques. Aside from the value of the piece, and Geoffroi's wrath

when he learns of the loss, the smith is afraid that someone will use the ring as an Arcane Connection to Geoffroi, allowing them to influence or harm him from afar. So where is the ring? What does the thief intend? And how is the goldsmith's apprentice involved?

being worked, transforming it so that it is of the finest colorless clarity.

Formed into decanters and drinking glasses, the resulting glassware provides a host with a +2 bonus to Leadership rolls while entertaining guests, as the host's wealth and power is vividly displayed.

(Base 10, +2 Substantial)

PHARMACEUTICAL THERIACS

Theriaks are medicinal compounds designed to treat or alleviate specific ailments.

Compress of Tormentil

Theriac Level 15

Potency: Mild

Over the course of a week, this bandage infused with tormentil and comfrey completely heals a Light Wound caused by a slashing or piercing weapon.

(Base 10, +1 Mild)

Tincture of Vitality

Theriac Level 15

Potency: Moderate

This small draft of liquor instantly improves a Tired fatigue level to Weary. Geoffroi uses these when he enters the tourney, as they allow him to exert himself for longer, giving him the advantage.

(Base 5, +2 Moderate)

Magical Craftsmen

The *City & Guild* supplement introduces a simple form of hedge magic through wondrous items, devices created by master

craftsmen with the *Touched by (Realm) Virtue*. The full rules for craftsmen and wondrous items can be found in Chapter 4 of *City & Guild*.

The crafting of a wondrous item is normally a two-stage process. First, the item itself is created to the highest quality possible by the craftsman. This is because the quality bonus itself assists the craftsman in his attempt to enchant the device.

The wondrous effect must be designed for a given individual (and acts as an Arcane Connection to that individual), and this takes at least a season. The possible effects are limited; they last for Sun at most, have an Individual target, and a Personal or Touch range to affect the item itself or its bearer.

Importantly, the craftsman's work is affected by the standard realm interaction table in *ArM5*, page 183, depending on the source of his power. This means a magical craftsman suffers when working within the Dominion, and finds his work easier within a Magic aura.

Within these limitations, here are some examples of wondrous items that Geoffroi may commission.

A MOST NOBLE RING

Created for Geoffroi by a master goldsmith with Divinely influenced power, this ring subtly enhances Geoffroi's bearing and appearance. He comes across as more forceful and fair than other men, thanks to the effect described below.

Aura of Enobled Presence

MulM 10

Pen +0, 1/day

R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Individual

As per the spell described in *ArM5*, page 145, Geoffroi gains a +3 bonus to attempts to influence, lead, or convince others in his presence.

(Base 3, +1 Touch, +2 Sun)

The craftsman requires a Workshop Total (see *City & Guild*, page 65) of 15 or greater in order to enchant this device, and the required craft totals to complete the work in 1 to 4 seasons are listed below. The craftsman's craft total for enchanting the device is based on his Dexterity + Craft Ability + his Workshop Bonus + a bonus from any assistant helping him + an appropriate aura bonus + any bonus afforded by the item's quality.

Required Craft Total: 1 season (28), 2 seasons (21), 3 seasons (19), 4 seasons (18)

A BLADE OF VIRTUE

This excellent quality long sword has a +2 bonus to both attack and defend. But it has also been enchanted by a magical craftsman with the following effect, granting a further +1 to both attack and defend when wielded by its intended owner.

The blade is enchanted for a specific individual, likely to be the knight who wins one of Geoffroi's tournaments, and takes a number of seasons to complete. If the raw materials for the blade are first treated as per the alchemical steel described in *Art & Academe*, page 76, the sword naturally gains a further +2 bonus to damage. Truly a prize worth winning.

The Rarefied Blade

MuTe 15

Pen +0, 1/day

R: Personal, D: Sun, T: Individual

In the hands of its intended owner, and upon the secret incantation being spoken, the sword's property of weight is altered such that it is lighter and more balanced in the hand. This grants +1 to both attack and defense.

When the effect is active, the sword has a Penetration of 0 and is resisted by any character or creature with a Magic Resistance of 0 or greater.

(Base 3, +2 Sun, +2 metal)

Required Craft Total: 1 season (30), 2 seasons (23), 3 seasons (20), 4 seasons (19)

Learned Magicians

In many ways the closest of the hedge magic traditions to Hermetic magi, learned magicians study their own arts, design their own spells, and create their own forms of enchanted devices. The following amulet and chartae effects use the rules presented in Chapter 5 of *Hedge Magic: Revised Edition*.

AMULETS AND CHARTAE

Amulets are the equivalent of charged devices commonly created by Hermetic magi. They take a season to create and can only be used by a single subject, specified at the time the device is created. They can contain any effect and they have a number of charges determined by the learned magician's lab total.

Chartae are simple single-use devices,

usually in the form of text transcribed onto a medium such as parchment, paper, or vellum. As with amulets, chartae are created for a given individual, but they are easier to make. The learned magician must spend a full day casting a horoscope for the charta's beneficiary, plus one hour for each magnitude of the desired effect. Amulets and chartae are both restricted to operating at Touch range.

Grant Fortune At the Tourney (Single Weapon)

TuFa Level 20

R: Touch, D: Season, T: Individual

This amulet, in the form of an embroidered girdle, grants the wearer great fortune throughout a season's effort at tournament when using their Single Weapon Ability. If the character's attack advantage is 0 or less, both combatants re-roll. If the second roll produces a positive attack advantage, it is used. If the character botches

any of his rolls, that roll is discarded unless the second roll also results in a botch. If this happens, the least harmful result is taken. Note, only the Single Weapon Ability is protected in this way.

The amulet must be worn for the full season. If it has multiple charges (determined when the device is created by the skill of the Learned Magician), then they will discharge automatically and continue protecting the wearer until all charges have been exhausted.

(Base 5, +0 Touch, +3 Season)

An Arrow So True Has Never Been Struck

SuFa Level 15

R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Individual

Completed on the morning of a hunt, this charta grants the recipient a +3 bonus to all attack rolls when using a bow.

(Base 10, +0 Touch, +1 Sun)

Chapter Three

Baron Giraud Le Cornu

Baron Giraud Le Cornu is never content to leave the magi alone. He regards magi's attempts at neutrality in mundane politics as a form of rebellion against their rightful overlords. By fair means or foul, the baron strives to undermine the magi's independence and eventually impel them to swear oaths of fealty. The Code of Hermes forbids magi from swearing fealty to mundanes with good reason. If the baron is successful, the covenant finds its political troubles are just beginning.

Background

A new baron has come into possession of one or more manors that abuts the lands of the PCs' covenant. Lord Le Cornu is fairly young for a baron, a rising star in the court of his count. He has many qualities that the nobles of Mythic Europe admire: loyalty, bravery, and courtesy, but also initiative and shrewdness.

Baron Le Cornu obtained his lands by betraying his own father. His father had rebelled against the count, and the young Giraud was outraged that his father

had jeopardized his birthright by siding against his liege. He feigned support for his father, but at a crucial moment betrayed him and handed him over to the count. When the rebellion was put down, Giraud's father was dispossessed or killed (depending on which makes sense for your saga). Giraud received the barony as reward. Either as part of this, or later as an incentive for continued loyalty, Lord Le Cornu has come to possess one or more manors adjacent to the covenant's lands.

The Baron's Resources

Lord Le Cornu rules about ten manors. At least one of them is very near the covenant, but the others could be up to several days' ride away. The baron lives in a tower keep, situated on the richest of his manors about ten miles (a half-day's ride) from the covenant.

He has the following retainers:

- A mesnie of three household knights (use the Knight companion template from page 23 of *ArM5*, but remove the Relic Virtue and the Overconfident Flaw).
- Nine vassal knights including his brother Artur.
- Two household squires, one of whom is his herald Bertrand Gallain.
- Another 15 mounted men-at-arms (including the squires of all his knights).
- A permanent guard of 12 dismounted men-at-arms at his castle (use the Standard Soldier grog template from page 22 of *ArM5*).
- About 50 semi-trained, dismounted peasant levies who can be called upon for military emergencies.



- A discreet and trusted confessor, Brother Henri Raoullin, who doubles as his castle chaplain.
- A steward who travels among and administers the baron's estates in his absence.
- His wife and four children (two sons and two daughters, all under the age of ten).

One of the baron's vassal knights is his younger brother Artur, who would rule as steward if the baron were to die before his eldest son comes of age.

Baron Le Cornu spends about half the time at his keep managing his own estate, and the other half divided between visiting his other manors and attending the court of his overlord.

The Baron's Household

The motivations and personalities of some of the people around the baron could be important to the saga.

Names and Titles

The name Giraud Le Cornu is Norman French and may need to be modified to fit your saga's setting. In Mythic Europe, Normans comprise the ruling class in northern France, England, Sicily, and parts of Ireland, Greece, and the Levant.

Baron is French term for a type of intermediate noble, higher than a landed knight, but lower than a count or earl. The baron owes allegiance to a greater noble who may be a count, earl, or duke. The baron's overlord is referred to as a count in this chapter, but his actual title varies according to where the covenant lies. If the covenant is in the county of

Champagne (in the Normandy Tribunal), then Baron Le Cornu's overlord is the powerful Count of Champagne. If the covenant is located in Cheshire (in the Stonehenge Tribunal), then the baron's overlord is the Earl of Chester, and so on. Since Baron Le Cornu enjoys some protection and aid from his overlord, it is best if he is not a direct vassal of the king or emperor: that would make his protector too powerful for most sagas.

Titles for nobles for all regions of Mythic Europe, including non-Norman regions, are discussed in the supplement *Lords of Men*, pages 30-36.

LADY ÉLOISE LE CORNU

Age: 27

Personality Traits: Loyal to Baron +2, Headstrong +2

Éloise is the wife of Giraud Le Cornu.

She is a competent manager in her own right, well able to manage the barony's affairs during her husband's extended absences at court or on military campaigns. Despite her competence, she is a bit insecure with these responsibilities, and responds by

Baron Giraud Le Cornu

Characteristics: Int +1, Per 0, Pre +2, Com +1, Str +1, Sta +2, Dex +1, Qik 0

Size: 0

Age: 35

Decrepitude: 0

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Landed Noble, Knight; Wealthy; Improved Characteristics, Privileged Upbringing, Protection (count); Hatred (of rebels; major); Oath of Fealty; Pious (minor)

Personality Traits: Hates Rebels +6, Brave +3, Pious +3, Calculating +2, Loyal +2

Reputations: Hates Rebels 2 (local)

Combat:

Lance and Heater, Mounted: Init 0, Attack +16, Defense +14, Damage +6

Long sword and Heater, Mounted: Init 0, Attack +14, Defense +13, Damage +7

Long sword and Heater, Dismounted: Init 0, Attack +11, Defense +10, Damage +7

Long sword, Dismounted: Init 0, Attack +11, Defense +7, Damage +7

Soak: +11

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Animal Handling 3 (horses), Area Lore: Own Barony 4 (personalities), Artes Liberales 2 (arithmetic), Bows 3 (short bow), Charm 3 (first impressions), Church Lore 2 (relics), Civil and Canon Law* 2 (property law), Etiquette 4 (court), Folk Ken 4 (nobles), French 5 (Norman), Great Weapon 3 (long spear), Hunt 4 (wild boar), Intrigue 4 (5) (alliances), Latin 3 (ecclesiastic), Leadership 5 (armies), Organization Lore: Nobles 4 (politics), Ride 4 (5) (battle), Single Weapon 5 (long sword), Theology 1 (liturgy)

Equipment: Warhorse (courser), full chain mail, heater shield, lance, long sword, diary chronicling conflict with the magi, several fake relics

Encumbrance: 3 (4)

Appearance: Baron Le Cornu is a tall, fair-haired man with a keen, calculating cast to his features. He is clean shaven and keeps his hair short to better fit under a helmet. His clothes are well-made and a bit conservative. He thinks carefully before he speaks and his voice carries a weight of accustomed authority.

* Substitute Common Law in place of Civil and Canon Law, if your saga is set in England.

Lord Le Cornu is a minor baron, so he controls about ten manors. Not all of his manors are located close together; it is not unusual for nobles in Mythic Europe to own manors distributed over a wide area, since they are often acquired one at a time, over several generations. Most of his manors are managed by knights whom he holds in vassalage, and Baron Le Cornu is, in turn, vassal to a greater noble.

putting up an exaggerated façade of authority. She makes up her mind too quickly, and rarely reconsiders or listens to advice.

She may find herself in the position of negotiating with the magi while her husband is away. In these negotiations, she is at first more demanding and less patient than her husband. The baron includes his wife in most negotiations and council meetings.

If the saga runs for several years, Lady Éloise eventually loses her Headstrong Personality Trait as she grows accustomed to authority, and instead begins to assert her own ideas without excessive force: she gains Innovative +1.

BROTHER HENRI RAOULLIN

Age: 46

Personality Traits: Loyal to Baron +3, Pious +3, Analytical +2

Brother Henri is Baron Le Cornu's chaplain and confessor. He has some legal training, and also serves as the baron's legal advisor and clerk. Brother Henri chooses his words carefully before he speaks, and he has a knack for quoting appropriate biblical proverbs. He tends to have a moderating influence on the baron. However, he is a willing assistant in the baron's intrigues. He wants to learn as much as he can about the magi: first, to be sure they are not diabolists or heretics; and second, to verify they are not using their powers to mistreat good Christian folk. Brother Henri may approach the covenant under a white flag to try to defuse hostilities, and his hand should be evident in any settlement terms the baron offers.

ARTUR LE CORNU

Age: 31

Personality Traits: Brave +3, Loyal to Baron +2, Pragmatic +1

Giraud's younger brother Artur is cut from the same cloth as his brother, but is physically stronger and intellectually a bit weaker. Artur is a vassal knight to Giraud. He has come to approve of his brother's choice to betray their father for the good of the realm, but doubts his own ability to make a similar choice. Artur lacks his brother's ability to read and write, and is

less skilled in intrigue and courtly graces, but he is also less prone to be swayed by his own passions. If he takes over the barony due to his brother's untimely death, he quickly learns the art of intrigue and becomes nearly as formidable as his predecessor. He is more likely than his brother to seek the help of hedge wizards against the magi, and less inclined to listen to Brother Raoullin.

BERTRAND GALLAIN

Age: 26

Personality Traits: Decisive +2, Brave +1, Loyal to Baron +1

Bertrand Gallain is one of two squires who directly serves Baron Le Cornu. Like most squires, he aspires to become a knight, but his skills and demeanor are better suited to diplomacy than to battle. He usually makes up his mind about people based on his first impression, and expects others to judge him the same way. Gallain is a younger son of a poor knight who puts on airs to try to hide his humble origins. He has come to enjoy fine clothes and the perquisites of the baron's court. While he is basically loyal to his lord, his fondness for luxury and his status consciousness makes him somewhat susceptible to bribery and flattery.

The Baron's Patron

Baron Le Cornu is a favored vassal of a count or higher noble and often attends his lord's court. If he feels threatened, he can take refuge at court or send his family there for safety. The baron also has contacts among his peers, to whom he can turn for advice or minor aid.

It is important for story purposes that the baron not rely too heavily on his liege for support. That would really make the baron's liege into an adversary as well as one who may be too powerful for the covenant to resist. There are good reasons why the baron's patron would not want to get involved in stories about the magi. The most important reason is that Baron Le Cornu is expected to handle his own problems. He holds his position because

he is useful to his liege, and if he starts causing trouble and running to his liege for help, his usefulness ends.

Another reason is that the baron's patron cares much less about the magi than the baron does. He doesn't see them as an imminent threat because the Order of Hermes has never before overthrown a count. He has so many vassals already that gaining the covenant's land and soldiers would not make much difference to him. Now, if he had the opportunity to use the magi's powers to benefit his position, that would be another matter. So the baron's overlord stands more to gain by making friends with the magi than he stands to lose by leaving them alone. Baron Le Cornu, as a dutiful vassal, understands this, and it moderates his approach.

The baron's overlord can be useful to help defuse tensions between the baron and the covenant. If raids and fighting break out, the overlord can send emissaries to broker a truce. On the other hand, if the magi become too violent and aggressive, the overlord can again send emissaries demanding they stand down or face the threat of his army. The count can muster an army of thousands, if necessary.

Aims and Motivations

The baron does not covet the covenant's lands or wealth for himself. Neither does he particularly want them to swear allegiance to himself, personally. What he cares about is that magi become law-abiding citizens as he understands the concept. This requires that they swear allegiance to some mundane overlord — and thereby break the Code of Hermes. Failure to swear allegiance to anyone is, in the baron's opinion, an act of rebellion.

Baron Le Cornu is motivated mainly by loyalty to his liege, and by a fervent belief in the feudal system. Like many nobles in Mythic Europe, he regards feudal hierarchy as the natural order of society. He sees its interconnected web of allegiances as the sole means of keeping the peace among

nobles. For this reason, he hates rebels and tries to fight them even when he has nothing personally to gain by doing so. In his opinion, anyone who does not pledge fealty to some noble in Mythic Europe is either a king, the Pope, or a rebel.

The more the baron learns about the magi's powers, the more he comes to fear them. Magi are so powerful that he believes they could dominate or even overthrow the nobles of Mythic Europe. They could take control of his liege's mind, or teleport into his bedchamber to murder him in his sleep. He believes that unless all magi can be brought into the web of allegiance that nobles use to check one another's aggression, they are a menace to himself, his kin, and his liege. In a world strongly resembling historical Europe, the Baron's assessment would not be far from the truth. See *Lords of Men*, pages 42–43, for a discussion of why the presence of magi doesn't actually overturn the feudal system.

First Encounter

The first encounter with Baron Le Cornu is relatively cordial. After the baron acquires his new manor next to the covenant, he sends one of his personal squires, Bertrand Gallain, to speak with his new neighbors. Gallain asks a few questions that seem to him innocuous, such as who is the covenant's liege lord and why the covenant maintains a garrison of armed warriors. Unless the covenant members are very careful in how they handle Gallain's unexpected visit, Baron Le Cornu learns some information that disturbs him.

Initial relations with the baron depend largely on the outcome of the first meeting. If Bertrand Gallain meets any magi who lack the Gentle Gift, he reports to his lord that the covenant is inhabited by nefarious characters who are not to be trusted. If the covenant admits to practicing magic, suspicions of heresy or devil worship come to the baron's mind. The presence of a castle or armed grogs without permission from some high lord upsets him a great deal. He tries to arrange, through his emissary, a personal visit to find out more. During that visit, he is visibly suspicious, and presses

the magi or their representatives, asking by what right they hold the covenant and who authorized them to keep men-at-arms.

Whether the covenant grants the baron's quest for a visit or denies it, he soon begins efforts to recruit agents to learn more about the covenant. He does his best to keep an eye on the magi's activities. His next step depends on what they do, but the first likely confrontation is that residents of the covenant are seen trespassing on the baron's land — accompanied by armed men, if applicable — and he sends a written complaint warning them not to trespass again.

Methods

Baron Le Cornu relies entirely on mundane resources and methods. He has no access to supernatural powers and no Magic Resistance.

Early on, the baron realizes that he is unlikely to get what he wants through direct combat with the magi. A typical covenant is probably powerful enough to defeat a baron, and the Code of Hermes permits magi to fight defend themselves against aggression from mundanes (see *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, page 51). Baron Le Cornu's approach is to try to use both a proverbial carrot and a stick, trying to court the magi's favor at some times, and to scheme against them at other times. If the magi go too far toward accomodating the baron, they risk accusations of interfering in mundane affairs. If they rebuff his friendly overtures too firmly or too often, he turns to harassment and coercion. Stories arise either way.

Expecting Favors and Gifts

When relations between the covenant and Baron Le Cornu are good, he occasionally tests the friendship by asking favors of the magi. For example, before riding off to fight in one of his lord's wars, he may ask the magi for some kind of magic to aid him in battle. The baron naturally

sees nothing wrong with this, and is offended if the magi refuse. He does not, however, have any ability to detect magic, so the magi can satisfy him (for a while) with a placebo. Sooner or later, he asks for substantive help of a kind that is not easily faked, such as a spell to save his crops from a blight, or magical assistance in hunting down some "rebel scum."

The baron also expects to exchange gifts with the magi. He presents them with fine and useful things such as nobles often give to one another: serving dishes, costly garments, hounds, horses, and so on. He drops hints that he expects magical gifts in exchange ("Surely wizards such as yourselves possess no end of wondrous enchanted things. I hope this gift does not seem too humble in your eyes."), and gets insulted if they are not forthcoming.

Property Rights

Baron Le Cornu owns a manor near the covenant, perhaps more than one. Like many nobles, he also owns considerable woodland, and may possess other assets such as a mill, bridge, road, or market. When he is at odds with the covenant, he denies its inhabitants the use of these lands and resources. This is potentially problematic because the baron may own the main route that provides access to the covenant. He may also own the land on which some of the covenant's vis sources lie.

If the baron learns that the magi regularly visit his lands or holdings (for example, to collect vis), he sends an angry letter forbidding them to trespass on his territory. He then directs his agents to keep an eye on the magi's movements. If they persist in their trespassing, the baron has two options: he can set a guard to keep the magi away, or he can file a lawsuit against the covenant.

The baron's agents can inform him of where the player characters go, so he knows where to set a guard. However, his knights and men-at-arms quickly tire of guard duty, so guards are a short-term measure. The baron may prefer to have a spy tail the trespassers and figure out what they are up to. If they are collecting vis, the baron doesn't know quite what it is,

but he can conclude it's magical and important to the magi. He then tries to use it as a bargaining chip in negotiations.

Legal Action

There are several reasons why the baron may choose to file a lawsuit against the covenant. The storyguide should choose just one or two of these: repeated lawsuits can be dull and potentially frustrating, unless your troupe really enjoys playing courtroom dramas.

The baron may file a charge of trespassing if members of the covenant have been seen on his land. The penalty for trespassing is a minor fine, so the outcome of the case is not very important. What is important is whether the magi recognize the authority of the court by answering the summons. If they defy the summons, the baron gets angry and hatches a new plot against the covenant. On the other hand, if they show up in court, the baron relaxes a bit, even if he loses the case, because the magi have shown

they respect mundane authority.

If the magi are seen removing something valuable from the baron's property, such as vis (if the baron has figured out that vis is rare and valuable), the charge becomes burglary. This is a serious offense, possibly carrying the penalty of hanging, and as such must be tried in royal court. Set the trial date a few seasons away so the characters have time to prepare. See *Resolving Court Cases*, later, for a discussion of how the characters might successfully deal with such a charge.

Contested Vis Sources and Covenant Boons

A vis source that lies on the baron's lands counts as the Contested Resources Hook. If your covenant has any Hidden Hooks, you may wish to reveal that one of those Hooks is a vis source that lies on the baron's lands. Another option would be to add a new Contested Resources Hook and let the players choose a new Boon to counterbalance

it. Or, you could give the covenant some other new resource worth the same number of build points as the vis source the baron now claims. Discuss with your players the situation that, for story purposes, the baron is blocking access to one of the covenant's resources, and ask what they think is a fair way to offset that loss.

If the covenant does not have a tame nobleman as the landholder of record, a noble can sue to challenge the covenant's ownership of some or all of its land or income sources. In fact, the baron has no personal claim to the covenant's property, so the suit has to be filed by the count. The case is clearly the baron's brainchild, though, and he appears in court to argue it on his lord's behalf. In Mythic Europe, almost all land and valuable resources, including mineral rights and hunting privileges, belong to some noble or other. Unless the covenant can prove they have a right to their land or resources, mundanes assume it belongs to the count. Even if the covenant is an allod (a piece of property that is owned outright, not granted as a fief), the baron may challenge the magi's ownership of it in the hope that they fail in defending their claim.

Agents

As relations with the covenant begin to sour, the baron assembles a network of agents whom he uses as spies and informants. The rules for agencies in *Houses of Hermes: Societates* (pages 140–144) can provide some inspiration for whom he might recruit. Those rules can also be useful if the player characters want to counter the baron's schemes by using agents of their own.

It is fairly easy for the baron to recruit agents. He is wealthy and influential, and he knows how to return a favor. The magi, on the other hand, are strange individuals whose Gift normally alienates the common folk. Most covenants inspire little loyalty among the peasants so there are usually people willing to keep an eye on



the magi in exchange for a little coin.

The baron appoints one of his inner circle, probably his wife, to operate the network for him. She starts by recruiting agents with weak ties to the covenant, such as farmers and artisans who make occasional deliveries there. Anyone with animosity toward the covenant — thwarted apprentices, evicted tenants, rival mages, shortchanged merchants — is also a good candidate for recruitment. Once the basic informants are identified, the baron's agents use them to find out progressively more about the covenant, and to get into contact with its residents. In time, they find covenfolk or grogs who might be susceptible to bribery or extortion: for example, covenfolk with impoverished relatives or grogs with a drinking or gambling Weakness.

It takes one season for the baron to accumulate the first three agents, all of whom live and work outside the covenant. After that, he can recruit additional agents, possibly inside the covenant. It takes one season to recruit an outsider, two or more seasons to recruit one of the lowly covenfolk, and longer than two seasons to recruit anyone of higher importance. You may find it helpful to keep a list of the agents the baron has recruited. They don't have to be fully developed characters with names and personalities; the important thing is to know how many agents the baron has and approximately where they are, so you have an idea what they can do.

The baron uses agents in several of his schemes. He also collects information from them one small piece at a time. For example, a local artisan who makes a delivery at the covenant can give him a description of the entryway and front courtyard, and the names of the servants who received his goods. Over time, the baron can assemble from these reports a surprisingly detailed profile of the covenant: its defenses, members, internal conflicts, sources of income, expenditures, and so on.

Alienating the Covenant's Friends

Most covenants rely to some extent on outsiders: farmers and merchants who provide supplies, friendly nobles, or

priests who provide political cover. Baron Le Cornu strives to drive a wedge between the covenant and its mundane allies and supporters. In so doing, he hopes both to weaken the covenant and eventually to force it to seek a new mundane benefactor: the baron's overlord.

The baron's agents can identify the covenant's friends and supporters, as well as the families of covenant members (if they happen to live nearby). The baron then has several ways he can apply pressure to those individuals.

- He has a great deal of control over his own villains and can simply beat them if they visit the covenant or talk to any of its members.
- He can send squires or knights to intimidate members of the lower social classes, whether they are free or not.
- He can threaten to boycott merchants and craftsmen who do business with the covenant. They probably rely on the baron's business for part of their livelihood, so he can make them choose between trading with him or the covenant.
- For members of the higher social classes, including priests and abbots,

the baron can try to persuade them that the magi are wicked people with whom one should not associate. His persuasive skill can be augmented by bribery or by veiled threats against the person's reputation. The baron can use his favored position at court to speak out against anyone who fraternizes with the covenant, leading to a risk of a bad Reputation and perhaps the displeasure of the bishop.

Once the characters notice that a friend or associate of the covenant has turned against it, they can try to win that character back through a story. For example, it might be possible to regain a peasant's support by having some tough grogs scare away the squire who's been bullying him.

Sowing Discord

If the baron finds out about any internal tensions at the covenant, he does his best to fan the fires of dissent. He has his wife or confessor arrange a secret meeting with the disgruntled party to encourage the con-

Succession Planning

Going up against wizards is dangerous business, as anyone in Mythic Europe should know. The baron expects that magi may manage at some point to cast a spell over him, or even kill him. He takes steps to ensure that simply eliminating him will not be enough to stop his plans.

Baron Le Cornu has three trusted advisers whom he keeps apprised of all his plans. These are his wife, his confessor, and his younger brother Sir Artur, who is one of his vassal knights. If the baron were to die suddenly, any of these three would be able to take over the campaign against the covenant. Baron Le Cornu has two sons, who are young (aged 9 and 6) when the conflict starts, but who will be brought into his circle of trust when they come of age at 21.

The baron can read and write. He keeps a detailed diary of his conflict with

the magi. This is hidden under the altar in the chapel next to the baron's keep, where the baron mistakenly believes it is completely safe from magical detection. The diary contains reports from all the baron's spies and informants, and in time grows into a very complete profile of the covenant and its inhabitants, defenses, floor plan, visitors, income sources, and so on.

The baron also records in this diary anything he can find out about the magi's magic, including where their vis sources are (as far as he can find out), what spells each magus has been seen to cast, what the magi's Wizard's Sigils look like, and the baron's conjectures about how to "break" or avoid particular spells. Half of this information is pure speculation and half of what is left is misinterpretation, but the quarter of truth remaining makes him a canny adversary.

flict. He does his best to point out the many faults in the magi's leadership, and paints a lovely picture of how harmonious relations would be, if only the magi would see reason and come over to his side.

Unless you want to roleplay stories of skullduggery and betrayal, the baron should fail in any attempts to cause actual infighting in the covenant. The worst that should happen in most sagas is that the baron might gain a few new agents inside the covenant, or perhaps persuade a handful of covenfolk or grogs to desert.

Assisting Rivals

Through his agents, the baron can get a good idea of who the covenant's rivals are. If there are any local hedge wizards whom the magi once insulted, or a clergyman who suspects the magi of witchcraft, the baron finds them and summons them to his keep. He listens with sympathy to the rivals' grievances, and offers what support he can.

The baron's support provides an opportunity to reintroduce adversaries whom the covenant thought they defeated, but who are still alive. In a high fantasy saga, the baron may go so far as to enter a pact with faeries or magical beasts. He would balk at consorting with demons, but only if he knew the demon for what it was.

Defenses Against Magic

Although the baron is a mundane, he lives in Mythic Europe and has some familiarity with magic from folk tales and hearsay. He's aware that his opponents are wizards, so he makes an effort to find out as much as he can about magic and how to protect himself against it.

As anyone knows from folklore, magic can be used to alter someone's appearance. Therefore, the baron instructs his knights, men-at-arms, and retainers to be alert for people who are acting strangely or seem out of place. He works out a system of passwords, so that suspected intruders can be challenged. He teaches his retainers not to follow orders unquestioningly, but to exer-

cise common sense and to demand the pass-word before following any unusual orders.

Once he realizes that wizards can fly or transform themselves into birds, the baron keeps the windows of his chamber tightly shuttered. Also, since a flying or invisible intruder could enter the castle and then move about inside, he installs bells on the doors of his chamber and other sensitive areas of the keep, and orders patrols at random times of the night.

Eye contact is important for some forms of hedge magic, including the Entrancement Supernatural Ability from page 65 of *ArM5*. Knowing this, the baron avoids eye contact with magi and instructs his retainers to do likewise. He orders any prisoners suspected of being wizards to be blindfolded and gagged for transport to the dungeon. This includes anyone the baron's men capture in raids or ambushes against the covenant, as well as any intruders who are captured inside the baron's keep or manors.

Unless Baron Le Cornu has supernatural allies, his defenses against magic are based mainly on conjecture. There are gaps in his knowledge: he understands little about Arcane Connections, and doesn't take precautions to avoid leaving behind a shed hair or hanging his favorite cloak where the magi's spies might steal it. Mixed in with his effective defensive measures are a number of ineffective ones, based on unfounded superstition and false conjecture. For example, the baron comes to believe that the touch of a relic instantly dispels any magic, and spends a great deal of time and money acquiring an impressive variety of relics — all fake. He keeps some of these on his person, and has others presented to any stranger who visits his court. The visitor must touch or kiss the relic before being admitted to the baron's presence. Over a few years, this and other odd habits lead the baron to acquire a local reputation of Eccentric.

Burglary

Baron Le Cornu may attempt to steal something from the covenant. He is mainly interested in enchanted items, and in written material, from which he hopes to

learn how to combat their magic. This is both risky and immoral, so he only does it if he feels the magi are dangerous: for example, after suffering a defeat at their hands, or if he suspects them of witchcraft.

Burglary requires the baron to use one or more of his agents. It is unlikely he has anyone inside the covenant who dares to break into a magus's lab, so he first must recruit a specialist from outside. It could take seasons or years for him to find a skilled burglar with whom he can strike a deal (perhaps by forgiving another crime, if the burglar agrees to do the job). The baron then uses any agents inside the covenant as accomplices in the break-in: they can help the intruder get inside, serve as lookouts during the job, and facilitate the getaway. The burglar tries to get the stolen items back to the baron as quickly as possible, rather than hiding them somewhere near the covenant, because he or she expects the magi to find their property magically, and wants to be long gone by the time they do.

It is best to have the baron's man steal something minor, like a lab text or a charged item, rather than something as major as high-Quality summa or an invested device. The actual theft probably does not amount to much. Players may nonetheless take even a minor theft very seriously. Give them a chance to catch the burglar in the act (this can make a good story for grogs).

Ransom

If the characters break into the baron's keep, get into fights with his knights or servants, make threats against his person, or otherwise escalate the conflict, the baron may resort to holding a member of the covenant for ransom. This, of course, requires him to capture someone. A variation of the ransom scenario could develop if one of the player characters stands accused of a serious crime and ventures away from the covenant. In that case, the baron holds the suspect for trial, but is open to negotiation for his release.

The most likely scenario is that the baron has received word through his agents that some members of the covenant will

be in a certain place at a certain time. The baron then assembles several of his knights and lays an ambush, the goal of which is to capture prisoners rather than kill anyone.

The baron is willing to offer a prisoner's release in exchange for restitution for some harm the covenant has done him or his knights. He also releases hostages in exchange for formal agreements with the magi (see *Negotiated Settlements*, later). The baron is not keenly interested in the covenant's money, though he doesn't refuse it. Any offer of cash will have to be accompanied by some kind of promise as well.

Warfare

It's possible that tensions between the baron and the covenant will escalate to open fighting. In that case, Baron Le Cornu is not really strong enough to defeat a typical covenant. He realizes that he has much more to lose from fighting than he stands to gain. He respects and fears the magi's power and, while he is no coward, he does not want to die over a matter as minor as one covenant.

The baron (or his successor) will probably attack if an attempt is made on the baron's life, or if he dies suddenly from mysterious causes or falls under some kind of spell. By the time the conflict has escalated to that point, the baron's advisors are well aware of his enmity with the covenant. They don't need hard evidence, or indeed any evidence at all, to convince them who is responsible for the assault. They simply attack the obvious suspects.

When fighting breaks out, the baron takes a defensive stance, fortifying his manors near the covenant, posting watches, and keeping at least half of his knights at home. He gathers another dozen mounted men (himself, three knights, and eight men-at-arms) who ride out on hit-and-run raids to ravage the covenant's lands with torch and sword. His prior intelligence-gathering work should tell him exactly where to strike. His first targets are any vis sources that he knows about: they are useless to the baron, but useful to his enemy, so destroying them is a logical move. If the covenant owns any wooden structures such as bridges or mills, he tries

to burn them next. After that, he tries to destroy property, and massacre or drive away as many of the covenant's farmers and laborers as possible. Although slaughtering civilians and burning granaries are heinous war crimes to a modern reader, they're routine tactics of medieval warfare.

These raids can be quite destructive, and may cause long-term financial setbacks for the covenant. The baron fully expects the covenant to launch proportionate reprisals. Once fighting has broken out, it can be difficult to stop. See *Resolving Military Conflict*, later, for how to bring the fighting to an end.

Investigation

No investigation is necessary to determine what Baron Le Cornu wants — sooner or later, he makes his demands plain. Investigation is necessary, however, to gain insight into his plans and to discover the agents he uses as pawns.

Investigating the Baron

As a prominent noble, Baron Le Cornu's name and reputation are widely known. Characters can get good information from a variety of sources: by speaking with his knights or any noble in the region, by talking with neighboring monks or townfolk, or even asking questions in the proverbial smoke-filled tavern.

The baron is generally well-regarded. He is noted for his consistent record of fighting against rebels. The story of how Lord Giraud Le Cornu acquired his lands by betraying his rebellious father is widely known in the region. Reactions to this betrayal are mixed, depending on who is telling the tale. Some see turning over one's own father to the enemy as a ruthless coup to gain favor and power; others see it as a knight's duty to aid his liege, even against his own kin. Since that battle, sources agree, Baron Le Cornu has always been eager to ride forth and fight any knight or lord who dared to challenge the count's authority.

The characters would need to speak

to the baron's peers, vassals, squires, or close associates to find out more. Giraud Le Cornu is a learned man, having been tutored in Latin, the *Artes Liberales*, and a bit of law when he was a boy. He's known among other nobles for being erudite. They also describe him as good negotiator and resourceful in battle.

Getting agents into the baron's keep can be challenging. Since he employs spies and informants himself, Baron Le Cornu is alert for others who may try to use the same methods against him. His defenses against magic make it somewhat difficult for a magical spy to infiltrate his keep.

Uncovering Agents

Since the baron works mainly through agents, rooting out those agents is a good way to thwart (or at least stall) his plans. The trouble is, the baron is perfectly able to recruit new agents to replace ones who become exposed. Counter-espionage can become a recurring source of stories for the covenant.

The easiest agents to uncover are also the hardest for Baron Le Cornu to replace: agents inside the covenant itself. Magi can easily root out such turncoats through *Intellego Mentem* spells (*Posing the Silent Question*, *Frosty Breath of the Spoken Lie*, and so forth). The difficulty lies in knowing when to look for such agents. It's possible to simply subject the grogs and covenfolk to random checks, but doing so can be harmful to morale. Such tactics can actually backfire by driving disgruntled covenant members to join the baron's service. The *Ars Magica* supplement *Covenants* includes rules for gauging the loyalty of the covenant's servants. Using magic to interrogate a servant probably counts as a minor humiliation, if you are using those rules. The loyalty rules, however, are not meant as a substitute for roleplaying. Consider playing through at least one or two interrogations and deciding the subject's reaction (and any change in loyalty) based on how the scene plays out.

Baron Le Cornu also has agents outside the covenant. These are harder to track down because there are more of them scattered throughout a much larger population.

Since agents are critical to many of the baron's schemes, exposing them is one of the best ways to stop him making trouble for the covenant. Give the players a fair chance to do this. Keeping a list of agents is one way to ensure the players have a fair chance. You can also create stories by having grogs or covenfolk notice, for example, shadowy figures skulking about restricted areas of the covenant. Once the player characters uncover an agent, they can deal with that agent in a number of ways. They might try to recruit her as a double agent, cast *Mentem* spells on her, try to feed her false information, bribe or intimidate her, or simply avoid her.

It might be interesting to roleplay the baron's attempts to recruit a player's grog or companion as an agent. The most likely course for such a story is for the player character to refuse, but if your troupe has an appetite for intrigue, the character can become a double agent, feeding false information to the baron. If your troupe has a very large appetite for intrigue, the player might actually want to roleplay a traitor to the covenant! (Think carefully before you try this option; be sure all of your players would enjoy that sort of story.)

Since the baron can only recruit agents at a fairly slow rate, industrious players can eliminate his entire network and prevent him from rebuilding it. Doing so requires a lot of stories.

Researching Hermetic Law

The player magi may fear that conflict with the baron will lead them into Hermetic legal trouble. In fact, the covenant is more likely to get into legal trouble for trying to accommodate Baron Le Cornu than for fighting him.

As is pointed out on page 51 of *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, magi are generally allowed to fight mundanes when they must, as long as they don't form alliances with the mundanes' enemies. If your saga is set in the Normandy Tribunal, the Peripheral Code is especially flexible with regard to mundane relations. See *The Lion and the Lily*, pages 24–25.

It is also clear from legal research that

the Peripheral Code outright forbids magi to swear oaths of fealty. Where the Code stands with regard to any sort of oath or treaty short of full allegiance is less clear; there are few, if any, precedents. The details of the Peripheral Code rulings should make plain that the Tribunal objects to oaths of fealty because they involve magi agreeing to personally serve mundanes. They also make plain that it's forbidden for magi to take sides in mundane conflicts because that could draw other magi and covenants into the struggle. Exactly what constitutes "taking sides" varies from Tribunal to Tribunal, and may not even be clearly established in case law.

Legal research should make clear whether the covenant's Tribunal is lax or strict with regard to enforcing the Code's proscription against interfering in mundane affairs.

Resolution

Baron Le Cornu can be an abundant source of stories for the covenant, because no matter how the characters try to deal with him, he triggers action. If they try to ignore him and hope he'll go away, he sends agents to infiltrate the covenant and cause mischief, which generates stories. If they try to reason with the baron and peacefully co-exist alongside him, they first have to negotiate with him, causing stories, and they then have to deal with his demands, possibly causing more stories. If the magi associate too closely with the baron or make a pact with him that too closely resembles an oath of fealty, their neighbors may complain to the Quaesitores or Tribunal, which leads to more stories.

Resolving Court Cases

One of the major issues in the conflict, from Baron Le Cornu's point of view, is whether magi are accountable to mundane courts of law. The outcome of a single legal case probably won't end the conflict between the baron and the covenant. The legal decision is nonetheless important in

its own right.

The Gift causes any secular court to develop a strong bias against magi who are called to testify (unless, of course, all the magi involved have the Gentle Gift). Make it obvious that the court dislikes the magi: As you roleplay the count or magistrate, try to seem irritable, scowl at the magi's players, and openly call the magi "knaves" or the like. Magi often earn experience points in a bad local Reputation when they appear in open court unless they are very careful. A minor charge such as trespassing can be a good way to foreshadow future legal trouble and illustrate that mundane courts are hostile to magi.

A description of the secular courts of Mythic Europe can be found in *Lords of Men*, pages 80–82, and of Church courts in *The Church*, pages 35–36.

QUESTIONS OF JURISDICTION

The first question that needs to be resolved is which court has the authority to hear the case. In historical Europe, a baron would typically have his own court of law that hears minor cases, such as trespassing and petty theft. If members of the covenant trespass on the baron's lands, the baron both brings the suit and hears the case. The idea of a party in a case also presiding as judge seems crazy to a modern reader, but modern ideas of justice do not prevail in Mythic Europe.

Medieval courts were so complicated and idiosyncratic, it's difficult to generalize about how they worked. This gives you creative latitude to have them operate in whatever way seems best for the story. For instance, if your players would feel that having their case judged by the plaintiff (the baron) is unfair, you can always say that, in this jurisdiction, such cases are traditionally heard in the court of the baron's overlord.

It is difficult, but possible, for magi to receive a favorable ruling from the baron's own court. The baron is strongly biased in his own favor, and further biased against the magi due to their Gift. Nevertheless, he takes his role as judge seriously, and will not knowingly abuse his authority. If the magi present strong evidence or argue exceptionally well, they can indeed re-

ceive justice from Baron Le Cornu's court. Indeed, their chances are about the same as they would be in any other court.

Anything involving the ownership of land, economic privileges (such as monopolies or royal charters), or capital crimes should be typically heard in royal court. Keep in mind that stealing livestock, poaching big game, and similar property crimes are punishable by death in secular courts.

There is a third option: the magi can try to have their case heard in a Church court. Canon courts automatically have jurisdiction if the accused is a member of the clergy, and usually preside over civil cases when the issue involves inheritance or a breach of contract. In parts of historical Europe, someone accused of a crime could claim benefit of clergy — the right to be tried in a canon court rather than a secular court — if he could prove he could read Latin.

ARGUING THE CASE

Courts in Mythic Europe operate rather differently from modern courts. The idea that the accused is presumed innocent until proven guilty would be foreign to a judge in Mythic Europe. Similarly, the accused has no right protecting him from self-incrimination. The court pays a great deal of attention to testimony, and is less concerned with physical evidence. In a secular court, the judge is often a noble with little or no education. If any lawyers



are present, they are there to advise the judge, not the defendant.

Witnesses are often called to attest to the character of the defendant. In a canon court, character witnesses are especially important: If enough clergymen attest to the good character of a defendant, a canon court deems the defendant cannot possi-

bly have committed the acts of which he stands accused. This is called compurgation. Compurgation does not formally exist in secular courts, but the court does treat character witnesses as relevant evidence. Assembling character witnesses, or using Mentem magic to create some on the fly, is a good way to weaken a circumstantial case against the covenant. Actual eyewitnesses who saw (or think they saw) a crime still carry a great deal of weight. Most characters in Mythic Europe have little training in logic or rhetoric, compared to magi, so players can still counter an eyewitness by pointing out alternative explanations for what he thought he saw.

In cases regarding the covenant's ownership of land or other income sources, the case hinges on proving the magi have possessed the property for a long time. The defense is that, if the magi have never been required to pledge fealty or pay fees to some noble who owns the resource, then the magi must be the rightful owners. The best independent records for showing how long the covenant has remained in possession of the land are often in the

Benefit of Clergy

The traditional test in historical Europe for someone to claim benefit of clergy was to read a particular Bible passage — Psalm 51 — in Latin. In Mythic Europe, claiming benefit of clergy may not be that easy. The Church and the Order of Hermes have existed alongside one another for centuries. If you don't want to explore the political consequences of magi becoming subject to Church courts, simply declare that either the Church or the Order has already decided that magi don't count as clergy unless they are actually ordained.

On the other hand, a troupe that is so inclined can spin quite a few stories around the issue of magi and the canon courts. First, there is the debate over whether magi are entitled to benefit of clergy, which might cause some political fallout. The Church wants to take a closer look at these new "clergymen," and the Order is concerned this puts the privacy and safety of other magi at risk. To explore stories of this kind, simply rule that, in your saga, there is no legal precedent on whether magi are subject to Church courts, and proceed to establish one.

parish church. The Church keeps track of baptisms, marriages, and deaths (including, very often, those of covenfolk and grogs). Many churches also record major events that occur in the parish. The parish records therefore are very likely to mention the covenant. Persuading the priest to open those records to the covenant for use in its legal defense may require a story.

THE VALUE OF VIS

Sooner or later, Baron Le Cornu may accuse the magi of stealing vis from his land. This is a novel and controversial claim that has potentially far-reaching effects for the covenant and the entire Order. The outcome depends in part on the physical form the vis takes.

If the vis appears in the form of something intrinsically valuable, such as a large animal or a jewel, then stealing such an item is already a serious crime under mundane law. In that case, the court disregards the baron's claim that the item was especially valuable because it contained vis. It judges the case as if it were a theft of a valuable mundane item.

If the vis is contained in a form of minimal value, such as flowers, beeswax, or most natural substances, the burden falls on the baron to prove that it was valuable. Unless the baron can call on a magus to testify, he cannot prove that. The court therefore rules that the characters committed trespassing, not theft. However, the baron makes an argument that if the covenant ever steals the same or similar item again, that the theft should serve as *de facto* proof that the item is indeed valuable. The court agrees with this argument, and treats any future cases of stealing vis from the baron's land as serious burglaries.

SETTLING OUT OF COURT

It is possible that the baron's case against the covenant is very strong: for example, if one of the characters actually committed a crime in front of witnesses. In that case, he sends an emissary to the covenant, offering to settle the case out of court. Of course, he requests fair compensation for whatever harm has been done to

himself or his vassals. He also makes additional demands. See *Negotiated Settlements*, later, for some of the things the baron requests as part of a settlement.

VERDICTS REGARDING THE COVENANT'S LAND OWNERSHIP

If the covenant enjoys the Autocephalous Boon (from *Covenants*, page 20), then the covenant has documentary evidence of its independence, and the baron and the count automatically lose the case. Otherwise, the covenant must either settle the case by recognizing that the count owns the land and negotiating a charter with him, or it must argue its case in royal court. The good news is that if the covenant manages to win the case, it acquires the Autocephalous Boon as a result of the verdict.

If the court dispossesses the covenant of its land, ownership reverts to the count. The baron gives the covenant a week to pack up its belongings, then leads a force of armed men to remove the squatters at sword-point.

Resolving Military Conflicts

If fighting breaks out between the baron and the magi, it might seem that the situation will inevitably spiral out of control. There are a number of ways to defuse tensions, even after fighting has broken out.

The count values the baron and his knights more highly than he values the resources of the covenant. Even if Baron Le Cornu becomes blinded by rage and hell-bent on defeating the covenant, his liege won't let him waste blood and treasure on a futile war. His liege can step in and order the baron to break off hostilities. The player characters might choose to appeal to the baron's overlord to curb the baron's aggression. See *Negotiated Settlement*, later.

With planning and perhaps a bit of daring, a covenant can probably defeat the baron in battle. If the player characters manage to fight off a couple of the baron's raids, sack one of his manors, or kill or seriously wound two or three of his knights, self-preservation motivates Baron

Le Cornu to call for a truce. If any of the baron's knights or inner circle are captured, he requests a temporary truce and negotiates a ransom. In short, resisting the baron's attacks is a good way to make him fall back and reconsider his options. Too strong a show of force, on the other hand, can drive Baron Le Cornu to desperation and a final, decisive battle.

Capitulation

The players can always simply give Baron Le Cornu what he wants: they can swear fealty to the count. This handily resolves the conflict with the baron — indeed, it makes him into a potential ally. The Quaesitores and the Tribunal would sternly disapprove of such a solution, however. Swearing an oath of fealty is a direct violation of the Peripheral Code in any Tribunal. If the covenant chooses that option, they have to keep their arrangement secret from other magi. Trying to protect that secret then becomes a source of stories.

Oaths of fealty are banned because they include a pledge of personal service. Promising to serve a mundane lord is basically the same thing as becoming a court wizard, which is illegal under the Code by long tradition. If the covenant carefully modifies the traditional oath of fealty, they may be able to swear an oath that satisfies Baron Le Cornu and his liege without running afoul of the Peripheral Code. See *Negotiated Settlement*, later.

The players may think of trying to set up a companion as a kind of figurehead. The baron could make that companion a knight, then accept him as a vassal. That trick works for some covenants, but unfortunately it won't fool Baron Le Cornu. It's the magi and their magical powers he worries about, and he won't be satisfied until he feels the magi themselves are under control.

RELOCATION

Another way to resolve the conflict with the baron is to move the covenant. It's an extreme solution, and it means the baron wins, but it can actually be a

good choice if your troupe would enjoy a change of setting and a break from the intrigue, while keeping the same characters.

Negotiated Settlement

Another alternative is for the covenant to negotiate some kind of permanent treaty with the count. A well-designed treaty stops short of the magi promising to personally serve the noble, so as not to violate the Peripheral Code.

A negotiated settlement does not have to be a single agreement. It's possible, for example, to start with a simple pact of non-aggression, which is enough to keep Baron Le Cornu satisfied for a few seasons. After a while, some other dispute may arise, leading to a conflict that can be ended by adding new terms to the agreement between the magi and their mundane neighbor.

The following is a list of the baron's demands, in descending order of priority. If the magi agree to all of these, there is no cause for further conflict and the baron becomes a peaceful neighbor.

- The magi must promise not to attack the count or any of his vassals, nor cast spells on them without permission. The count's vassals include Baron Le Cornu and all of his own vassals and retainers. Magi are allowed to use magic or deadly force in self-defense if mundanes attack them first.
- The magi must satisfy the baron that their powers don't come from the Infernal. Accepting the holy sacraments of confession and communion satisfies the baron. The players may think of other ways to convince him (or, more precisely, his confessor, who advises him on this and all spiritual matters).
- The baron demands the magi provide magical service to his liege. His idea is that the magi will use spells to help the count at court and to aid him in military adventures. Of course, to do so would be a blatant violation of the Code of Hermes. Negotiating this point takes some effort: at first the baron is angry that the magi defy his lord's will, but eventually the char-

acters can persuade him to drop this demand.

- The magi must promise to respect the baron's territorial boundary. They may not venture onto his land without permission, nor remove anything without paying for it. This, of course, includes not taking vis from the baron's land without giving something valuable in exchange. The baron will accept money, but he would prefer to be paid in goods only the magi can provide, such as enchanted items (including charged items) or spells cast for his benefit. The magi must also respect the property of the count and his other vassals.
- The magi must agree to obey mundane law. Covenant members who are accused of major crimes, such as murder, arson, assault, and burglary, must be handed over for trial. The covenant must be subject to lawsuits so aggrieved neighbors can seek redress. Exactly which court shall have jurisdiction over the magi is open to negotiation; see Questions of Jurisdiction, earlier.
- The magi must pay to the baron's overlord a percentage of the income from any land or resources they cannot prove they hold entirely in their own right.
- The covenant must obtain permission from the count to keep men-at-arms, or disarm all of its grogs.
- The magi must agree to pay scutage (a kind of fine or tax for avoiding military service), but the baron will grant an exemption if doing so helps him get one of his higher priorities.

There are concessions the count (though his representative, the baron) is willing to grant in exchange (again, in descending order of significance).

- Formal recognition that the covenant owns its land and resources, including the serfs who live at the covenant and work its fields.
- A charter that recognizes the covenant is an independent legal entity, so other nobles can't question its legitimacy, and its privileges can't be taken away in future generations.
- Permission to keep a garrison of armed grogs.

- Exemption from military obligations and scutage.
- Formal and exclusive rights to collect vis from the baron's lands.
- Permission to clear wasteland and bring it under cultivation.
- Permission to hunt and slay magical beasts.
- Exemption from certain taxes and fines.

Most of these privileges are things that covenants typically act as though they already have. The advantage of agreeing to the baron's terms is that the covenant can secure these rights permanently and doesn't have to worry about them in the future. If the characters negotiate a settlement with the count (through Baron Le Cornu), it is final.

Repercussions of the Settlement

A few of the terms Baron Le Cornu demands are novel, in the sense that similar arrangements between magi and mundanes have not been described in previous **Ars Magica Fifth Edition** supplements. If the characters agree to these terms, they are breaking new ground in Hermetic law as it concerns mundane relations. Some members of the Order of Hermes disapprove of the precedent they are setting.

VIS OWNERSHIP

The Tribunals described in **ArM5** supplements decide the ownership of disputed vis sources solely among magi, without regard to the mundane owner of the land where the vis source is found. Baron Le Cornu asserts that vis from his land is his, to dispose as he sees fit.

Magi in the Tribunal are concerned about the baron's claims because other mundane landowners can be expected to also assert ownership over vis on their lands. This threatens the security of vis sources all over the mundane realm in which Baron Le Cornu resides. Members of the Tribunal may accuse the covenant's magi of threatening to deprive them of magical resources, because what once be-

longed to their covenants may soon be claimed by mundanes.

There are a number of legal questions that might be debated at Tribunal:

- If the Tribunal had previously considered the vis to belong to the covenant, does that ruling still stand? If the vis is theirs, are they within their rights to give it to the baron? If the Tribunal objects, does it have the authority to cancel the agreement?
- The covenant has made an agreement with the baron regarding the vis on his lands. Are other magi in the Tribunal bound to recognize that agreement? If someone trespasses and takes the vis, would that be a Hermetic crime? What crime, and who would be the injured party — the covenant or the baron?
- Does the baron actually own the vis source or does he only control access to it? Is he entitled, for example, to sell the vis to the highest bidder?
- By alerting the baron to the value of the vis source, did the covenant inconvenience or put at risk the resources of other covenants in the Tribunal?
- Given the implications of the agreement for all the magi in the Tribunal, did the covenant have the authority to sign it? Should it require ratification by the Tribunal, and will the Tribunal ratify it?

COURT WIZARDS?

Another question is whether the magi, in making some kind of settlement with the baron, have gone too far toward becoming court wizards. An accusation might be made at Tribunal. It may or may not be justified by the facts: some magi are cynical enough to hurl a frivolous claim at a political rival, just to cause trouble and tarnish his reputation.

MUNDANE COURTS AND MAGI

The biggest legal and political issue is the extent to which magi are allowed and required to submit to mundane authority. This is intentionally left vague in *Ars Magica Fifth Edition*, so your troupe can decide for itself how closely integrated or how well isolated the Order of Hermes is with respect to mundane society.

On the one hand, some members of the Order resent the covenant for agreeing to obey mundane law. Mundanes expect that decision to be binding on all magi, yet some magi regard it as an infringement on their sovereignty. Being forced to obey mundane law can be a major inconvenience. For example, it means that nobles or magistrates may feel entitled to visit the covenant from time to time for an inspection. One can make an argument that

signing a document agreeing that the covenant is subject to mundane law endangers the Order; it encourages nobles to pressure other covenants for similar contracts.

On the other hand, openly defying mundane law antagonizes nobles and increases their hostility toward magi and the Order. Making some kind of negotiated settlement, one could argue, calms relations with mundanes and makes Mythic Europe safer for magi.

The actual outcome of the Tribunal debate could swing either way. The Tribunal may restrict itself to making a narrow ruling on the covenant's individual agreement with the baron, or it may make a sweeping policy decision, either forbidding or requiring that magi submit to the authority of mundane courts. Either a narrow ruling about the covenant's particular arrangement, or a broad policy ruling, could be argued all the way to the Grand Tribunal. The Tribunal may go so far as to assert that magi can only be tried in special Hermetic courts, in much the same way clergy are subject only to ecclesiastical courts. The player characters may get involved to either support or oppose an effort to set up such a court system.

Father Joseph of Napoli

Father Joseph is a churchman. He is a papal legate whose mission is to provoke a Christian revolution within the Order of Hermes. His task is to reinvent the Order as a true religious order controlled from Rome.

Aims and Motivations

To reinvent the Order of Hermes as a religious order, Father Joseph needs to accomplish three tasks:

- He needs to appoint a magus to the office of Grandmaster of the Order of Hermes (or persuade the Order to appoint someone to this office).
- He needs to establish the Grandmaster of the Order as a Christian religious title. For this to happen, the pope must acknowledge (probably in a papal bull) both the existence of this title and the Order itself. The new religious Order of Hermes also needs to acknowledge that, like all good Christians, the Grandmaster is subservient to the pope — God's representative in Mythic Europe.
- Finally, the father needs to (eventually) have Marched anyone who will not accept this new vision of the Order. He anticipates this will include devout pagans, Muslims, and Jews within the Order who will not convert to Christianity, along with others who wish to remain independent of Rome. Elimination of such characters via Wizard War (waged by Father Joseph's allies) is also possible, but Father Joseph would prefer the unambiguous legal process of a March.

As far as Father Joseph's mission is concerned, the Hermetic practice of magic is unproblematic; he does not want to burn magi at the stake or even restrict the use of magic. In fact, he envisages that canon law will be extended (via papal bulls) to cover magi as a new order of religious, and the Code of Hermes and the regional Peripheral Codes will be adopted as new volumes of canon law that apply to this new holy order. The Houses of Hermes and the regional and Grand Tribunals are all acceptable to Father Joseph's and Rome's new vision for the Order. The independence and scholarship of the magi is likewise satisfactory to Rome.

Even the possible impact of the magi's work on theology will be tolerated. Father Joseph acknowledges that some arcane knowledge will surely improve the Church's understanding of the world, as well as mankind's place in God's plan, but he also believes that other aspects of Hermetic knowledge will surely be shown to be false or misleading. Father Joseph is not a true specialist in either theology or arcane lore, so he cannot judge which is which. However, the possible adoption of some arcane lore is no different than the way in which the Church already deals with theology disputes. Individual, mun-



New Virtue: Commanding Aura

Free Virtue, Supernatural

This supernatural power is granted to a legatus missus by the Divine. It is an inherent benefit of this Church office.

The character has a power equivalent to the Hermetic spell *Aura of Rightful Authority* (ArM5, page 151), but with Voice Range; this power has no cost and no penetration. The character also has a Magic Resistance of 15 and a Soak bonus of +3. If the character carries a relic, this Magic Resistance is

added to that of the relic.

If a legatus missus delays or deviates from his mission, then his Commanding Aura ceases to work until he completes penance. The Commanding Aura is also lost when a legatus missus completes his mission.

Some other Church officials also receive the Commanding Aura as a benefit of their office (see *The Church*, page 26, or *Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition*, page 42-43).

dane, Church theologians throughout Mythic Europe already hold to all sorts of disputable theories. Some of these theological "heresies" eventually go on to be-

come accepted as conventional theology, others are restricted to obscure Church scholars and forgotten texts, and a very small number are branded and repressed

as true heresy. The secrets and theories of magi will be treated no differently: some will be embraced, others will be tolerated, and a very few will be outlawed.

While Father Joseph is an officer of the Church, his mission does not necessarily represent the attitude of all churchmen. Clearly, his mission and status as a legate indicates that the pope is willing to entertain this kind of relationship between the Church and the Order, and presumably he is supported by a faction within the Church. However, other factions within the Church may be opposed, and work against Father Joseph. It is possible that the pope may not even really expect Father Joseph to succeed; rather, the pope may anticipate using Father Joseph's eventual failure to reconcile the Church and the Order, as a pretext for the Church to adopt a more aggressive stance *against* the Order.

Father Joseph

Characteristics: Int +3, Per 0, Pre +1, Com +2, Str -2, Sta -1, Dex +1, Qik -1(1)

Magic Resistance: 25 (+15 papal legate, +10 relic)

Size: 0

Age: 54 (44) (+5 Longevity Ritual)

Decrepitude: 0 (1)

Warping Score: 3 (5)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Faith Points: 2 (1 from relic, which regenerates; +1 from mass)

Virtues and Flaws: Priest; Arcane Lore, Inspirational, Relic, Temporal Influence, Well-Traveled; *Commanding Aura*; Driven; Ability Block (Martial), Arthritis*, Visions*, Vow, Weak Characteristics

* These Flaws are due to Warping.

Personality Traits: Driven +6, Religious +3

Reputations: Papal Legate to the Order of Hermes (ecclesiastical) +4, Quaestor's notary (Hermetic) +1

Combat:

Dodge: Init -1, Attack +1, Defense -1, Damage NA

Soak: +2 (-1 Sta, +3 papal legate)

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10),

-5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Area Lore: Naples 3 (history), Area Lore: Rhine Tribunal 2 (covenant locations), Area Lore: Rome 2 (churches), Area Lore: Rome Tribunal 3 (covenant locations), Artes Liberales 1 (logic, reads Latin script), Awareness 3 (spell effects), Bargain 3 (treaties), Charm 2 (covenant grogs), Civil and Canon Law 5 (magic), Code of Hermes Lore 3 (mundane interference), Concentration (meditation) 2, Dead Language: Latin 5 (church use), Divine Lore 1 (angels), Etiquette 3 (Hermetic), Folk Ken 4 (magi), Guile 2 (written communication), Intrigue 5 (magi), Leadership 5 (religious), Living Language: Low German 3 (travel), Living Language: Italian 5 (Napoli dialect), Magic Theory 2 (spells), Music 1 (church), Organization Lore: Church 5 (papal curia), Organization Lore: Order of Hermes 4 (Christian magi), Profession: Scribe 3 (copying), Ride 2 (long distances), Theology 3 (magic)

Powers:

Commanding Aura, see insert (as papal legate).

Faithful Wisdom, see Supernatural Powers.

Equipment: Priest's stole, well-worn monk's habit, finger-bone relic, letters of authority (kept in a leather scroll case), writing equipment (ink, parchment, legate's seal, wax, etc.), riding horse (with saddle and tack).

Encumbrance: 0

Appearance: Father Joseph is a tall, ascetic man who usually hunches slightly, after many years spent at a writing desk. However, when he preaches, his posture rises and his eyes glisten. Although clearly aged, the father does not seem decrepit, thanks to his Longevity Ritual. Father Joseph wears the regalia of a priest and a finger-bone relic on a silver chain around his neck, and he carries a satchel filled with writing equipment. When traveling, the father rides an impressive, very expensive, glossy black stallion. Lighter and swifter than a warhorse, the father's horse has a formidable constitution and may be ridden for many days with little rest. Father Joseph is usually accompanied by one or two clergymen. As his plans advance, his retinue may be joined by a magus ally, who may comport himself as another clergyman.

On the other hand, the last few decades, under Pope Innocent III and (since 1216) under Pope Honorius III, have seen a concerted effort to reform the Church and concentrate power in the papal curia. Bringing the Order of Hermes under papal control would certainly be a magnificent addition to the pope's powers in Mythic Europe, and Father Joseph's mission can easily be seen as part of the ongoing program of Church reform and concentration of power within the papal curia. In addition, and quite apart from the magical powers of the magi, Father Joseph's mission could be seen as the papacy taking the Order of Hermes' claim to be an "order" seriously. It is just bad politics for a widespread, pseudo-religious order to be seen to be beyond papal authority. The papacy fears that the example of the Order of Hermes might cause some of the monastic orders to wonder whether they too might be better off independent of Rome.

Father Joseph is Not a Holy Man

It is important to make the distinction between the Church as a human institution and the Church as an expression of the Divine. Like most churchmen, Father Joseph is not a holy man; he does not have True Faith, nor can he perform miracles, although he can pray to the saints for intercession. Father Joseph is a Christian and a good man. He tries to lead a moral life according to the teachings of Christ and the canons of the Church.

Father Joseph's mission is likewise not a holy one. His mission is political, and arises from the earthly ambitions of the Church. This does not mean that his mission is necessarily incompatible with the will of the Divine, and Father Joseph certainly believes that his mission is sanctioned by God. He may even find that the Divine directly comes to his aid; he does, for example, receive the *Commanding Aura* directly from the Divine.

However, Father Joseph could be wrong.

If relevant, the true position of the Divine upon Father Joseph's mission is something for your troupe to decide for your own saga.

Holy Magic

Father Joseph is aware of the existence of Holy Magic (see *Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition*, page 66). He views Holy Magic and mainstream Hermetic magic as being two similar but different things. He views Holy Magic as being like a cathedral constructed by angels, built next door to Hermetic magic which is like a cathedral built by men. The ca-

thedral built by angels will clearly be superior to the one built by men. However, both cathedrals glorify God. The fact that the angels have built a cathedral is not a reason to tear down the one built by men. Similarly, the existence of Holy Magic does not mean that Hermetic magic should be suppressed or replaced. This is just Father Joseph's opinion.

Background

Father Joseph was born in Napoli. He was the son of a fisherman, but as a boy, his family pushed him to follow his uncle and enter holy orders. Joseph rapidly advanced to the grade of deacon, then, at the age of 19, he left the formal service of the Church. He had been recruited to act as the notary of the Hermetic archmage Pompilus of House Guernicus.

Pompilus was a Quaesitor, and Joseph traveled extensively with him throughout the Rome and Rhine Tribunals. The elderly Pompilus' wiry limbs were crooked and bent with the years he had embraced. Nonetheless, the bright-eyed archmagus was lively and intelligent, and he was often called to adjudicate, investigate, and advise upon Hermetic law and crimes.

Deacon Joseph eagerly learned about the mysterious Order of Hermes while he helped Pompilus perform his duties, and, over the years, Joseph came to deeply respect the miraculous powers of the magi. However, he also observed that, like all men, magi struggled both to understand their place in the Divine plan, and always act as good men should. Joseph would also later confess that he was very envious of The Gift, and that he was terribly frustrated by the knowledge that he could never become a magus. Although he now accepts that his envy represented a failing of his own character, Joseph suspects this may have been exacerbated by the strange anti-social aura seemingly created by The Gift. Joseph now no longer envies The Gift, and although he still finds many magi (at least initially) seem odd and untrustworthy, he is aware that this is mostly a consequence of The Gift.

For almost 17 years, Joseph followed Pompilus as he journeyed around Mythic Europe, and they had many long conversations together about the roles of the Order and the Church in the Divine plan. Pompilus even made a Longevity Ritual for his notary. Unfortunately, in the summer of 1202, the archmage abruptly turned to stone in the middle of an investigation. Distraught and confused, Joseph was able to arrange for a nearby covenant to recover the lifeless statue of his friend and master, but it was apparent that the elderly magus had irrevocably passed into Final Twilight, leaving behind only a fossilized husk. The shocked Joseph presented Pompilus' remaining case notes to the Quaesitor's successor, and then quietly trudged back to Napoli, his birth city.

At Napoli, Joseph re-entered the formal Church, becoming a canon at San Giovanni Maggiore, where he wrote several books about the Order of Hermes. Joseph was ordained as a priest in 1210, and soon after, he was called to Rome. Copies of his books had been circulating in the papal curia, and Father Joseph was asked to help Pope Innocent III formulate Church strategy toward the Order.

In 1216, Innocent III died, but Father Joseph's position in the papal curia continued upon the succession to the papacy of Honorius III. In 1219, Father Joseph was invested formally as a papal legate, and assigned his mission to act as envoy to the Order of Hermes.

Father Joseph's Insights

From his time as the notary of the Quaesitor Pompilus, Father Joseph knows

a lot about the Order of Hermes, and his information is mostly accurate. Although he is no expert in Hermetic Law, he knows more about the Code of Hermes than many non-specialist magi do. He is certainly well aware of the Oath of Hermes, and many common Peripheral Code rulings. He knows the procedures for and legal standing of Marches, Wizard War, and Certamen. He knows the details of the main provisions for interference with the mundane, molestation of faeries, and dealing with the devil. Father Joseph therefore knows that his proposal will be considered by many magi to be at odds with the current Oath of Hermes. However, his point is that the Oath (or how it is interpreted by the Order) can be changed.

Father Joseph is quite familiar with the location, layout, and number of inhabitants of many of the covenants in the Rome and Rhine Tribunals (including some of those hidden in regiones). He knows this because he has personally visited these covenants in the company of Pompilus. Of course, most of his information is almost twenty years out-of-date, but magi do not move covenants particularly frequently. Father Joseph is unlikely to be very familiar with magi Gauntleted in the last 20 or so years, unless he met them as young apprentices. From reading petitions and letters to the papal curia, the father also has some idea of the location of the main (non-hidden) covenants in the rest of Mythic Europe — although he must rely on the reports of priests and bishops who are often very ignorant about the details of the Order of Hermes.

Father Joseph knows how the Order of Hermes is structured. He knows about the Tribunals and Houses (and the general flavor of each House), and he knows about Quaesitors and Redcaps. He isn't familiar with the details of the Tribunals that he hasn't visited, but he knows enough to comprehend that how the Code is interpreted can be quite different from Tribunal to Tribunal. The father knows that Mystery Cults exist, but other than the House Cults, he does not know much more than the names of any particular Mystery Cults. The father also knows a lot about the history of the Order, such as the foundation of the Order, the Schism War, and the scourging of House Tytalus. Father Joseph

also knows that lesser hedge wizards (outside the Order) exist. He doesn't know anything detailed about hedge wizards, but he does know about the formal "Join or Die" position of the Code.

With regard to magic theory, Father Joseph knows less than a typical freshly Gauntleted magus does. However, he does

Father Joseph's Books

Copies of these books, written by Father Joseph at San Giovanni Maggiore between 1203 and 1210, are circulating within the Church. The intended readers are clergy. Magi, in general, do not know of the existence of these books.

The Order of Hermes (Order of Hermes Lore Ability tractatus, Quality 8)

The Rule of The Order of Hermes (Code of Hermes Lore Ability tractatus, Quality 8)

History of the Magi of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rome (Order of Hermes Lore Ability tractatus, Quality 8)

know more than many young apprentices. He has a good understanding of the sorts of things that are possible with Hermetic magic. He knows about Arcane Connections, the Arts, Magic Resistance, Parma Magica, vis, and that, for example, it is more difficult for magi to cast spells within the Divine aura of cities and churches. He cannot teach someone the Arts or Parma Magica, nor can he cast spells, of course. The father just knows that these things exist, what they are for, and how they generally work. He certainly knows enough to accurately copy texts about the Arts; this was some of the work he did for Pompilus.

Father Joseph is familiar with some common spells, including *The Aegis of the Hearth*, *Frosty Breath of the Spoken Lie*, *Whispers Through the Black Gate*, *Demon's Eternal Oblivion*, and a variety of Wards. He would not be able to identify such spells as they were cast, but he might be able to identify them by their effects.

For rare or highly specialized knowledge (such as knowledge of the Arts spe-

cialties of an individual magus, the magnitude of a spell to read a mind, or the location of the secret entrance of a covenant), the storyguide should make, on Father Joseph's behalf, rolls for Order of Hermes Lore, Code of Hermes Lore, Magic Theory, or Area Lore against appropriate Ease Factors, as required.

Moving Father Joseph

Clearly, if it suits your saga, Father Joseph's background can be changed. The most obvious change is to move his background details to a different Tribunal. There should be no problems with doing this. Where in Mythic Europe Father Joseph comes from, and where he worked with the Quaesitor Pompilus makes no difference to Joseph's capability, or suitability, to now serve as a papal legate. Replace his Area Lore and Living Language Abilities as appropriate. If required, the dates in his background can also be changed.

Why is He not Dead?

In some sagas the Order is a special and obscure, but (in general) not a deliberately isolated or successfully secretive part of Mythic Europe. In such sagas, the fact that Deacon Joseph (a simple scribe employed as a notary) could wander from the direct control of the Order of Hermes and eventually become a confidant of the pope requires no further explanation. In such sagas, the Order does not keep close track of exactly where every grog is and what happens to them.

However, in other sagas, the Order of Hermes is much more secretive, and the magi should have tried to contain Father Joseph long before he became a problem. In such a saga, Father Joseph should not have been allowed to leave when Pompilus entered Final Twilight. The Order would have found a new role for Pompilus' scribe elsewhere in the Order, or they would have magically erased his memory of the Order (allowing him to return to the mundane world without risk), or he would have been simply killed.

For a saga where the Order of Hermes is highly secretive, some explanation of how Father Joseph got away is needed. Some possible explanations that your troupe could consider are:

- **It was an oversight.** Pompus enters Final Twilight in a spectacular manner, and his notary is wrongly thought killed in the resulting carnage. The mistake is not discovered until years later, when Father Joseph returns as legate.
- **It didn't happen here.** Even a very secretive Order of Hermes is likely to have regions, or even entire Tribunals, where security is lax. Fortunately for Father Joseph, Pompus entered Final Twilight while in one of these regions, and the local magi did not try very hard to locate Deacon Joseph or prevent him from returning to the Church.
- **It was a conspiracy.** Father Joseph did not leave the employ of the Order of Hermes. He is really (and possibly unknowingly) a pawn of some faction within the Order who wish either to provoke confrontation with the Church or to control it. See the Dominion section later in this chapter.
- **It was a miracle.** The Divine intervened and either saved Father Joseph from magi who were pursuing him, or allowed his memories of the Order to return a few years after the magi believed they had been removed.

Encountering Father Joseph

Father Joseph can be encountered the first time in a number of ways. In considering the initial encounter, it is important to remember Father Joseph is not a violent man. He will not petulantly argue his point, nor will he provoke the magi to violence. His initial intentions are merely to get magi thinking and talking about his ideas.

The storyguide should carefully consider the progress that Father Joseph has already made when he is encountered by the player characters. Perhaps, the covenant is one of the first approached by Father Joseph, and thus he has few, if any, Hermetic allies. Alternatively, Father Joseph may already have numerous converts to his cause within the Tribunal.

A Visit

If Father Joseph already knows of the covenant, either because he visited it as a Hermetic notary or because local clergy or another magus told him its location, then characters may encounter him when he approaches the covenant to seek an audience with the magi. If the covenant is inaccessible to Father Joseph (or if the storyguide be-

lieves the player characters may immediately kill him), then characters may meet him as a guest of another covenant, when they visit.

Father Joseph needs a token to cross the covenant's *Aegis of the Hearth*, because of the Divine Might of the relic that he carries, unless the *Aegis* is too weak to prevent the entry of the relic. For this reason, rather than relying on the hospitality of unknown magi, Father Joseph may prefer to stay at a nearby parish church. In this case, he will send a messenger (perhaps the parish clerk) to the covenant and request that the magi visit him in the church. Note that Father Joseph's Magic Resistance (due to his office as papal legate) does *not* prevent him crossing the *Aegis* boundary; *Aegis of the Hearth* only keeps out things with a Might, not things with a Magic Resistance. The father knows that he can just leave the relic behind, if he wants to cross the *Aegis* boundary without a token.

An advantage of meeting at a parish church is that it is a canon crime to spill blood within the sanctuary of the church. While Father Joseph is aware that, like many nobles, some magi will consider canon crimes inconsequential, he believes that this legal point will give even very hostile magi some cause for thought.

On the Road

If the player characters travel widely — perhaps they are Redcaps — then they may



encounter Father Joseph likewise traveling between covenants or ecclesiastical centers.

Rumor

The magi may encounter the father's ideas before encountering the man. Magi either sympathetic or hostile to Father Joseph could approach the player characters seeking allies. Player characters might also hear about the legate and his mission through ecclesiastical contacts.

Tribunal

If Father Joseph's plans are well advanced when your saga begins, he could be first encountered when he (or his allies) dramatically propose an alliance between the Church and the Order at Tribunal. A large faction in favor of the father could have already formed.

Investigating Father Joseph

Once Father Joseph starts making his presence felt in the Order, magi want to know more about him. Player characters may be assigned to investigate the man's history and motives.

The Past

The Order knows very little about Father Joseph. Some magi may remember him as Pompilus' notary, but Father Joseph is much more likely to remember magi than for magi to remember him. Magi who have good relationships with senior Church officials may have heard recent news of Father Joseph and his mission, especially after he was officially made a legate.

As he has written several books about the Order of Hermes, some magi may

know of Father Joseph as an author. However, there are plenty of better books about the Order available to magi. What makes Father Joseph's books unusual is that they are primarily in circulation within the Church, especially the papal curia. Only magi with strong Church contacts are likely to have noticed Father Joseph's books.

However, it is not very difficult for magi to find out about Father Joseph's background. Magi who have met him previously can use magic to refresh their memories, and he is willing to discuss his background, as he has nothing to hide. He is reluctant to offer information about his birth family in Napoli, out of suspicion that some magi might threaten to harm his family as a way to influence him. Such threats will not sway him — he believes his mission is more important than his family — but he prefers to protect his innocent family from harm by unscrupulous magi.

To determine whether a magus knows of Father Joseph's life as the notary of the archmage Pompilus, make a roll on the Reputation Ease Factor Table (see *ArM5*, page 19). Father Joseph's reputation as a notary is low because it is many years since he worked in this capacity. Once this is known, further details, such as cases, crimes and convictions, can be discovered by consulting the Quaestorial records. The records actually taken by Joseph will also contain his signature, which can be used as a Sympathetic Connection (see *ArM5*, page 84).

At Napoli, Father Joseph is well-known both at his old church of San Giovanni Maggiore and within the wider community. His family are not wealthy; most are still simple fishermen although he has several relatives serving as lowly clergy. Nobody in Napoli, except perhaps at the bishop's court, will have anything but the vaguest idea of Father Joseph's mission as a papal legate.

Supernatural Powers

Father Joseph carries a finger bone of Saint Jerome. This is a saintly relic, which he wears on a silver chain around his neck beneath his robes.

Saint Jerome is the patron saint of scholars. He lived in the fourth and fifth

centuries, and was the primary translator of the Vulgate Bible — the main Latin translation of the Bible used by the Church. Any character with a score in Church Lore knows of Saint Jerome, and Father Joseph has sufficient Magic Theory to be aware that possessing the relic gives him some protection against magical effects. A rough idea of the powers of the relic can be determined with a suitable Intellego Vim effect (with sufficient penetration).

The finger bone relic has 1 Faith Point, and a Divine Might of 10. See *ArM5*, page 189, and *Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition*, pages 43–46, for information about relics. The finger bone has the power *Faithful Wisdom*. Relic powers are activated by spending the relic's Might Points, which replenish every sunrise.

Worldly Power

Papal legates represent the pope, the head of the Church. Speaking to a legate is equivalent to speaking to the pope, and an attack on a legate is seen by the Church as tantamount to an attack on the pope himself. There are several grades of legate, and Father Joseph is a legatus missus. The legatus missus grade receives a particular mission from the pope, and the legate loses his title, authority, and legal powers upon the completion of his mission.

The status of legates within the Church is trivial information for characters to discover. Any character with an Ability Score in Church Lore knows what a legate is. To specifically know of Father Joseph as a legate, make a roll on the Reputation Ease Factor Table (*ArM5*, page 19). Remember that, when encountered, Father Joseph will freely volunteer this information anyway.

LETTERS OF AUTHORITY

As a legatus missus, Father Joseph carries a set of letters that detail his legal powers. The intention is that Father Joseph presents these letters to religious, Hermetic, or secular authorities to establish his status as a papal legate. His letters explain that he is a papal legate sent as an

envoy to the Order of Hermes, and that he should be given free and safe passage by all. The letters also state that Father Joseph has the authority to speak with magi on the pope's behalf, and that he may requisition any assistance he needs from churches, bishops, and monasteries.

To check whether a character knows (or can guess) that Father Joseph is likely to be carrying letters of authority, make an Intelligence + Church Lore roll against an Ease Factor of 9.

Father Joseph's usual procedure is to present his letters to the bishop when he arrives in a new diocese. Father Joseph is very plausible, and he does not usually have a problem convincing the bishop that he is a legitimate legate. Once the bishop has met with Father Joseph, he then assigns a well-known deacon or priest to accompany Father Joseph in his travels in the diocese. The presence of the bishop's deacon means that Father Joseph is easily accepted within the diocese, and also allows the bishop to be kept informed of Father Joseph's movements. When Father Joseph leaves the diocese, the deacon travels with him, both to help confirm the father's identity in the next diocese — and to ensure that the father has truly departed.

The wary watching of Father Joseph by the bishops has nothing to do with his mission. The bishops are just worried that Father Joseph is really in their diocese to audit them. They are suspicious of legates because, in the last few decades, the pope has begun to claim more real, practical power over all the dioceses of Mythic Europe, and there is still some uneasiness about precisely where the division lies between the powers of the pope and the powers of the lesser bishops. On the other hand, even the most rebellious bishop will not openly interfere with or hinder Father Joseph's mission, for this very reason — such interference would just provoke the papacy to act against the bishop.

On the other hand, a bishop might hinder Father Joseph if he strongly believes that the Order is heretical or Infernal. Father Joseph knows and understands the political situation that he faces as a legate, and he really is not interested in the affairs of the bishops. He also has a good idea which bishops of Mythic Europe have strong hostile opinions about the Order.

Relic Powers

FAITHFUL WISDOM

1 point, Init +3, Mentem

R: Touch, D: Season, T: Individual

The character is blessed with the ability to read a single text specified at the time of the blessing. The text might be a tractatus, summa, Lab Text, or similar. This blessing overcomes any difficulties that the character may have, such as being illiterate or unable to understand the language, alphabet, or notations used in the text. The character reads at the rate of a normally literate person, and obviously he must have a copy of the actual text in order to read it.

If the character is literate in any language, then he can make a copy of the text, without errors, using the normal copying rules. The character need not be naturally literate in either the language or script of the text. The copy is exact — it is not a translation — so he may not be able to read the copy when the blessing expires.

This blessing lasts for the special duration of Season.

If, in your saga, you require Father Joseph to have a greater Magic Resistance, you can increase the power of the finger bone relic. Increasing the Faith Score of the relic to 2 or 3 increases the father's total Magic Resistance to 35 or 45, and the relic may also manifest addi-

tional powers. *Life of the Ascetic* and *Rebuke of the Scholar* are additional example powers and *Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition* (page 88) contains more examples of relic powers. Even if you do not need to increase the power of Father Joseph's relic, you might like to swap the *Faithful Wisdom* power for another one.

LIFE OF THE ASCETIC

5 points, Init +3, Corpus

R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Individual

The blessed character is freed from his need to eat or drink for the duration of the effect. The character will still become hungry and thirsty, but he will not suffer loss of Fatigue, take Wounds, or die because of this deprivation.

REBUKE OF THE SCHOLAR

1 Point, Init +10, Corpus

R: Voice, D: Sun, T: Individual

The cursed character is struck with a bad case of stammering, and he is unable to form a coherent sentence. If he is a spell caster, the cursed character must take the appropriate penalty for casting spells without words. Although he cannot form the appropriate words for spell casting, the caster can still make noise with his voice; if he does so, the range of Voice Range spells is unaffected by this curse.

AUTHENTICATION OF PAPAL DOCUMENTS

The papacy has not managed to establish a robust system for authenticating papal letters. Father Joseph's letters *do* carry papal seals, but such seals can be forged, though there are harsh penalties for doing so. This is why Father Joseph also relies on a chain of introductions from diocese to diocese.

If required, Hermetic magic can determine that the father's letters of authority really do come from the papal curia — this is a part of the history of the vellum that the letters are written on (see *InAn* guidelines: *ArM5*, page 117). The pope has probably not personally written the

letters — a scribe in the curia would have performed this task for him.

LOSS OF LETTERS

The letters themselves are only a record of the pope's confirmation of these powers to Father Joseph. Physically possessing the letters does not grant Father Joseph any special powers. This applies both to his legal powers and the *Commanding Aura* Supernatural power. So, if Father Joseph's letters are lost, stolen, or destroyed, he does not technically lose his authority, nor does a thief acquire the father's powers by merely possessing his letters or copies.

Of course, it may be difficult for Father Joseph to establish his identity to strangers without the letters, and a character who acquires the letters or copies may be able to pretend to be Father Joseph. Of course, an impostor will need to be careful that he does not encounter people who already know the true Father Joseph.

If he needs replacement letters, Father Joseph must return to Rome to get them. He might also leave a replacement set of letters with a friendly bishop.

Methods

Father Joseph uses a number of approaches in his attempt to bring magi within the Church.

Discussion and Travel

Father Joseph's main intention is to travel among the Hermetic covenants he knows of and try to discuss and negotiate his ideas with the magi he encounters. If Father Joseph can encourage magi to think about his ideas and talk about them either to him, or better yet to other magi, then he will consider that he is making progress. The father does not need to keep traveling, and settles for several seasons, perhaps in a monastery or as the guest of a covenant, if he thinks that regular meetings with the local magi will help his cause. Generally, the father tries to convince politically influential members of the Tribunal, and then rely upon magi to spread his ideas for him.

Where he is able to, the father attempts to discover the locations of more covenants, and he would love to accompany a Redcap traveling about the Tribunal. The father also uses the Redcap network to carry messages for him, if permitted. If he runs out of known covenants to visit, the father travels within clerical circles, attempting to discover rumors of where more covenants might be found.

Ultimately, Father Joseph would like his ideas presented at a Tribunal meeting, but he is more than willing to let sympathetic magi speak for him at such a gathering.

STORY SEED: MIRACLE OF THE MAGI

The covenant magi are seen casting spells by the local clergy. The dean writes to the papal curia describing the miraculous events and asking for guidance. Eventually the dean's letter is passed to Father Joseph, who recognizes the presence of Hermetic magi. He comes to the deanery to meet with the dean and track down the magi.

STORY SEED: HOST OF THE CHURCH

The magi of the covenant, who are sympathetic to the Church, agree to let Father Joseph stay as a guest for several seasons. Christian magi from all over the Tribunal come to hear Father Joseph preach about the Church's position on magic, and his message of brotherhood between the Church and the Order. The visiting magi are generally well-behaved, but the magi of the covenant need to find accommodation for all the pilgrims and their retinues.

After a few seasons, a band of pagan magi arrive. The pagans are argumentative, hostile, and insult both the pilgrim magi and Father Joseph. The father is not alarmed by this, but many of the pilgrim magi are aggrieved, and several malicious certamen matches are waged. Unless someone acts to calm the situation, Wizard's War may be declared (or maybe even murder committed).

STORY SEED: PILGRIMAGE

One (or more) of the covenant magi accompanies Father Joseph as he travels about the Tribunal. During the journey, the magus has ample opportunity to discuss the father's vision for the future of the Order. If given the choice, Father Joseph chooses for his traveling companion a magus who is actually *against* his proposal (though obviously not a magus who is uncontrollably homicidal toward Christians). The father hopes to convert his companion, through calm argumentation and example, during the course of the pilgrimage. From Father Joseph's point of view, there is little point in traveling with an already converted magus!

The magus may be accused of reveal-

ing the location of hidden covenants to Father Joseph — although it is not clear that this is in any way a Hermetic crime. The magus may also need to defend Father Joseph from pagan magi, either via certamen or even more aggressive attacks.

STORY SEED: THE ADDRESS

Father Joseph travels to the Tribunal and wants to address the meeting. He wishes to propose a formal treaty between the Order and the Church, and open negotiations for the formulation of a religious Rule for the Order. The covenant magi may be supporters of Father Joseph, in which case they need to argue for Father Joseph's right to speak to the assembled magi — in most Tribunals, it is customary to allow only magi to address the formal Tribunal meeting. If Father Joseph is denied permission to participate in the Tribunal, perhaps one of the covenant magi addresses the Tribunal in his stead. If the covenant magi are opposed to Father Joseph, then they might try to prevent him from speaking or they might address the Tribunal in reply.

In either case, the magi could be involved in pre-Tribunal intrigues. Father Joseph would like to save his address for an occasion when he knows that he has some support. Ideally, he would like his proposals accepted by the Tribunal, but a second best result would be for a significant minority to publicly support him, creating a division within the Tribunal. If the father and his allies do not think either is possible, he will merely wait until the next Tribunal meeting.

The Societas of the Mystical Christ

Another of Father Joseph's strategies is the Societas of the Mystical Christ. This is a Hermetic societas for Christian magi who support Father Joseph's vision for a religious Order of Hermes. There are chapters of this Societas in each of the Tribunals.

The Societas of the Mystical Christ was founded at Father Joseph's suggestion, but (as he is not a magus) he is not a member, nor does he control the Societas. There is no magical benefit or cost to magi

associated with belonging to the Societas. It is not a Mystery Cult. A character does not even need to be a particularly devout Christian to be accepted as a member, but pagans, Muslims and Jews must convert and be baptized before they can join. Father Joseph regularly meets with the leaders of the Societas (at least once a year), and he has a good knowledge of who is a member. If threatened by a magus, the father may try to seek help from the local members of the Societas. However, the main purpose of the Societas is to spread and discuss Father Joseph's ideas, and to be a kind of embryo of the father's new vision for the Order — he expects that the first Grandmaster of the Order of Hermes will be drawn from among the leaders of the Societas. Father Joseph is content to let the magi of the Societas claim credit for his ideas, if they wish.

The Societas of the Mystical Christ is known of by the papal curia and some sympathetic bishops. A magus who identifies himself, to high-ranking Church officials, as a member of the Societas is accorded respect and legitimacy. If a magus member of the Societas identifies himself when he makes a petition to the papal curia (see *The Church*, pages 46–48), he receives a +3 bonus to his Petition Total. Although the Societas is not a secret, knowledge of it is not common (either in Hermetic or Church circles), so low-ranking Church officials are unlikely to be impressed as they do not know what it is.

The Societas of the Mystical Christ uses the old Roman Christian emblem (the superimposed Greek letters *chi* and *rho*), followed by the astrological sign for mercury as its symbol.

STORY SEED: CHRIST UNDERGROUND

If the Tribunal is dominated by pagan (or other anti-papal) magi, Father Joseph's proposals are met with strong resistance. In this case, the members of the Societas of the Mystical Christ need to be very secretive and cautious — they run the risk of concerted Wizard's War from the dominant Tribunal pagans. Of course, such a repressive environment is something that the very early Church also experienced, and the challenge of preaching to a bastion of paganism is welcomed by Father Joseph.

Other Hermetic Allies

In the Rhine Tribunal, the Societas of the Mystical Christ might conduct itself as a Gild (*Guardians of the Forests*, page 27). The olive would be a good choice for a tree for such a Gild, given its association with Christianity. Alternatively, the existing Apple Gild could become allies of

Father Joseph. In the Theban Tribunal, a League could play a similar role.

The Priory of Saint Nerius (*Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition*, page 94), and the covenant of Cunfin (*The Lion and the Lily*, page 106) may also become allies of Father Joseph.

A Christian Mystery

As presented here, the Societas of the Mystical Christ is not a Mystery Cult; it is a political faction. However, for your saga you might like to consider

the possibility of the Societas (or a select inner circle) having access to Mystery initiation scripts that offer members Divine Virtues.

Father Joseph mobilizes the few members of the Societas within the Tribunal to secretly shelter him. He is moved from location to location throughout the Tribunal, preaching, and (hopefully) slowly converting magi. The persecution (and even death) of a few of his followers is not necessarily a disaster for Father Joseph; martyrdom is one of the ideals of Christian sacrifice.

The covenant magi may be local members of the Societas of the Mystical Christ who must hide the father, and carefully transfer him to new safe locations. Alternatively, the magi might be members of the Societas in a neighboring, less pagan-dominated Tribunal. In this case, they are called upon to provide support to their brothers across the Tribunal border. Finally, the magi could be hoplites or Quaesitors of the Tribunal asked to hunt down and eliminate Father Joseph and his disruptive supporters.

STORY SEED: THE GOOD NEWS

Magi who are known to be pious Christians are sometimes recruited by the Societas of the Mystical Christ, rather than directly by Father Joseph. The Societas tries to research potential recruits, to determine by their writings and deeds whether they will be sympathetic to the new vision for a religious Order of Hermes.

If the player characters become members of the Societas of the Mystical Christ, they might be asked to testify to the good

character of magi from neighboring covenants. Alternatively, if the player characters are not yet recruits to Father Joseph's cause, they may stumble upon agents of the Societas who are investigating the good characters of Tribunal magi.

Hermetic Benefices

When a priest of the Church is ordained, he is offered a benefice, which is an income collected from his parishioners' tithe contributions. Indeed, a priest cannot technically be ordained unless there is a vacant benefice for him. Organizations, like monasteries, can also be assigned a benefice, in which case the monastery keeps the main proportion of the tithe and pays a priest to officiate in the parish church. See *The Church* (pages 41–43) for further details.

Father Joseph proposes to assign benefices to Hermetic covenants, so that the covenant will keep the majority of the tithe, employ a priest in the parish church, and forward a small proportion of the tithe to the local bishop. This is exactly what a monastery does. The purpose, from Father Joseph's point of view, is to enmesh the covenant in the mundane and ecclesiastical communities that surround it. Father Joseph hopes that the magi will become more interested in the affairs of the parish (a healthy, productive parish means a larger tithe), and that the covenant will thus come to occupy a similar

position in the community to a monastery.

As far as most magi are concerned, the wealth of the benefice is convenient, but if magi really want wealth, they can just create it with *Creo Terram* effects. However, a well-defined relationship with their community would simplify mundane relationships. Having a similar status to a monastery (and being supported in this by the Church) would also allow a covenant to convincingly deny aid to local nobles seeking magical assistance.

STORY SEED: FIRST RIGHTS

The pope directs the bishop of the local diocese to grant several benefices to the covenant. This counts as a Typical Income Source for the covenant. However, the bishop removes benefices from a chapter of canons in order to grant them to the magi.

The canons are outraged, and are determined that their income must be returned. Of course, the bishop was aware that his actions would annoy the canons. The canons are from the second most powerful church in the diocese (after the bishop's cathedral), and he is concerned that the canons have become too powerful and wealthy. The magi of the covenant make a powerful ally (and gain wealth) if they assist in suppressing the canons. However, the canons make for bitter enemies. On the other hand, if the magi refuse to take the benefices, they make an enemy of the bishop.

STORY SEED: CARE OF SOULS

The covenant magi are granted a benefice. They must now find a priest to pay to perform mass in the parish church (from which the benefice is collected). Once he is established, the priest occasionally turns to the magi for help with the needs of the congregation — perhaps the magi can help cure diseased farm animals, or help find a lost child, or determine who is lying in an argument between merchants.

STORY SEED: THE TITHE

The covenant magi, or their agents, must travel throughout their parish once a

year to assess the crop yield of each field. The tithe is one-tenth of the yield. Usually, this task is performed by the parish clerk, but the magi might use the opportunity to search for vis sources within the parish. Negotiating a tithe that included naturally occurring vis among the wheat or other produce would be an efficient way for the covenant to increase their vis stocks.

Synods and Tribunals

Synods are regional meetings of clergy. They are essentially the clerical version of Tribunals, though held much more frequently and (usually) for much smaller geographical jurisdictions (see *The Church*, page 45). Local noblemen or their representatives are often invited to synods to discuss items of mutual interest to the clergy and nobility, and Father Joseph tries to encourage sympathetic bishops and archdeacons to likewise invite local magi to their synods. He also encourages magi to reciprocate and invite bishops and abbots (or their representatives) to attend Tribunals and covenant councils (as non-voting speakers or observers).

As a legate, Father Joseph has the authority to call special synods if he needs to, and he can invite whomever he chooses. However, he prefers to encourage the regional clergy to invite magi to more routine synods. This is because Father Joseph wants to create a real, long-lasting relationship between magi and the Church, rather than something that requires his ongoing personal intervention.

STORY SEED: SLANDEROUS ACCUSATIONS

In 1215, the papacy decreed that slander was a canon crime. The local bishop believes that magic is not evil. However, he has learned that a number of priests in his diocese have been preaching that magic and magi are the tools of the devil. The bishop decides to call all his clergy to a synod to clarify his position on magic, and to clarify the papacy's position on slander. He invites the magi of the covenant to attend the synod to help demonstrate that they are not evil.

STORY SEED: HERETICS

The dean of the rural priests located near the covenant has fallen into a heresy (perhaps he is a Cathar), and a number of his priests have followed him. The covenant's representatives are invited to attend a synod called by the dean, and they recognize the dominance of this heresy in the theological discussions. The covenant must choose whether to report this heresy to the bishop or let the heretics continue. If the magi report the heresy, they might be called upon to help rehabilitate (or suppress) the dean and his followers. If the magi ignore the problem, they might also be accused of heresy when the bishop (or archbishop) eventually discovers it.

STORY SEED: OPULENT COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The covenant invites the local bishop to send a representative to their yearly council meeting. The bishop's representative (a deacon) is a severe ascetic, and he is concerned at the ostentatious and extravagant wealth displayed in the council chambers. The deacon complains to the bishop about the wealth of the covenant, and the bishops writes the magi, asking them to explain their sources of income. The bishop might be merely curious (and perhaps fishing for gifts) or he might follow the ascetic concerns of his deacon.

The Bishop's Court

If relations between the ecclesiastical authorities and the magi of a diocese are proceeding well, Father Joseph encourages the bishop's court to seek the assistance of magi in performing investigations. Hermetic services would be valuable in establishing the authenticity of miracles, and the facts in some cases of canon crimes.

Of course, magi who assist the bishop's court could be accused of acting as court wizards. However, this is exactly what Father Joseph wants. He wants such a case to be brought before the Tribunal, and for the Tribunal to rule (and add to the Peripheral Code) that such activities

are *not* Hermetic crimes. Of course, Father Joseph will not embark upon this stage of his plan until he is fairly confident that his Hermetic allies will be able to successfully push his agenda at Tribunal. Even a defeat over this point at Tribunal might not be a disaster; a second-best outcome may result in the creation of a Tribunal precedent that acting as an ally to the bishop's court is a lesser Hermetic crime, punished by a relatively low *vis fine*.

STORY SEED: AUTHENTIC MIRACLES

Reports of a holy man, living in a small village within the diocese, reach the bishop's court. It is said that the holy man heals lepers who pray and fast with him. The bishop asks the magi to report on whether the holy man is a conduit for miracles, a charlatan, or possibly some sort of wizard (hedge or otherwise).

STORY SEED: POSSESSION

The summer is unusually hot, dry, and still. In the town square, the foul stench of the tanneries swarms and tumbles, and outside the cathedral the cobbles are stained with dark blood. The thick blood was spilled when a family of Jews was murdered on the cathedral steps during the warm, starry twilight of the previous Sunday. No one in the town seems to know who is responsible for the murders, and the bishop fears that some of the townsfolk are possessed by a murderous demon. Anxious to prevent a wild pogrom, the bishop asks the magi to investigate and deliver the town from the demons.

Conversion and Baptism

Obviously, Father Joseph's long-term plan for the Order does not tolerate the presence of infidels and pagans. Father Joseph tries to convert such characters, and convince them to submit to baptism — however, he only tries to do so by theological debate. Father Joseph is not stupid, and he is aware that threatening or forcing

magi to convert is likely to be counter-productive. He also does not want to become distracted by converting individual magi; his target is the entire Order.

STORY SEED: THE RIVER JORDAN

Following the model of John the Baptist at the Jordan River, Father Joseph sets up a mission at a covenant on the banks of the Danube. He offers to baptize any magus who wishes to convert in the living waters of the river.

A group of pagan magi arrive, wanting to be baptized, but they are pursued by the jealous, troublemaking, animalistic spirits of their pagan cult. The magi of the covenant might be the hosts of the baptisms, in which case they (and their grogs) need to deal with the manifestations of the pagan spirits. Alternatively, maybe the player characters are the converting pagans, in which case they need to defeat their jealous, former gods.

The Grand Master

Father Joseph ultimately needs the Order to align itself behind a Grand Master who can be acknowledged by (and answerable to) the pope. There are several possible ways that this could come about.

- The pope, on the recommendation of Father Joseph, could declare a magus to be the Grand Master of the Order of Hermes. This is Father Joseph's least preferred method, as a Grand Master declared in this manner would not be seen as legitimate by most magi.
- A magus, probably a member of the Societas of the Mystical Christ, could declare himself the Grand Master of the Order of Hermes. This is little better than a declaration made by the pope, as the majority of magi would be unlikely to fall in behind such a usurper.
- The Grand Tribunal could vote on, and declare a Grand Master, who can then be acknowledged by the pope. This is Father Joseph's preferred method, as such a Grand Master would be generally perceived to be legitimate.



A second-best option would be for a regional Tribunal to declare a Grand Master, with the other regional Tribunals then being forced to choose whether or not they support this Grand Master (or declare their own).

Obviously, however the Grand Master is selected, there will be a lot of political intrigue about who will be the Grand Master, and whether it is possible for there to be a Grand Master at all. A Grand Master (especially one widely seen as illegitimate) could also become a target for certain challenges or Wizard's War.

The papacy and Father Joseph do not care how the Grand Master is selected, how long he serves for, or how and whether he can be challenged for his title. All that concerns the papacy is that there is a mechanism to select a Grand Master that most of the Order feels is legitimate. Father Joseph believes it best that, at each Grand Tribunal, the archmagi of the Order vote a magus to the office of Grand Master, who serves until the next Grand Tribunal meeting, similar to the way that the pope is chosen by the cardinals of the Church.

Once the Grand Master has been chosen, an agreed version of the Peripheral Code is disseminated and supported by the Church as the canon rules for the new Order. The papacy expects the new Order to continue to administer itself, almost without change, through its own institutions such as Tribunals and Houses, in much the same way that the mundane religious orders govern themselves. Eventually, the papacy may try to encourage the new Order to become more monastic (segregation of magi and magae, a prayer routine, elimination of violence as a legal tool, etc.), but this is a battle the Church is content to leave to future generations.

STORY SEED: ORDER AND ANTI-ORDER

The Rome and Normandy Tribunals both proclaim rival Grand Masters. The magi of the Order are split between supporting the two rivals, and as respected magi, the player characters are approached by Father Joseph to broker a compromise between the two factions. The papacy can

clearly resolve the issue by acknowledging one of the Grand Masters — however, the papacy does not know which faction has the most support. Alternatively, one of the player characters may be named as one of the opposing Grand Masters.

What Might the Magi Do?

Father Joseph plans for a radically transformed Order, and magi have to choose some response, even if that response is to ignore him and hope that he goes away.

Ridicule

Many magi likely laugh at Father Joseph's attempt to embrace and transform the Order. In their minds, the Church and the Order are irreconcilable forces. Father Joseph points out that Rome itself was once a pagan capital; the world turns and changes with every dawn.

Certainly, ignoring Father Joseph stops the magi from being accused of causing a catastrophic confrontation between the mundane and Hermetic worlds. However, the danger is that not every magus ignores the father, and so the Order as a whole might suffer another Schism War. Ignoring the father is only a short-term solution.

Befuddlement

Father Joseph has Magic Resistance, due to his Church rank and the relic he carries. However, he is not immune to Hermetic interference with his mind. Specialist magi can quite simply destroy Father Joseph's mind, make him lose interest in his mission, or turn him onto the path of temptation and damnation. This might well be successful. However, Father Joseph represents the papacy. So, if the papacy is truly supportive of his ideas, then at best, the befuddlement of Father Joseph

will result in a replacement legate being sent from Rome. Alternatively, if the Divine actively supports Father Joseph, then a miracle might restore his mind.

Attempting to similarly interfere with the mind of the pope is a possibility too. However, to prevent the idea arising again, the minds of numerous other members of the papal curia might also need to be adjusted on an ongoing basis. This is risky, and the Divine might miraculously intervene to save the pope anyway. If discovered following this strategy, the magi would almost certainly be prosecuted for interference in the mundane, not to mention incurring the wrath of the Church and its leadership.

Enlistment

The magi might decide to join Father Joseph's mission, either as members of the Societas of the Mystical Christ or an independent group. Magi helping Father Joseph may be asked to defend him (or other Church officials) from other magi. Father Joseph also asks his converts to travel among the Tribunal covenants, seeking conversions.

Ambitious magi who join Father Joseph are likely to want to be involved in negotiating with Rome the precise terms by which the Order reinvents itself as a holy order. A politically skilled magus may also be interested in maneuvering either himself or a protégé into the office of Grand Master of the Order.

Magi who join Father Joseph run the risk of Tribunal charges of endangering the Order through mundane interference.

In the East

The Eastern Orthodox Church does not in 1220 acknowledge the superiority of the western Latin pope (see *The Divine Revised Edition*, page 83). This means that, in the eastern Tribunals, many Christian magi will belong to the Eastern Church, and thus might not support Father Joseph. On the other hand, large parts of eastern Mythic Europe are occupied by western crusaders, and consequently there are a number of Latin churches, Latin religious orders, Latin

priests, Latin bishops, and Latin magi in eastern Mythic Europe. The siege mentality of the Latin crusaders means that mundane crusaders' groups are likely to support a papally endorsed Order of Hermes.

If Father Joseph operates in the east of Mythic Europe, the Eastern Church fathers may respond by trying to create a rival Greek version of the Order of Hermes. However, it is ultimately up to the Greek and Latin magi to decide whether the Order of Hermes will become divided like the mundane Church. One option is that a single Grand Master tries to walk the fine line between loyalty to Rome and to Constantinople. Another option is parallel Latin and Greek Grand Masters, who might be either hostile or friendly toward each other.

Dominion

If Rome can establish a Grand Master of the Order of Hermes, can a magus be elected to the papal throne? Ambitious (or mad) magi might see Father Joseph's ideas for the Order of Hermes as a vehicle to carry magi into an open position of power over all of Mythic Europe.

If this does not occur to the player characters, then perhaps the Societas of the Mystical Christ (or a faction of it) is really a cabal of power-mad Tytalus magi. It is possible that Father Joseph has been a pawn of the magi all along, even as far back as his days as a Hermetic notary.

My Enemy's Enemies

A number of Church figures — for example, Bishop Orris (in this book) — are unlikely to be pleased about Father Joseph's plans. Dissenting churchmen, perhaps including other members of the papal curia, may be willing to work with magi to suppress Father Joseph's mission. Well-informed churchmen may even directly approach magi for assistance. If they learn of Father Joseph's mission, the powerful noble courts of Mythic Europe also (perhaps rightly) fear the consequences of a papal court with control over a large, allied order of such powerful wizards.

An alliance of previously mutually hostile magi, bishops, and nobleman may thus form to oppose Father Joseph.

Martyrdom

Murdering Father Joseph is obviously an option. Although he has some Magic Resistance, he is still vulnerable to magic or mundane assassins. However, it is possible that a miracle could save the father from an assassination attempt.

Saint Joseph

Although Father Joseph is not an unusually holy man in his life, he becomes a saint if martyred. See *Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition* (page 85–89) for the powers he might acquire as a saint. As a saint (perhaps a patron saint of wizards), Joseph attempts to continue his mission — even if a crusade is declared against the Order

Father Joseph has certainly contemplated the possibility of his martyrdom — there are plenty of precedents of churchmen being martyred trying to convert pagans or heretics. The father is not suicidal, but he has accepted that he may die in office.

Unfortunately, Father Joseph's death is unlikely to solve the problem of his ideas. At best, assassinating Father Joseph merely causes a delay until the papacy learns of his death and assigns a successor. The new legate is likely to be accompanied by members of the military orders, and though still vulnerable to a magical attack, would be much better prepared to defend against mundane attack. In addition, the Societas of the Mystical Christ continues to push Father Joseph's agenda, and support the new legate.

At worst, it may be that the papacy really wanted Father Joseph to fail. Perhaps the papacy really wanted to provoke the Order. In this case, the assassination of Father Joseph provides the pope with the perfect pretext to preach a crusade against the Order. The military orders and other devout individuals immediately answer such a call to crusade. However, to gain the substan-

tial involvement of the nobility, the crusade would have to provide opportunities to acquire land and resources. Although the Order does not generally (at least, openly) own substantial tracts of land, the various "tame" nobles who might defend the magi do own land. The prospect of legally capturing the lands of these "heretical" nobles would provide considerable motivation for minor noblemen, from all over Mythic Europe, to join in the crusade. Major nobles, like Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II, might also welcome the opportunity to meet crusade obligations without needing to wearily travel to the ends of Mythic Europe. The involvement of a major noble would rapidly escalate the crusade.

Apart from dealing with crusaders, the magi responsible for murdering Father Joseph and triggering a crusade would certainly be prosecuted at Tribunal for interference in the mundane. Even if a crusade does not happen the murderers still need to explain themselves in Tribunal. Mundane authorities, perhaps aided by sympathetic magi, also try to identify and prosecute the murderers of a papal legate.

Adapting Father Joseph

Father Joseph can easily be adapted as an antagonist for a wide variety of covenant power levels.

- His Magic Resistance can be scaled by adding Faith Points to his relic.
- The number and power of his Hermetic allies (mainly, the members of the Societas of the Mystical Christ) can be chosen to suit the power-level of your saga.
- The Church's enthusiasm and support for the legate's mission can be increased or decreased.
- For a very high-level saga, it may be interesting if Father Joseph's influence is more advanced. Perhaps a Grand Master has been proclaimed and the rest of the Order is faced with either submitting to the Grand Master's (and Rome's) authority or falling into a new Schism War.

Chapter Five

Bishop Orris

The bishop of the diocese in which the characters' covenant is found, Bishop Orris is both blessed and cursed. He is blessed in that he is sensitive to the presence of evil and can see the good in people's hearts. His curse is that he can also sense magic, but is incapable of distinguishing the presence of magic from the presence of evil; to him, they seem the same. This delusion, coupled with his piety and his dread of the Infernal, makes him a dangerous antagonist when he happens across the player characters and becomes convinced that they are in league with Hell.

Bishop Orris is an opponent best suited to a covenant not entirely divorced from the mundane world. The bishop has great influence over the local population, and his antagonism toward the characters can cause them great difficulties, but his impact is lessened if the characters are socially isolated.

His story works best if he is presented as a puzzle that needs to be solved, rather than a monster to be defeated. The bishop is a good man who has the interests of his flock in mind while he opposes the characters. In many ways, he highlights the problem faced by the Order; magi are for-

bidden from meddling in mundane affairs, but the mundanes are not similarly prohibited from meddling in theirs.

If you have already established the diocese into which the player characters' covenant falls, then Bishop Orris can be a new appointment to the episcopal seat, or else be the incumbent bishop taking on a more prominent role in the saga.

The Bishop's Cathedral

The bishop's seat should be a city near the characters' covenant, so they fall within Orris' diocese. The cathedral is a minor pilgrimage site, thanks to its relic of St. John the Apostle, and the constant flow of pilgrims is both a nuisance and a revenue stream to the cathedral staff and its congregation.

The bishop's staff consists of a secretary, several archdeacons, a cathedral chapter of canons, and a host of assistants in minor orders. Each archdeacon heads the canon court within his archdeaconry (a subset of the entire diocese), and administers the interests of the Church there. The canons attend to the cathedral itself, and constitute the choir for which it has become famous.

The cathedral described here is written in a generic enough manner that it can be slotted in to most cities in western Mythic Europe. It need not be dedicated to St. John the Apostle, but could still possess a major relic of the saint; the location of St. John's Hand is not known in Mythic Europe. If your saga is not set under the authority of the Roman Church, you will need to alter some of the details to account for the differences between Western and Eastern Christianity.



ARCHDEACON GEOFFREY

Age: 51

Personality Traits: Avaricious +3, Self Important +3, Social Climber +2

Geoffrey is the most senior of the archdeacons within Bishop Orris' diocese, and the only one to be ordained as a priest. Geoffrey is a political creature, at home among the intrigues of the episcopate, and likes to consider himself the power behind the throne. This is not the case: Bishop Orris is wise to his ambition, and ensures that he has little actual influence. Geoffrey has a weakness for money, and is not above skimming money from the diocesan funds if he thinks he can get away with it.

DEACON ADAM

Age: 32

Personality Traits: Loyal to Bishop +3, Obsequious +3, Jealous +2

Adam is the devoted secretary of Bishop Orris. In fact, he is much more than simply an appointments clerk: he is both chamberlain and steward to the bishop's personal household, and also acts as the bishop's manservant. He is jealous of his position at Orris' side, and loathe to permit anyone else to get as close; consequently, he is overworked and almost always exhausted.

FATHER PETER

Age: 67

Personality Traits: Practical +3, Honorable +2, Brave +1

Father Peter is the provost of St. John's canons, and the bishop's confessor and confidant. He therefore has the potential to have a great deal of influence over Bishop Orris, but has never exercised any such power. Father Peter is old, and suspects his time is short; he worries that there is no one to take his place. He recognizes Brother Theodoric as a true mystic, respecting his power and simultaneously discounting him as suitable for a worldly task such as his own.

Bishop Orris

Characteristics: Int +1, Per 0, Pre +2, Com +4 (2), Str -1 (1), Sta -1, Dex -1, Qik -1 (1)

Size: 0

Age: 57 (47)

Decrepitude: 1 (0)

Warping Score: 1 (5)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Faith Score: 0 (1*)

* from participating in the sacrament of the Eucharist.

Virtues and Flaws: Senior Clergy; Educated, Great Communication, Inspirational, Magic Sensitivity, Privileged Upbringing, Puissant Magic Sensitivity, Sense Holiness & Unholiness; Meddler, Mistaken Identity; Clumsy, Lesser Malediction (cannot distinguish evil from magic), Fear (the Infernal)*, Noncombatant, Poor Hearing

* from Warping

Personality Traits: Protective of Flock +4, Paranoid About Hell's Intentions +3, Brave +2, Devoted to God +2

Reputations: Just 4 (Local), Trustworthy 3 (Ecclesiastic)

Combat:

Dodge: Init -1, Attack n/a, Defense -1, Damage n/a

Soak: -1

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Ancient Greek 3 (translation), Area Lore: Diocese 4 (parishes), Artes Liberales 2 (rhetoric), Charm 3 (invoking saints), Civil & Canon Lore 5 (papal bulls), Concentration 3 (while praying), Divine Lore 2 (Cantores), Etiquette 4 (the Church), Folk Ken 4 (penitents), Intrigue 5 (church politics), Latin 4 (liturgy), Leadership 6 (holy influence), Magic Sensitivity 3+2 (practitioners of magic), Native Language 5 (exhortation), Organization Lore: Church 5 (clergy), Organization Lore: Nobility 3 (pious nobles), Organization Lore: Order of Hermes 0 (2) (legal issues), Philosophiae 2 (theological concordance), Profession: Preaching 4 (swaying hearts), Ride 1 (on roads), Sense Holiness & Unholiness 2 (good), Theology 7 (biblical knowledge)

Equipment: Ruby ring of office, clerical vestments. He may also be carrying the relic of St. John (see The Cathedral of St. John the Apostle, later), particularly if he has cause to fear for his life from supernatural sources.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: The bishop is tall and stick-thin. In his youth, his hair was

orange-red, but has faded to pure white; apart from his tonsure, he has a full head of hair. His eyes are a clear blue, and his nose is large and hooked. He is a strong orator and clever rhetorician, able to infuse his powerful voice with emotion to stir men's hearts.

Unlike many bishops, Orris was not a member of a monastic order prior to his appointment, but was a parish priest within the diocese he now rules. This 'local boy made good' story has contributed to his local reputation, and the cathedral city in particular is proud to have him as their bishop. Bishop Orris benefits from being able to preach to his parishioners in their own language as a native, and from knowing the specific problems of his diocese.

Note that both of the bishop's Supernatural Abilities are aligned to the Divine realm, so he suffers no penalty in any supernatural aura, and gains any Dominion aura as a bonus. His high Warping score and low Decrepitude score result from the holy blessings he receives from the cathedral's cantors (see later). The bishop can rely on the substantial resources of his cathedral, most notably its relics, but when he enters the saga, he does not routinely carry them with him.

BROTHER THEODORIC

Age: 42

Personality Traits: Pious +5, Other-worldly +3, Hopeful +1

Brother Theodoric is the *de facto* leader of the Holy Tradition of Cantores at St. John's. He has no true leadership qualities, but is the chief chorister and most experienced of the holy magicians. He established the Cantores here a decade ago, and carefully chooses new recruits based on the visions he receives. Some of the

canons feel snubbed that they have not been initiated, but Brother Theodoric is oblivious to this, and Father Peter works hard to negate any tension and ill feeling. Theodoric has True Faith.

What the Bishop Knows About the Order

In common with other lords secular and spiritual of Mythic Europe (*Lords*

of *Men*, pages 40–41), Bishop Orris has a working knowledge of the Order of Hermes, although some of it is erroneous, thanks to misinformation spread by the Order. He knows that magi are organized locally into covenants, but conceives these to be similar to cathedral chapters or monasteries. Unless they have taken pains to conceal it, he is aware that the characters' covenant falls within his diocese and is possibly aware of its name, but has not been sufficiently concerned to learn more. He has never met a magus before, and

The Cathedral of St. John the Apostle

As described in *The Church* (pages 48–51), churches can be described using the same system as covenants. This insert describes the resources that Bishop Orris, as head of his diocese, has available to him. He may use any of these resources for himself, just as a magus can utilize the resources of his covenant. The Hooks and Boons described here can be found in *The Church* and *Covenants*.

Hooks: Pilgrimage Site (Major, Surroundings), Urban (Major, Site)

Boons: Aura (Major, Site); Chapter of Canons (Minor, Church), Edifice: Lady Chapel (Minor, Fortifications), Edifice: Chancel (Minor, Fortifications)

Resources: Divine Aura 5, rising to 6 in the Lady Chapel. Books: *The Bible* (Summa on Theology, Level 10, Quality 3; Summa on Organization Lore: Church, Level 3, Quality 3), *Parish Register* (Summa on Area Lore: Diocese, Level 3, Quality 5), *The Misal* (Tractatus on Organization Lore: Church, Quality 7; Tractatus on Music, Quality 7), *Breviary* (Tractatus on Organization Lore: Church, Quality 8), *Sentences* by Peter the Lombard (4 Tractatus on Theology, Quality 9), *The Decretum* by Gratian (Summa on Civil & Canon Law, Level 5, Quality 11), *Sic et Non* by Peter Abelard (Summa on Theology, Level 5, Quality 13), 8 other Tractatus on Theology, Civil & Canon Lore, and Organization Lore: Church (Quality 7). Relics: Hand of St. John (see later), Rib of St. Martin (see later), Fragment of

the True Cross (Faith score 1), 3 other minor relics (Faith score 1). Specialists: provost of canons (Theology 5), chief chorister (Holy Music 8), 4 Cantores (Ceremony 5), 3 canons (Organization Lore: Church 5), archdeacon (Civil & Canon Law 7), 2 notaries (Profession: Scribe 5), exorcist (Divine Lore 6), deacon (Profession: Steward 5), 4 doorwardens (Brawl 5), 8 acolytes used as clerks, scribes, messengers, and distributors of alms (Organization Lore: Church 4). Vis Sources: 3 pawns *Creo vis* (tears on the statue of St. John the Apostle), 5 pawns *Imaginem vis* (echoes in the cathedral following Easter Mass), 2 pawns *Vim* (water washed off the chancel steps). (502 Build Points)

THE HAND OF ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE

Evangelist and prolific writer, St. John was called 'The Beloved Disciple', and Jesus made him the guardian of the Blessed Virgin. He was the brother of St. James the Greater, and the two were known as the Sons of Thunder. St. John died at Ephesus. The Hand of St. John is one of Christendom's most significant relics, as it is the hand that penned the fourth Gospel, three Epistles, and the Book of Revelation. The Hand has a Faith score of 4, giving it 4 Faith Points and a Divine Might of 40. It also has two Powers.

Turn Back the Missile, 2 points, Init +5, appropriate Form. The Hand can defend

up to 10 people at Range Voice from missiles, hurling the weapons back at their originators. The power protects against any missile, whether thrown or shot, and can even affect objects impelled by magic. The attackers must defend against their own missiles, as if they were the targets of their own attacks; Penetration, if necessary, is calculated using the relic's Might. Once invoked, the power persists until it is no longer needed — typically at the end of combat. This effect emulates one of St. John's miracles.

Curse of Drowning, 2 points, Init +8, Aquam. The target of this curse begins to vomit forth sea water, and starts to drown. The relic's wielder must continue to concentrate, and can end the effect at any time. While it persists, the target must make Deprivation rolls (*ArM5*, page 180–181) every 30 seconds, and can take no other action. Once the effect is ended by the wielder, if the target is still alive but took any wounds from drowning, then these become Long Term Fatigue levels instead.

THE RIB OF ST. MARTIN OF TOURS

The patron of beggars, horsemen, and soldiers, St. Martin of Tours is a popular saint in France and Italy. His Rib has a Faith score of 2, giving it 2 Faith Points and a Divine Might of 20. It also allows the holder to activate the saintly power *Grant of Serenity* (*Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition*, page 88).

expects them to be dressed in blue robes with tall, brimmed, blue hats and carrying staves. He is also aware that the Order regulates itself through a series of laws and secret Tribunals, and that it is democratic in nature.

In general, Bishop Orris is suspicious of magic, since he has encountered sorcerers before whom he knew, deep down, to be evil (thanks to his Lesser Malediction Flaw). He has been told that not all wizards and magi are evil, and on a rational level believes this to be possible. Nevertheless, he knows that God has blessed him with the ability to identify evil, and reserves judgment until he has had personal experience of them.

Variations on a Theme

If the storyguide is interested in using Bishop Orris as an antagonist, but feels that the character does not quite fit within his saga, there are a number of options as to how his character can be changed. Note that several of the options in this section could be combined.

NOT A BISHOP

As an antagonist, Orris' story revolves around his desire to protect those for whom he is responsible against the threat that he perceives the characters to pose. If the saga does not have a suitable bishopric nearby for Bishop Orris to head, it is not essential that he is a bishop for this story. Naturally, some elements will have to be altered to match his changed status. The least disruptive change is to make Orris an abbot: an equivalent ecclesiastic rank, but head of a cloistered community rather than a member of the secular clergy.

For a complete change, Orris could be the preceptor of a local chapter of the Knights Templar, or even a pious nobleman with links to the clergy, perhaps through a younger brother. For either of these options, it might be necessary to rebuild Orris' statistics to make him a more martially focused character.

The Cathedral Chapter of St. John

The canons of the cathedral constitute a Holy Tradition of Cantores (*Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition*, page 93-94) who practice their devotion to God through music sung in plainchant. There are five members of the Holy Tradition at St. John's, including the chief chorister Brother Theodoric. There are also four other members of the cathedral chapter who are not Cantores, but occasionally participate in their group ceremonies (one of these is the provost of the chapter, Father Peter). The five Cantores employ Holy Music, Invocation, Blessing, and Enchanting Music as their favored Abilities, and regularly employ the last of these to infuse the congregation with a sense of wonder for God, or other emotions appropriate to the Mass being celebrated.

Bishop Orris is aware of the abilities of the Holy Tradition, and is in awe of their faith. He has rarely asked them to use their miraculous powers, trusting in

Brother Theodoric's piety to guide them. In recognition of this non-interference, every year the cathedral chapter gathers to perform a ritual blessing of the bishop's health, which has resulted in a bonus to his aging rolls of +5 (Holy Music / Blessing 50). This has continued for 10 years, and has resulted in Warring for the bishop.

Brother Theodoric can lead a ceremony of the four Cantores and receive a +24 bonus to miraculous effects (from the total of the Cantores' Presence + Holy Music). With the full chapter of nine canons present and performing a ceremony without a leader, the total bonus is +46 (+25 group bonus, -9 participants, +30 from total of the Cantores' and canons' Presence + Holy Music). If they use the Invocation Method rather than Holy Music, the bonus from the Cantores' Communication + Invocation is +14 for a led group and +16 for an unled group.

OTHER MOTIVES

As written, Bishop Orris is motivated by his episcopal duty as a shepherd to protect his flock against the wolves of the Order. However, his methods can remain the same while his motives change. He may not be deluded by his powers at all, but instead desire the downfall of the characters for different reasons. He may resent the apparent power that they have, or desire possession of a resource (such as a source of income) that they have claimed, and so he plots their destruction for his own gain.

If Bishop Orris is motivated by selfishness, he is less likely to receive assistance from the Cantores at his cathedral; in fact, the characters may find a potential ally in Brother Theodoric. He is still able to manipulate the other institutions of the Church, thanks to the authority of his rank, but it will be easier for the characters to overcome these obstacles — if the bishop is driven by worldly desires, his allies may be less loyal.

Taking alternative motivations to the extreme, Bishop Orris could be corrupt,

morally or supernaturally, and desire the characters' demise out of sheer malice. Perhaps the magi have had a beneficial effect on the local community, and this is too much for a corrupt Bishop Orris to stomach. This variant should be carefully considered; the cliché of a corrupt churchman can be easily overused, and the ethical dilemmas of this story are lost if the characters are right and the bishop is wrong. Furthermore, in Mythic Europe, it is less likely that a truly corrupt man would attain an episcopal rank — not with the active interest of angels, saints, and holy men looking out for the church.

A MORE POWERFUL BISHOP ORRIS

Bishop Orris is already reasonably powerful, not because of what he is, but rather who he is. If the storyguide believes that he would not pose a sufficient challenge to her players' characters, there are a few ways in which he can be enhanced. Making him an archbishop or cardinal would invest him with a personal Magic Resistance

which stacks with any provided by the relics he carries. He would also gain the Commanding Aura by virtue of his position (see *Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition*, page 42-43, or *The Church*, page 26). An archbishop's cathedral should have another 500 build points to spend on resources, such as more specialists and more vis that could be employed by a larger chapter of Cantores. The Cantores of the cathedral could be allowed access to more Holy Powers, and use their powers at the bishop's direction. If they have the Understanding Power, then they can grant Bishop Orris Divine counsel and visions of the future, making him aware of the actions of the characters and able to plan appropriate responses.

If Orris' home city is the site of a preceptory of Templars or Hospitallers (or conceivably Teutonic Knights, depending on the location), then these allies could be brought into play sooner in the story, and pose a serious challenge to the characters. The Church Knights are veterans of siege warfare, and are particularly effective against a covenant, if their siege engines are protected by a Blessing supplied by the Cantores that grants Magic Resistance.

A WEAKER BISHOP ORRIS

It is not necessary to change the bishop's character to make him a weaker opponent for the player characters: just make him less ardent in his pursuit of them. A bishop is a busy man with many demands on his time, and even if he genuinely believes the characters to be a threat, he can afford to move against them slowly unless they retaliate.

First Encounter

The initial encounter between Bishop Orris and the player characters could take a number of different forms. The key feature is that the bishop gets close enough for his Magic Sensitivity to alert him to the characters' magic. One example of such an occasion is given later, but the storyguide might have other opportunities for the characters to rub shoulders with a bishop.

The Visitation

Every year, a bishop is obliged to visit the parishes within his diocese. He must examine the state of the clergy and congregation, ensure that the buildings and land owned by the Church are well-maintained, and to deal with any Church business. This obligation is normally devolved to Orris' archdeacon, but he has fallen ill, so the bishop has decided to perform the visitation in person.

The yearly visitation probably is of little interest to magi. It may be that the archdeacon is usually more lax than the bishop, and most years he doesn't bother visiting every parish, missing the more remote ones (such as that of the covenant). However, news reaches the covenant that the summoner has called a person to face the bishop's court on a charge of sorcery. In itself, such a case should attract the attention of magi, who are forever nervous about such accusations being laid against them. If the storyguide thinks that a bit more spice is needed to pique the interest of the characters, then the accused can be somehow linked to the covenant. He may have worked for the covenant in the past, or been a recipient (willing or not) of their magic. Perhaps it is the farmer who sells his crops to the covenant, or even someone in the covenant's direct employ. The accused could even be linked directly to one of the covenfolk — a relative of one of the favored grogs, or even a Dependent or True Love of one of the player characters. If a magus is notorious for a crime (in the technical sense that there are witnesses to him performing magic), then he may be summoned himself.

If the accused is intimately connected to the characters, play through the summons. The summoner is a sub-deacon of the diocese who is paid by the accused, not the court, for issuing the summons. He justifies this by reasoning that if he didn't do this job, the accused would be ignorant of the charges against him and be found guilty *in absentia*. The charge he levies is appropriate to the income of the character — basically, how much he thinks he can get away with. Summoners have a disreputable job that attracts accusations of trivial summons purely to extort a fee. Perhaps this summoner is in

cahoots with the archdeacon: he invents sins and then earns money from the summons and subsequent fines at the court.

THE ARRIVAL

The bishop's entourage arrives in mid-afternoon, and the whole parish attends to see him. It is rare to see the bishop, and there is a festival air. A feast has been arranged for the visitors, paid for out of parish revenues, and it is as lavish as the parish can afford. Bishop Orris is accompanied by his secretary, four acolytes, and four guards hired from his cathedral city, for a total of ten people. If the region has a reputation for being lawless, there may be more guards: they are responsible for protecting not only the clergymen, but also the alms and wages they carry with them. A player can make an Intelligence + Organization Lore: Church simple roll. If he succeeds against an Ease Factor of 9, the character is aware that this is an unusually small retinue; two or three times this number is permitted, and can be a great drain on the resources of the parish.

This should be the first time that the characters have come met the bishop personally. Players can make an Intelligence + Organization Lore: Church roll to see what they know about him. Lacking this Ability, they can still make a roll of a stress die plus the Bishop's Reputation (4). The character knows everything under the highest Ease Factor they beat, and under all lower Ease Factors.

EASE	WHAT IS KNOWN
Botch	Provides information about a different bishop.
3	This is Bishop Orris.
6	He is considered a fair man; the men of his city are proud of him.
9	He is a local, having grown up only about ten miles from here.
12	He is influential in his city, and by all accounts a powerful orator.
15	In the past, he has taken a very hard line against sorcerers.

The feast takes place in the open air if the weather is appropriate, or in a shelter made by removing one wall from a barn if it is not. Food is provided only

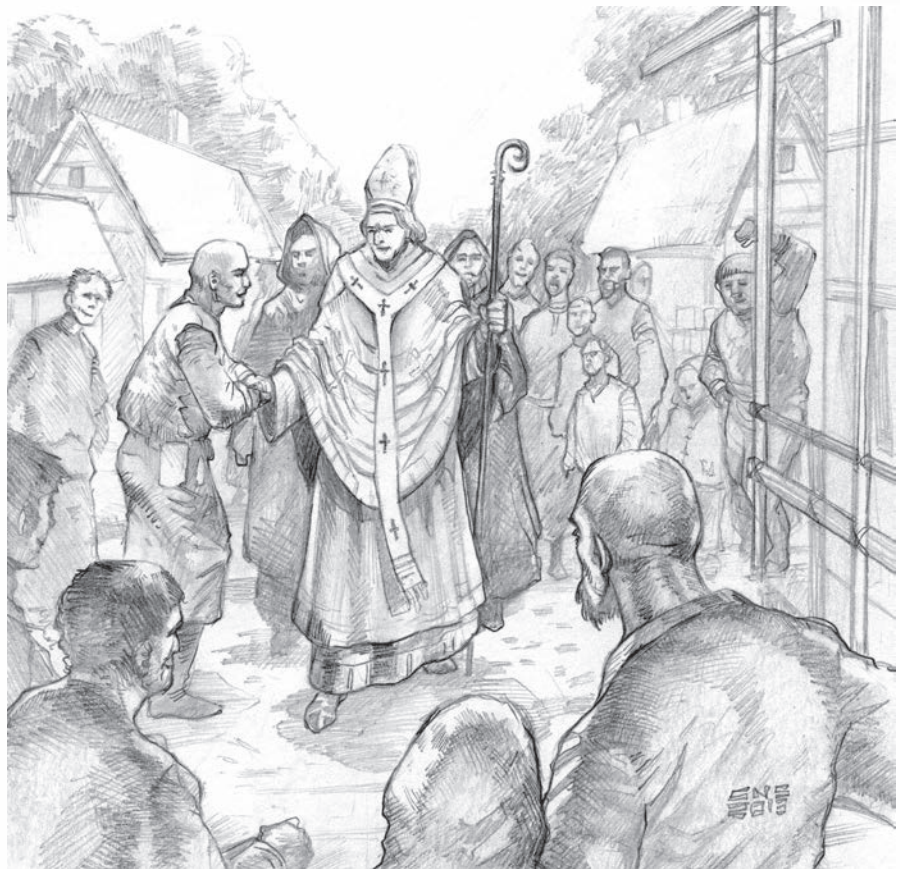
for the visitors, the parish priest, and one or two local figures such as the reeve or notable freemen. However, trestle tables have been laid out for the peasants to eat whatever food they have brought with them, and the bishop has generously donated several barrels of ale to share among them.

It is possible that a magus or companion from the covenant will be invited to sit at the bishop's table, although this is only likely if the characters have a substantial presence in the parish, and are considered well-known or important enough to dine with the bishop. Thanks to The Gift, it is unlikely that a magus has a sufficiently good reputation to receive such an invitation, but if he does (or has The Gentle Gift), then the encounter between the magus and the bishop that precipitates the rest of the antagonism occurs over supper (see later).

THE BISHOP'S COURT

On the day after his arrival, the bishop holds court within the parish church. However irregular the summons or the charges, the accused would be wise to attend the bishop's court and defend himself.

A simple platform has been built in front of the altar, and a table and chair have been placed on it. The bishop sits in judgment on this platform, accompanied by a notary and his secretary Deacon Adam. A large proportion of the parish's freemen attend, standing in the nave. Bishop Orris begins by leading the parish in a prayer for justice and



wisdom, during which time he exerts his spiritual authority and tempers the Dominion aura toward Justice (see *Exerting Holy Influence*, later, or *Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition*, pages 38–40). This is not a normal procedure, but the bishop's fear of the Infernal, coupled with the charge of sorcery, leads him to this course of action. The temper provides a bonus to all activities that promote the uncovering of secrets.

The court commences with the deacon reading a checklist of all items having to do with the upkeep of the church, the collection of its tithes and dues, and the conduct of the priest and congregation. The assembled parish is required to swear that each of these duties has been executed correctly, providing evidence such as church ledgers as proof.

The bishop is the sole judge of guilt and innocence, and the court claims jurisdiction over moral offenses and matters connected to religious obligations, and all crimes committed by clergymen. There are not many cases to be tried: a case of brawling in the church, a failure of certain individuals to attend religious festivals, and a case of a woman giving birth after only seven months of marriage. You could also add cases arising from story events in the last year. Most of these cases are dealt with through monition (official warnings), small fines, and public penance. Characters may notice that the bishop hands out judgments fairly, and is prepared to give defendants the benefit of the doubt without appearing unduly lenient.

The Legal Status of Magic

While regional variations certainly exist, practicing magic in and of itself is neither a secular nor a canon crime in most of Mythic Europe. However, the mode of practice or effects of magic can be illegal. For example, if magic is used to commit theft or murder, then the magician has committed a crime. Similarly, if performing magic involves idolatry, then this is punishable by a canon court. Hermetic magic was purged of overt idolatry by Bonisagus, but theologians and practitio-

ners of holy magic still claim it invokes the symbolism of sacrilegious rites through its gestures and words (*Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition*, page 66–69). A character who hears (and understands) the words and sees the gestures of a magus casting a Hermetic spell can make an Intelligence + Artes Liberales roll to recognize influences from pagan sources; the Ease Factor is 9 for a non-Ritual spell and 6 for a Ritual spell. The individual may interpret these influences as idolatrous.

The Bishop's Magic Sensitivity

Bishop Orris can sense manifestations of the Divine, Infernal, and Magic Realms, thanks to his Supernatural Abilities. In the presence of such things, he feels momentarily dizzy, and breaks out a cold sweat. If the sensations come from the Divine, he experiences an upwelling of joy, and rays of golden light seem to shoot from the source of Divine power. When experiencing either the Infernal or Magic Realms, he finds it uncomfortable to look directly at the place, object, or being, and it seems shrouded in gloom and hollow despair. In all cases, he must Penetrate any Magic Resistance to receive any sensation at all.

The Ease Factor to detect a person with the Gift is 15 – (highest Art divided by five or highest Supernatural Ability). Against Hermetic magi in particular, this is quite difficult. However, take into account the following modifiers:

- The bishop is next to the altar, and therefore in a Dominion of 5. This adds to his Magic Sensitivity roll.
- If a character is on trial, she is also within the Dominion aura of 5. If

the characters are just bystanders, then they are in a Dominion aura of 4. Subtract 3 times the aura from their Magic Resistance while within the Dominion.

- The Just temper of the Dominion adds to the bishop's Magic Sensitivity roll.

If the characters cast a spell, then Orris may detect that instead, or he might detect an enchanted item carried by a companion or grog. Magic Resistance may not be an issue in such cases. If the bishop's Magic Sensitivity fails to Penetrate, the character is aware that something has been rebuffed by her Magic Resistance and may elect to investigate, giving the bishop more opportunity to detect the presence of magic.

In all, it is possible for Bishop Orris to detect the character's magic, and mistakenly identify it as evil. If all else fails, the storyguide could simply rule that he is successful, for the sake of dramatic necessity. Even storyguide characters roll ones on occasion.

When it comes to the accusation of sorcery, the accused is brought forward and the charges against him described. As explained in the nearby insert, magic is not a crime *per se* in Mythic Europe; the legal accusation brought before the canon court is that the magic was effected by exhorting pagan entities, and thus idolatrous. The charges may be entirely falsified or entirely true, depending on the specific situation chosen by the storyguide, but the accusation is based on hearsay rather than tangible evidence.

COMPURGATION

If the accused is indeed a practitioner of magic, or currently under the influence of a spell, then the bishop may detect this thanks to his Magic Sensitivity (see insert). If the bishop detects the presence of magic, then he blanches as the defendant

is brought before him. Pulling himself together, he delivers an impassioned speech to the crowd about the seriousness of the case and the dangers of sorcery to one's eternal soul. Nevertheless, he is bound by his own sense of justice, and cannot convict on hearsay alone.

The bishop resorts to compurgation to settle the case. He asks for witnesses to step forth and attest to the character of the accused. They are asked to take an oath on the Bible he has brought with him that the defendant is of good character and incapable of the crime of which he has been accused. If at least 12 persons take such an oath, then the accused will go free. Parishioners are reluctant to come forward initially, concerned about being seen as supporting a potential sorcerer. This is particularly true if the bishop has lectured on the perils of witchcraft. The accused is permitted to appeal to individuals for help, and may implore members

of the covenant to stand witness for him. Should one of the magi stand witness for the accused, then the bishop detects his magical ability when he takes the oath. He does not interrupt proceedings, but takes a good look at the witness, resolving to find out more about him. Naturally, if magic is used to persuade witnesses to step forward, then the bishop may detect this too. If he does, he is likely to call off the whole proceedings and drag the accused back to the cathedral for a full trial, since Hell is clearly trying to interfere here.

If insufficient witnesses attest to the character of the accused, then Bishop Orris convicts him of the crime. Depending on the seriousness of the case, he might demand a public penance (typically, wearing a white sheet before the congregation) or a fine. If magic was deemed to have been used to commit a major crime, then the defendant might be turned over to the mundane authorities for another trial.

ORRIS' DILEMMA

Ultimately, the outcome of the case does not matter to the furtherance of the plot; the purpose of this story is to allow the bishop to be exposed to the magical nature of a magus and to detect the stench of Hell on him. If this did not happen as a direct result of the trial, then another excuse for the bishop to come across a player magus should arise, even if it is just a chance meeting on the road or at an inn. If the covenant maintains a chapel, then the bishop's visitation could legitimately include the covenant to ensure that it is being well maintained — and the covenant's Magic aura is very easy to detect if it is not entirely enclosed in an *Aegis of the Hearth*. Alternatively, the bishop might receive testimony from a priest who has witnessed a spell being cast, or even heard confession from a grog or servant of the covenant who admits to having done the bidding of witches and sorcerers. In these circumstances, the bishop is sure to investigate further before deciding on a course of action.

After becoming convinced of the wickedness of at least one of the player magi, Bishop Orris returns to his cathedral. There he meditates on his face-to-face encounter with evil, and prays for guidance. He is torn

between an obligation to fight evil and a need to protect the weak. His flock could suffer if he goes to war against the covenant; besides, he lacks good information on his enemy. He therefore decides to take things slowly, gathering information about his foe while trying to bolster his parishes against the evil in their midst.

The Bishop's Arsenal

At this point in the story, the characters are probably entirely unaware that they have made an enemy. While they go about their business, the bishop marshals his forces against them. What follows is a gradual escalation of the bishop's opposition to the characters until his actions force a response from them, at which point the story reaches its climax. This section describes the weapons that Bishop Orris has at his command, and what stories might develop from their use. It is assumed that the characters react to the events triggered by the bishop's actions; the consequences of actions initiated by the characters are dealt with in a later section.

Exerting Holy Influence

Orris' first step toward protecting his flock is to provide them with some spiritual armor against the deceptions of sorcerers. His sermons take up a common theme, based around the cardinal virtue of Prudence, and demonstrate the points he wants to make through practical examples from the bishop's court. He interferes in the exercise of secular justice as well, offering guidance which proves well-considered, and publicly acts as a spiritual advisor to any who require it.

All Dominion auras within his diocese take on a Wise temper (*Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition*, pages 39–40). In practical terms, individuals become more prudent, gaining a bonus to Personality Traits associated with the temper, such as Careful, Cautious, Chaste, Practical, and Prudent. Similarly, they become less Ambitious, Overconfident, Naïve, and Lecherous, taking a penalty to appropriate Personality Traits. The bonus also adds to all activities that support making sensible decisions, and penalizes those that oppose prudent behavior. The size of the bonus or penalty depends on the bishop's Holy Influence roll: Presence + Leadership + stress die. A total of 9 grants +1, a 15 grants

+2, and a 24 grants +3. The storyguide should make a Holy Influence roll for the bishop the first time in each season that the characters interact significantly with mundanes within the diocese.

The effect is subtle, but any storyguide characters whom the magi meet within the diocese become more suspicious of their motives, and less likely to exhibit blind trust. Longstanding vendors may reconsider the wisdom of trading with wizards, and allies might start asking for greater assurances from them. The player characters and their covenfolk are not themselves affected by this temper unless they reside within a Dominion aura.

A PRUDENT POPULACE

Magi are used to people distrusting them, but when everyone becomes more cautious around strangers and less naïve toward covenfolk, then it is possible that the grogs will notice. The locals also become more curious; they are actively interested in the covenant's business, and less likely to simply ignore the presence of the covenant in their vicinity.

If the grogs are used to leaving the covenant in search of drink, gambling, or female company, they find a new paucity of these vices. The covenant's steward

The Nature of the Bishop's Malediction

Orris' Lesser Malediction Flaw is central to this story, and storyguides should consider its provenance, as the player characters may resolve the story by removing the curse (see Resolution, later). The belief that magic is evil is a common position in Mythic Europe, although by no means universal; there are many who know the truth. In the bishop's case, he appears to have empirical proof of this belief because of his curse. He has had concrete exposure to the power of Hell, and receives the same sensation of evil when he is around magic. Furthermore, Orris has only ever perceived magic as evil, and in his mind there is no difference; he is not aware that it is possible to sense magic separately from holiness or unholiness.

This curse was laid on him by a supernatural being, and there are several options for how that occurred. God — or an angel working under instruction — could have placed the curse on Orris as a means of testing the player characters. They are guiltless of any specific crime in this story, yet are persecuted by a powerful adversary. The test is whether they can maintain the moral high ground and restrain their power. It may be possible for them to make the problem of Orris simply go away, but this is not a matter of what they could do, but rather what they *should* do.

Alternatively, a demon could be responsible for the malediction. This would have happened many years ago, before Orris was a bishop but showing

inclination of a promising career. Given the Supernatural Abilities he has, he could be a powerful enemy of demons, so Hell muddies his ability to detect them, causing him to waste energy persecuting magical — and potentially innocent — individuals.

Finally, the curse could be the result of a curse from a powerful hedge wizard or faerie. This is likely to have been a response to some event early in Orris' life in which he caused offense to such a being. Curses of this type often obey the dictates of poetic justice, so it is likely that Orris' error was that he witnessed something he did not understand and jumped to the conclusion that it was the work of the Devil.

(or whoever normally keeps track of its finances) notices that the covenant has had a slight but steady increase in expenditure. The locals are less likely to offer credit to the covenant, and seem to have become shrewder at bargaining; whereas before the covenant was able to make a good deal, its agents now need to work harder to make the same exchanges that they did before. Characters who have regular dealings with locals can make Perception + Folk Ken simple rolls. If they beat an Ease Factor of 6, they are aware that something has changed in the attitude locally, but beating an Ease Factor of 9 is necessary to pinpoint it. An Intelligence + Divine Lore roll against an Ease Factor of 6 reveals that the temper of the Dominion aura is the most likely cause of this effect.

BURNING BRIDGES

The Wise temper is not simply turned against the characters; it affects all aspects of life in the diocese. All across the land, the common people start to act with zeal and prudence, allowing practicality to overcome tradition. For example, the freemen of a town commission a bridge to cross the river, rather than walking several miles to the existing one. In doing so, they attract the attention of a demon builder (such as Architectus, see *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 66). Three times, they manage to outwit the demon. Shamed, the demon seeks revenge by framing them for diabolism and ensuring that the characters see the "evidence." Since the town's new bridge is an edifice apparently built by evil magic, the covenant might seek to destroy it, but this only confirms what the bishop has been saying about them.

Gathering Information

The bishop also sets about investigating the covenant as early as possible. He quizzes Father Geoffrey about them, since they fall within his archdeaconry. He tells his archdeacon to keep an ear to the ground, and to ask questions about

the characters at his next visitation. He is particularly interested in any complaints brought to the canon court or local lord, any rumors about their activities both within the diocese and beyond, and any relations that they have with local notables. It can be assumed that anything contained within the local or ecclesiastic Reputations of the characters or the covenant is known to the bishop after this investigation.

He then turns his attention to more direct means of gathering information. He hires a couple of agents to go into the villages and towns nearest the covenant and find out as much as they can. The storyguide should think back over the stories she has told in the saga so far, and note any blatant use of magic by the characters in front of witnesses, and any supernatural event that attracted their attention. The bishop's agents do not necessarily discover the characters' motives or the stories' resolutions, but they learn at least that the magi or their servants were associated with the events. They also gather lots of information that has nothing to do with the characters, but has been connected with or blamed on the magi and their strange ways.

Working for the bishop, the agents are bold enough to approach any noblemen or significant locals with whom the magi have a friendly relationship (or are rumored to have such a relationship), and ask subtle questions of their servants, serfs, friends, and enemies. The agents may even have the opportunity to approach the covenant's own servants, but the bishop advises against this, unless he has already discovered that the covenfolk have an uneasy relationship with their masters.

After the agents report back, Bishop Orris is in possession of a vast amount of information about the covenant. How much of it is accurate depends very much on how subtle and secretive the characters have been over the covenant's history. At the very least, he discovers the names of most (if not all) of the magi at the covenant as well as many of the companion characters, and the name of the covenant itself. At most, he could have a list of the sorts of magic each magus has been known to use, along with strengths,

weaknesses, and possible crimes committed with magic.

A third source of information for Bishop Orris may be available, depending upon the saga's assumption as to the amount of knowledge the Church has about the Order of Hermes. If, as *The Church* suggests, the pope has sent a legate to represent the pope at Tribunal meetings, Bishop Orris corresponds with that legate to try to discover if he has learned anything pertinent to the characters under the bishop's scrutiny. Again, how much the bishop learns through this route is highly saga-dependent.

BLOCKING THE BISHOP'S SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Of course, the characters have opportunities to discover that someone is asking questions about them. These opportunities should be lightly scattered through other unrelated stories without drawing too much attention to them, so that the characters only gradually realize that someone is systematically investigating them.

Some possibilities include:

- A "chance conversation" at a roadside tavern between a grog and another customer turns out to be more probing than the grog was expecting from a stranger.
- An ally of the covenant asks in passing if a particular character managed to meet up with his cousin. Apparently, a distant relative came around and was asking where his cousin lived, and similar questions.
- A Quaesitor has been alerted through his agents within the papacy that a legate has received a question about the magi. He arrives at the covenant to investigate what they might have been up to, without revealing the true purpose of his visit. This may lead the characters to believe that the Quaesitor is responsible for the investigation.

If the characters themselves have mundane agents, they could become aware of the bishop's agents, and attempt some

counter-intelligence action or reveal the bishop as the source of all these questions. It is best if such a story starts mid-encounter, with the characters' agents desperately trying to get back to their masters with some specific information. If the agents do not survive the story, then neither the players nor the characters learn what was going to be passed on.

The Friars Preacher

Armed with the information he has gathered, Orris requests the assistance of the Friars Preacher, and the local chapter house provides him with three capable individuals: Brothers Peter, Bartholomew, and Alonso. The Order of St. Dominic was specifically instituted to combat heresy and to sway the hearts of men against idolatry and sinful behavior, and the three friars sent to the diocese are the sort who lead by example as well as through preaching. Dominican friars wear distinctive black habits, earning them the moniker of "Black Friars."

Their preaching revolves around God's hatred of idolaters and sorcerers, likening them to murderers, adulterers, perjurers, and fornicators. Brother Alonso, in particular, is fond of describing in fine detail the horrors that face sorcerers in Hell. Using Scripture as a guide,

they liken magicians to fraudsters, because they falsify miracles; to fornicators and sodomites, because their crimes are against Nature and against God; and to idolaters and blasphemers, because they call upon demons. The friars do not restrict themselves to generalities; they lay accusations of sorcery directly at the door of the player magi. They use any of the facts that Bishop Orris has gathered to support their accusations, but are honest with their facts and do not embellish or lie for rhetorical effect. As described in *Art & Academe* (pages 13–14), those with Profession: Preaching are experts at persuading crowds to their way of thinking, and the Black Friars are expert preachers.

The result of this concerted campaign against sorcery in general, and the magi of the covenant specifically, is the acquisition of a bad Reputation at a score of 1. Everyone identified as being involved with the covenant's magic, even if they are not themselves a magus, gains this Reputation. The exact nature of the Reputation might vary from person to person; if particular crimes involving magic can be pinned to an individual, then they will be. Each specific identifiable event adds another experience point to the Reputation, which increases as an Ability (*ArM5*, page 167). Every season that the friars continue to preach, the negative Reputation gains another experience point. This Reputation gradually makes it difficult for the

characters to conduct any business within the diocese, as they are met with sullen obstruction, hostility, or outright fear by any mundanes who recognize them. The Reputation also impacts negatively on the loyalty of the covenfolk, causing grogs to be surly and uncooperative (*Covenants*, page 40).

With the Black Friars in the region, the changes in local attitude become much more blatant than they were under the Wise temper alone. The covenfolk are liable to hear rumors about their masters — and possibly themselves — when they interact with locals. Once the characters have become aware of the reputation, they may attempt to discover its source, and come across the Dominicans preaching in a village near the covenant. What happens if the characters take direct action against the friars is covered in a later section.

BLAME THE WITCH

One consequence — perhaps the main consequence — of the negative Reputations imposed by the Friars Preacher is that the characters get blamed for every misfortune that strikes the diocese. This leads to any number of stories, until the characters realize that they are the target of an unusual number of rumors, and decide to find the source.

The Three Priars

Brothers Peter and Bartholomew look so similar to each other that they could be brothers. They are not locals, but hail from a region where the native language is the same as the bishop's diocese. Both friars are personable and maintain a cheerful banter with each other that puts people at ease. They have the demeanor of the common-born (which they are), but this hides their keen intelligence and academic training. Brother Peter is more of a theologian than Brother Bartholomew, and has a great memory for Scripture. Bartholomew often plays the fool to draw crowds, having perfected the pratfall and the head-over-heels

tumble.

Brother Alonso is from a distant kingdom, such as Aragon or Sicily (change his name to Alan if he is from northern Europe). He has a thick accent, and appears to be entirely humorless. He uses his apparent poor understanding of the local language to maintain a distance between himself and the other brothers, although his command of the tongue is better than he lets on. Alonso appears as a somewhat sinister character who has an uncompromising attitude toward sin.

All three friars are of impeccable character. While they frequent alehouses and market squares to spread

their message, they abstain from excessive drink and eat frugally. They travel together, but take it in turns to preach in the market squares, only remaining in each town or village for a few nights before moving on. If the characters actively seek them out, it may take several days of tracing their steps before they can be found.

Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition has a template for a Franciscan friar that can serve as a basis for these Dominicans (page 96). They should have Profession: Preacher and perhaps the Puissant (Ability) Virtue in this Ability, rather than Teaching.

- A faerie is bewitching cows and preventing bread from rising. When the characters get the blame rather than the faerie, it no longer derives vitality from its actions. While faeries cannot actually starve through lack of vitality, it is transformed by its cravings into something more dangerous. Simply defeating the faerie does not end this problem; the cause of its transformation must be addressed. Alternatively, a cognizant faerie might even accuse the characters of molestation, since they are stealing vitality from it.
- If a player magus has a predatory familiar, it is accused of eating valuable livestock. The creature summoned to the manor court, and it is tried for destruction of the lord's property. A group of men are sent to the covenant to ensure that the familiar attends court.
- A rival covenant capitalizes on the player magi's bad Reputation. Within the diocese, a church has been built on an ancient vis source. The rival magi cause the church to collapse, allowing them to claim the vis from the source. Naturally, the players' covenant is blamed.

ATTRACTING UNWANTED ATTENTION

A Quaesitor passing through the area hears of the Reputation that the characters have acquired, and begins an investigation. If the accusations against the characters are specific, then this might appear to be a clear case of meddling with mundanes. The Quaesitor might even find enough evidence to bring a case at Tribunal.

Invoking St. John the Apostle

If the characters make a direct and overt move against the bishop or the diocese, Orris conducts a public ceremony to invoke St. John's wrath against them. He calls upon the saint to punish the perpetrator, attempting to invoke St. John (*Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition*, page 87). If this fails, he repeats the attempt every day. If the characters' crime was particularly heinous, and the saint has not responded to Orris' ceremony of invocation, Bishop Orris humiliates the saint's relic the following week, attempting to threaten the saint into action (*Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 87—88). If either attempt succeeds, the saint uses either his *Curse of Drowning* or *Ignis Domini* power against the character.

Biblical Injunctions Against Magic

The Black Friars might use some of the following quotes from Scripture to support their message:

As for the illusions of art magick, they were put down, and their vaunting in wisdom was reproved with disgrace (*Wisdom of Solomon*, 17:7).

Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live (*Exodus* 22:18).

Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God (*Leviticus* 19:31).

A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them. (*Leviticus* 20: 27).

There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive

them out from before thee. (*Deuteronomy* 18:10–12).

For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king. (*I Samuel*, 15:23).

Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee. Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it. (*Isaiah* 47:13-14).

And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand; and thou shalt have no more soothsayers: Thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt no more worship the work of thine hands. (*Micah* 5:12–13).

And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his

wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts (*Malachi* 3:5).

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (*Galatians* 5: 19–21).

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. (*Revelations* 21:8).

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. (*Revelations* 22: 14–15).



Extreme Measures

If Bishop Orris has not managed to encourage his opponents to seek penance and be forgiven by God for their magic, he turns to more direct means of coercion. Before he embarks on this more extreme road, he preaches a sermon before a packed congregation, picking an important holy day if possible, such as St. John's Mass (December 27th). He implores the magi to submit to the earthly representatives of God and surrender themselves to His mercy. Those magi who are known by name are specifically commanded to seek the forgiveness of God by burning their books, breaking their staves, and setting aside their magic (it is a commonly held belief that a magus needs a staff to perform magic; see *Lords of Men*, page 41). The bishop ensures that a written copy of this sermon is delivered to the covenant. He waits a week for any response.

EXCOMMUNICATION

If the covenant ignores or refuses the demands of the bishop, then he follows through on his threat. Up until now, the bishop has turned the populace against the characters, and the covenant might be of the opinion that this is as much as he can do. They are about to be proved wrong.

Bishop Orris lays the ultimate spiritual sanction upon the magi: excommunication. In a midnight ceremony at the cathedral, the bishop conducts this fearful rite with the as-

sistance of all the clergy he can muster, and the characters are cast out from the Church and declared anathema. Anyone who knowingly associates with them inherits the spiritual taint of excommunication. Those specifically excommunicated are the "known" wizards: that is, anyone the bishop's evidence makes him believe has used magic.

At this point, the loyalty of the covenant must be seriously considered. Excommunication is a dreadful curse to any God-fearing person. An excommunicant is denied benefit from any sacrament other than penance, and should he die, Hell is almost a certainty. Unless the covenant and turv are exceptionally loyal, or the characters take extraordinary measures to

prevent it, the covenant will be emptied as its inhabitants flee the taint of anathema.

THE CHURCH KNIGHTS

Having employed his most powerful spiritual weapon, the bishop turns to the most powerful earthly force he has at his disposal — the Church Knights. There are several orders of the Church Militant that Bishop Orris could call upon; which one he uses depends on the saga's location. In Iberia, his allies are the Order of Santiago. In Eastern Europe, it is the Teutonic Order, who operate out of Hungary. Nearly everywhere else in Mythic Europe, the Knights Templar are

St. John the Apostle

Divine Might: 75

Areas of Veneration: Authors, booksellers, friendships, against burns & poisoning, tanners

Feast: December 27

Attributes: Chalice with a serpent, book, eagle

Powers: Curse of Drowning (see relic, earlier), Expel Demons, Grant Visions, Heal Burns, Ignis Domini, Purge Poison (see later), Raise the Dead, Terrify the Unbeliever, Turn Back the Missile (see relic, earlier)

Grant Visions, 2 points, Init +0, Imagination: The target of this power receives

a true vision of the future, although it is clouded in mystical allegory. An Intelligence + Divine Lore of Ease Factor 9 permits a rough interpretation; if a higher roll is achieved, then more is revealed.

Heal Burns, 2 points, Init +0, Corpus: This power heals any non-lethal wound caused by fire.

Purge Poison, 1 point, Init +0, Corpus: This power drives poison from a person, causing them to vomit it forth. The target is healed of any non-lethal wound or fatigue caused by the poison, and takes no further damage.

The Bishop's Frame of Mind

If the covenant has any spies in the cathedral, the player magi get an idea of the character of the bishop. He spends night after night in vigil, prostrate on the chancery steps, praying for a sign that his judgment is correct and

his chosen course of action is the only way to protect the people whom God has placed under his care. From this, they may realize that the bishop is not a villain, and a peaceful solution can still be sought.

Anathema

Excommunication is a terrible thing to happen to a Christian, but the social threat of being anathematized is sometimes insufficient to coerce characters (or players). After all, magi are social pariahs anyway, and being shunned is nothing new to them. In such cases, the storyguide may apply any or all of the following game penalties to excommunicated characters:

- The immediate loss of all Faith points, if any. Divorced from the sacraments, the character cannot gain any more Faith points while excommunicated unless she possesses True Faith.
- The loss of one Confidence point as soon as she hears of the excommunication. This penalty can be a crushing blow to one's self-belief.
- Gaining a Local reputation of "Anathema" at a score of 1.
- The character's baptismal name now becomes a sympathetic connection.

- The character attracts the attention of demons. Should she die while still anathematized, then Hell wins an easy soul.
- The tenor of The Gift's social penalty changes, so that the character is now shunned by God-fearing folks specifically for her presumed impiety, rather than any other reason.
- Other characters with Faith points (for example, from receiving a sacrament) somehow know that the their own soul is imperiled by associating with the character.

All these effects disappear once the character has reconciled with the Church. Bear in mind that the intent of excommunication is not as a vindictive punishment but as a medical penalty; a means to apply pressure to make a person repent and return from the spiritual wasteland of anathema. Naturally, a character who is not Christian cannot be anathematized, and suffers no penalty.

the most appropriate order. All of the militant orders are charged by the pope to fight pagans and infidels, and the bishop is able to use the authority of his rank to persuade the local commandery to assist him.

The bishop turns to the Church Knights only after he has tried excommunication. By calling in the Knights, Bishop Orris is contemplating the spilling of blood; while he hopes that the mere reputation of the Templars will prove sufficient to force compliance, he is also aware that he must be prepared to follow through on his threat and condone military action against the covenant.

The Church Knights arrive in the city with a great deal of pomp. The city folk know why they have been called in, and greet them with enthusiasm — by this stage, the negative Reputation of the characters is well-established. The knights come in force; in addition to the commander, there are at least five other knights, plus a dozen or more brother sergeants. The exact size of the force should be tailored to the perceived forces of the covenant, prior to any desertions thanks to the excommunication. The Church Knights have at least as many brother sergeants as there were grogs in the turb, and a number of brother knights equal

to the number of companions. *The Church* contains the statistics for brother sergeants and brother knights (pages 126–127); otherwise, use the templates in *Ars Magica Fifth Edition*. The Church Knights are the same as the Knight companion template (ArM5, page 23), and fight as a trained group with the commander as leader, who has a Leadership Ability of 5. The brother sergeants have the Standard Soldier grog template (ArM5, page 22), except for the leader of each trained group of five men, who is a Grizzled Veteran (ArM5, page 21). It is highly likely that each knight has a relic with a Faith of at least 1.

AGAINST THE COVENANT

Once the Church Knights have arrived in the region, they march on the covenant immediately. The characters may be forewarned if they have spies in the town, but apart from that, they are likely to be unprepared. The Church Knights are experienced in war, particularly in sieges, and if the covenant is well-defended, they stockade it while preparing an escalade. Rules for mass warfare and sieges can be found in *Lords of Men* (pages 109–116). Assume that the commander of the knights is an experienced tactician with direct experience in the Holy Land, and that he has a team of siege engineers who can undermine the covenant's fortress.

Direct Action From the PCs

The previous section describes Bishop Orris' escalation of hostility against the characters on the assumption that they do nothing but sit passively by and allow him to slander their name, ruin their reputations, and then assault their covenant. He will not rest until he has destroyed the nest of evil in his diocese, and the covenant can only afford to ignore him for so long. This section describes some of the ways in which the characters could stop the bishop, and what the consequences of those actions might be.

Investigating Bishop Orris

As soon as the bishop's interest in the covenant has been noticed by the characters, they may wish to research their enemy much as he is researching them. He has a substantial reputation, and characters with appropriate contacts in different circles of society can find out various pieces of information about him.

In ecclesiastical circles, Bishop Orris is well-regarded. He is the second son of a wealthy knight, who was, or so the story goes, was called to religion by a saint in a dream. He joined the Benedictines initially, but following ordination, he secured a release from his monastic vows and took up a post as a parish priest against the wishes of his family. The abbey where he served his novitiate was abandoned soon after he left (for entirely innocent reasons, although the characters may not wish to believe that). He became known for his quiet faith, strong character, and efficiency, and no one was surprised when he was elected bishop.

Locally, he is a popular bishop, at least in part because he is a local himself. The previous incumbent spoke the local language very poorly, and had a reputation for being standoffish. Orris, on the other hand, is well-known for his sense of justice. More than once, he has personally intervened to mediate a dispute between prominent locals, and he is a champion of the poor and weak against the rich and powerful. The city folk in particular are full of admiration for how he faces down local lords who attempt to exert their authority over the free men of the city.

THE BISHOP'S MISTAKEN IDENTITY

It is tempting for the player characters to assume that Bishop Orris is crooked; after all, they are the good guys, and he is their antagonist — so he must have some angle, mustn't he? Storyguides wanting to exploit this assumption can employ stories involving the bishop's own Story Flaw. Somewhere in the diocese, the bishop has a near-identical double. This individual is a local scoundrel by the name of

Turstan, who has proven a source of minor vexation to the bishop. Orris has not yet worked out he has a doppelgänger, but he does hear occasional stories and sightings of him from his parishioners that do not match his own movements. This Story Flaw is due come into full force over the course of this story.

If the characters have agents in the city after this story starts who are specifically watching the bishop, they see him leaving the cathedral one evening dressed in a typical townsman's outfit, clearly trying to avoid attention. This is, of course, Turstan. Archdeacon Geoffrey discovered him a few years ago, and has a small scam going, where the archdeacon accepts a fee from clients for arranging for the "bishop" to perform a blessing on new work premises, business ventures, and so forth. Turstan has just finished one of these engagements, and is off to spend his ill-gotten earnings at the local brothel.

If the characters follow Turstan for a few days, believing him to be the bishop, they witness him drinking heavily, gambling, consorting with loose women, and doing deals with disreputable characters. Of course, the real bishop has impeccable alibis for all of this debauchery, having been seen by several hundred townsfolk during Mass, the blessing of a wedding of a guild-master, and distributing alms to the poor. If the player characters try to denounce the bishop publicly, the charges are so ludicrous that their malicious intent will be obvious to all who hear, only worsening the characters' Reputations.

However, Turstan is not just a con man with a coincidental resemblance to the bishop (although this is what he will claim if confronted). He is intimately connected to the bishop's curse, and his exact nature depends on what the storyguide has decided is the reason for that malediction (see earlier). The scoundrel could be a diabolist in disguise, who has used his infernal magic to undermine the bishop's good works by taking his form. Turstan could be his faerie tormentor, who occasionally visits the city to see how his victim is faring. Alternatively, the double could be an angel, waiting for the characters to confront it so it can reveal the curse and set them on the journey to remove it.

DISCOVERING THE BISHOP'S CURSE

A thorough investigation of Orris' past reveals that he has faced both evil and magic before, and reacted the same way each time. Potential sources of information are monks who shared their novitiate with Orris; penitent parishioners who have meddled with petty magics; former victims of possession revealed by the bishop; or even the ghost of a witch who was slain by a lord after being convicted of murder by sorcery in Orris' court. The characters can gather evidence of Orris witnessing true evil, as well as clear uses of magic — some of which were magic used for evil. These cases point toward the bishop's malediction, that magic appears as evil to him. This might spur the characters to discover the source of that curse.

To characters inclined toward resolving this story peacefully, discovering the nature of the bishop's curse is crucial. In this, they may be guided by an angel or saint, who could push them gently toward Father Peter, who knows the bishop better than anyone. There is also the matter of Turstan, the bishop's double, who knows more about the curse than is first apparent. The means of removing the curse is dependent on its origin (see earlier), but could depend on the characters undergoing a pilgrimage or similar quest (for guidance on running a pilgrimage, see *The Church*, pages 15–19).

BESMIRCHING THE BISHOP'S REPUTATION

Bishop Orris is the source of all the characters' woes, and were he to lose standing in the eyes of the cathedral chapter and with his archbishop, then his accusations would hold less force, his allies might desert him, and he might even be removed from office.

Attacking the bishop's Reputation is difficult, though, since he is well regarded in the local community for a lifetime of good deeds. However, this tactic could bear fruit if the characters are prepared to spend time on the project. The magical resources available to a magus could be invaluable in creating false evidence. The

characters must provide the bishop with a bad Reputation through a significant event, then work to increase this Reputation through their actions, much as the friars are currently working against them. Once the negative Reputation exceeds the bishop's current Reputation, the new Reputation takes precedence, and people start to believe whatever falsehoods the characters are spreading.

In most parts of Mythic Europe, only the pope can remove a bishop from his see, and characters may submit a petition to this effect (*The Church*, pages 46–48). However, any request to remove a bishop from office is thoroughly investigated by papal legates, and the characters have to work very hard to falsify the testimony of the cathedral chapter, local dignitaries, and locals who provide character witnesses on the bishop's behalf. The characters' influence with the local nobility and churchmen might be of use here, but also lay them open to accusations of meddling with mundanes.

Against the Black Friars

One of the bishop's principle weapons is the Friars Preacher and the bad Reputations that they impose. Rather than simply permitting them to perpetuate these Reputations, the characters may decide to meet them head on.

Unscrupulous characters might be tempted to attack the Black Friars, or arrange their deaths. How they do this is critical. A public confrontation simply rallies the locals against the attackers, and three mysterious deaths in the middle of the night simply add to the rumors of evil magic active in the area. As a tactic, this is dangerous and ultimately futile, since the bishop simply arranges for some more to replace them, and any rumors about their demise add to the sermons their successors preach. However, the bishop does not have an unlimited supply of Dominicans; if deaths continue, their superior will eventually refuse to send more. Further, the original three friars are by far the best the order has to offer, and subsequent Black Friars will increase Reputation

points at half the rate of Brothers Peter, Bartholomew, and Alonso.

Rather than attacking the friars, the characters could decide to attack their ideas. A public debate with the friars could improve public relations; even if the characters do not actually win, their very willingness to partake in public discussion could win them respect. Should a challenge to debate be issued by the characters, it attracts a great deal of attention, and their bad Reputation does not accumulate any experience points that season. If the characters instead simply confront and debate the friars *ad hoc*, they do not benefit from this cessation in Reputation increase.

Rules for debate can be found in *Houses of Hermes: Societates* (page 90) and *Art & Academe* (page 104); the friars are restricted to the latter rules for academic *disputatio*, whereas magi are free to go beyond such restrictions and be more flexible with their subject matter, but suffer the social penalty from *The Gift*. If a magus or his representative wins a debate, he immediately earns a positive Reputation of 1 that counters the negative Reputation imposed by the friars. Depending on the subjects covered in the debate, this positive Reputation may also apply to the other characters affected by the Black Friars' preaching.

If the characters lose the debate, then they have at least succeeded in preventing their Reputation from increasing further in that season, unless they lose catastrophically (by botching a debate roll), in which case they have done more harm than good, and the Reputation gains an additional experience point. Further debates can be scheduled for the characters to either try again to win, or to capitalize on previous success (earning 1 experience point per debate), since the friars are keen to engage in debate against their enemy. A maximum of one debate per season can contribute to the characters' Reputation, either positively or negatively.

Submitting to the Bishop

Perhaps the easiest way of stopping the bishop's crusade against the characters is for all the magi to approach him and

seek absolution. If the characters arrange to speak with Bishop Orris, he assumes that this is why they are here and is eager to meet with them. However, the meeting probably does not go the way he hopes.

For him to give up his pursuit of the magi, they have to agree to take part in a public display of confession and contrition. They have to approach the bishop, humble in demeanor and clothing. Before the entire congregation, they must confess their sins. They have to break their staves, and swear on the cathedral's relics to never practice magic again. They must give up their familiars, and surrender their books to the Church. Finally, they have to accept whatever penance the bishop demands. If they agree to all of this, the bishop is happy to welcome them back into the bosom of the Church, and take steps to undo all that he has done so far. Note that the bishop is not asking anything extraordinary; public confession of sins is standard practice.

There are not many magi who would voluntarily submit themselves to such humiliation, and it is highly unlikely that they would truthfully swear to give up their magic. However, the potential consequences of falsely swearing under the circumstances demanded are too great for magi to risk. Apart from the social impacts if they were proven to have reneged on an oath, there are likely to be Divine consequences as well, such as being struck with the *Curse of Drowning* by St. John the Apostle and almost certainly anathematized.

If the characters are unwilling to prove their intentions are true, then the bishop will have nothing more to say to them. It may be possible to convince the bishop that magic is not evil; in which case the story might be successfully resolved — see Full Disclosure, later.

PROSECUTION BY THE ORDER

If the characters submit to the bishop, they may be in for a rocky time within the Order of Hermes. A local magus known for his dislike of the Church might accuse them of endangering their sodales, since their actions could encourage the Church to bully more magi into submission. If the characters actually forswear their magic, then they might be deemed to have left

the Order, depriving them of the Code's protection, and making it imperative to slay them before they can betray the secret of the Parma Magica.

Resolution

The assault against the characters amounts to a gradual attrition of good will, rather than a direct attack, and the characters may not realize the peril until it is too late to do anything about it. As a result, resolution of the story may be equally nebulous. There are three principal ways in which the story can conclude: capitulation, hiding, or all-out assault.

Magic is Not Evil, Truly

Removing Bishop Orris' Malediction allows him to see that magic is not necessarily evil. While the curse is in place, Orris is incapable of reaching a satisfactory détente with the characters — his uncompromising attitude toward Hell does not permit him to let up his persecution of those who threaten his flock.

The characters may attempt to resolve the curse and free the bishop from its influence. If it was caused by a demon, destruction of the demon destroys its power over the bishop, particularly if the bishop witnesses the actions of the characters. The demon (or one of its minions) keeps an occasional watch on the progress of the event it set in motion so long ago, and celebrates the consequences of the whimsy that caused it to so inflict Orris with the curse. The characters can thereby track the demon and confront it.

If the malediction was caused by hedge magic or a faerie, then it's likely that the curse has some condition which, once fulfilled, ends its power. The characters could discover that condition and aid the bishop in breaking the curse. Discovering the condition might require tracking down the being who laid the curse in the first place, and it might require some apology or reparation before it is willing to aid the characters in

lifting its vengeance on the bishop.

As explained earlier, if the curse has a Divine provenance, then its intent may be to test the characters themselves, rather than to afflict Bishop Orris. In this case, the Lesser Malediction resolves itself once the characters have learned their lesson. This might require them to perform some sort of public penance, as described earlier.

Note that, if the curse was laid by a non-Divine power, the characters could, in theory, break it with *Perdo Vim*. Discovering that there is a curse, and that it is responsible for the problems, then casting a spell on a hostile bishop bearing relics is likely to be hard enough to make Bishop Orris a challenging antagonist, even if the spell level required is fairly low. However, if one of the characters is a strong Vim specialist, it might be better to give the curse a higher level and have it come from a tradition with which the characters are not familiar, so that they cannot invent a specific *Perdo Vim* spell. Learning enough about the tradition to craft the spell takes time, and at least one additional story.

Full Disclosure

In this scenario, the characters approach Bishop Orris and tell him everything. Their ability to get close to him varies over the course of the story. At the beginning, he is strong and hopeful, and will demand nothing less than full contrition (see Submitting to the Bishop, earlier). Toward the latter part of the story, his resolve has weakened, since he is complicit in excommunication and planning bloodshed. This makes him more willing to talk to the characters, but it might be more difficult to accomplish, with the knights of the Church Militant taking turns to guard the prelate from treachery.

If the magi meet the bishop in person, and he suffers the effects of The Gift, they cannot persuade him of their innocence. The bishop thinks he has direct evidence of the characters' evil, and The Gift's taint reinforces this. If the characters present all have the Gentle Gift or are unGifted, or if the characters can somehow include Bishop Orris in a Parma Magica, persuasion may be possible.

The most important part of any face-to-face meeting is to convince Orris that magic is not evil. This may be difficult, given the evidence of the bishop's own senses, but the characters can appeal to academic explanations, mysticism, or theology to convince him. It is vital that the characters appear as open and honest as possible; he is a good judge of character, and if he perceives any effort at deception, this could be disastrous for the characters. The magi are also asked to provide details about the Order of Hermes, to correct areas of the bishop's ignorance, which they may be reluctant to do for fear of breaking their Oath.

Although roleplaying should be critical in any attempt to convince the bishop, it can be resolved with the same mechanics as a debate (*Houses of Hermes: Societates*, page 90). The characters should be wary of using dirty tricks — when the bishop meditates on the debate as he prays for guidance, he should not get the impression he has been hoodwinked.

If the bishop accepts that magic and evil are separate, then he still has some stipulations before calling off his campaign against the magi. He requires them to confess and do penance for any crimes they have committed of which he is aware. He requests a church in the covenant, and for Mass to be said there every Sunday with all the magi in attendance. One of the Friars Preacher will be appointed priest in charge of the church. He expects to see the covenant tithing to the Church (if they have not been doing so), and providing succor for certain unfortunates of the diocese, caring for the mad and the social outcast (this might be a good supply of grogs, companions, or possibly even apprentices). Finally, once a year he will hear the confession of each magus. However, he does not demand that they forswear magic for good. He is quite inflexible about these stipulations, viewing any attempt to avoid them as recidivism. However, in a year or so they may be open to negotiation.

Disappearance

In this scenario, the characters retreat from society. They either relocate to a different diocese, or else take greater steps

to absent themselves from mundane life. They might use powerful magic to hide the covenant, redirecting visitors or covering all structures in an illusion. All food and supplies would have to be sourced from distant regions, using layers of agents who transport goods to the covenant in secret. The magi could only leave the covenant in disguise.

Such precautions would be necessary until their negative Reputation fades, at which point society forgets about them. The Reputation decreases by only 1 experience point per year that the characters do nothing to arouse suspicion, so it could take several decades for it to fade away entirely. By this stage, Bishop Orris has probably died, and stories of the characters have passed into legend.

Killing the Bishop

It might seem that murder is a simple solution to the threat posed by Bishop Orris. There are a number of good reasons why the characters might discount this option, not the least of which is the Code

of Hermes. Should a bishop who has been causing problems for members of the Order of Hermes suddenly meet an untimely end, this will alert both ecclesiastical and Hermetic authorities, and the characters find themselves on the wrong end of some very awkward questions. The simple fact that the Church wants to investigate the matter will be enough for a Hermetic conviction for some Tribunals.

Implementing a plan to murder Bishop Orris should not be simple. There is a good chance that he will be forewarned in a dream about any attempt on his life. If the characters have a reputation for ruthlessness, then he may be expecting this action, and have hired bodyguards to defend him against direct assault as well as keeping the cathedral's relics nearby. Against magical attacks, the relic of St. John provides the bishop with a Magic Resistance of 40; the bishop is normally in a Dominion aura of at least 4, increasing his Resistance to 44. If he is assaulted, the bishop prays for a miracle to save him, and the relic he carries can greatly assist this as well. However, at the end of the day, Bishop Orris is an aging man with absolutely no experience in combat, and if all his de-

fenses fail, he can be killed with ease.

If the characters succeed in killing the bishop, their problems are only just starting. In addition to the legal issues discussed earlier, the bishop's replacement could be worse than Orris. Knowing some of what transpired previously, the cathedral chapter does not elect one of their number to the role, but appeals to the papacy for a suitable candidate. The individual chosen to replace Bishop Orris is someone experienced with combating heresy, who is knowledgeable about the Order of Hermes, and who has a great deal of political clout. It would be unusual — but not unheard of — for a cardinal to take up the post, bringing with him his own Divine Magic Resistance that stacks with that from a relic.

The storyguide should not forget the influence of the Divine either. Bishop Orris was a good man, if misguided, and his callous murder should not go unpunished. At the very least, his ghost should be given an opportunity to visit a close friend, such as Brother Theodoric, and describe the circumstances of his death, ensuring that the characters' problem do not simply end with the bishop's death.

Chapter Six

Galerius of House Guernicus

Galerius is a Quaesitor who sees it as his personal mission to punish magi who do anything that potentially endangers the Order of Hermes. His idea of what endangers the Order is extraordinarily broad, and he gets so personally invested in his cases that his judgment becomes clouded. He is the sort who believes it is better to risk punishing the innocent than let the guilty escape.

When confronted with evidence of some minor offense, Galerius takes umbrage and quickly concludes that the suspects are mavericks who threaten the peace and rule of law. He makes it his mission to bring them to "justice," and in the process, he loses sight of his duty to obey the Code and to respect the rights of magi. In truth, Galerius himself is a greater threat to the Order than are any of the magi he persecutes.

Galerius is best used if the characters have done something questionable, or at least if they have something to hide. It is also possible to bring him into play by having the magi falsely accused, either in error or a frame-up. If there is really no reason to suspect the magi of a crime, Galerius isn't a significant threat. In that case, he can be used as an ally in the short term. Do the magi notice his over-reaching methods, and if so, do they dare risk his ire by challenging them?

Background

Galerius is a respected member of House Guernicus in the Tribunal where the characters reside. His pater was the illustrious Paulinus, a now-deceased Quaesitor known for his erudite legal opinions, his

skill as a negotiator and peacemaker, and his decades of selfless service to the Order.

A few years after Galerius passed his Wizard's Gauntlet, Paulinus, while traveling alone, was murdered by an angry mob of peasants who mistook him for a witch. This was a great blow to Galerius. He had idolized his pater, and his loss filled him with anger and bitterness. At first, his acrimony was directed at mundanes, but he soon learned the circumstances of the riot that killed his pater. A rash magus had been casting spells in public, frightening the common folk and leading their bishop to deliver fiery sermons about witchcraft imperiling Christian

souls. Paulinus was simply unlucky enough to pass through the town during that troubled time. A peasant he passed on the street shouted an accusation of witchcraft. Quickly, a mob formed. Paulinus tried to disguise himself and slip away, but the mob was able to maintain pursuit in spite of his ever-changing appearance. Eventually, the mob seized him, dragged him to the town square, and hanged him.

Galerius hunted down the careless magus, a Jerbiton named Holger Rosmer, and charged him with endangering the Order. After a short trial, Rosmer was convicted and punished with the death of his famil-



iar. (Galerius had pressed for a Wizard's March, but cooler heads prevailed.)

Since Paulinus' death over twenty years ago, Galerius has dedicated his career to prosecuting magi who he thinks endanger the Order. He is well-known for his tireless commitment to this work. Anyone who knows Galerius' Reputation knows that to be investigated by him means real trouble.

Aims and Motivations

Galerius firmly believes that reckless behavior endangers the Order. He has a vivid imagination for how a seemingly minor

incident can escalate into a crisis. Galerius also has a cynical view of human nature, and presumes that magi are constantly scheming against one another and sidestepping the Code of Hermes. He believes that only vigorous enforcement of the Code prevents the Order from spiraling into chaos.

In fact, much of Galerius' austerity arises from unresolved feelings about his

Galerius the Quaesitor

Characteristics: Int +4, Per +2, Pre +1, Com +2, Str -2, Sta +1, Dex -1, Qik 0

Size: 0

Age: 54 (47)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 2 (5)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: The Gift, Hermetic Magus, Flexible Formulaic Magic, Affinity with Intellego, Great Intelligence, Hermetic Prestige, Improved Characteristics, Skilled Parens, Driven (protect the Order of Hermes from internal threats, Major), Restriction (cannot cast under a cloudless sky), Ability Block (cannot learn Martial Abilities), Obsessed (finding evidence of criminality), Unimaginative Learner

Personality Traits: Driven to Protect the Order +6, Loyal to Nightwing +3, Suspicious +3, Fastidious +1, Forgiving -2

Reputations: Aggressive Investigator 3 (Hermetic)

Combat:

Dodge: Init 0, Attack n/a, Defense +2, Damage n/a

Dagger: Init 0, Attack +2, Defense +1, Damage +1

Soak: +1

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Artes Liberales 2 (logic), Awareness 3 (searching), Brawl 1 (dodging), Civil and Canon Law 2 (laws and customs of Lorraine), Code of Hermes 5 (mundane relations), Concentration 2 (spell concentration), Finesse 2 (fine control), Folk Ken 3 (mundanes), Guile 3 (imper-

sonating mundanes), High German 5 (expansive vocabulary), Intrigue 3 (rumormongering), Latin 5 (Hermetic usage), Order of Hermes Lore 3 (politics), Magic Theory 6 (12) (Intellego), Parma Magica 3 (Mentem), Penetration 3 (Intellego), Teaching 1 (Magic Theory)

Arts: Cr 7, In 13, Mu 5, Pe 6, Re 5, An 5, Aq 0, Au 0, Co 9, He 5, Ig 0, Im 7, Me 10, Te 0, Vi 10

Equipment: Opal ring talisman, wizardly robes, two-minute hourglass, dagger

Encumbrance: 0

Spells Known:

The Inexorable Search (InCo 20/+23)

Sight of the Molting Magus (InCo 25/+23) (Houses of Hermes: True Lineages, page 72)

Whispers Through the Black Gate (InCo(Me) 15/+23)

The Whole from the Part (InCo 15/+22)

Tangle of Wood and Thorns (ReHe 15/+11)

The Ear for Distant Voices (InIm 20/+21)

Summoning the Distant Image (InIm 25/+23*)

Aura of Beguiling Presence (Mulm 10/+15*)

(Houses of Hermes: Societates, page 96)

Disguise of the Transformed Image (Mulm 10/+15*)

By His Works (CrMe 5/+21*) (Houses of Hermes: True Lineages, page 73)

Words of Unbroken Silence (CrMe 10/+18)

The Good Witness (CrMe 25/+22*) (Houses of Hermes: True Lineages, page 73)

Frosty Breath of the Spoken Lie (InMe 20/+24)

Posing the Silent Question (InMe 20/+26)

Mastery 2 (quiet casting, still casting)

Thoughts Within Babble (InMe 25/+24)

Aura of Rightful Authority (ReMe 20/+16)

Trust Me (ReMe 20/+16) (Houses of Hermes: True Lineages, page 73)

Invisible Sling of Vilano (ReTe 10/+6) (Houses of Hermes: Societates, page 38)

Bitter Taste of Betrayal (InVi 15/+24) (Houses of Hermes: True Lineages, page 75)

Sense of the Linger Magic (InVi 30/+24)

Maintaining the Demanding Spell (ReVi 20/+16)

* Includes attunement bonus of talisman

Talisman Effects:

Invisibility, Pelm 15, Pen 0, 3/day (Base 4, +1 Conc., +1 moving image, +5 levels because item maintains concentration)

Posing the Silent Question, InMe 20, Pen 0, unlimited uses

Loss of But a Moment's Memory, PeMe 15, Pen 0, 6/day

Talisman Attunements: Opal +2 images, Opal +4 memory, Jewelry +4 protect self

Appearance: Galerius is a tall, thin, austere-looking man with an air of accustomed authority and a brusque demeanor. He commonly wears wizard's robes of fine woolen cloth embroidered with gold thread. However, Galerius is rarely seen in his true form unless he wants to be; he makes frequent use of *Disguise of the Transformed Image*. His favorite disguises are inconspicuous: a beggar, a peasant laborer, a common peddler.

Galerius is a middle-ranked Quaesitor in the Tribunal where the characters reside. (His native language and his specialty in Civil and Canon Law should be modified to match the setting.) He is known to be especially dedicated to his work of maintaining law and order and rooting out wrongdoers. In fact, it is said that everyone he has investigated has been found guilty of something. He is also an acknowledged expert on mundane relations.

Familiar: Nightwing, the Raven of Virtue

The Raven's base statistics (before being bonded as a familiar) can be found in *Realms of Power: Magic* (page 62).

Magic Might: 9

Characteristics: Int +1, Per +2, Pre -2, Com 0, Str -7, Sta 0, Dex -1, Qik +5

Size: -4

Warping Score: 1 (8)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Magical Animal; Magical Friend; Essential Virtue (understand portents), Keen Vision, Unaffected by the Gift; Compulsion (steal shiny objects), Weak Characteristics

Magic Qualities and Inferiorities: Improved Abilities (x2), Improved Defense (x2), Minor Virtue: Premonitions, Minor Virtue: Second Sight;

Susceptible to Deprivation

Personality Traits: Loyal to Galerius +3, Morbid +3, Nurturing +2, Raven +3, Understands Portents +3

Reputations: Bad Luck 2 (local)

Combat:

Dodge: Init +5, Attack n/a, Defense +12, Damage n/a

Beak: Init +5, Attack +7, Defense +11, Damage -6

Soak: 0

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1), -3 (2), -5 (3), Incapacitated (4), Dead (5+)

Abilities: Athletics 3 (flying), Awareness 3 (shiny objects), Brawl 3 (dodging), German 5 (sarcastic remarks), Hunt 1 (voles), Latin 5 (Hermetic usage),

Magic Theory 1 (enchanting familiar), Premonitions 4 (homicide), Second Sight 4 (ghosts), Stealth 1 (hiding in treetops), Survival 3 (fields)

Vis: 2 Intellego (1 in each eye)

Gold Cord: 0, **Silver Cord:** 3, **Bronze Cord:** 0

Bond Powers:

Mental Communication (complex), as per the Level 15 effect in *ArM5*, page 105.

This effect works on both Galerius and Nightwing.

Shared Senses, as per the Level 30 effect in *ArM5*, page 105. This effect allows Galerius to use Nightwing's senses, but not the converse.

Appearance: A raven whose eyes sparkle with unnatural intelligence.

pater's death. He greatly admired Paulinus while he was alive. He feels a fierce drive to carry on his legacy, yet he has elevated his teacher's memory to the point where he can never live up to it. He has transferred his guilt over his pater's death onto the Tribunal and his fellow Quaesitors, blaming their laxity for Paulinus' fate.

Galerius is highly intelligent but is blinded by his own preconceptions. He is very much concerned with harm that *could* arise from magi's actions, rather than with harm that *does* arise from them. He sees it as his mission to punish magi who behave recklessly, so they will learn to live in peaceful isolation, as he thinks all magi should do.

Although his judgment is clouded, Galerius' motives are sincere. If he is made to realize that his over-reaching zeal has made a travesty of justice, he is devastated and tries to make amends as best he can.

First Encounter

Galerius is only interested in investigating cases that potentially endanger the Order or other magi. Since he imagines dire consequences arising from the most minor offenses, most Hermetic legal issues qualify.

Galerius' investigation may begin in response to a complaint by one of the covenant's Hermetic neighbors, but he can also undertake investigations on his own initiative. There must be some evidence of a crime to draw his attention — he doesn't just wander into the area and start investigating pure speculation — but he willingly investigates weak or circumstantial evidence.

Galerius' Initial Suspicions

The following are some suggestions for what attracted Galerius' attention.

PLAUSIBLE BASIS

If the player magi have made a mistake in either not paying enough attention to the Code, or thinking they can get away with breaking it, Galerius is a good way to show that the Order does enforce its law. It may seem to the players that they're facing an especially tough and dangerous Quaesitor, but in fact, Galerius' over-reaching makes it easier to defend against his accusations. If they can expose his bias and his ethical lapses, they stand a good chance of having the charges reduced or dismissed.

Some actual transgressions that the characters may commit, or be reasonably accused of committing, include:

- **Scrying:** As pointed out on page 14 of *ArM5*, Tribunals tend to enforce this clause of the Code strictly, yet it's easy to violate. Galerius himself enjoys limited immunity from charges of scrying while he is performing an investigation (see *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, page 62), and he tends to rely on that immunity very readily. He does not, however, extend any leniency to his fellow magi.
- **Dealing with Demons:** Most *Ars Magica Fifth Edition* players don't want their magi to knowingly dabble in the Infernal, though the rules in *Realms of Power: The Infernal* make it possible. Still, dealing with devils is another crime the Order takes extremely seriously. Even accidental or seemingly innocent acts can lead to charges, for example, against characters who unknowingly collect or use Infernally tainted vis. If a demon or diabolist is known to have frequented the area near the covenant, Galerius feels an investigation is necessary to determine who has been corrupted. Since demons are famous for their ability to deceive Hermetic magi, it is easy for him to imagine their pres-

ence where none exist. The punishment for knowingly dealing with demons is always a Wizard's March, so this option is potentially very dangerous for the players' magi. The story should hinge on proving the characters either didn't come into contact with demons at all, or didn't recognize the evil at the time. The storyguide should take extra care to give the players enough clues and be sure they understand Hermetic law and procedure well enough, to give their characters a good chance of acquittal.

- **Deprivation of Magical Power:** Simply collecting vis from a disputed source is enough to trigger a charge of this crime. If the characters are attacked by a magical beast within several miles of another covenant and slay it, that covenant may make a claim that the vis rightfully belonged to them. Disputes over possible familiars or apprentices also fall into this category. If the covenant gets dragged into more than one or two disputes over magical resources, Galerius decides they are habitual troublemakers who need to be taught a lesson.
- **Mundane Interference:** Exactly what constitutes mundane interference varies from saga to saga and Tribunal to Tribunal. The Normandy Tribunal interprets the Code's clause about mundanes very loosely: for a crime to have occurred, it must be proved that the magus' dealing with mundanes actually "[brought] ruin upon" another magus. (See *The Lion and the Lily*, page 25). There is latitude in the definition of "ruin." Is financial harm enough, or loss of goodwill and reputation? In other Tribunals, the Peripheral Code is less forgiving, and actual harm need not always be proved. Activities that seem likely to harm another magus (or the Order as a whole) may qualify as low crimes. Actually serving a mundane as a court wizard is always a serious crime, even in the Normandy Tribunal.
- **Reckless Behavior:** It is not against the Code of Hermes to do something stupid, but Galerius thinks it should be. His pater was murdered by a mob stirred up by a careless magus who cast spells in public. Any action that provokes a lot of anger from the Order's neighbors — mundanes, faeries, the Church, even hedge wizards in some Tribunals — is a

crisis in Galerius' mind. In Holger Rosmer's case, the reckless behavior indirectly resulted in the death of a magus, so it was easy for the Tribunal to see things Galerius' way. In the player characters' case, the potential harm their actions might hypothetically cause can easily become more important, in Galerius' mind, than the actual repercussions of those actions. Any reasonable Tribunal is reluctant to set the precedent of issuing harsh punishments for what *might have* happened, so Galerius is very likely to lose the case unless he can prove real harm was done. His emotions get in the way of his judgment and he can easily become impassioned about a case that has no real merit. This makes him into a paper tiger, but it can still make for a good story. Consider this approach if your troupe has little experience with legal stories. Galerius' fearsome reputation and his aggressive pursuit of the case make the threat seem serious, but the actual danger to the magi is much less than it appears. Experienced troupes might see the weakness in Galerius' case early on, but there remains the risk of the magi losing Reputation and respect if convicted, which should be enough to motivate them to mount a good defense.

MISTAKEN AND FABRICATED ACCUSATIONS

The characters need not have actually committed any infraction at all. The magi might simply have been in the wrong place at the wrong time. If some Hermetic crime is committed near the covenant, the player characters are natural suspects, even if the actual perpetrator was a neighbor or passer-by. It's also possible that the magi were framed. These kinds of accusations make good stories because the characters have a clear path to proving their innocence: solve the crime themselves and present their evidence, either to Galerius or in a dramatic courtroom revelation.

- A wandering magus or redcap whom the covenant dislikes has disappeared and was last seen nearby. In reality, anything could have happened: the victim

might have been kidnapped or murdered by outlaws, fallen into a river and drowned, or been abducted by faeries.

- The sanctum of a magus at a neighboring covenant has been burgled. Something very valuable, such as an invested device or high-Quality book, was stolen. The rightful owner's Arcane Connections to the stolen items have prematurely expired due to Perdo Vim magic. The theft was an inside job; a member of the victim's own covenant is to blame.
- A hedge wizard in the area has turned to diabolism. He shares some mutual enemies with the covenant, and attacks those enemies with his Infernal powers.
- A magus from another Tribunal has been selling enchanted items surreptitiously to evade the normal rules restricting the power and number of items that may be sold. Nobles, clergymen, and rich merchants throughout the region all vie with one another to collect the most impressive items.

There are many other story seeds throughout various *Ars Magica Fifth Edition* sourcebooks where the player characters are accused of Hermetic crimes. Any of those would be a way to introduce Galerius as an adversary.

Meeting Galerius

Galerius' reputation should precede him. Since he belongs to the same Tribunal as the player characters, the characters know his reputation if they succeed in a stress roll of Galerius' Reputation against an Ease Factor of 6 (*ArM5*, page 19). His Reputation as an "aggressive investigator" means that he is known both for prosecuting minor offenses that other Quaesitors might be inclined to overlook, and for seeking the harshest penalty allowed by law.

In the first encounter, Galerius announces that he's conducting an investigation in the area and asks the magi some preliminary questions: what they know about the incident, exactly which magi live at the covenant, whether there have been outside magi visiting the area, and so on. He refers to this as an "interview" rather than an interrogation. The initial in-

interview is cordial enough. Galerius seems brusque but that could be attributed to efficiency. He does not badger or intimidate the witnesses — yet. It is not customary for this kind of questioning to take place under magical verification, such as *Frosty Breath of the Spoken Lie*, and if the magi volunteer for such magic at this point, Galerius demurs, saying it would be premature. He does remember the offer and asks the magi to honor it later, once he has decided they're a threat to the Order.

He tells the magi in matter-of-fact terms what specific incident he's investigating. His *modus operandi* is to find out first what happened, then jump to a conclusion about how that endangers the Order, and then keep digging for evidence until he can convict the culprit.

Galerius pretends to leave the area after the interview, but in fact, he stays around in disguise to investigate. The first thing he does is verify the characters' answers to his initial questions.

ing Mundanes, later in this chapter). If he is working alongside another magus (see Bodyguard, later), he casts a magical disguise over his colleague as well.

There are a number of standard disguises Galerius uses. He prefers the guise of a male, but will adopt a female persona when it serves his purpose. Most of his disguises are from the lower social classes so they attract less notice. Some of his disguises include:

- A beggar.
- A destitute leper.
- A penitent pilgrim.
- A street urchin.
- A young (mundane) apprentice on an errand for his master.
- Any local villager he has seen heading the other way; impersonating a local helps him avoid notice in small communities.

Galerius' Wizard's Sigil is the color grey, so all of his disguises include an article of grey clothing or grey hair. This can become a clue once the characters start keeping a watch for him.

Galerius changes disguises often, as much as several times per day, choosing the guise that best fits the place he's investigating or the people he wants to question. His Gift causes distrust in the mundanes he passes near, so he prefers to keep moving. It seems to the mundane population that several suspicious-looking strangers have converged on their village. In larger towns, there are usually a lot of strangers, so he stands out less.

Using a magical disguise to gather information about a magus counts as scrying under the Peripheral Code. Using a spell such as *Discerning the Images of Truth and Falsehood* would also count as scrying, but under the principle of forfeit immunity, it is not a crime to magically expose another magus who is doing something illegal. Things are a bit tricky because Galerius doesn't believe he is doing anything illegal, but he probably is. If unmasked through magic, he threatens charges but later drops them because he knows they're weak. *Discerning the Images of Truth and Falsehood* must penetrate Galerius' Magic Resistance.

Methods

Galerius uses his powers as a Quaesitor to investigate whatever crime or offense the magi are suspected of. In fact, he goes quite a bit beyond what his legal authority actually allows. He quickly turns his investigation into a fishing expedition, continuing to search for evidence until he has something with which to charge the player characters. After the initial interview, he avoids directly confronting the suspects until he feels he has gathered all the evidence he can. Then he either goes back to his home covenant and waits to file formal charges at Tribunal or, if the player characters offered to submit to magical questioning, he returns to them and asks them to honor that offer.

Disguise

Galerius makes extensive use of the spell, *Disguise of the Transformed Image*. He uses disguise primarily to search for clues and to question mundanes (see Question-



INVISIBILITY

Galerius' Talisman has the power to make him invisible. Since it can only be used a few times a day, he usually reserves it for getting out of a tight spot, such as slipping away when he thinks he's being shadowed. If a tempting opportunity arises, such as the chance to follow a major suspect, he might give in to that temptation. Simply walking around while invisible is widely considered a form of scrying, though some Tribunals are less strict about it than others. Using invisibility to knowingly follow a magus is indisputably scrying.

Familiar

Galerius' familiar is a raven named Nightwing. It has a bond power that allows him to see and hear through its senses. He uses the familiar to keep watch over important places (such as the scene of the crime, once he's found it) and to scout areas where he doesn't want to travel on foot. If he becomes aware that the characters are following his movements, he uses the raven as a lookout to avoid trackers. This counts as scrying in any Tribunal.

The Investigation Begins

Galerius' investigative style combines deep background work among the mundanes closest to the magus who draws his attention, and magical scrying techniques that flirt with the boundaries of interdicted behavior among magi.

Questioning Mundanes

One of the keys to Galerius' success as investigator is his excellent use of mundane witnesses. Not everyone in the Order or the Tribunal respects these methods: mundanes can be considered unreliable because their senses and their memories are so easily deceived by magic. Nonetheless, Galerius has refined the art of using mundane witnesses to guide his investigations.

Regardless of how they view the magi living near them (whether with curiosity, awe, or dread), mundanes rarely ignore the affairs of wizards. They tend to know a good deal about magi's habits and associations, and it's usually easy to get them to tell stories about the magi. For example, if

the magi have been paying a lot of visits to the local lord (or vice versa), the peasants at the lord's manor know about it. They also tend to report eagerly other supernatural happenings, such as faerie sightings.

Galerius' usual approach is to use *Disguise of the Transformed Image* to walk among mundanes incognito. He eavesdrops on conversations and tries to identify potential witnesses. Then he uses his talisman's *Posing the Silent Question* power (or casts the spell without using words or gestures) to confirm that the witness actually saw something. Next, he tries to catch the witness unaware, so he can cast *Trust Me* (*Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, page 73) and initiate a conversation. This spell buys the caster time to have a sensible conversation, despite The Gift. If that fails, he falls back on bribery. He prefers to ask questions verbally, rather than through magic, because his subjects are more likely to volunteer information. He feels he can learn more from watching their eyes and faces than he can from magically gathering the bare answers from their minds. The entire process is time-consuming: Galerius can spend days in a village or town questioning witnesses.

Most mundanes deeply distrust magi because of The Gift. Galerius himself suffers from this problem, which is why he relies on magic to aid him in questioning mundanes. He has become so accustomed

The Powers of a Quaesitor

The lawful powers of a Quaesitor are discussed in detail in *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, pages 61–66. Although that material is too lengthy to reproduce here, Galerius' relevant powers and responsibilities as a Quaesitor can be summarized as follows:

- A Quaesitor must carry a letter of authority signed by the Primus of House Guernicus. If a Quaesitor abuses his powers, he can be stripped of his authority and expelled from the House.
- A Quaesitor has a duty to investigate complaints of serious violations of the Code. He can't refuse to investigate a serious incident, but he has some latitude in determining which complaints are serious. He can also undertake investigations on his own initiative.
- A Quaesitor can demand that magi provide reasonable cooperation with an active investigation. Cooperation does not require magi to submit to magical interrogation or give up other rights.
- Quaesitors (or any magi) are entitled to use magic to investigate crimes. If, during the investigation, a Quaesitor inadvertently discovers other information about a magus unrelated to the crime, this is itself a crime. Quaesitors enjoy some immunity from prosecution for scrying in the course of their official duties; Galerius overrelies on that immunity, as explained under "Investigation Immunity."
- In extreme cases, a Quaesitor may call a Wizard's March without first presenting the case to a Tribunal. This would only be done if the Hermetic criminal were an immediate and serious threat to one or more Hermetic magi. Most Marches that occur are called this way. The March must later be ratified by a meeting of the Tribunal.
- Quaesitors do *not* have the authority to arrest and detain magi, though there are some magi who advocate that they be given that power. Neither do they have the power to order a magus or a magus' servants to submit to mind-reading or truth-detection spells, though magi can voluntarily agree to such methods if they wish.

to relying on mundane witnesses that their bias against magi tends to infect him as well. After gathering mundane testimony, he tends to conclude the subjects of his investigation are deceitful rogues. He looks hard for evidence of their bad behavior, and uses it to attack the magi's character at trial.

When questioning a mundane witness, Galerius tries to be vague about his own identity. He is not afraid to lie, impersonating a pilgrim, traveling minstrel, or even a royal officer. He has a number of aliases and disguises worked out in advance. If the mundane in question has already witnessed another wizard blatantly using magic, he may admit that he is a magus and that he's on the trail of "outlaw wizards" as he puts it.

It is impossible to question a lot of mundanes without attracting attention to oneself. Soon, the area is abuzz with talk of mysterious strangers and their strange questions about wizards and magic. Wild rumors begin to circulate about the possible answers to these questions. This can create excitement, wonder, or paranoia. Galerius usually leaves the area before he has a chance to see what a stir his questioning creates.

This strategy assumes that the covenant is not taking extraordinary steps to remain hidden from mundanes, or to maintain a false cover story. However, unless the covenant's hidden nature or cover story are an established part of the saga, the local mundanes are aware of it and tell stories about its inhabitants. If the magi are more discreet, more of the stories are made up.

Investigation Immunity

The Code of Hermes states: "I will not use magic to scry upon members of the Order of Hermes, nor shall I use it to peer into their affairs."

Galerius' methods — using magical disguises and Mentem spells to question mundanes; using his familiar as a lookout and scout; the wealth of Intellego spells at his command — certainly count as using magic to "peer into [magi's] affairs." His status as a Quaesitor gives him some immunity to charges when he uses magic as part of an official investigation. In practice, Galerius often bends, and sometimes breaks, the limits of his proper authority to scry on magi.

Investigations are possible because of

Interrogating Mundanes with Magic

Galerius, as the character is written, is designed with a fatal weakness: his practice of using spells to question mundanes. This is to give the player characters a better chance to make a counter-claim against him. If you want to make Galerius more formidable, let

him use a grog to do his leg work instead. Galerius gets much the same information, but since he does it without magic, the Code's prohibition against scrying does not apply. This greatly reduces the player characters' opportunities to discredit him.

Testimony of Mundanes

As pointed out in *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages* (page 58), mundanes are sometimes called to present evidence at Tribunal. They are permitted to testify in person, but more often, they provide written testimony. Some kind of magic is generally used during the testimony

to ensure the mundanes are speaking freely, without magical coercion.

Frequently, Quaesitors don't bother trying to present a mundane's testimony at Tribunal. They may instead use mundane witnesses simply to guide the investigation and help them find physical evidence.

the principle of forfeit immunity: that a magus who breaks the Code of Hermes forfeits the protection of the Code with respect to that breach. Thus, criminal activities are not protected by the Code, and it is legal for a Quaesitor (or, indeed, any magus) to use magic to pry into criminal activity. However, this exception applies only to evidence of criminal activity, and it is still illegal to magically gather, even inadvertently, information about the magus' innocent affairs. This makes it difficult to use magic in an investigation for fear of learning too much, so the Peripheral Code grants Quaesitors a privilege called investigation immunity. By tradition, Quaesitors have some protection against charges of scrying if they are investigating a reasonable suspicion of wrongdoing. Investigation immunity means that the Quaesitor can only be prosecuted if, by discovering information about the magus' innocent activities, she causes actual harm to the magus (for further detail, see *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, page 62).

A Quaesitor is expected to exercise good judgment and restrain the scope of his magical investigations. For example, it is perfectly acceptable to use magic to search a crime scene for clues, or to try to trace a piece of evidence back to its point of origin, but simply to use magic to gather background information about a magus

and his habits would be unacceptable. Yet this is, essentially, Galerius' standard operating procedure. If the player-magi can prove that he has done it, they will be able to file charges against him at Tribunal.

Galerius considers himself an upstanding Quaesitor. He believes the broad investigative net he casts is perfectly justified, and he comes up with a rationale for every step. For example, he rationalizes that using magic to interrogate villagers about a magus' routine associations is justified because he needs to know whether the suspect is in regular contact with suspicious characters.

Galerius, therefore, stops short of breaking hard and fast rules, such as the well-established rule that magi or their servants cannot be subjected to Intellego Mentem spells without the magi's permission.

BROADENING THE INVESTIGATION

It is quite possible that Galerius will discover evidence of suspicious activity that is unrelated to his official case during his investigations. He can't resist the urge to follow up on any signs of wrongdoing that might endanger the Order. Galerius can jump from suspicion to suspicion for quite a while. He believes everybody is guilty of something.

Ingrid of House Tremere

Characteristics: Int +2, Per 0, Pre 0, Com 0, Str 0, Sta +2, Dex 0, Qik +1

Size: 0

Age: 36

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 0 (1)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: The Gift, Hermetic Magus; Flawless Magic; Affinity with Penetration, Minor Magical Focus (certamen), Skilled Parens, Strong-Willed; Favors (to House Guernicus); Deficient Form (Mentem), Difficult Spontaneous Magic, Oversensitive (to magi flaunting their power)

Personality Traits: Ambitious +2, Brave +2, Stubborn +1

Combat:

Dagger: Init +1, Attack +5, Defense +4, Damage +3

Soak: +2

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Artes Liberales 2 (astronomy), Athletics 3 (acrobatics), Awareness 2 (bodyguarding), Brawl 2 (dagger), Code of Hermes 1 (Tribunal procedure), Concentration 3 (spell concentration), Finesse 3 (targeting), High German 5 (storytelling), Latin 5 (Hermetic usage), Leadership 1 (in combat), Magic Theory 4 (Rego), Parma Magica 4 (Ignem), Penetration 5 (Rego)

Arts: Cr 5, In 0, Mu 5, Pe 10, Re 9, An 0, Aq 0, Au 0, Co 10, He 0, Ig 0, Im 0, Me 0, Te 9, Vi 0

Equipment: Unassuming dress, Ash Wand talisman, dagger

Encumbrance: 0

Spells Known:

Bind Wound (CrCo 10/+18) Mastery 1 (penetration)

Gift of the Bear's Fortitude (MuCo 25/+18) Mastery 1 (still casting)

Grip of the Choking Hand (PeCo 25/+27*) Mastery 3 (penetration, imperturbable casting, multicasting)

Invocation of Weariness (PeCo 20/+25*) Mastery 1 (penetration)

Endurance of the Berserkers (variant with Duration: Diameter instead of Concentration) (ReCo 15/+22) Mastery 1

(imperturbable casting)

Wizard's Leap (ReCo 15/+22) Mastery 1 (fast casting) (*Houses of Hermes: Societates*, page 36)

The Crystal Dart (Mu(Re)Te 10/+17) Mastery 1 (penetration)

Pit of the Gaping Earth (PeTe 15/+26*) Mastery 1 (precise casting)

Stone to Falling Dust (PeTe 20/+26*) Mastery 1 (penetration)

Invisible Sling of Vilano (ReTe 10/+21) Mastery 1 (precise casting) (*Houses of Hermes: Societates*, page 38)

Ominous Levitation of the Weighty Stone (ReTe 15/+21) Mastery 1 (precise casting) (*Houses of Hermes: Societates*, page 38)

Trackless Step (ReTe 10/+21) Mastery 1 (quiet casting)

The Unseen Porter (ReTe 10/+21) Mastery 1 (multicasting)

* Includes attunement bonus of talisman

Talisman Effects:

The Wound that Weeps, PeCo 15, Pen 0, 12/day

Repel the Wooden Shafts, ReHe 10, Pen 0, 6/day, Fast Trigger (+3 to Initiative)

Talisman Attunements: Ash +2 harm people, Wand +4 destroy things at a distance

Appearance: When working with Galerius, Ingrid poses as his wife or daughter, and tries to blend into the background, keeping her eyes open and her mouth shut. She wears finely made but unassuming dress with a minimum of jewelry. A closer look reveals that she's not a typical mundane woman: her wiry, athletic build would be out of place for almost any social class. She keeps her talisman concealed in the sleeve of her dress and has a habit of fingering it.

Ingrid is a junior maga of House Tremere who does not yet possess her voting sigil. She often accompanies Galerius as a bodyguard when Galerius must travel through dangerous areas or investigate violent crimes. Ingrid remains by Galerius' side; if there is a need for someone to perform an errand, Galerius sends his familiar or a mundane servant. Ingrid tries to keep a low profile, but her Gift sometimes makes this difficult. Ingrid uses her Christian name because it can't be used as a sympathetic connection to her.

Bodyguard

Galerius is a skilled investigator, but he is not well-equipped to defend himself. He frequently works with a young Tremere maga named Ingrid who serves as a bodyguard. Ingrid's superiors have assigned her to help the Quaesitores when they ask.

In a sense, Ingrid is like a very junior Hoplite, though she would not use that word to describe herself. Galerius calls on Ingrid when he feels a need for protection and assistance, but doesn't want to call on a full-fledged Hoplite. The two magi have worked together several times before. Ingrid is weak in investigative skills and spells, so she usually doesn't contribute directly to the investigation.

In combat, Ingrid usually tries *The Crystal Dart* first, but if she runs into trouble penetrating Magic Resistance, she falls back on indirect spells such as *Invisible Sling of Vilano* and *Pit of the Gaping Earth*. Her spell mastery of *Wizard's Leap* lets her teleport as a fast-cast defense to avoid magical or mundane attacks. If Ingrid can obtain both an Arcane Connection and a sympathetic connection to her opponent, she can get a high enough Penetration Total to try her favorite attack spells: *Invocation of Weariness* and *Grip of the Choking Hand*. She likes these spells because they're non-lethal, meaning she's unlikely to be charged with a high crime, even if she attacks with insufficient cause.

Exactly when and how often Ingrid accompanies Galerius is for the storyguide to decide. Ingrid is useful for deterring the player characters from attacking or harassing Galerius. On the other hand, if the players make a bad decision and find their characters in a fight, Ingrid is not as deadly as an actual Hoplite.

Requesting Cooperation

According to the Peripheral Code, magi are required to give reasonable assistance to a Quaesitor in an investigation. Galerius invokes that authority under certain circumstances: when he feels he must, or when the player magi confront him.

Galerius is reluctant to ask for assistance from a stranger because he doesn't trust any-

one (except, to a limited extent, Ingrid). He never asks the player characters to accompany him on his investigation, unless they have brought him strong evidence that points toward a different suspect. He requests hospitality, but only for a night or two, so as to give the impression that when he leaves the covenant, he has also left the area.

If Galerius suspects the magi are trying to tamper with evidence or otherwise obstruct his investigation, he approaches them and explains that the investigation is a delicate matter. He requests the magi go back to their covenant and stay there for a day or two on some pretext, so he'll know where to find them for further assistance, or so they don't "accidentally" damage any physical evidence.

Failure to cooperate with a Quaesitor's investigation is a low crime. If Galerius sees the magi do anything that he thinks hinders his investigation, he files charges against them, using his own eyewitness testimony as evidence.

Counter-Intelligence

Investigation is the key to defeating Galerius' charges against the magi. It is important for story purposes that Galerius not reveal his own findings before the Tribunal. The magi have to figure out what he suspects and why.

Discovering Galerius

People living near the covenant become aware of mysterious, suspicious-looking strangers who ask odd questions and snoop around places the magi frequent. Sooner or later, word reaches the magi or their servants. Because Galerius uses several different disguises, it is not obvious at first that all those disguises are the same person.

Under the principle of forfeit immunity, a magus who breaks the Code loses the ability to claim its protection. If the magi don't realize the mysterious stranger

is Galerius the Quaesitor, they are probably justified in using magic to track his activities until they find out the stranger's identity.

It is also possible (and perfectly legal) to find out what Galerius is up to by mundane means. His Wizard's Sigil makes it possible to recognize his disguises. Galerius' raven familiar is also a clue. Several grogs and companions covering the area can probably track his movements, with difficulty. This can lead to some amusing scenes as mistaken identity leads grogs to shadow innocent peddlers or follow street urchins on a merry chase. There can also be suspenseful scenes where ominous figures seem to close in on the magi from all sides. The bigger the town or village, the harder it is to keep up with this slippery magus.

If the characters are able to follow Galerius' movements, make it possible for them to piece together the nature of his investigation. They can use the same methods he uses — questioning a variety of mundanes to gather a complete picture. This is an opportunity for grogs and companions to shine, as they can question mundanes without The Gift getting in their way.

If confronted, Galerius gets angry and strongly hints that the magi have illegally shrieked on him, even if they tracked him down by mundane means. He then demands they "cooperate" by staying out of his way. In reality, he knows a charge of scrying isn't strong enough to stick; he is only using it to scare them off.

Galerius' Record and Reputation

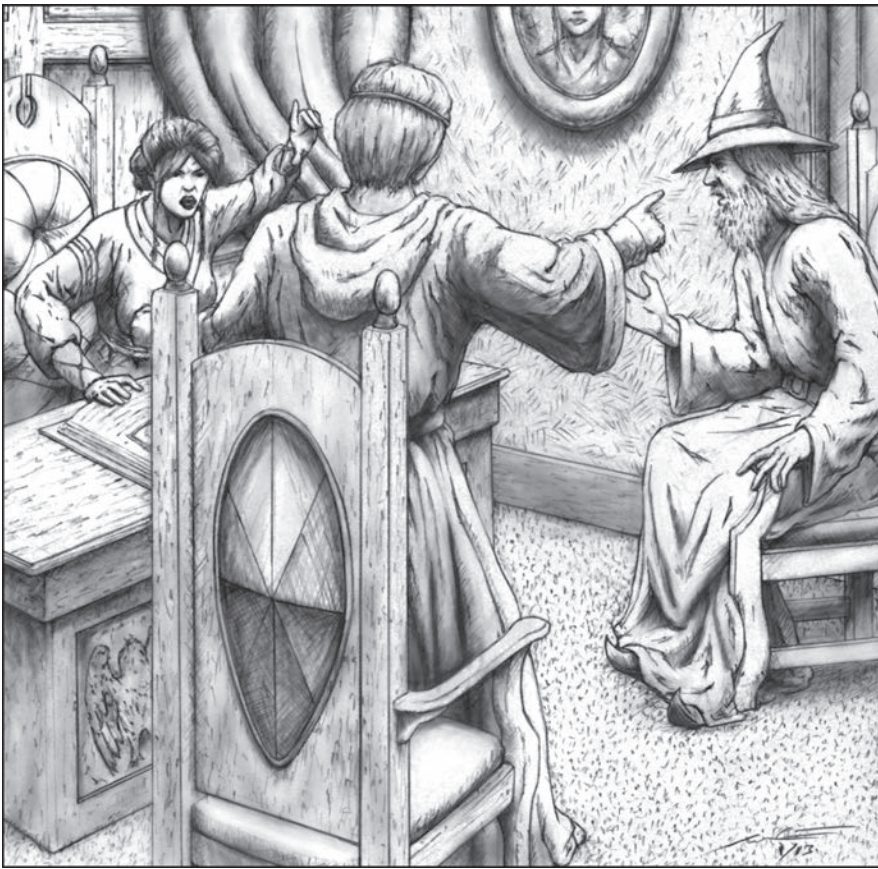
If the characters have attended Tribunal before, they may have seen Galerius prosecute someone else and witnessed his aggressive style first-hand. If not, it is easy to find magi who were present for his trials. Galerius both investigated and prosecuted all the cases, which is unusual, but senior magi attribute that to personal ambition. In all of the cases, Galerius argued well and pressed for harsh penalties. Several of the magi whom Galerius convicted still reside in the Tribunal, but are reluctant to speak with anyone who is currently the target of Galerius' investigation. They fear guilt by association.

The Tribunal records give details of his cases, though full transcripts are not kept. Galerius has won cases in at least three meetings of the local Tribunal (not necessarily consecutive). Every magus Galerius has charged with a crime has been convicted, though in at least one case, the successful charge was unrelated to the offense that triggered his investigation.

Characters who closely examine these records (which are available for inspection, given a season's advance notice) can easily tell that Galerius is a very thorough prosecutor. They should make an Int + Code of Hermes stress roll against an Ease Factor of 12. Success tells the character that Galerius tends to win his cases by impugning the character of his opponents, often including anecdotes that cast the defendant in a bad light, but may be only weakly connected to the actual case.

Three of Galerius' past cases foreshadow some of his actions in his current investigation.

- Kraxia of Criamon was originally accused of molesting the fae, but Galerius found that she had been framed by a neighbor, Jürgen of Trier (of House Ex Miscellanea), to cover his own crime. Kraxia was never charged with the original crime, but during the course of his investigation, Galerius uncovered evidence that she had interfered in mundane affairs by helping a local bandit escape mundane authorities. The bandit went on to rob Jürgen's covenant, so Kraxia was convicted of mundane interference. Both magi were given stiff penalties, amounting to several seasons of service.
- Iana of Merinita was accused of reneging on the outcome of a certamen she lost to Claudius of Verditiis. Both principals voluntarily submitted to questioning under *Frosty Breath of the Spoken Lie*, but there were no independent witnesses. Each claimed they had won the certamen, and both appeared to be telling the truth. Galerius found that Iana had used a spell specifically designed to defeat truth-detecting spells (similar to *Clear Breath of the Consummate Liar*, *Guardians of the Forests*, page 73), which she could cast without voice and gestures. The spell



known and provides an important clue as to his motivations.

Preparing the Defense

It is useful to investigate exactly what Quaesitors are and are not allowed to do. Most of the rules regarding Quaesitors' conduct are unwritten traditions within House Guernicus, and active Quaesitors do not like to talk about possible misconduct by one of their own. Finding reliable information may require consulting experts outside the Tribunal who are less interested in preserving Galerius' reputation, or travel to distant libraries.

Magi accused of Hermetic crimes are entitled to call character witnesses. Assembling witnesses is a good way to counter Galerius' penchant for character assassination. Resist the urge to make the characters work too hard to get witnesses to testify; a non-player character who demands favors for testimony is probably not well-regarded enough herself to be influential as a character witness. Any magus the characters have significantly helped in the past should be willing to put in a good word for them now. Likewise, if the magi have lived for years without serious disputes with their neighbors, those neighbors should want to say so. Even the testimony of mundanes is admissible, though it carries much less weight than that of magi, so nearby nobles, clergy, and merchants who are on good terms with them can provide testimony.

As the magi contact their prospective character witnesses, story opportunities often arise. Re-connecting with old friends and allies provides an opportunity for them to ask for help with new challenges. Another possibility is that, once reminded of their gratitude toward the magi, those friends and allies express belated appreciation by offering some interesting information that leads to a side story. They might also be able to offer help and advice in the magi's current legal defense.

Solving the Real Crime

If someone else committed the crime of which the magi are suspected, try to make it easy for the players to discover the general

was of Momentary duration, just long enough for her to tell a short lie, so it was not detected when the Quaesitor checked her for active magical effects at the start of her testimony. Iana was convicted of the low crimes of failing to honor the outcome of the certamen, and of obstructing a Quaesitor's investigation. Due to the egregious nature of the latter offense, she was banished from the Tribunal. The Tribunal also seized and destroyed the lab text of the offending spell.

- There had been repeated complaints of Tranio of Jerbiton stealing vis. A different Quaesitor had investigated him once before, without formal charges being brought. Galerius was able to get a conviction by setting up a trap. He simply waited, invisible, at one of the vis sources from which Tranio had been stealing and caught him in the act. Tribunal records mention that he used mundanes as lookouts to know when to set his trap, but the mundanes are not named and were never called to testify.

The storyguide should feel free to invent other cases as desired.

Galerius' methods have not yet been called into serious question. Once or twice, magi have challenged his practice of charging them with crimes outside the scope of the original complaint, but none of these challenges has been upheld by the Tribunal. Most of his cases were decided at a private hearing, and were never debated in public before the full Tribunal.

Other magi in the Tribunal have mixed opinions about Galerius. They widely acknowledge that he is good at solving difficult cases that other Quaesitors can't unravel. His methods are considered unorthodox by some, but all acknowledge that they are very effective. Galerius is unafraid to investigate the political elite of the Tribunal as vigorously as he does the youngest magus from a spring covenant. He has no known friends except Ingrid, and perhaps the members of his home covenant. Secretly, many members of the Tribunal fear him, but publicly they applaud his success at rooting out trouble-makers.

The story of his pater's death is well-

outline of the crime. The story lies in uncovering the particulars and obtaining evidence that Galerius or the Tribunal will believe.

While they investigate the real crime, the magi have to avoid Galerius, who would accuse them of interfering with his investigation or tampering with evidence. If he notices the characters are on the lookout for him, he varies his disguises to make things more difficult for them. Nightwing, Galerius' familiar, can be a clue to his approach. Mundane ravens can also appear from time to time to add tension.

Resolution

Galerius is only really satisfied when he brings someone to trial. Barring remarkable circumstances, he brings formal charges against one or more characters at the next Tribunal meeting. If those characters were not planning to attend the Tribunal, they receive an official summons, bearing the seal of the presiding Quaesitor of the Tribunal.

Pleading Innocence

Quaesitors, including Galerius, possess spells that make it easy to prove someone's innocence. If the player characters are indeed completely guiltless, they could end the case in a few minutes simply by volunteering to submit to questioning under *Frosty Breath of the Spoken Lie*. Magi are never obligated to submit to magical interrogation, and Galerius is sure to that point out before the questioning begins.

There are good reasons not to agree to magical verification in the first place, particularly when facing Galerius, as he has a history of prosecuting magi for information he gathered that was unrelated to the original investigation. One can always refuse to answer questions that are off-topic, but doing so immediately arouses Galerius' suspicions.

Although Galerius insists on multiple precautions to prevent magi circumventing *Frosty Breath of the Spoken Lie*, there are no reciprocal assurances that he's actually casting the spell he claims, rather than, for example, one that makes a person's breath frosty whenever the caster wishes. Similar-

ly, it is hard to verify that he isn't surreptitiously using additional magic while he's interrogating them, such as his talisman's *Posing the Silent Question* effect. He would not do such a thing, but it's understandable for the magi to distrust him.

Galerius suspects tricks. He has past experience with a maga who knew how to fool simple Intellego spells. For this reason, he requires his subjects to also submit to *Sense of the Lingering Magic* before and after the interrogation. He forbids magi from casting spells or using items of their own while being questioned; if he catches any of them doing this, he assumes they were attempting perjury. He insists on questioning the subjects one at a time and in private, keeping those who have already been questioned separate from those who are yet to testify.

He insists that *Frosty Breath of the Spoken Lie* be cast by a Quaesitor: probably himself, but a neutral Quaesitor can be brought in if necessary, though this delays the interrogation, of course. Galerius uses *Maintaining the Demanding Spell* to carry on the interrogation while maintaining the spell. (Ordinarily, maintaining concentration through a conversation is very difficult: see page 82 of *ArM5*.) He carries a two-minute hourglass to let him know when he needs to pause the interrogation and re-cast.

Galerius carefully phrases his questions to make them difficult to evade. For instance, he doesn't ask if they "know something," as a character could then truthfully answer "no" if he merely suspected but didn't know for sure. He prefers phrases such as, "do you have reason to believe" or "are you aware of," or even speculative questions such as "is it possible that..." Some of his questions sound paranoid: "Did you discuss this case with anyone else before coming to me?" Unless, in your saga, you have made a specific ruling to the contrary, magi do not have the right to refuse self-incriminating questions. Galerius tries to entrap the suspect.

He saves his best entrapping question for last: "Are you aware of any other possible Hermetic crime, high or low, that may not have been reported?" Of course, a character can refuse to answer this or any of Galerius' questions, but refusal to answer is, in his mind, an indication of guilt. He tries to guess what crime the character may be covering up, and diligently searches until he finds one.

Once the characters consent to magical interrogation, Galerius keeps questioning them until he's satisfied. Galerius believes that refusal to answer any of his questions is the low crime of failing to cooperate with an investigation, but his superiors (and the Tribunal) know that a magus has the right to refuse any question that is irrelevant to the formal cause of the investigation. Galerius threatens, but does not actually prosecute, a magus for refusing to answer his questions. He believes, after all, that he is rooting out threats to the Order. Such a weak charge is not worth pursuing for its own sake.

Even if the characters pass Galerius' scrutiny and proclaim their innocence, he has some lingering suspicions. He's seen magi try to fool truth-detection spells before. He tries to independently confirm the characters' testimony before he accepts their innocence. If he doesn't find any incriminating evidence (of the original charge or any other), he concludes the investigation and never files charges.

Finding the Real Culprit

If the characters are actually innocent, it is possible to convince Galerius of their innocence before the case ever reaches the Tribunal. This is difficult because the players need to overcome his preconceptions. It requires both sound detective work and delicate diplomacy.

The only thing that really dispels Galerius' suspicions is evidence implicating another culprit. He suspects the evidence might be fake. He's stubborn, but not blind: if the lead looks credible, he follows it, and he eventually draws the correct conclusion, despite all his attempts to support his original position.

Putting Galerius on the trail of the real perpetrator earns his gratitude. He is too self-righteous to feel much guilt over wrongly accusing an innocent magus, but he is aware that to formally accuse the wrong suspect would have been a major blow to his status and credibility. Galerius expresses his gratitude in an unorthodox way: by asking the characters for help in future investigations. He has, understandably, few other friends to whom he can turn. Helping Galerius earns the characters

experience points in a positive Hermetic Reputation, such as Reliable or Upstanding, along with the usual rewards of adventures. In time, this former adversary can become a valuable if somewhat prickly friend.

Trial

Galerius does his best to bring the case against the magi to trial. Because Tribunal meetings are typically held every seven years, it could be years before the characters' actual trial. The procedure by which Tribunals hear cases is described in *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, pages 56–59.

CHOOSING THE PRINCIPALS

The Tribunal must first determine who will argue the case. The defense principal is the accused. The prosecuting principal is

usually the magus who filed the initial complaint. If the accuser declines to argue the case, the duty falls to a Quaesitor. If there is an accuser, Galerius arranges for him to choose not to present the case so he can prosecute the characters personally. If Galerius investigated the case on his own initiative, he acts as the prosecutor by tradition.

PRIVATE HEARING

A Hermetic trial begins with a private hearing between the defendant, his or her accuser, and the presiding Quaesitor of the Tribunal. The hearing serves two functions: to determine whether the charges have any merit, and to vet the evidence. Unlike a modern trial, all the facts of the case are decided at this private hearing, before the public trial takes place. The dramatic climax of the story will most likely occur during this scene.

In this scene, it should become clear that

Galerius' personal feelings are heavily invested in the case. It is important for story purposes that Galerius present all his evidence first. He starts by trying to discredit the accused with any general muck he has been able to rake up regarding the characters' pasts, their parentes, and their associates. He proceeds to circumstantial evidence, which he takes quite seriously. He concludes with his hard evidence, such as physical clues or eyewitness testimony, presenting it with a triumphant glare at the defendants.

In Mythic Europe, the concept of a "conflict of interest" is much less important than it is to modern people. For instance, it is common for a king to judge legal cases in which the crown stands to collect a hefty fine if the defendant is found guilty. Galerius' personal involvement in the case is bad form for a Quaesitor, but it's nothing extraordinary. The Tribunal routinely hears cases argued by magi who are bitter enemies.

The characters have a full opportunity to dispute Galerius' evidence with contrary evidence of their own. However, if they try to have Galerius' evidence thrown out on a variety of grounds (such as irrelevancy), the presiding Quaesitor points out that the purpose of the hearing is to determine the facts only. The relevancy of the evidence is a legal argument that will be heard later in the public phase of the trial.

Until now, Galerius has been lucky enough to get away with his highly questionable tactics. He is good at justifying them, and tries to defend them if challenged. He aims to discredit the accused, and is good at doing so. Most of his past cases were decided at the private hearing, so his methods were not exposed to scrutiny by the whole Tribunal. Finally, the fact that all his past opponents were truly guilty of something prevented the Tribunal from taking their counter-claims seriously. Only now, in this trial, is there a chance to shed light on how off-balance Galerius has become.

It is permissible for the defendants to question Galerius' evidence. They can also demand to know how he obtained it. The more deeply they delve into Galerius' conduct in the case, the more agitated Galerius becomes. He insists that all his rumor-mongering and spying were justified. Clearly, the defendants were a threat to the Order, he says, so he had to pursue all the evidence he uncovered. He insists

A Friend in Need

One of the risks of using Galerius as an adversary is that players may come to feel that Hermetic law is unfair, or worse, that the entire Order is made up of scheming, self-serving villains. It is perfectly fine to portray the Order as a political snake pit, if that's what the players enjoy. You might prefer, though, to populate the Order with a variety of non-player characters, both likable and despicable. This helps make the setting more credible, and it reduces the sense that the players and the storyguide are adversaries. Players are more likely to take an interest in Hermetic law and politics if they feel they have a chance of success in those arenas.

While he is generally well-respected, Galerius is not universally well-liked. He has overzealously prosecuted other magi in the past: magi who still reside in the Tribunal, nursing wounded pride and bruised reputations. During vigorous debate at Tribunal, it may become clear to some onlookers that Galerius is overstepping the bounds of propriety. Enduring public persecution from Galerius may win the characters sympathy

from some new friends.

If, as you roleplay through the Tribunal proceedings, the characters seem ill-prepared or the case is going poorly for them, a sympathetic non-player character can step up during a recess to offer legal and political advice. This is an especially good option if the players are new to Hermetic intrigue and need some guidance. Their new advisers only help them come up with ideas; it is up to the players to execute those ideas. For instance, a friendly magus might point out before the private hearing that a participant in a case has the right to challenge the other side's evidence, including demanding to know its sources.

New allies may also approach the player magi after the Tribunal, regardless of the verdict. They commiserate with the player magi about what a vindictive wretch Galerius is. It should become clear from these conversations that Galerius was just as hard on his other victims as he was on the player magi. The recent case is settled, but these new well-wishers could be useful if the player magi draw Galerius' ire again.

his methods were justified, given the seriousness of their crimes. The presiding Quaesitor gets progressively angrier at Galerius as the sordid details of his tactics unfold before him. Eventually, he begins questioning Galerius directly.

If the characters are completely innocent, this fact comes out during the evidence hearing. If the characters have not already provided testimony as to their own innocence, the presiding Quaesitor requests they do so under his magical inspection. The defendants have the right to refuse to submit to magical interrogation, and may wish to refuse even if they have nothing to hide. It is important to retain the moral high ground if they want the Tribunal to sanction Galerius for his overzealous methods, and submitting to magical interrogation weakens the impact of any complaint that Galerius has violated their privacy. If the characters decline to submit to spells, the presiding Quaesitor questions them without magical verification.

After all the evidence has been presented and argued, the presiding Quaesitor can recommend that the case not proceed. If the characters are really innocent, even Galerius can see the truth, and he agrees, rather than face the disgrace of having his whole investigation discredited in public.

COUNTER-CLAIM AND SETTLEMENT

If the private hearing went as expected, the characters have grounds for a counter-charge of scrying against Galerius. They may have prepared and published that counter-charge ahead of time, in which case they proceed to a separate private hearing for their claim. If they haven't filed a complaint against Galerius yet, for procedural reasons they must wait for the following Tribunal.

Both parties now have a chance to agree to a settlement. Unless the players have missed the opportunity to call Galerius' tactics into question, the presiding Quaesitor presses both sides to settle. In exchange for reduction or dismissal of charges against the player characters, he asks them to agree to drop their counter-claims against Galerius. Galerius is ordered to turn over his letter of authority to the presiding Quaesitor, suspending him from duty. He is then sent to Magvillus for several seasons of "study"

Staging Tips for the Private Hearing

The evidence hearing is where the player characters have the chance to bring Galerius' world crashing down on him. Or they may see it as the chance to clear their names. Either way, it promises to be a dramatic scene.

Consider designating a "second" to play the presiding Quaesitor at the hearing. This should be a player whose magus is not on trial. It's a good way to involve a player who would otherwise be a bystander throughout the hearing. More importantly, it means you won't have to talk to yourself while roleplaying through what is probably the climactic scene of Galerius' story.

Coach your second ahead of time about how important the Code's provision against scrying is. Emphasize that Quaesitors are allowed to use magic in

their investigations, but they are expected to limit their investigation to relevant facts. Quaesitors who abuse their powers are judged harshly by House Guernicus. The presiding Quaesitor at first is sympathetic to Galerius because of his prestige, but gradually sours on him as he learns how his methods have become corrupt and his judgment clouded.

There are several ways to bring the scene to an end. Galerius may lose his composure and devolve into shouting incoherent accusations until the presiding Quaesitor silences him. He may argue with the presiding Quaesitor over the propriety of his tactics, which he loses. Or the player characters may make him realize he overstepped his authority, in which case he is first thunderstruck, then humiliated and contrite to the point of tears.

before his authority is reinstated. He may be permanently transferred to a different Tribunal. Galerius also has to compensate the defendants for their expenses and lost seasons. A nominal fee of three pawns of vis per magus per season should be acceptable. This he pays within one season.

The blow to Galerius' prestige also costs him the support and friendship of Ingrid. Whatever her personal feelings about the trial, House Tremere strongly discourages her from associating with a Quaesitor who has fallen into disfavor.

ARGUMENTS AND PENALTY

If, after the evidence hearing, Galerius still has his credibility intact and some facts on his side, the case proceeds to the public hearing, where the principals debate how the Peripheral Code should be applied, given the facts of the case. The facts are written into the Tribunal's official records at the start of this phase of the trial.

In the legal argument phase, Galerius has all the advantages. At least some of the facts are on his side, and he has his notoriety to lend weight to his arguments. He feels vindicated and presses for harsh penalties. This should be a frightening time for the player characters.

In the end, cooler heads prevail. The Tribunal fails to see the player magi as the looming threat to the Order that Galerius thinks they are. It hands down a minor penalty, such as a fine of vis or a couple of seasons' compulsory service. However, the defendants have had their misconduct displayed before the entire Tribunal. This earns them a new or increased bad Hermetic Reputation (see *ArM5*, page 167).

Future Charges

If Galerius wins his case against the magi, he is not satisfied. Whatever penalty the Tribunal imposed, he is convinced it was too light. He makes a point to keep apprised of any mischief in the characters' region of the Tribunal, and shows up promptly to investigate.

At some point — not necessarily the very next Tribunal — there will be a courtroom rematch. Galerius may bring new charges against the characters, or they may bring charges against him for investigating them unlawfully. If there is a second accusation against the magi, strive to make it decisive. It's more fun to have a dramatic final confrontation with this adversary than to live in constant dread of yet another trial.

Chapter Seven

The Infatuated Diabolist

Heav'n has no rage, like love to hatred
turn'd; Nor hell a fury, like a woman scorn'd.

—"The Mourning Bride"

by William Congreve, 1697

Hannelore is an exemplar of the dangers of ambition and the lust for power. When the characters first meet Hannelore, she is simply the favored daughter of a local nobleman. She has been educated by private tutors and lived a life of relative luxury, spoiled by an indulgent father. Her tutors have taught her letters, but have also witnessed her temper and her ambi-

tion, and have said a prayer for her future husband, whomever he might be.

She becomes physically attracted to one of the player characters, and they may pursue a short romance before circumstances force them apart. Hannelore, however, never gives up on her love. Her passions lead her down a dark path, and attract the attention of a demon. Preying on her drive to succeed, the demon tutors Hannelore in malefic powers, turning her into a tool that it can wield against the Order of Hermes.

In five short years, Hannelore is transformed from a spoiled child into a powerful diabolist, still utterly infatuated with

the player character. She is determined to do anything she can to have him for her own — and if she *can't* have him, then no one shall, not even the Order of Hermes.

This antagonist relies on several Infernal powers for her to be effective, and to get the most out of stories using Hannelore, it is recommended that the storyguide has access to a copy of *Realms of Power: The Infernal*.

Variations on a Theme

Hannelore's actions are described as being directed at a player character, but she could instead target a prominent storyguide character whom the characters are motivated to rescue from her clutches. Other variations on Hannelore include:

DIFFERENT MOTIVATIONS

As written, this story is about love perverted by the Infernal into a twisted mockery of what it should be. However, other motivations can be put into play with very little work if there is no suitable player character as a love interest for Hannelore. The two principle alternatives are avarice and envy. Should Hannelore be driven by avarice, she has witnessed a magus' use of power (or heard rumors of an event), and seeks that power for herself. She does not wish to be with the character forever, but instead to be trained by him. Of course, lacking The Gift, this is impossible, and her rage drives the rest of the story. If envy is her motivation, then Hannelore is consumed by the need to possess magical power, and if the magus will not share his magic, then he must be forced to relinquish



Hannelore the Diabolist

Hannelore has been designed with more Virtues than is normally permitted at character generation, but she has nothing that a player character could not achieve through a similar dedication to Hellish forces. Infernal powers are notorious for lavishing their victims with gifts and powers, if it achieves their aims. As a consequence, Hannelore has received demonic tutelage in the Infernal arts, equivalent to taking the Mentored by Demons Virtue (*Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 86) 5 times, for an extra 50 experience points per year. She has also undergone prolonged Vituperations that have resulted in the Self-Confident Virtue (i.e., a Confidence Score of 2) and Aging Points.

This is a major investment in Hannelore by demons, and implies that the stories where she intersects with the player characters are not the only plans that Hell has for her. She is possibly already embroiled in a major demonic scheme, and the infatuation described here is a diversion that becomes a distraction. The details of any other role Hannelore might play in a saga is left to the storyguide to develop.

Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre +1 (1), Com +3 (1), Str 0, Sta -1, Dex 0, Qik +1

Size: 0

Age: 21 (21)

Decrepitude: 0 (2)

Warping Score: 5 (2)

Confidence Score: 2 (6)

Hierarchy Score: 3

Virtues and Flaws: Diabolist; Gentlewoman; Ceremony, Diablerie, Incantation, Malediction, Psychomachia; Affinity with Incantation, Arcane Lore**, Educated, Infernal Blessing***, Mentored by Demons x5, Puissant Incantation, Self-Confident, Unaffected by The Gift*, Curse of Venus, Hatred, Restriction (maleficia won't work on children), Fragile Constitution***, Obsessed (knowledge is power), Tainted with Evil***

* See *Realms of Power: Magic*, page 47

** Free with Diabolist

*** From Warping

Personality Traits: Hateful +5, Attracted to Power +3, Inquisitive +2, Sensible -3

Reputations: Ambitious 3 (Infernal), Fierce Temper 2 (Local)

Combat:

Dagger: Init +1, Attack +5, Defense +4, Damage +2

Soak: -1

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Artes Liberales 2 (writing), Awareness 2 (mannerisms), Brawl 2 (dagger), Ceremony 3 (Diablerie), Charm 3 (men), Etiquette 3 (courtly manners), Folk Ken 2 (men), Guile 3 (lying to relatives), Infernal Lore 3 (powers), Latin 4 (reading), Native Language 5 (local dialect), Noble Lore 3 (positions of authority), Philosophiae 2 (ethics), Penetration 3 (Malediction), Ride 2 (while hawking).

Methods & Powers: Incantation 9+2 (affecting self), Diablerie 5 (Infernal blessings), Malediction 4 (Personality Flaws), Psychomachia 4 (lustful actions)

Powers:****

Gaze of the Wolf : Hannelore can fix a person to the spot if she is able to make eye contact, and the object cannot move while she maintains her stare. This effect has a Penetration of 5 + Penetration Bonus + Aura Modifier.

Exhaustion: Hannelore's touch can inflict a Long Term Fatigue level on a victim. This Ability does not function in the Dominion or on women, and has a Penetration of 5 + Penetration Bonus + Aura Modifier.

****These derive from the Infernal Blessings Virtue. They were granted by a Level 25 Debauchery / Phantasm effect (Base 4, +1 Touch, +4 Forsaken)

Equipment: Fine clothes, curved dagger.

Hannelore knows of several sources of Infernal vis, and at any time should have at least (3 + simple die) pawns. Some of this is vis prava, converted using one of Hannelore's maleficia (see nearby insert).

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: A handsome young woman, with dark wavy hair that she keeps uncovered and deep green eyes. She prefers gowns of red velvet, and nearly always wears a fur cloak, since she easily catches a chill. Hannelore has a rich voice, unusually deep for a woman; many have commented that this is her most attractive feature.

Her Warping Score is particularly high, because she takes Warping points to fuel her magic (see the description of Incantation on page 104 of *Realms of Power: The Infernal*), and she is under several continuing mystical effects (see Hannelore's Maleficia, later). See *Realms of Power: The Infernal* for more details on Incantation, Vituperation, and some of her Virtues and Flaws.

Hannelore has several sources of vis available to her. These do not count as Personal Vis Sources because gaining the vis is not automatic — she must steal to get them, contest them with others, or there is a finite supply. Some examples are:

- She regularly steals the Host during Communion, and profanes it to produce vis (*Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 96);
- She has replaced the relic in her father's chapel with a fake and similarly profaned the real one;
- Once a year on Lammas Eve, a sulphurous spring on her father's estate belches forth vis, but a local witch coven has collected this since time immemorial;
- One of the books in her father's library (see later) has a number of glass beads on the cover, each one of which contains a pawn of vis.

Hannelore's Maleficia

Hannelore typically employs the maleficia listed nearby, although these are not formulaic spells and can be varied in terms of Range, Duration, Target, or effect when she employs them. For more information, see *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, Chapter 10. Her Casting Total is equal to Communication + Incantation + (Power) + Aura modifier + stress die. Her Hierarchy score protects her from the harsh effects of failing a maleficia roll, at least for effects of Level 30 or below. Each use of a maleficium costs her either a Confidence point (which does not add anything to the Casting Total) or a Warping point.

Any Range: Personal and Duration: Forsaken maleficia can be assumed to have already been cast by Hannelore on herself, and are effectively permanent. These include: *And the Devil Shall Take Care of His Own*; *Black Wings, Eye-Piercing Beak*; and *She Who Bears the Mark Shall Be Unharméd*. Each gives her a Warping point every year for the continuing mystic effect (these Warping points have not been included in her total). These, and other powerful maleficia, are cast with various additional elements to grant bonuses to her Casting Total:

- +5 per pawn of vis prava, or +2 per pawn of other vis (maximum Incantation + Power pawns);
- +3 for each Confidence point (maximum 2 Confidence points);
- +6 for the sacrifice of a black animal;
- +5 per assistant, assuming Communication of +1 and Incantation 4 (maximum 3 others with Diablerie, 2 otherwise).

With her best Power (Diablerie), she can expect a maximum Casting Total of around 53 + stress die (assuming an Infernal aura of 2, 2 Confidence points, 4 pawns of vis prava, and the sacrifice of a black goat). With a coven of 3 assistants, she can increase this by an additional +15.

A CROWN OF TWELVE STARS ON HER HEAD

Incantation/Psychomachia, Level 40
R: Voice, D: Moon, T: Ind

This maleficium forces the target to follow the caster's commands for the duration. Hannelore must be perceivable by the target: he must be able to see her, hear her voice, or smell her perfume, or else the effect ends immediately. She generally employs this effect after she has her victim under her control with another maleficium, using a ceremony with vis and a sacrifice to get the Casting Total she needs.

(Base 15, +2 Voice, +3 Moon)

A GHOST ON THE WIND I SHALL BECOME/NO DOOR CAN STOP ME

Incantation/Diablerie, Level 45
R: Per, D: Sun, T: Ind

Hannelore gains the Nightwalker Major Virtue (*Hedge Magic Revised Edition*, page 104) until sunrise. Briefly, this permits her spirit to leave her prone body and fare forth in immaterial form, traveling at great speed. She can switch between corporeal and immaterial form by taking three rounds to do so, and while immaterial, she may also become invisible at will. When corporeal, she can pick up objects that she could normally carry, and these become immaterial when she does. When her spirit is near humans, they become drowsy; and if already asleep, become impossible to wake up. In spirit form, she is affected by spells that affect ghosts or spirits, but she has no Might, and thus cannot be stopped by wards or laid to rest. She cannot enter the Dominion in this form.

(Base 35, +2 Sun)

AND THE DEVIL SHALL TAKE CARE OF HIS OWN

Incantation/Diablerie, Level 40
R: Per, D: Forsaken, T: Ind

Grants the caster a Magic Resistance of 25. This does not stack with other

sources of Magic Resistance.

(Base effect, +4 Forsaken)

BLACK WINGS, EYE-PIERCING BEAK

Incantation/Diablerie, Level 35
R: Per, D: Forsaken, T: Ind

This maleficium grants the caster a False Power that duplicates the Skin-changer Virtue, allowing Hannelore to adopt the form of a crow. Her focal item for this Virtue is a fetish made from the wings of the bird she sacrificed to cast this maleficium.

(Base 15, +4 Forsaken)

BLOOD AND BODY OF THE BEAST

Incantation/Diablerie, Level 35
R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Ind

This maleficium requires a short ritual that is a mockery of the Eucharist. It converts a pawn of vis into vis prava (see *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 19). In the hands of a diabolist such as Hannelore, vis prava is more potent than regular vis, and adds +5 to the casting total per pawn used, rather than +2.

(Base 30, +1 Touch)

BREAK NOT, BEND NOT, BURN NOT/THY POWERS DESERT

Incantation/Diablerie, Level 25
R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Ind

Any single object touched gains a Magic Resistance of 15 for the duration of this maleficium. This does not stack with other sources of Magic Resistance. The object cannot be a living creature, and it can be no larger than a base Individual of the appropriate Form.

(Base effect, +1 Touch, +2 Sun)

CLOTHED IN THE DRAGON'S SCALES

Incantation/Diablerie, Level 50
R: Per, D: Moon, T: Ind

This maleficium grants the caster a False Power that duplicates the Greater

Hannelore's Maleficia, cont'd

Immunity Virtue. Like *She Who Bears the Mark Shall Be Unharmd* (see later), Hannelore tailors the nature of this Immunity to cover whatever perils she expects to be facing, but Fire is an obvious choice. Hannelore can only really attempt this maleficia once because of its high level; it needs a hefty sacrifice, a lot of vis, and/or a good Ceremony bonus for her to pull it off. If she could somehow achieve a 55th level effect, then she would certainly attempt Duration: Forsaken.

(Base 35, +3 Moon)

HER INIQUITIES SHALL BE HIDDEN FROM HIS EYES

Incantation/Psychomachia, Level 25

R: Eye, D: Moon, T: Ind

For the duration of the maleficia, the target's senses are twisted so that they are unable to perceive one thing for what it really is, but mistakes it for something else. This can disguise a specific man to appear to be a serving maid, or the casting of a specific malefic spell as a delightful country dance.

(Level 5, +1 Eye, +3 Moon)

MOTHER LILITH, QUEEN OF DESIRE/STROKE HIS STAFF, STOKE THE FIRE

Incantation/Psychomachia, Level 25

R: Eye, D: Sun, T: Ind

The victim of this maleficia is consumed with lust. While the caster cannot direct his actions, she can manipulate the target like an addict craving a drug. Hannelore usually employs this effect after using her Transfix power to immobilize her victim.

(Base 10, +1 Eye, +2 Sun)

PACT OF THE CHALICE OF BLOOD

Incantation/Diablerie, Level 25

R: Voice, D: Moon, T: Ind

This maleficia solemnizes a pact made with an intelligent creature with

Infernal Might. They both drink from a cup filled with blood from a sacrifice. For the duration of the maleficia, the creature is compelled to follow the terms of the compact to the letter. These terms must be agreed between Hannelore and the creature, without coercion by Magic or Infernal powers. A creature like Fimus (*Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 68), a Fictilis (*Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 69), or Morrighu (*Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 72–73) is within her power to control via a pact such as this.

(Base 4, +2 Voice, +3 Moon)

SHE WHO BEARS THE MARK SHALL BE UNHARMED

Incantation/Diablerie, Level 35

R: Per, D: Forsaken, T: Ind

This maleficia grants the caster a False Power that duplicates the Lesser Immunity Virtue. Depending on the challenge that the storyguide wants Hannelore to pose, she may have already cast several versions of this maleficia, granting herself immunity to long swords (or other individual weapons) and/or magical fire (or other forms of magical damage). Granting herself this power uses a portion of Hannelore's resources and adds Warping, so she must carefully consider what immunities to grant herself. This means that she may neglect a source of damage, leaving her vulnerable in a certain manner. Her choices are based on what she believes to be the capabilities of anyone who might come against her; she has probably not made herself immune to her love's favored magic (if she even knows what it is) since she believes he would never attack her.

(Base 15, +4 Forsaken)

THE SCORCHED HEART OF A MAN OBSESSED

Incantation/Malediction, Level 35

R: Eye, D: Moon, T: Ind

The cursed individual becomes Ob-

essed with Hannelore, as per the Personality Flaw. When she is in his presence, he can do nothing except attend her needs; and when she is absent, they are frequently distracted by thoughts of her. His judgment cannot be trusted when it comes to Hannelore. This power is often employed after Hannelore has already bewitched her victim with her other powers.

(Base 15, +1 Eye, +3 Moon)

THE WRATH OF WOMAN SCORCHES THE VALOR OF MAN

Incantation/Malediction, Level 35

R: Voice, D: Sun, T: Ind

The victim of this curse develops an overwhelming Fear (as per the Flaw) of women.

(Base 15, +2 Voice, +2 Sun)

THY HEALTH SHALL SHRIVEL LIKE STRAW IN A FLAME

Incantation /Malediction, Level 30

R: Eye, D: Sun, T: Ind

This curse reduces the victim's Stamina by 2 points, to no less than -1. The victim is momentarily wracked with pain, and develops a hacking cough, trembling heart, or other minor infirmity for the maleficia's duration.

(Level 5, +1 Eye, +2 Sun, +1 for extra point of reduction, +1 to reduce to decrease minimum)

TRAMPLED UNDER DEATH'S PALE HOOVES

Incantation/Malediction, Level 30

R: Eye, D: Sun, T: Ind

The victim of this terrible curse suffers -6 to all rolls involving the Ride Ability, and 6 additional botch die whenever 0 is rolled. This, and similar curses affecting other Abilities, are the means by which Hannelore disposes of unwanted suitors.

(Base effect, +1 Eye, +2 Sun)

it to her. Avarice and envy drive similar stories; the main difference is that an avaricious Hannelore is angry with the character for not giving her magic, while the envious Hannelore wants to take the character's magic from him (or her, of course).

A MALE HANNELORE

This variant requires few changes to the story as written, except refocusing it onto a female player character. The male Hannelore could possibly have some martial abilities as a baron's son, but this is not necessary. If appropriate to the troupe, a male Hannelore could pursue a male player character, or the female Hannelore pursue a female player character, but this would require a few changes, since same-sex relationships are perforce secret in Mythic Europe. Baron Hugo's reaction might be very different, seeking no clemency for a son or daughter engaging in acts the Baron perceives as a heinous and shameful sin.

This option could also work with a different motivation for a male Hannelore (see earlier).

HANNELORE PURSUES A COMPANION CHARACTER

Hannelore is particularly potent against characters with no Magic Resistance, because she needs to take no special measures to gather Arcane Connections, and her maleficia become a lot more effective. Her initial gambit — to woo her love and entrap him, keeping him besotted by her power — will probably prove successful, and the other characters may have to mount a rescue of their comrade. Of course, her victim resists such a rescue with all his might, at least until her maleficia wear off. She can subsequently throw curses at him with an Arcane Range, using Arcane Connections gathered while he was her prisoner (she would never achieve the requisite Penetration to use such spells on a Hermetic lover). If the companion character dwells within an *Aegis of the Hearth*, she may need to watch the covenant in crow form until he leaves its protection.

A WEAKER HANNELORE

Hannelore is not that powerful against Hermetic foes, and probably does not need to be weakened that much for a younger or less experienced troupe unless it has few or no magi. Her principal strength is to know the limits of her powers, and how to use them to best effect. A lot of her strength comes from her demonic patron; she had five years of teaching in the maleficia, which contributes most of her knowledge here.

Taking away one or two of her Powers would reduce her efficacy greatly, although it is recommended that she retains the Diablerie Power, since much of the story revolves around its usage. It has been assumed that Hannelore has access to a good supply of Infernal vis, which she corrupts with a maleficia to make it even more potent. Without this vis, her Casting Total drops dramatically and her powers are limited substantially.

A MORE POWERFUL HANNELORE

For a more experienced troupe, Hannelore can be made more powerful in a number of ways. First, she should take control over a coven of infernalists early in her career, giving her a Ceremony bonus to most of her maleficia. This allows her to achieve better Casting Totals for her Infernal Blessings, and higher Penetration totals for her curses against Hermetic enemies.

The Diablerie Power permits a diabolist to make pacts with supernatural creatures, and even bind them to her will. Particularly with a coven to back her up, Hannelore might be capable of having a veritable army of demons and corrupted beasts at her beck and call.

Hannelore's demonic patron has a background role in the story as written, but this powerful creature could take a more front-stage role, and add another peril to any encounters.

Hannelore is a storyguide character, and need not be balanced in terms of Virtues and Flaws. She could easily have more malefic Powers, although she would probably need to be older, or have the Wealthy Virtue, to have sufficient score in these Powers for them to be useful.

A ONE-TIME THREAT

Hannelore need not have a lengthy romance with the player character prior to her corruption. She could simply meet the character after becoming a diabolist, become infatuated, and then abduct him to use for her own pleasure. In this scenario, the characters might be less likely to offer her clemency, proceeding straight to her death and subsequent return as an Infernal ghost.

A Chance Encounter

The initial encounter between Hannelore and the characters should be presented as either a chance encounter, or as part of a different story. The characters should be at a social occasion where they have a reason to meet a local nobleman, by the name of Baron Hugo, and his daughter Hannelore. The specifics should be tailored to the saga, but some options include:

- The characters are invited to the wedding of a mundane ally, or one of his relatives. The ally suspects that there is something supernatural about the bride's family, and wants the characters to investigate. Baron Hugo is a guest.
- The characters have a chance encounter with a hunting party that includes Baron Hugo and his daughter. The hunt has been successful, and the characters are invited to lunch with them. Over luncheon, the characters hear a story of a fantastic beast seen by one of the huntsmen.
- The characters have recently saved the lives of an important local, and a party is thrown in their honor. Baron Hugo is one of the guests.

Baron Hugo can be any suitable nobleman from the area; the characters may have heard of him before, but probably have not met him. He need not be a landed noble; his role in this story works just as well if he is a knight or sheriff. He should be of middling importance, and have some

Hannelore's Lover

Choosing the target of Hannelore's obsession might require some care. It needs to be someone who is not repulsive, although there is no need for exceptional suaveness or sophistication — Hannelore is attracted to power, not to appearance. Naturally, a magus with the Curse of Venus Flaw is a natural choice, but this is by

no means a prerequisite for Hannelore's attention, since she herself has this Flaw and is prone to inappropriate infatuation.

It is assumed that Hannelore's target is a man, but this need not be the case for this story to progress as described (although some details may need to be altered).

is much drama in a love pursued through adversity, and a love affair should be actively encouraged. It is necessary for such a relationship to remain in secret: Baron Hugo would certainly not approve (see later), and it is possible that the character's covenant might not look too kindly on their *sodalis* either — a dalliance with a noblewoman could bring the wrath of her father against the Order, in contravention of the Oath of Hermes. This could lead to further stories.

sort of local authority that means the characters want to remain on his good side.

Initially, most of the characters' attention is occupied by Hannelore, rather than her father. She is sixteen years old and quite pretty. What's more, she is educated, eloquent, confident, and most significantly, unaffected by The Gift. Hannelore is attracted to power, and she identifies one of the male magi present as a powerful man, and makes an effort to get to know him. Although she cannot herself feel the effects of The Gift, she can see the effect it has on others, and she interprets the jealousy and suspicion it engenders as a natural consequence of power. As a young noblewoman of marriageable age, Hannelore is good company, and the attention she shows the magus is novel and pleasurable for a man used to being shunned by mundane women thanks to The Gift.

character might love Hannelore, she is merely infatuated with him and his power. She will still be drawn to dark magics, since she desires to share in her love's power, and yet, lacking The Gift, cannot learn Hermetic magic. However, the course of the initial story with Hannelore depends very much on the character's reaction.

A LOVE AFFAIR

If the player desires a romantic engagement or family life for his character, then he may welcome Hannelore's advances. There

A LUKEWARM RESPONSE

The character chosen by Hannelore may remain unswayed by her attentions. This makes little difference to the plot, since the action revolves around Hannelore's attempts to win the love of a man who is beyond her reach anyway. However, if the storyguide wishes to involve the magus in a few more preparatory stories before moving on to the main action, it might be that a faerie seeks to bring the star-crossed lovers together through its meddling. Taking the role of a hideous creature, it kidnaps Hannelore, and

Initial Infatuation

If all goes well between Hannelore and the magus, she might suggest that they meet again, properly chaperoned, of course. She loves to go hawking, and will suggest that they try out her new bird. Having set her sights on the magus and the power she desires, she becomes determined to have him, and this is probably her downfall. She needs her man to be attentive to her needs and to court her, something for which most magi lack the time or inclination. Even if she has been unable to get even a cursory interest from her intended swain, she still pursues him, convinced she can win him over. Furthermore, there are many pressures that might drive them apart. It is important to emphasize for the purposes of the story that while the magus



Hannelore, Spoiled Daughter

Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre +1, Com +3, Str 0, Sta -1, Dex 0, Qik +1

Size: 0

Age: 16 (16)

Decrepitude: 0 (0)

Warping Score: 0 (0)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Gentlewoman; Educated, Unaffected by The Gift*; Curse of Venus; Obsessed (knowledge is power)

* See *Realms of Power: Magic*, page 47

Personality Traits: Attracted to Power +3, Inquisitive +2, Sensible -3

Reputation: Fierce Temper 1 (Local)

Combat:

Dagger: Init +1, Attack +5, Defense +4, Damage +2

Soak: -1

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Artes Liberales 2 (writing), Awareness 2 (mannerisms), Brawl 2 (dagger), Charm 3 (men), Etiquette 3 (courtly manners), Folk Ken 2 (men), Guile 3 (lying to relatives), Latin 4 (reading), Native Language 5 (local dialect), Noble Lore 3 (positions of authority), Philosophiae 2 (ethics), Ride 2 (while hawking).

Equipment: Fine clothes.

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: Hannelore is a girl on the threshold of becoming a woman. She is quite pretty, with dark wavy hair and deep green eyes. She talks enthusiastically about philosophy, probably more than a woman of her standing should.

Note that Hannelore has one more Flaw point than Virtues at this age. If she hadn't gone in the direction she is destined to follow, this would probably have been balanced by the Protection Virtue.

time she expects to spend with her love. There isn't a lot of time in the life of many magi for being an attentive lover.

It is possible therefore that the magus targeted by her obsession eventually spurns her. She will not take the first refusal seriously, and will pester the magus in person and through correspondence. If he holds firm, she turns petulant, and might seek some petty revenge against him, such as attempting blackmail (if she has any leverage), or persuading some noble's son to defend her honor. Such threats should be a minor nuisance to the magus, and easily dealt with. Hannelore seems to acquiesce to the situation, leaving him in peace.

FORCED APART

A major impediment to the relationship is Baron Hugo. He loves his daughter dearly, and certainly does not approve of her chosen. He has doubtless heard some unsavory stories about the magus, and has a low opinion of him as being suitable for his darling daughter (Hugo has none of his daughter's immunity to the effects of The Gift). He intends to find an attentive and wholesome groom for his daughter, one who could strengthen his ties to important people. When he discovers that Hannelore has been pursuing a magus, he does his best to break them up. There is further pressure on the relationship — most magi have no recognized social status, and yet Hannelore is the daughter of a nobleman. If the affair became public, it might sour any relationships that the covenant has with mundane society, since those who cross social boundaries are treated with suspicion.

sends a ransom demand to her reluctant swain, reasoning that if her beau is motivated into rescuing her from the clutches of a monster, then love might blossom (it works like that in stories, after all!).

REJECTION

If the character rejects Hannelore out of hand, things end as badly as if the character had strung her along and then rejected her. See Ending the Affair, later.

The Course of the Affair

Although Hannelore might be an enjoyable dalliance for the character, the affair is not destined to last. There are a number of things that could drive a wedge between Hannelore and her lover, and these should be presented as challenges to the relationship. However, it is not necessary for the story for the affair between Hannelore and the character to end, and

it is best left to the character to decide the course of the affair for himself.

ENDING THE AFFAIR

Hannelore is very demanding. She has grown up on a diet of courtly romances, and expects to be wooed. This is likely to prove to be a nuisance to a magus, whose studies and laboratory activities will be interrupted by her visits and the amount of

Hannelore's Family

As already mentioned, Baron Hugo can be replaced any moderately influential nobleman in your saga. Rather than Hannelore's father, he could be an older brother or uncle who is her guardian after the unfortunate deaths of both her parents. Whoever he is, there is some secret in his past (see Baron Hugo's Books, later).

As well as Hugo and Ermengarde (Hannelore's stepmother), Hannelore

may have other family members who could complicate the story. One or more brothers might take umbrage at the character's treatment of their sister, and try to avenge her honor. Older sisters allow Baron Hugo to be more indulgent of her desire to remain unmarried during the next phase of the story. Any siblings (but particularly younger sisters) could form her coven, if she is able to corrupt them.

Obsession and Corruption

In this phase of the story, Hannelore is corrupted and becomes a diabolist in secret. Her ultimate motive for this is her lust for power — the reason she is attracted to the character in the first place. How she reaches this point varies according to the reaction of the character to her advances.

If she has been rejected by her love, she reasons that the rejection is based on an inequality of power — she was spurned because she had no magic, unlike her lover. After all, how could a mighty magus, who can manipulate the shape of creation itself, love a woman as mundane as herself? Even if the magus kept his magical nature secret from Hannelore, she finds out about it while searching for rumors and information about her love.

If her attentions have been reciprocated, she resents the time that her lover does not spend with her. By learning magic herself, she figures she can share laboratory time and study, and pursues the Dark Arts in the mistaken belief that all magic is equal. She does not share her tuition with her lover, preferring for it to be a surprise. She may also be aware of obstacles to their love of which her lover is unaware, and she relishes the opportunity to solve these problems herself and not worry her swain over them.

In either case, Hannelore reasons that, if she can learn some spells herself, she can earn the respect of her intended, and they can be together forever and always. Alter-

Baron Hugo is in possession of some books on Infernal Lore, and his secret library could also contain other books of Infernal and magical lore, such as tomes on the maleficia, the Goetic Arts, hedge wizardry, or perhaps even Hermetic magic. Ultimately, it is up to the storyguide where he got these books, and why he still keeps them, but some suggestions are offered here.

- Hugo was a sorcerer in his youth, but like Shakespeare's Prospero, put aside his books and broke his staff, vowing to give up his Art and redeem his profaned soul. He has remained true to this vow, and has led an exemplary life since. A Faith point gained through a pilgrimage has kept him safe from demonic temptation.
- Hugo is a member of a secret society within the Church, dedicated to erad-

Baron Hugo's Books

icating evil in all its forms. This society is coordinated through a religious Order, such as the Knights Templar. The books are spoils of a battle many years ago, and Hugo keeps them so he can study the works of the Enemy for ways to defeat them in future.

- The books belong not to Hugo, but Lady Ermengarde (the baron's wife and Hannelore's stepmother), who is a sorceress herself. The lady is responsible for Hannelore's corruption, and is using her as a cat's-paw to hide her own evil deeds.
- The books are an inheritance from an ancestor. Hugo himself can barely read, and has no knowledge of what they truly contain or the threat they pose to his family. Hell has a way of making sure books such as these fall into the hands of those who will use them.

natively, she can bespell the object of her infatuation so that he will love her, or use spells (i.e., curses) to remove any obstacles to their love. At this point, Hannelore has become mentally unhinged; her infatuation has taken her intelligence hostage, and she is not thinking rationally. It may be that the Obsession power of a demon is to blame, making this a longer-term plot of Hell to make trouble for the covenant, while gaining Hannelore's soul. A demonic explanation is not necessary for the advancement of the story, however, and is a

detail that is unlikely to matter or become known in the unfolding of the plot.

Fortunately for Hannelore, she has the means to learn magic. Her father has in his possession a set of books on magic that he has forbidden her from reading. He keeps them locked in a chest in his chamber, but she gains access to them, and begins to read them in secret. The books form a corpus of diabolic lore, although Hannelore does not realize this at first. She self-initiates the Unholy Method of Incantation through a rite that grants her a Warping point, and this opens the gateway to other powers.

Her initiatory rite attracts the attention of demons, and eventually a powerful demon contacts her in a form pleasing to the eye. It offers to teach her directly, and under its tutelage she grows powerful quickly. Through subtle use of its Obsession power, it feeds her mental instability, and her infatuation is gradually twisted into a mockery of its former self. She is aware that her power is illicit, but probably does not realize, at least at first, that her spells are Infernal, or that her beloved's magic is not. For five years, she studies under the demon in secret. Hannelore's obsession with power and perfection cause

Hannelore's Demonic Patron

Details of the demon who has assisted Hannelore's rise to power are not given in this chapter. The intent is for the demon to remain very much in the background, using Hannelore to enact its designs on Earth. A Watcher (*Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 64) is ideal in this role; they are specialists in teaching corrupt magic to mortals, and among the more powerful demons found outside Hell. Such a demon would be a specialist in the corrup-

tion of mankind through Infernal magic, and have a greater capacity for simulating patience and controlling its passions than many of their ilk. Ultimately, it wants the corruption of as many as possible from this scheme, but its faked forbearance has a limited duration. Hannelore is by no means the demon's only current project, and it may well have other cultists it can send to Hannelore's assistance, if it seems that she might fail or falter.

her to delay until she believes that she has sufficient skill to confront her "lover" with her power. The demon expects him to reject Hannelore, and it hopes that she will destroy him in her subsequent rage. If she doesn't, then the demon still gets her soul.

Hannelore Woes Her Love

It is five years since the incipient romance between Hannelore and a player character began, and Hannelore is a very different person now. All attempts by Baron Hugo to match Hannelore up with a husband have failed. Hugo merely needs to mention a potential suitor for her affections and the man sickens, or has some terrible accident, or simply disappears. Some are found dead behind barred doors (she adopts the Nightwalker Virtue to gain entrance). Anyone who actually meets her is driven off by the taint of Hell that surrounds her — the baron loves his daughter, but even he cannot stand to be around her for long. Depending on the source of his Infernal library (see insert), he could be ignorant of her burgeoning power, or blinded by his fatherly love to the level of her corruption.

Hannelore is now a fully fledged diabolist, and is ready to get what she believes she is owed — the undying love of her magus lover. Oblivious of the difference between Hermetic magic and Infernal sorcery, she naïvely believes that, now that she has power like her beloved, he will fall for her as fully as she has for him.

To facilitate this, she arranges a meeting between them, inviting the magus to her father's residence. The exact circumstances of this invitation depend very much on the relationship that the characters have with Baron Hugo, and how the potential romance between Hannelore and a player magus has played out. The invitation comes from Baron Hugo, rather than Hannelore; whether he is complicit in the invitation or forced to take part by her magic depends on the role that the storyguide has chosen for the baron. If he is an ignorant pawn, then Hannelore simply manipulates him into doing her will, using force if necessary. If he is a demon-

hunter, then he might call the characters for advice over demonic activity on his manse, not realizing that his daughter is involved. Alternatively, Hannelore might fake her own disappearance. The baron may suspect the player magus, or else ask him for help.

Whatever the circumstances, the magus is enticed to visit Baron Hugo's home. Bringing the characters here is important; Hannelore's activities have created an Infernal aura on the baron's lands, and eroded the Dominion aura of the castle to strength 1 (meaning it fades entirely after dark). The character probably does not come alone, bringing other magi or companion characters with him, as well as one or more grogs. Hannelore and the character may meet at dinner, but she is calm and nonchalant, hiding her excitement that her love is here. Even if there was a hostile break-up of the incipient romance, Hannelore expresses a desire to put this behind them, claiming that she was young and foolish back then, and is a very different person now.

Hannelore waits until the character is alone before visiting him. She uses her most powerful maleficium — *A Ghost on the Wind I Shall Become / No Door Shall Stop Me* — to take phantasmal form, then visits his chamber at night once the Dominion has faded away. She adopts corporeal form to speak with her love; if he does not see her appear, he may believe that he is speaking with Hannelore in her real body. She releases her feelings in a flood of words, begging his forgiveness at her coldness over supper, explaining the need for their love to remain secret, and her excitement that he is here at last. She then demonstrates her newfound power, slowly fading into incorporeality and invisibility, leaving behind a foul sulfurous slime that evaporates quickly. A short while later, she visibly re-manifests, laughing hysterically with delight. Her "beloved" should immediately recognize that something is wrong; it is very hard to acquire powers such as these, and Nightwalking, if the character knows anything about it, cannot be taught at all. A simple Intellego Vim spell reveals the presence of Infernally tainted magic (she is using a 9th magnitude maleficium).

The actions of the character determine what happens next.

THE MAGUS REJECTS HANNELORE

If the magus recoils in horror, rejects her, or reacts in a violent manner, Hannelore screams in rage, but tries to escape rather than attack, delaying if she can so she can dissolve her corporeal form once more (this takes three rounds). If she has the opportunity, she tries to acquire an Arcane Connection, such as a favored piece of clothing or even a handful of hair, which becomes immaterial when she changes form.

Once an Arcane Connection has been secured, she returns to her love, perhaps as he is still raising the alarm among his comrades. She can appear suddenly out of nowhere by manifesting a physical form in a place that has already been searched. Hoping for the element of surprise, she intends to use a maleficium to control him: *Mother Lilith, Queen of Desire / Stroke his Staff, Stoke the Fire*. Using a maleficium is very obvious, involving the chanting of blasphemies and invocation of demons, so if she did not surprise her target, she'll use her Transfix power first. Depending on what Arcane Connection she managed to gain, this tactic may or may not affect the character: her Casting Total is weak, but she has sympathetic connections to the character — his name, and possibly letters signed in his own hand. This might be enough to surmount his Mentem Magic Resistance; she uses vis and Confidence if necessary.

If her maleficium works, she is able to control the character through lust. She reinforces her control using *The Scorched Heart of a Man Obsessed*, timing the incantation for sunrise or sunset if necessary, so she is not impeded by the Parma Magica (she can surmise that the magical protection fades at these times, since many maleficia do). The other characters are probably suspicious, particularly if their comrade managed to rouse them prior to his second meeting with Hannelore that night, but under the twin effects of the two maleficia, the character is a slave to the diabolist. As part of her control over her beloved, Hannelore uses her Infernal Ability to drain Fatigue levels from her captive, and to obtain a strong Arcane Connection to use against him in future. She uses *Her Iniquities Shall Be Hidden From His Eyes* on her father, so he cannot perceive the magus for who he really is, but mistakes him instead for a female companion.

If the character was lured to Baron Hugo's house alone, then he could be a slave to Hannelore's desires indefinitely — or at least until his sodales become sufficiently suspicious of his prolonged absence to investigate his whereabouts. Hannelore renews her maleficia as necessary to keep her captive under her power, and may try more powerful versions of the *Psychomachia* Infernal Power to control her love. Perhaps it is a botched attempt at one of these spells that allows him to finally break free.

THE MAGUS PLAYS ALONG

Rather than recoiling from Hannelore, the character may instead decide to play along with her in an attempt to get more information. She cheerfully relates how she has murdered the suitors chosen by her father, through curses or through nighttime visitations like this, all in the name of her love. She admits to fantasies about killing her father, since he is trying so hard to drive their love apart.

Hannelore is dangerously mad but not stupid, and the player may need to succeed in social Ability rolls (Charm, Folk Ken, or Intrigue depending on tactics; the Ease Factor should be at least 6) to prevent her from becoming suspicious. She is particularly coy about the current location of her body, but might be persuaded to meet with her swain in person somewhere nearby. The character may not realize it, but he is in real danger, since Hannelore uses the same maleficia described earlier to enslave her love and prevent him from getting away from her again. Allowing Hannelore to get close to him just gives her more opportunity to acquire a significant Arcane Connection.

Help from the Baron

Ultimately, the player characters desire to find Hannelore and put an end to her evil ways. This might be part of a rescue attempt some time after the targeted magus first visited Baron Hugo's home, or it might be part of the same event if Hannelore's gambit has failed.

The characters may be loathe to ap-

Redemption

Hannelore is not beyond redemption. She has committed mortal sins, yet any who truly seek salvation can attain it. A patient and persistent character may persuade Hannelore to give up her powers after getting her to realize their source. In this, he may well have the help of the baron, who could himself have abandoned diabolic powers in the past (depending on the backstory chosen for him). If the characters simply abandon her after she expresses a genuine desire for redemption, then the storyguide can assume her recidivism and subsequent search for

revenge. However, if the characters are inclined to put in the effort, then such salvation might be achieved, although the road will be fraught with obstacles. Her desire for redemption will be tested by God, and her demonic patron certainly will not let her go without a fight.

Penance would undoubtedly involve voluntary incarceration in a nunnery. If the nunnery chosen for Hannelore happens to be the corrupted one described later in this story, then she could easily slide back into diabolism without the assistance of those who care for her.

proach the baron about Hannelore's activities — she is his daughter, after all. Nevertheless, they will find it difficult to confront Hannelore on his property without his knowledge or assistance. If the characters do go to him for help, he is saddened to hear their tale about his daughter, but he is capable of believing it of her, given what he has witnessed over the last few years. Of course, if the characters have neither proof nor a believable story, or approach him in a disrespectful manner, they find it hard to elicit his aid and may need force or magic to locate Hannelore.

If they persuade Baron Hugo to help, he makes that help contingent on a promise that Hannelore's life be spared. Despite everything, he still loves his daughter, and her death would be heart-wrenching. He also has hopes that she can be persuaded to seek redemption and abandon her wicked ways. He wants to accompany the characters to ensure that this wish is respected. Once this is agreed, he supplies manpower — a trained group of four soldiers (use the Standard Soldier template, *ArM5*, page 22) lead by a serjeant (use the Grizzled Veteran template, *ArM5*, page 21). One of his knights might be in residence, and he is able to summon more, given a day to do so. He also knows his manor well, and his influence over his staff will prove invaluable to tracking down where Hannelore has secluded herself.

If the characters choose to attempt an assault against Hannelore without the Baron's assistance, they find out that little hap-

pens in his barony without his knowledge. He confronts them with his armed men before they manage to find Hannelore, and demands to know what they are doing. As a baron, he probably has the right of judge, jury, and executioner over a hostile force found on the barony (this varies according to the location of the saga), and the rest of his men are mobilizing to provide support in arresting the invaders. If the characters are capable of placating him — he is angry, but still suspicious of his daughter — then he insists on accompanying them, and brings his soldiers to ensure that his daughter survives their encounter.

Confronting Hannelore

Hannelore has taken over a series of caves once used by the baron's household to store perishable goods, but now abandoned. The caves were expanded in size in the past and dressed with stone, and go deep into the bedrock to take best advantage of the cool conditions. Hannelore has been using one of the caves as a ritual chamber, and it now contains an Infernal aura of 3, thanks to her evil activities within.

Hannelore is no match for a group of magi. Her powers can be considerable, given sufficient preparation, but have low Penetration Totals against those in whom she has taken no interest. However, she can lay curses on companions and grogs, inflicting Minor Flaws such as Noncomba-



tant, Palsied Hands, or Fear (like *The Wrath of a Woman Scorches the Valor of Man*). She can also blight an Ability such as Single Weapon (like *Trampled Under Death's Pale Hooves*), or penalize a Characteristic (like *Thy Health Shall Shrive Like Straw in a Flame*). All of these curses can be delivered with Duration: Diameter, giving her a good chance of employing them in this aura. If

she is aware that the characters are coming for her, she can adopt her phantasmal form and use these curses from a point of relative safety (being capable of becoming immaterial and invisible), or else use her acquired Skinchanger Virtue to make an exit. Her main tactics are hit-and-run, weakening her opponents as much as possible before having to confront them, al-

though she can achieve some immunity from danger with *She Who Bears the Mark Shall Be Unharmd*. If the characters have come heavily armed, then the storyguide might wish to make the encounter more challenging with the assistance of some minor demons controlled through a pact (see *Pact of the Chalice of Blood*), or else a mundane champion — one of her former suitors — whom she has ensorcelled in advance with her *Crown of Twelve Stars on Her Head* power.

If, for some reason, the baron has not accompanied the characters to confront Hannelore, then he arrives before the characters are able to kill her. He interposes himself between the characters and his daughter, and begs for her life. She might see this as an opportunity for self-preservation and rush to his side, falling to her knees before him to beg for forgiveness and protection.

Resolution and Consequences

Ultimately, Hannelore is no match for a group of determined characters, and she can be easily outmatched physically and magically. However, her father's interference most likely prevents her demise, and he has a solution. The baron's suggestion is to have Hannelore confined to a nunnery, secluded on holy ground. As an anchorite — walled into a cell and fed through a hole — her capacity for mischief would be

A Little Bundle of ... Joy?

If Hannelore managed to consummate her lust with her beloved, then there is a chance that she might conceive a child with the player character. She is at the peak of fertility, and if the magus has not yet created a Longevity ritual, then the stars are right for such an event. If it suits the story, another Infernal witch (or a demon) might interfere at Hannelore's behest and allow her to conceive a child, even with a sterile magus (the Consumption Power permits such a maleficium).

Depending on the time elapsed between the couple's liaison and her defeat at the hands of the character, her pregnancy may not be obvious, and she bears the baby in the seclusion of the nunnery without the knowledge of the father. He only discovers this when they return to the nunnery after Hannelore's escape (see later).

Alternatively, too much time might have gone by for the pregnancy to go unnoticed, or else the baby might have already been born. This revelation, only obvious once the magus and Hannelore

meet up again in the events described earlier, may be enough to make the character consider clemency for the mother of his child.

The fate of the baby could become a major plot point, particularly if it has The Gift. How does a magus — who has probably resolved himself to being childless — deal with suddenly becoming a father? What happens to the child? Could it become its father's apprentice? And if it was conceived with the assistance of Infernal powers, is it also tainted?

greatly diminished and her powers curbed. Furthermore, she may seek salvation and make amends for the evil she has performed. Baron Hugo is an influential man, and his good will should be something that the player characters desire; they may find it unsatisfying but necessary to acquiesce to his demands.

Should Hannelore perish during the encounter, this is no great problem; simply skip the next section and go straight to Hannelore's Final Gambit.

Hannelore's Revenge

Hannelore does not simply languish in her confinement in the nunnery. While her demonic tutor cannot visit her here, she is not without resources. Although life at the nunnery may have seemed austere, within a few months of Hannelore's presence there, she has sufficient influence over a select group of nuns to make her life more comfortable, and within a year she is studying from grimoires and has access to vis that her corrupted servants have smuggled in for her (see insert "The Nunnery," nearby).

The Confinement

It is up to the storyguide how much time elapses between Hannelore's imprisonment and her escape. On the one hand, an immediate escape maintains a high level of tension and immediacy in the encounter. On the other hand, having an old enemy reappear is an equally good dramatic device. In the second scenario, the storyguide might need to apply one or more years of experience to Hannelore. While she cannot learn at her former accelerated rate, she certainly has access to profane reading materials and raw vis, and can improve her Methods and Powers accordingly. This enhances her powers against the protagonists when it is time for them to meet once more.

The Nunnery

The nunnery should have an established reputation in the saga before it is introduced as Hannelore's prison. Perhaps the characters have guided lost novices there, or been involved in a minor story connected to the nuns. Such foreshadowing should establish the nunnery as an ordinary religious house with a solid foundation; this prevents the characters from being too suspicious about its role in this story.

However, once Hannelore arrives here, its darker side is brought forth. If the storyguide has chosen an immediate escape for Hannelore, then the nunnery was corrupted before her arrival, and Baron Hugo was steered toward choosing it by an outside force (such as the demon who tutored Hannelore). If a slower resolution has been decided upon, then Hannelore arrives at the nunnery while it is still in a state of grace, and she is responsible for its downfall.

If the nunnery was corrupted prior to Hannelore's arrival, then the agent of its demise is Father Fulke, the priest assigned to the pastoral care of the nuns. "Father" Fulke is not a priest at all, but an infernalist posing as one. He is devoted to the same demon who trained

Hannelore, and has been directed to assist her. Either Hannelore or Father Fulke works to exert personal influence (*Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 22–23) over several of the younger nuns, promulgating rebelliousness and licentious behavior. Through their actions, the Dominion aura of the nunnery is weakened, and an Infernal aura manifests at night. These corrupted nuns are also Initiated into the Favored Abilities of Hannelore's patron: Ceremony, Diablerie, Incantation, Male-diction, and Psychomachia.

It is not necessary for Father Fulke or Hannelore to corrupt the entire nunnery; indeed, it is unlikely that either would be able to. However, each nun adds her Presence + Incantation as a ceremonial bonus to Hannelore's Casting Total, and she leads one nun in a ceremony per point of her Ceremony Ability (*Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 91). Alternatively, in a ceremony with no leader, 12 nuns plus Hannelore can add the sum of their Ceremony scores (– 13) to her Casting Total, in addition to the earlier bonus. This could provide her with a significant boost to her power, allowing her to prepare for her assault with a number of Infernal Powers granted by Diablerie maleficium.

The Escape

The time will come when Hannelore cannot benefit further from her confinement, and she judges it is time for her to leave. Since the Dominion aura within her cell has been eroded through the actions of herself and her minions, it no longer provides an impediment to her Infernal magic. She can adopt the shape of a crow using her *Black Wings*, *Eye-Piercing Beak* maleficium.

It may be some time before the nuns discover her flight. Those nuns in her service who have remained behind can cover for her absence by volunteering to take her food and see to her needs. Even once the deception has been uncovered, the prioress may not immediately inform anyone, being too ashamed of her failure. Only if the characters have stressed the danger that Hannelore poses will she overcome

her embarrassment and do the right thing.

Hannelore's cell contains those possessions she could not take with her in crow form. Some books on the maleficium and a few pawns of vis can be found among her clothes and eating bowl. The vis appears to be Corpus vis to Hermetic magic, and is in the form of a dried crust of bread; this is actually profaned Host, and is vis infesta. Hannelore managed to take her more precious stores of vis prava, clutched in the claws of her bird shape.

The Showdown

Hannelore has escaped for one reason only — revenge. Her targets are her beloved, her father, and the rest of the characters who participated in her defeat. She

Contingencies

It is entirely possible that the characters are not happy with permitting a witch like Hannelore to live. While they might be content to permit Hannelore to be incarcerated in a nunnery, they may intend to ensure she does not survive long past her confinement. Naturally, an assault against a nunnery must be made in absolute secrecy — it would look very bad for the characters if they were discovered planning an armed raid against a group of nuns. This is why Hannelore's demonic patron tries to ensure that the local authorities are made aware of such plans in time to interfere.

If more covert methods are used, even the mundane challenges of getting into a nunnery secretly might be enough to thwart a magus. Most of the nunnery is within the Dominion, providing an impediment to spellcasting. The high walls are designed to keep the nuns cloistered from the outside world, and Hannelore herself is bricked into her cell (at least, she is whenever the characters come visiting...).

A persistent troupe should not be prevented from pursuing this option, however. Hannelore's showdown with the characters can take place in the nunnery as easily as a place of Hannelore's choosing. If the characters move quickly, the nunnery should have been corrupted in advance, so that Hannelore benefits from the Infernal aura around her cell; she may have made preparations to protect herself against such an assault. If necessary, she burns down the nunnery if it ensures the death of her former love.

If the characters have an Arcane Connection to Hannelore (her former lover, if initially willing, could well have one), then they may be able to target her without leaving home. This is a trickier option to adjudicate because it robs the story of a showdown, but the foresight of obtaining and preserving an Arcane Connection should be rewarded. In this situation, the return of Hannelore as an Infernal ghost should be made more dramatic, to give a satisfying conclusion to the story.

has planned this revenge since her incarceration, and wastes no time putting her plan into action, knowing that if her escape is noticed, she will be tracked down and stopped.

Her method is brutal. While she could easily murder her enemies in their sleep by using *A Ghost on the Wind I Shall Become*, she wants them to suffer for their actions against her, and her unhinged mind concocts a plan. She sends a message to her foes, asking them to meet at a particular tavern. The message appears to come from a known ally, perhaps even Baron Hugo. The tavern is not in a town, but near a relatively busy road, serving the travelers who need to stop on the way between two major towns. It is also a popular haunt of redcaps, and famed for its ale. Baron Hugo gets a similar message.

When everyone is inside, she bars the doors and sets fire to the building. She has made a compact (via *The Pact of the Chalice of Blood*) with an aethniscus (a demon of fire, see *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 67),

who sets the flames. She follows it around, bespelling the roof, doors, and sections of wall with *Break Not, Bend Not, Burn Not / Thy Powers Desert*, hindering magical attempts to escape the burning building. The tavern has many patrons this night, and their panicked attempts to escape hinder the characters' actions further. For a more difficult challenge to the characters, this encounter could occur at night when most of the patrons (and possibly some of the player characters) are asleep.

Hannelore herself is standing outside the building, watching it burn. She has protected herself from fire using *Clothed in the Dragon's Scales*, and may well cavort within the flames and taunt her opponents as they attempt to get out. If anyone manages to escape, she is ready with a knife to dispatch them, although she may have called in some of her allies, demonic and otherwise (as earlier), if the characters are competent in a fight. She would dearly love to personally put a knife in the hearts of her father and her betraying lover,

and if the opportunity presents, she does not hesitate to try — even if the attempt might result in her capture or death.

ESCAPING A BURNING BUILDING

Fire is a primal fear, and being trapped inside a burning building with a group of panicking people is one of the surest ways of dying. The first peril is the smoke, inhalation of which imposes Deprivation rolls (*ArM5*, page 180). At first, these rolls are made every 30 seconds (5 combat rounds), but as the smoke thickens, the frequency increases to every round. A wet cloth in front of the face adds +3 to all Deprivation rolls against smoke inhalation.

The second problem is the heat. Characters should make a roll to avoid Short-Term Fatigue (*ArM5*, page 178) every round they engage in activity within the heated tavern. Anyone wearing principally metal armor receives a -3 penalty to this Fatigue roll.

Third, when fire breaks out, each round every character must soak +5 damage from the flames. After 5 rounds of exposure, metal armor provides no protection against flames. If the character attempts any heroic actions, then more of his body may be affected by the flames, doubling, tripling, or quadrupling the base damage (*ArM5*, page 181). After 10 rounds in the burning building, the damage increases to +10, and the rafters are in danger of collapsing, bringing the whole tavern down. Every round, roll a simple die: if it is less than or equal to the number of rounds that the tavern has been burning since the damage increased to +10, then the roof collapses, inflicting +15 damage on all within.

The final danger faced by the burning building is the other people within. There are about two dozen people trapped inside the building with the characters, and they do not act rationally once they realize that they are likely to burn to death. The list that follows offers a few examples of their actions. Characters can attempt Communication + Leadership rolls against an Ease Factor of 12 to attempt some influence over these people, or else use brute force to get them out the way. If the characters have interacted with some

of these individuals during their visit to the tavern, they may be more inclined toward heroic actions.

- A merchant offers the characters a pouch of silver coins if they rescue his wares from his private chamber upstairs.
- A mother stands screaming hysterically because her children are trapped upstairs, and begs the characters to help her.
- A young man and his love are hiding beneath a table, and refuse to come out even though the table has already caught fire.
- A local hero is throwing water and ale from the barrels onto the flames, but is doing so ineffectually.

Since Hannelore has barred the doors from the outside, characters need to force them open or chop them down. If they rely on pure Strength rolls to force the doors, the Ease Factor is 12. If a character charges at the door, he must lose a Short-Term Fatigue level, but can add his Athletics to the Strength roll. Up to four characters can combine their Strength to force (but not charge) the doors. If they use a bench as a battering ram, they may add +3 to their roll. Characters who use an axe (there is one by the back door, for chopping firewood) can make a Stress check for the door each round — roll a stress die against an Ease Factor of 15, adding 3 to the roll because it has been barred. If the stress check fails, the door loses a damage level. It has 2 damage levels in total; once they are gone, the door is passable.

The characters should not forget about Baron Hugo. He is also inside the tavern, and if they save his life, they might further cement their alliance with this influential nobleman, or repair a damaged relationship.

TIMELINE OF THE FIRE

A typical timeline of the encounter at the tavern is given nearby. Remember that if the characters do smell smoke, it might take them several rounds to discover that the building is on fire. If it is during the day, the rolls to notice the smoke are in-

creased by +3 because the cooking fire masks the smell of the tavern burning. If characters are asleep, the Ease Factor for their rolls to notice the smoke is increased by +9.

Round 1: Characters may notice the smell of smoke, with a Perception + Awareness roll against an Ease Factor of 12. Whether they smell it or not, the characters make a Deprivation roll for smoke inhalation.

Round 3: The Ease Factor for noticing the smell of smoke drops to 6.

Round 5: The smoke cannot be missed any more. Characters must make Deprivation rolls for smoke inhalation every round from here on. Further, the heat from the burning building means that Short-Term Fatigue rolls also have to be made every round.

Round 10: Fires are now breaking out all over the tavern, inflicting +5 damage each round.

Round 15: The tavern is now burning furiously, inflicting +10 damage each round. The Ease Factor to break down the doors decreases by 3 since the tavern is structurally weakened. There is now a risk that the tavern will collapse on the characters.

Hannelore's Demise

There should be no last-minute rescue for Hannelore this time — even Baron Hugo can see the need for his daughter's death. If the storyguide desires, Hannelore could try to escape in crow form when it is apparent that she has not caused the death of either her father or her beloved. Whether this escape is successful, or whether she is shot down by an archer, is up to the needs of the story, but her death at this point of the story ensures that it reaches an appropriate climax.

For a suitably dramatic ending, once an Incapacitating or Fatal wound has been inflicted on her, Hannelore might beg for her father or her love to come close and hear her confession. She then spits one final curse at one of them, expending the rest of her power and offering herself as an Infernal sacrifice to power the effect.

Hannelore's Final Gambit

Hannelore's story is not quite done. Hell gives her one last chance to secure her revenge by permitting her to return as an Infernal ghost. If she can gain more souls for Hell, the punishment she is due for a sinful life will be remitted fractionally. She is given a year from the anniversary of her death to secure a soul for Hell, and if she succeeds, her time as an Infernal ghost is extended for another year. To win a soul, she needs to tempt them to commit a mortal sin, then ensure they die without repenting.

As a demon, Hannelore has lost all the governing virtue of her conscience, and she must struggle against the desire for a quick conclusion in order to get the revenge she craves. She works her way through any remaining members of her family, then moves on to any grogs or companions who helped her lover survive the fire.

Hannelore's method is the same each time. Starting with Baron Hugo (assuming he is still alive), she possesses his wife Ermengarde, and uses her Infatuation Obsession on Hugo and Ermengarde. She then fakes evidence that Hugo has been unfaithful (or uncovers a real infidelity, using her *Betrayal of the Heart* power), and provides Ermengarde with the opportunity to kill him after inflicting her with the Revenge Obsession. Ermengarde succumbs to the passion and her soul is forsaken; Hannelore then ensures her swift death by ensuring that Ermengarde does not survive her arrest by the lord's men. After killing Ermengarde, Hannelore moves on to her siblings and any of baron's knights who participated in her demise. Not all of the wives act on the Revenge Obsession; in these cases, she takes full possession of her host and simulates the attempt. This doesn't earn her the wife's soul, but if her target kills her spouse, she can tempt her into remorse-laden suicide.

If the character has maintained connections with Hannelore's family since her death, or has contacts within the local nobility, he may learn of the series of deaths and investigate before too many are killed. He may connect the dates of the

deaths as clustered around the date that he finally defeated Hannelore, and realize that another anniversary is coming up soon. If Hannelore should see her paramour, her demonic nature makes it impossible for her to resist abandoning her plan in favor of killing him as soon as possible. This means that she has little opportunity to plan her attack, and her involvement is likely to be transparent. For example, the wife of her current target, secretly possessed by Hannelore, might attempt to ravish him on the supper table, or else Hannelore might possess several women at the same time and attempt to tear him limb from limb. All she

needs is for him to commit a mortal sin and then die without atonement. However, she flees from superior opposition.

If any covenfolk took part in her demise she might intend to target them first; but once again, she may spy her beloved and be unable to resist targeting him instead. Possessed humans are not warded by an *Aegis of the Hearth* or similar protection, as long as the demon does not extend its Magic Resistance over the host (*Realms of Power: The Infernal* page 32). If the Penetration of an *Aegis* exceeds her Infernal Might, though, all powers cost twice their usual Might points.

If she is thwarted in either of these in-

stances, she becomes increasingly desperate as her deadline looms closely and she still lacks a soul to ransom her own. She becomes careless and targets her former paramour directly. She does not — indeed cannot — bother with subtlety around her beloved. She uses everything at her disposal to tempt him to sin and then end his life, with the proviso that, at the end, he is aware that she is the architect of his demise. An appropriate end to this story would be a big showdown with the characters on the anniversary of her death, leading to her soul being dragged back to Hell by angels of punishment in a show of flames and smoke.

Hannelore, Vengeful Ghost

Infernal Might: 20 (Mentem)

Order: Accusers

Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre +1, Com +3, Str 0, Sta -1, Dex 0, Qik +1

Size: 0

Confidence Score: 2 (6)

Virtues and Flaws: As in life

Personality Traits: Hateful +5, Attracted to Power +3, Inquisitive +2, Sensible -3

Reputations: Ambitious 3 (Infernal)

Combat:

Dagger: Init +1, Attack +5, Defense +4, Damage +2

Soak: -1

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: As in life

Powers:

Betrayal of the Heart, 2 points, Init 0, Mentem: This power allows Hannelore to see into the hearts of men and draw forth people's most secret fears and sins. Each use of this power reveals to the demon one fact about the target to which he would never admit. Truly holy people may be immune to this power if they have no secrets, no matter how petty.

Envisioning, 1 or 5 points, Init +0, Mentem: Hannelore can appear in the dreams of a sleeping target (in which case it costs 1 Might point), or make the target experience a waking dream or vision (in which case it costs 5 Might points). A demon cannot instantly make substantial changes to a dream, but can gradually twist it to take on a darker and more frighten-

ing tone, and can speak through any figure from the victim's subconscious. A waking dream is more obvious; the victim suffers an immediate and powerful hallucination of whatever the demon desires. This may be so horrific that the victim is stunned for a round, and must make a Brave Personality roll against an Ease Factor of 9 or have an extreme reaction, such as retching, convulsions, or abject terror. This is the only way that Hannelore can communicate with humans.

Obsession, 1 to 3 points, Init -5, Vim: Hannelore can attempt to impose either of her Obsession Traits of Infatuation or Revenge upon a mortal whenever the mortal indulges in a venial sin. If the power penetrates Magic Resistance, the victim is assailed with sinful thoughts, and acquires a Personality Trait with a score equal to the number of Might points spent by the demon. This Trait may become permanent if the character indulges in that sin when next presented with an opportunity. For more details, see *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, pages 31-32.

Possession, variable points, Init +2, Mentem: To possess a human, the demon may expend any number of points from its Might Pool to create a Possession Might Pool; these points actually enter the possessed creature and will not be regenerated by the demon until the possession is ended. The more of its Might it expends to use this power, the more the demon can do with its host, but the weaker the Penetration. If the target's resis-

tance is overcome by this power, the victim is possessed by the demon, and is under its direct control. For more details, see *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 32.

Whispers Behind the Back, 2 points, Init 0, Mentem: Working exactly like the spell *Pains of the Perpetual Worry*, this power gives the victim a nagging, taunting, painful emotion linked to their secret sins. It is a recurrent sense of anxiety that their secret will be uncovered, and a suspicion that everyone already knows it and is taking about the target behind his back. This power lasts for a month.

Vis: 4 pawns of vis prava, but this is insubstantial.

Appearance: She looks much as she did in life, but her face is pinched into a caricature of its former self, and her skin is scarlet as if she has been boiled alive. She has small horns in her tousled hair. Her fine clothes are faded, and stream behind her as if constantly whipped by the furnace winds of Hell.

Note that Hannelore is incorporeal in her natural form, and cannot be engaged physically in combat unless her opponent is also a spirit. She has no capacity to form a solid body.

The storyguide may wish to increase Hannelore's Might score if she would not pose a suitable challenge to the player characters. Her Infernal Reputation could afford her the rank of Master or Lord, giving her +5 or +10 Might respectively. It is up to the storyguide as to whether she still has access to her maleficia as a demon.

Chapter Eight

A Demonically Inspired Cult

In this scenario, a heretical cult arises near the covenant. It is more successful than usual, because several demons, not working together initially, each give it added impetus. As the cult grows, it spreads misery, death, and Infernal auras throughout the region that contains the covenant's resources. The player characters can ignore the rise of the cult, but left to their plans, the demons that support it spread a deadly disease, destroying the economy of the region and driving thousands of desperate people to sin, creating further Infernal auras. The Church and nearby noblemen are forced to act, and Hermetic magi, untrustworthy and unorthodox, risk being destroyed with the heretics.

Background

The flagellant movement described in this chapter is, initially, an accidental collaboration between demons.

Abaissier is a demon dedicated to turning the exceptionally pious away from God, by distracting them with the sin of Pride. His seductive message is that people who go to greater extremes of suffering are demonstrating greater piety, and therefore are more beloved of God. This is not true, but the snare of sacrifice is such that the more people have forsaken for God, the more difficult it is for them to admit that they have been mistaken. Abaissier tempts single pious individuals, but also lures charismatic men who become the leaders of small heretical groups. As a Lord, Abaissier has sufficient status to command many lesser demons.

Bufonia is a demon who causes sickness by poisoning wells. Her greatest love is to have her followers perform their evil

work, and then shift the blame to others. Her followers have blamed Jews, lepers, pagans, Muslims, sorcerers, and (and this is unusual to this demon in particular) greengrocers, for whom she has a passionate loathing. She is not, directly, a servant of Abaissier, but as the cult grows, her schemes complement his so that they are effectively allies.

Fabrico usually makes false relics. This demon enjoys tricking mortals by simulating acts of the divine. He crafts mundane items, and then surrounds them with fake miracles so that they are acclaimed as relics. Fabrico then promulgates false doc-

trine by aiding those who espouse spiritual errors. The tiny cults he creates are usually suppressed by the Church.

Aims and Motivations

Abaissier arranges for several of his cells to emerge publicly in various places simultaneously, making them more diffi-



Abaissier

Abaissier is a Lord of the Angels of Punishment. It is a demon that tricks people into harming themselves. This leads them to damnation, because the sinners then believe they have atoned for their transgressions.

Order: Lord of the Avengers of Evil

Infernal Might: 35 (Ignem)

Characteristics: Int +2, Per 0, Pre +2, Com +3, Str +1, Sta +3, Dex +3, Qik +4

Size: +2

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Personality Traits: Relentless +5, Merciful -3.

Reputations: Angel of Punishment 3 (Infernal), Scourge of the Pious 1 (Infernal).

Hierarchy 5

Combat:

5 x *Flailing chain*: Init +5, Attack +12, Defense +11, Damage +9.

Soak: +5

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -1, -3, -3, -5, Unconscious.

Wound Penalties: +1* (1-7), -3 (8-14), -5 (15-22), Incapacitated (23-30), Dead (31+).

* Light wounds make Abaissier more dangerous, not less. He may deliberately harm himself each round, to gain these bonuses. This bonus cannot go higher than +5.

Abilities: Awareness 4 (flagellants), Civil and Canon Law 4 (petty errors), Philosophie 5 (making people feel guilty), Single Weapon 6 (whip), Theology 6

(threatening Scriptural quotations).

Powers:

Coagulation, 3 point, Init -1, Corpus:

Allows the demon to manufacture a solid body from the ambient, unformed matter of the universe. See Appearance for details.

Envisioning, 1 or 5 points, Init 0, Mentem:

1 point allows the demon to enter and twist dreams. 5 points allow the demon to create a waking hallucination. If used to terrify, the victim can ignore it with a Brave Personality trait roll against an Ease factor of 9. Failure to resist leads to a profound physical reaction, like a seizure. Abaissier often uses these waking dreams to remind people of tiny failings, as a way of stoking their Pride. "Your failing is so small," he notes, "that if you just expiated it with flagellation, you would be perfect." These hallucinations can be resisted with a Humble Personality Trait against an Ease Factor of 9.

Protective Obsession, 1 to 3 points, Init -5,

Vim: When a person is committing a sinful thought or deed, the demon may impose its Obsession Trait if this Power defeats Magic Resistance. This gives the person a temporary Personality trait of Self-loathing, and at the next opportunity, he must make a roll, opposed by any suitable Personality trait, to avoid doing something to harm or punish himself. If the Obsession fails, the tem-

porary trait is lost. If it succeeds, the trait is acquired permanently. A character under the effect of this Obsession has a Light Wound modifier of +1, although no more than three of these wounds can stack as a bonus (for a total of +3).

Punish the Sinner, 5 points, Init +3, Corpus:

Allows the demon to harm humans in proportion to their level of sin. An unexpiated mortal sin causes a Heavy wound if this Power penetrates Magic Resistance, and a venial sin causes a Light wound. A character with no obvious sin suffers a number of points damage equal to the sum of all the character's negative Personality Traits. This power is activated by a touch from the demon, and can be used in conjunction with a strike from its flail.

Weakness: Protected group (people who self-flagellate in a way permitted by the Church).

Vis: 7 pawns of Perdo, 1 in each whip.

Appearance: Abaissier takes the form of an angel made of flaming chains, the color of brass and blood. This particular Angel of Punishment has no right hand; instead, it has five thin chains with weighted ends. In battle, these extend to an extraordinary length, and can be used independently as flails. It wears a pale white robe, which, uniquely among its kind, is stained with blood-like liquid if it is injured.

cult to extinguish. Fabrico subverts some of the cells. The different demons' flagellant leaders argue, and their followers clash. Fabrico is weaker than Abaissier, though, so the more powerful demon brings the other into involuntary servitude.

When the Church or magi intervene, Abaissier avoids drawing attention to himself. He is willing to sacrifice Fabrico, provided this allows him to identify the leaders and methods of his opposition. Fabrico knows this. The player characters may be able to encourage Fabrico to attack Abaissier, weakening each demon before the players destroy both.

Bufonia does not initially know that Abaissier is master of the cult. She believes Fabrico rules the flagellants, and is afraid of him. Once the processions begin, she recruits followers to poison the wells in towns near the flagellants. She hopes to destroy a group of outsiders: greengrocers, magi, Jews, whoever is easiest. If everything goes sour and competent opposition materializes, she wants her activities to be blamed on Fabrico. Bufonia is not a direct rival or ally of Abaissier, but her evil and his are complementary, so it appears that they collaborate.

Demons cannot, in the strictest sense,

exercise the virtue of patience, which prevents them from making plans. They are also unable to share, because they cannot abstain from greediness, which prevents them co-operating in a collegial way. In this case, however, no real planning is necessary. The cult is damaging simply because three demons that usually operate separately happen, on this occasion, to be active in the same region. Once each has set its minions to action, the demons do not need to direct the development of the cult. Their followers, who are human and therefore capable of calculated harm, find their own mischief.

First Encounter

The characters first encounter Abaisier's schemes when their companions or grogs meet some people who are part of

his extended network of flagellants. The first encounter with the flagellants occurs in a story in which they are not the focus. Following the story seeds given later in the Methods section, the first encounter is with a single member of the cult.

The presence of the demons may become obvious when they begin to cause panic and suffering in mortal communities, but their connection to the flagellant cult is revealed only gradually.

Bufonia

Bufonia is a demon who teaches humans how to poison wells. She does this to provoke hatred of scapegoat groups. She does not, however, ever poison wells herself.

Unusually for her class of demon, Bufonia can take on a superficially pleasant human form. This allows her to convince some of her dupes that the liquids they are creating, and then placing in the wells, protect against the plague. These victims usually die soon after, as they take her sovereign remedy in highly concentrated form in an effort to protect themselves. The demon so enjoys their suffering, particularly when she reveals to her victims that they have killed their family and friends, that she often cultivates a few of these victims, even if willing accomplices could do more harm.

Order: Likely a Vessel of Iniquity

Infernal Might: 20 (Animal)

Characteristics: Int +1, Per 0, Pre +2, Com 0, Str +1, Sta +1, Dex +3, Qik +1

Size: 0

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Personality Traits: Depraved +6, Hateful +6, Loathes greengrocers +3.

Reputations: Poisoner of Wells 1 (Infernal).

Hierarchy 1

Combat:

Thrown vial: Init 0, Attack +7, Defense 0, Damage 0*

- Contact with the undiluted contents of one of Bufonia's vials should be treated as poisoning with an Ease Factor of 9, doing heavy damage. See **ArM5**, page 180, for details.

Soak: Toad form +3, Human form +1.

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious.

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+).

Abilities: Awareness 4 (the Divine), Guile 6 (frightened people), Medicine 6 (contaminants), Thrown weapon 6 (vial of poison), Teaching 6 (to make "cures").

Envisioning, 1 or 5 points, Init 0, Mentem: 1 point allows the demon to enter and twist dreams. 5 points allow the demon to create a waking hallucination. If used to terrify, the victim can ignore it with a Brave Personality trait roll against an Ease factor of 9. Failure to resist leads to a profound physical reaction, like a seizure.

Form of Wickedness, 2 points, Init 0, Mentem: This allows the demon to manufacture a solid form of pure sin. Those around the demon who lack sufficient Magic Resistance begin to suspect their neighbors of poisoning them. A Stamina stress roll against an Ease Factor of 6 is needed every hour; failure costs a Fatigue level, and a success breaks this Power's hold. The Power also ends if the victim falls unconscious. A botch causes temporary insanity, and imposes a Minor Personality Flaw appropriate to the sin. This form may only be maintained for one round, after which the demon must take spiritual or human form.

Form of The Proud Man, 0 points, Init 0, Corpus: After assuming corporeal form (see Form of Wickedness earlier), the demon can take solid form. See Appearance for details.

Possession, variable points, Init +2, Mentem: The demon stores some of its Might in a temporary pool in a victim, after overcoming Magic Resistance. When this pool is spent, the possession ends. The two pieces of the demon can only communicate if in sight of one another. The demon controls the actions of the host,

but must spend Might to have the victim perform tasks he considers abhorrent. This requires the demon to make a roll of stress die + spent Might points against the victim's Personality trait roll. Using a Supernatural ability also costs 1 Might, or the same number of Might points a possessed supernatural creature spends to use one of its powers.

Contagious Obsession, 1 point per victim, Init 0, Mentem: When a person is committing a sinful thought or deed, the demon may impose its Obsession Trait if this Power defeats Magic Resistance. This gives the person a temporary Personality trait of Hates (group). At the next opportunity, he must make a roll, opposed by any suitable Personality trait, to avoid attempting to harm the scapegoats. If the Obsession fails, the temporary trait is lost. If it succeeds, the trait is acquired permanently. Any human who becomes a victim of this demon's Obsession power becomes a carrier of that Power, and can pass it on to anyone he abuses, using the same series of rolls. Every added victim costs the demon 1 Might point, and the Power ceases to be contagious if either the carrier runs out of Might or a day passes without someone being infected. Once the power ceases being contagious, it continues to affect the afflicted as described earlier.

Weakness: Protected group (people who never drink well-water)

Vis: 4 pawns of Perdo, long nose.

Appearance: The natural appearance of this demon is sin made manifest as a formless dark shape. She can, however, take a solid form. She appears as a tall, refined woman, often dressed as a plague doctor.

Why Do They Care?

The Church, or the Divine, eventually extirpate all heretical movements, so there's a temptation for player characters to just hunker down and ignore the cult. There are many reasons why the player characters should choose not to do this.

First, when the Church extirpates heresy in an area, it's not a gentle process. Initially, preachers are sent to reconvert the populace, but if that fails, military force is used. There's no real difference, to the average person, between an invasion for the pride of a king and an invasion for the good of the Church. Cities are still sacked, the countryside is still pillaged, and crops are still burned.

Magi shouldn't want this happening in their area, from purely practical considerations if for no other reason. The farmers, craftsmen, and merchants most covenants require cannot continue their professions during war.

Second, when the Church suppresses heresy by invasion, its followers often target other problematic people during the process. Jews, Muslims and pagans are also forcibly repressed. Magi, who are problematic people with fortresses, are prime targets for crusading forces. A commander who takes a heretical castle may reasonably expect to keep it as a fiefdom. This means that the younger

noble sons who form the officer class of the crusading army are highly motivated. They are not dissuaded by the magi defeating other raids, since they assume each failure on the part of other crusaders has reduced the men and supplies of the castle.

Third, a successful demonic cult creates Infernal auras in the countryside. These corrupted places act as seeds for future trouble, and support the schemes of other demons. Characters who refuse to deal with the first outbreak are ignoring the way that a virulent period of diabolic activity contributes to later corruption.

Fabrico

Fabrico is a demon who creates false relics. He encourages the sin of Pride by creating small cults who believe they have been chosen by a particular saint for a great task. He encourages the leaders of his cults to believe they know the will of God better than the Church, since they are guided by regular signs from their patron.

Order: Deluder

Infernal Might: 20 (Corpus)

Characteristics: Int +1, Per +1, Pre -1, Com +3, Str +3, Sta +1, Dex +4, Qik +2

Size: 0

Virtues and Flaws: Puissant Guile

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Personality Traits: Credible +3, Sly +2.

Reputations: Creator of relics 1 (Infernal), Deluder 1 (Infernal)

Hierarchy: 1

Combat:

2 *Claw-like fingernails:* Init +2, Attack +7, Defense +10, Damage +5

Soak: +1

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Awareness 4 (the Divine), Guile 6+2 (Divine), Brawl 6 (claws), Theology 6 (miracles).

Powers:

Coagulation, 3 point, Init -1, Corpus: Allows the demon to manufacture a solid body from the ambient, unformed matter of the universe. See Appearance for details.

Delusion, 1 or 5 points, Init +3, Imaginem: This power creates vivid illusions. A 1-point use of the power affects a single object, while a 5-point use of this power creates an illusion the size of a room. The illusions always have a subtle fault. Fabrico uses these powers to simulate miraculous messages.

Duplicate the Magi's Creation or Transmutation: variable, Init +1, variable Form: This power allows the demon to create any non-ritual Creo or Muto Hermetic spell of level 20 or less. The demon uses props with this power to make false relics.

Envisioning, 1 or 5 points, Init 0, Mentem: 1 point allows the demon to enter and twist dreams. 5 points allows the demon to create a waking hallucination. If used to terrify, the victim can ignore it with a Brave Personality trait

roll against an Ease Factor of 9. Failure to resist leads to a profound physical reaction, like a seizure. Fabrico often uses these waking dreams to simulate visions. These hallucinations can be resisted with a suitable Personality Trait roll against an Ease Factor of 9.

Obsession, 1 to 3 points, Init -5, Vim: When a person is committing a sinful thought or deed, the demon may impose its Obsession Trait if this Power defeats Magic Resistance. This gives the person a temporary Personality trait of Gullible. At the next opportunity, he must make a roll, opposed by any suitable Personality trait, to avoid believing something dangerous or stupid. If the Obsession fails, the temporary trait is lost. If it succeeds, the trait is acquired permanently.

Weakness: Fascinated by valuable mundane objects

Vis: 4 pawns of Perdo, eyes.

Appearance: The natural appearance of Fabrico, like all deluders, is a rent of darkness in the face of the world, filled with eyes, teeth, and organs. He uses his powers to appear as a flagellant wrapped in bandages during this scenario.

Methods

The flagellant cult develops through many stages, as described in the following sections. Storyguides do not need to use all of the seeds given here. They represent a progressively more powerful cult, under increasingly obvious demonic influence. If some of the story seeds are skipped, storyguides should try to implant the key motifs of those seeds in the background of the other stories they are telling.

Cells of Flagellants

In the first stage of the cult's development, the demon Abaissier finds at least a half-dozen charismatic speakers, and seduces them to his cause. The demon is more concerned with their ability to draw and hold the emotions of crowds than with their social position. Player characters may notice this when a character who has previously used his eloquence for another purpose becomes a lay preacher.

Fabrico, at this stage, is spreading prophecies of the coming of the Antichrist and the end of the world. These prophets are not Abaissier's charismatic cult leaders: they are a separate class of dupes. Their bleak message does, however, make people more receptive to Abaissier's solution to the problems of the world.

STORY SEED: A TRAITOR, AN AMBUSH, AND AN EASY WIN

A local bandit group causes the player characters difficulty, by targeting merchants or Redcaps. One of the senior members of the group approaches the player characters. He claims that he has been visited by an angel, and told to separate himself from sinners. After he aids the characters to ambush his erstwhile companions, he leaves to become a preacher and to expiate his sins. He may return in later story seeds, as a follower of the flagellant cult.

STORY SEED: DEMONIC ATTACK

Abaissier enjoys the evil spread by his little cults, and is unwilling at first to allow them to draw the attention of the Church. When one of his charismatic leaders begins proselytizing for the cult, Abaissier destroys that cult cell. If the player characters or members of the Church notice this, they may assume that the flagellants are on the side of the angels, since they have been assailed by the forces of Hell. Members of the cell who survive, particularly if they are given positions of trust as such obviously pious people, will be contacted later by Abaissier through other servants to use them as agents.

Shock to the Community

Once Abaissier's preachers are recruited, he needs communities to become vulnerable to manipulation. He weakens them by creating conditions that his followers can claim represent the displeasure of God. His strategies are varied, so that the pattern of his manipulation is not apparent. Player characters may become involved in mitigating the local effects of his efforts.

At this stage of the cult's development, more public flagellants become active, across a broader area. These are not harmed by the plague, and their eloquence attracts followers. At this stage, followers are not asked to whip themselves, but instead to pray, fast, and perform other acts that are entirely within the doctrine of the Church. Some of these gatherings, made up of pious people doing pious things, create temporary Dominion auras.

CROP FAILURE

In some areas, crops periodically fail for a few cycles for purely natural reasons, and Abaissier's preachers simply take advantage of this. In others, where a crop has already failed, Abaissier takes advantage of this opportunity by sending mundane raiders, commanding small demons to rot seed corn, and encouraging arsonists.



Small Demons of Rot

These little creatures are intended as foes for grogs and companions. They lack the Strength to do much damage with individual blows, and thus attack in groups. Large groups may include some demons who grapple or cover the eyes of their opponents, while their allies attempt called shots.

Order: Vessel of Iniquity

Infernal Might: 5 (Herbam)

Characteristics: Int 0, Per +1, Pre 0, Com 0, Str -8, Sta 0, Dex 0, Qik +6

Size: -4

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Personality Traits: Depraved +6, Enthusiastic +6.

Reputations: Bringers of Famine 1 (Infernal), Vessel of Iniquity 1 (Infernal)

Combat:

2 x *sharp claws*: Init +6, Attack +6, Defense +12, Damage -8*

* Putrid ichor coats these claws. This causes fever and sepsis in the claws' scratches. It also causes plant

products to moulder and rot. (Disease Ease Factor 6, causes a minor wound, see *ArM5*, page 180)

Soak: +2

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1), -3 (2), -5 (3), Incapacitated (4), Dead (5+)

Abilities: Awareness 4 (foes), Brawl 6 (feet)

Powers:

Coagulation, 3 point, Init -1, Corpus: This allows the demon to manufacture a solid body from the ambient, unformed matter of the universe. See Appearance for details.

Weakness: The demons cannot harm, and are burned by contact with, the Host or wheat intended to be turned into the Host.

Vis: 1 pawn of Perdo, tongue

Appearance: These little rodent-like humanoids cause harm by appearing in places where grain is stored and tainting it with the pus from their claws.

mundane wealth. They can track down local sources of harm and prevent them from making the situation worse. At this early stage, the magi are unlikely to connect the problems to Abaissier.

PLAGUE

Large cities are more difficult to attack with crop failure, but the cult's development, at this point, is aided by the schemes of a third demon, Bufonia. She teaches her minions to make poisonous concoctions, and pour them into wells in major cities. Her human servants can make a number of different mixtures, which cause a variety of sicknesses, but for this plague, the ingredient required for each potion is a human heart, preferably from someone who has died of the plague.

RUINING REPUTATIONS

In other areas, the demons strike at the reputations of the community's leaders. They publicize venal sins and falsify evidence of terrible crimes. The demons do this through mortal puppets, whom they can kill or ignore (breaking the connection between demon and puppet) to cover their tracks. Player characters may take advantage of this to tear down local rivals.

STORY SEED: PROTECTING CROPS

The player characters may be able to survive the crop failure by shipping in sup-

plies and leaving the mundanes to fend for themselves. They may instead choose to save their local community. The magi may feed nearby towns magically, or by using

A Note on Plague

In Mythic Europe, plague is not caused by bacteria; it's caused by a susceptible body coming under the influence of an external cause that unbalances its humors. External causes include bad air, unfortunate astrological configurations, direct demonic influence and, in this case, poison.

The plague Bufonia spreads does not need to be anything as apocalyptic as the Black Death. It is better for a storyguide to select an illness that is considered mild in the modern world, particularly if one of the players has recently suffered the same illness. Alternatively, the storyguide might just describe a set of symptoms that are not recognizable as a

particular modern disease.

For example, measles is recorded as first appearing in Europe in the second century. It's a mild childhood illness to most players, but it killed one quarter of the population of the Roman Empire. The strain of strep throat that causes scarlet fever is another ideal illness for this purpose; it caused permanent disability and death well into the 20th century. The difference between player perception and the characters' reality helps make the plague frightening.

For those using the disease rules on pages 47-50 of *Art and Academe*, Bufonia can create many different diseases, and may do so if she feels that this makes it

less likely for her to be caught. She does, however, want Fabrico to be blamed for everything, so she cannot use her full range of poisons. Those hunting Fabrico must not realize he is not versatile enough to create the observed maladies. Her mainstay disease in this scenario has Severity 13, a Stable score of 9, an Improve score of 12, and an interval of a week. It causes a Heavy Wound, with symptoms of thirst, and burning sensations in the fingertips, nose, toes, followed by bleeding from the eyes and ears. Those not using the *Art and Academe* rules should use the rules on page 180 of *ArM5*, and give this poison an Ease Factor of 12, causing a Major Wound.

STORY SEED: PLAGUE AND RUMOR

Player characters who find the people poisoning the wells, and prevent them delivering further doses, allow the plague to burn out at its own pace. They may also be hired to investigate the source of rumors. If potentates who have been smeared send followers to attack those they imagine responsible, the player characters may want to mediate.

To avoid closing the saga prematurely with a direct confrontation between the primary demons and the player characters at this point, the storyguide may want to interpose another lieutenant demon for the player characters to defeat. If the characters destroy Malicia, the rate at which the cult spreads slows, and it is less powerful in their local area. It still eventually reaches the next stage.

Processions Begin

Religious processions are not unusual in Mythic Europe, but flagellant processions are a little different to those that celebrate Saints' Days. The pilgrims carry banners, but these are not the usual veneration. They are denunciations of human weakness and threats written on behalf of God. These pilgrims also carry whips and birch scourges, though they do not yet use them. There are disruptions at the edges of the events where angry pilgrims fight with locals.

If the processions are opposed, the participants become furious. They begin to believe that worldly powers are corrupt and working against them. If they are not opposed, the processions gain popularity. Local churchmen, worried by the processions, oppose them with processions of their own, dedicated to local saints.

STORY SEED: COUNTER-DEMONSTRATIONS

The counter-demonstrations that local priests arrange are targets for Infernal influence. Player characters can protect these processions. At this stage, the Infer-

Malicia is a Fury, a demon who feeds on anger that destroys the person who feels it. She has been recruited with the promise of a cult of tasty prey. Flagellants who fall under her sway whip those watching their processions, and may mortally wound themselves by accident; flagellant leaders who fall under her control may counsel their followers to commit suicide. If Abaissier is defeated, Malicia tries to seize at least part of his cult, and use the despair the followers feel during the crackdown by the nobility and the church to provoke mass suicide.

Order: Fury

Infernal Might: 15 (Corpus)

Characteristics: Int +2, Per +2, Pre -2, Com 0, Str +3, Sta +0, Dex +3, Qik +2
Size: 0

Virtues and Flaws: Berserk

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Personality Traits: Wrathful +4, Angry +2, Self-controlled -6

Reputations: Eater of the self-destructive 1 (Infernal), Fury 1 (Infernal)

Hierarchy: 1

Combat:

Bite : Init +2, Attack +12*, Defense +9, Damage +4**

Hands : Init +2, Attack +8*, Defense +7, Damage +3

* +2 when berserk

** Venomous, as asp bite, see ArM5, page 180

Soak: +1 or +3 when berserk

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (15-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Awareness 4 (the weak), Brawl 5 (bite), Guile 6 (the weak)

Powers:

Coagulation, 3 point, Init -1, Corpus: The demon may manufacture a solid

Malicia

body from the ambient, unformed matter of the universe. See Appearance for details.

Obsession, 1 to 3 points, Init -5, Vim: When a person is committing a sinful thought or deed, the demon may impose its Obsession Trait if this Power defeats Magic Resistance. This gives the person a temporary Personality trait of Self-Harming, and at the next opportunity, he must make a roll, opposed by any suitable Personality trait, to avoid hurting himself. If the Obsession fails, the temporary trait is lost. If it succeeds, the trait is acquired permanently.

Envisioning, 1 or 5 points, Init 0, Mentem: 1 point allows the demon to enter and twist dreams. 5 points allows the demon to create a waking hallucination. If used to terrify, the victim can ignore it with a Brave Personality trait roll against an Ease Factor of 9. Failure to resist leads to a profound physical reaction, like a seizure.

Endurance of the Enraged, 0 points, Init 0, Corpus: The demon does not suffer Wound penalties, except on Defense totals.

Waxing of the Humors, 3 points, Init +2, Mentem: Causes passion to overcome sense. The victim must make a Personality trait stress roll against an Ease Factor of 9 to keep the emotion in check. This Power is often used immediately after a successful use of the Obsession Power.

Weakness: Protected group (children)

Vis: 3 pawns of Perdo, serpent head

Appearance: Malicia seems to be a young woman with a serpent emerging from the middle of her chest. The head of the serpent gnaws and stings the rest of her body continuously, save her face. The serpent's bites bleed a little, and some bear the livid colors of venom and putrefaction.

nal disruptions are not spectacular: possessed individuals attack the procession, herds of animals escaped from markets block routes, poor weather makes roads

impassable, and fires spring up in buildings that the procession must pass. Player characters who prevent or remedy these problems gain a positive Reputation with

the priests mostly likely to lead the fight against the flagellant preachers.

To create individuals who have been possessed, take any suitable grog or companion, give them an Infernal Might of 10, the Berserk Virtue, then add +3 to their Soak, and +3 to their damage.

Spread of the Cult

Once the processional movement has started, Abaissier spreads the ideas behind the cult. He does this by inspiring waking dreams and visitations, encouraging bards, and having followers speak with pilgrims. Redcaps notice this strange proliferation of information, with its many points of origin, and are alarmed by it. They discuss it with friendly covenants, but have no firm idea what is causing it.

FABRICO AND ABAISSIER CLASH

Fabrico notices the flagellant movement at this time, and claims parts of it. His followers clash with those who follow Abaissier. In limited areas, groups of flagellants fight in the streets. Player characters can limit the damage this causes. Eventually the two demons fight, and one overpowers the other, making him a vassal. The battle between two powerful demons may be reported by seers, particularly those claiming that disaster looms.

UNIFORMS

At this time, Abaissier's flagellants in the areas near the covenant begin wearing uniforms. These are undyed robes of wool or cotton, with a red mark on the breast. Characters can track the source of these. They are a charitable donation from a nobleman. He has been visited by an angel. It commanded him to distribute these clothes as alms, in penance for a disproportionately terrible crime he committed. Tracking the shipments the nobleman has sent allows the player characters to identify the gathering points for many of the local flagellant cells.

STORY SEED: ATTACKING THE LOCAL LEADERS

If the characters know who the leaders of the local movement are, they can reduce its influence. They may do this with assassination, imprisonment, spiritual disputation, smear campaigns, or removal of resources. Alternatively, the player characters can give the names of the leaders to others. Moderate churchmen can separate the leaders from their followers, and hold them incommunicado. Nobles who have been ridiculed by flagellant leaders take more direct measures.

Larger Processions

Once the two demons are collaborating on the flagellant movement, it becomes increasingly popular. Processions lasting 33.5 days, one day for each year in Jesus' life, begin to occur. False miracles are performed, and news of them spreads. Processions can have a thousand participants, of both genders and all ages. Many people who do not participate in the processions nonetheless support the movement.

FLAGELLANT SONGS

Flagellant songs, a sort of call and response chant to which people whip themselves, are invented. The idea develops that whenever Christ is mentioned in the songs, the pilgrims must abase themselves, by flinging themselves to the ground. In practice, this means that, at the mention of the name of Christ, the pilgrims cover themselves in dirt, blood, and animal droppings.

STORY SEED: SILENCING SONGS

Companion and grog characters can help slow the spread of this movement by disrupting the spread of the flagellant songs. Player characters may compose highly amusing ballads, which bards prefer to learn and carry to perform in other places. This requires a stress die + Communication + any appropriate Ability roll against an Ease Factor of 15. They may

pay bards not to learn the flagellant songs. They may also prevent the spread of the songs by imprisoning or killing bards who have learned them.

Magi who realize the importance of the songs may equip their servants with magic items that remove the songs from memories. The Quaesitores keeps a few of these items, to tidy up after magi have interfered with mundanes. The Redcaps also have similar items, used in rescues and for espionage. Player characters can negotiate for the loan of these items, although the Quaesitores need more convincing than the Redcaps.

THE PROBLEM OF SUPERABUNDANT SUFFERING

Minor sins become common in the processions. People become proud of their filthy, bloody uniforms. They neglect their attendance at Sunday services. They believe that their sins are forgiven due to their suffering, and that the superabundance of their suffering is saving the world. This suggests to some of them that, provided they continue their flagellation, they can commit other crimes with moral impunity.

STORY SEED: PREVENTING SINS BY NOBLES

A flagellant noble estimates his own suffering to have such high value that, now he has beaten himself bloody for a week, he is perfectly justified in seizing a nearby widow and her lands by rape and forced marriage. The player characters may intervene to gain the widow as a noble ally. The attacker's personal guards are also flagellants, and similarly believe that they have suffered so much that they can do all kinds of depraved things without threatening their place in Heaven. This includes using peasants as human shields, and exhuming the corpses of babies to cause terror in their enemies.

Some other flagellant nobles might, however, become valuable allies to the covenant, as they are some of the first to question the authority of the Church. Covenants who have poor relations with the Church may find flagellant nobles very receptive to their complaints.



Inadvertent Sins

At this stage of their plan, the collaborating demons begin to use the processions themselves as vehicles of sin.

PLAGUE CARRIED BY PROCESSIONS

Fabrico makes false relics that emit the evil airs that cause disease, but also ensures that the flagellants have access to an antidote, so that they do not fall ill. Lengthy flagellant pilgrimages leave sickness and death in their wake. The incubation period of the plague is long enough that the flagellants can claim that their presence held off the plague until they left. False visions keep the flagellants fervent. False miracles and bogus relics make spreading their word, and Fabrico's plague, easier.

At this point, the processions still have support from some sections of the Church. Most of the Church, however, knows that something has gone wrong with the flagellant movement. Counter-processions become popular, but these suffer disruption by supporters of the flagellants, and by the demons who nip at the heels of all processions. The belief among flagellants that you can sabotage a traditional procession, and then make it good with God through flagellation, becomes widespread.

STORY SEED: PLAGUE-BEARING PROCESSIONS

The player characters may oppose the processions, if they notice that they are tainted. In some areas, city authorities discern that, far from dispelling plague, flagellant processions seem to herald its arrival. If the player characters can spread the word of this, towns begin to close their gates to the processions.

In the closest city to the covenant, there is a faction that supports the flagellants. They intend to open the gates to the procession, cause riots, and then overthrow the local rulers, if they can. The player characters gain a hint of this, and can infiltrate the fifth column forces as the procession approaches. If the procession is kept out, Bufonia's students poison the town's wells, attempting to destroy the authority of the rulers who turned "salvation" away. Player characters can find her followers and prevent them from distributing the poison. The characters can also purify the wells or find alternative water sources. Bufonia or Fabrico may use dupes who place concoctions or false relics into the water supply in an attempt to protect their town. Characters may also discover a remedy for Fabrico's vapors or Bufonia's toxin, and distribute the cure.

In some other areas, pious people, aided by their saints, resist the flagellants successfully. This sometimes causes riots, impromptu battles, or even de facto sieges. Player character can get involved in this.

Open Heresy

Abaissier knows that God will eventually destroy its cult. The demon decides to do as much harm as it can, pushing its followers into open heresy. Abaissier lets Fabrico do whatever he likes, knowing that this makes its patsy more visible.

REPLACEMENT OF SACRAMENTS

Many flagellants now believe that their activities replace sacraments. This allows them to work off sins, and to forgive the sins of others. This gravely exacerbates the problem of people thinking that they can perform sins, and then flagellate themselves pure again. Once people begin believing that flagellants can transfer their virtue voluntarily to others, this causes even greater trouble. Wealthy sinners offer money to the flagellants in exchange for their forgiveness, a transaction that counts as the sin of simony.

STORY SEED: SIMONY

Player characters can reduce the harm done by the many people who believe they found a loophole in the laws of morality. Simony affects merchants, who have more coin than most other classes of society.

A local merchant has begun setting fire to the shops of his rivals in the middle of

the night. A group of grogs can determine who it is before he targets merchants who trade with the magi. The merchant's initial victims are his closest rivals, selling identical goods. As the merchant turns to new targets, he increases his spending on flagellant devotions, to pay for his sins. As he becomes fixated on the usefulness of fire as a business tool, the merchant permanently employs three flagellants as personal well-springs of forgiveness. He hides them in a cottage in the woods, but they have families, and these families gossip.

Another merchant begins mixing adulterants into the bread he sells in the market. This is pretty common practice, but some adulterants, like ergot-infected wheat and chalk, cause sickness. As people sicken, the characters notice that all the victims have bought food at a particular place. Characters with criminal connections can discover the merchant by seeking out the sources of his adulterated flour. As the merchant has fallen more deeply under the influence of the flagellant cult, his demand for adulterants has risen to such an extent that local criminals know his Reputation as a bulk buyer.

CLAIMING MIRACLES

The leaders of the cult start publicly performing miracles. This cannot occur in towns, where the Dominion is too strong, and cannot be regular, because the demons have only so much Might to spread among their followers. As the Church, nobility, and magi attack the flagellants, some of these leaders are removed, and the fewer there are, the more regularly each can perform miraculous feats.

STORY SEED: ATTACKING FALSE PROPHETS

Characters who conclude that all of these prophets are being powered by a single demon may decide to strike at several simultaneously. This is an excellent strategy, because although the most powerful demons can move swiftly from place to place, they simply can't be everywhere, in their full power, at the same time. Individual magi may attack individual false

prophets, or the magi can form a network of alliances, and send their allies against some of the others. Unless the characters take intricate precautions, a large alliance is likely to be perceived by a minor demon, allowing the targets to prepare.

The greater their success, the weaker the flagellant cult is in the characters' region. If the cult is shattered in the region around the covenant, this region becomes a centre of resistance to the flagellant movement. It is a staging area for crusaders, but does not suffer invasion, during the later phases of the scheme. If the covenant has co-ordinated the destruction of the cult in this area, it can use the influence this grants it to protect a few covenants in areas that the crusaders invade.

BLOOD-SOAKED RAGS

Many flagellants are, by this stage, heretics, but Fabrico spreads the heresy more widely. He uses his powers to make false miracles, and spreads the idea that rags soaked in the blood of flagellants are relics. Many of the users of these relics are women, and they are generally activated by wiping the blood into the user's eyes.

Many of those who have performed this ritual believe they have developed a Divine power of vision. Actually, it gives demons an easier way to use the Evocation power to lead followers into sin. A person who personally makes a bloody-rag relic, and voluntarily wipes it on her eyes, creates a hole in her spiritual defenses. She must make a Personality trait roll against an Ease Factor of 9 to resist the demon's promptings.

The blood on the rags may also be poisoned, which further spreads plague. In some flagellant groups, Bufonia exhorts followers to make these relics. She gives them a special "holy oil" to sprinkle over the rags, and then encourages her victims to protect their communities by throwing the rags into wells and storing them in granaries.

STORY SEED: MANUFACTORY OF BLOODIED RAGS

Grogs and companion-level characters can patrol towns, removing these infected cloths, and investigate who is planting

them. Arranging groups of locals to covertly watch neighborhoods and drive away rag-spreaders is an effective counter-measure to this strategy of the cult.

In the local area, the player characters may uncover and destroy a secret manufactory for these cloths. It is an abandoned building where flagellants take turns whipping themselves while seated on a floor covered in filthy bed sheets. Another acolyte cuts the sheets into palm sized pieces at the end of each day. These are then taken away, and sprinkled with "holy oil." The rags are smuggled to supporters in nearby towns for distribution. If the player characters attack this site, bodiless demons possess the acolytes, assisting them in combat, and then animating their bodies after death.

LETTER FROM AN ANGEL

Some groups of flagellants begin to read a letter, said to be delivered by an angel, before each procession. The letter is a false relic. It makes it easy for the procession to find passage around obstacles. It also contains unclear and symbolic passages. Fabrico uses these to direct his followers, by placing these marks and signs in the places they come to, signaling that they should destroy, occupy, or venerate a thing.

STORY SEED: FORGING NOTES FROM GOD

Player characters who discover what is written in the angelic letter can use these signs to confuse the flagellants and frustrate their leaders. Even those who have been personally visited by angels cannot countermand a letter written by God himself and delivered by his messenger. In some groups, the contents of the letters change occasionally, to give new directions once earlier goals have been achieved. Magi can take advantage of this by composing new instructions. Forgers require an original letter to copy and the materials to be included in the copy. They must make an Intelligence + Finesse roll or a Dexterity + Craft roll against an Ease Factor of 9.

The leader of a flagellant group is likely to obey the instructions, but will obey

them more zealously if they are in a tone similar to those he has already received: they must stoke his Pride. This meddling certainly bring the magi to the attention of Fabrico. He may not report their meddling to Abaissier, if he thinks they are useful allies against his master.

BACK FROM THE DEAD

Abaissier and Fabrico craft complicated visions in which some of the leaders of their groups die, but are then restored to life by praying to, and through the power of, their angels. These are simply complicated waking dreams, but the servants do not realize it, particularly once they are told they have been resurrected for a special purpose, because they are so close to the heart of God. Only one leader in each geographic area is given this treatment: the demons would prefer each thought himself uniquely blessed, or at least the first to be so blessed.

Characters who believe they have been returned from the dead are told they are saints, and may ordain priests, outside of the Church hierarchy. At the point where false priests are being ordained, all support for those groups of flagellants within the Church is destroyed. The Church rapidly decides to eliminate them, with armed force if necessary.

STORY SEED: REMOVING THE SAINTS OF FLAGELLATION

When the false saints begin to create false priests, it is obvious to anyone with the tiniest understanding of the Church that reprisal is inevitable. Player characters who become aware of the false ordinations know that desperate action may be required. Individual false saints can be detained or killed, which shifts the Church's focus to other areas.

Killing a false saint requires the characters to discern where he is hiding and overcome his defenses. The "saints" may be protected by mundane noblemen. Some are also protected by possessed flagellant followers or (unbeknownst to them) demonically tainted animals.

The false saints are difficult to reason

with, but a suitably pious character may convince one that he is a victim of demonic corruption. This is possible with a contested roll of stress die + Communication + Theology + false saint's Pride roll if the player character's score exceeds the saint's by at least 6. Characters who can demonstrate to the flagellant saint that he is defended by demonic animals can add 6 to their total.

A penitent false saint might surrender to the Church, and be placed in a nunnery or monastery, but some local bishops will want the heretic put to death. A repentant false saint unable to surrender to the Church might find shelter and employment with the Order.

Flagellant Civil War

Some flagellant groups oppose the false saints. This group of flagellants retains sufficient support in the Church that it is not eliminated in the inevitable purge. If Abaissier is careful, he can keep this portion of the movement bubbling along, training heretics for a few more years.

Some nobles who are already on poor terms with the Church side with the false saints. Other nobles are able both to follow the flagellants (and so ignore many of the Church's decrees), while retaining some link to the Church by making war on the nobles who shelter the false saints. Similarly, parts of the Order support the "loyal" flagellants.

STORY SEED: DISCREDITING LOYAL FLAGELLANT GROUPS

Player characters can disrupt the rest of the cult by finding proof that the opposition to the false saints is a strategic pose. They can do this in several ways:

- Senior members of each half of the cult occasionally meet. Player characters who determine where this is, and can take witnesses from the Church to the event, destroy the cult's mask of obedience to orthodoxy.
- A very few members of the "loyal" group have themselves been told by

the demons that they are saints. If captured and put to the question by churchmen, they are so Proud that they are unable to maintain the humble lie of obedience.

- A nobleman visited by a false angel has also been granted a true vision by the Archangel Michael. He leads his followers into battle against the nobles who serve the demons. His initial attacks are against noblemen tied to the "loyal" faction. But rival nobles, disguised to protect their identities, ally with the false saints and muster with the visionary noble's enemies. If the player characters help the noble to win his battle, he can take the disguised nobles, or their bodies, to the Church authorities, demonstrating that the two halves of the cult act together.
- Characters who uncover evidence sufficient to destroy the remains of the cult may rouse Abaissier to make a personal assault on them.

Resurrecting the Cult

The demonic collaborators can revive the cult by finding the remnants of destroyed cells. The devotees are told that they have passed a test from God, and that their suffering has brought them close to the heart of God. From these groups the demons, either collaboratively or singly, seek to create new secret societies, beginning the entire cycle again. This may also lead to further feuding between the two demons, when Abaissier discovers some of Fabrico's cults.

STORY SEED: CULT REVIVAL

If the player characters detect these groups, they can deal with them personally, or report them to the Church. If they deal with them personally, the characters discover leads which allow the demons to be confronted. If they report the cells, then the Church eliminates them, and the player characters develop stronger ties with the local Church. The demons may treat the player characters as enemies, avoid risking resources near them in future, or both.

General Story Ideas

The following story ideas can be used at any stage in the development of the flagellant cult.

ATTACKING THE PIOUS

There are many pious monks, even saints, who are flagellants. Once the player characters have shown themselves to be enemies of the flagellant cult, Abaissier attempts to trick the player characters into attacking the truly pious. Player characters can tell truly pious flagellants by their other actions, and by their attitude toward flagellation. Flagellation used moderately, voluntarily or as prescribed by a bishop, and which is treated as a punishment or used as a way of focusing the attention, rather than a way of earning merit with God, is permitted. Penances that are done *instead of* atonement are not permitted.

If the player characters avoid the snares of the demons, the pious allies they create may be useful. Some can dispute with the leaders of the flagellants. Others can teach common flagellants their errors, and draw them back to the Church, or even into monastic life.

ANGERING RIVAL DEMONS

Widespread movements like this wash over and destroy the plots of other demons. This has bought Abaissier potent enemies. If the storyguide wishes to make the cult more difficult to defeat, these can be suborned by Abaissier, much like Fabrico, and made into fractious lieutenants.

Investigation

There are several features of the cult that allow the player characters to investigate it, once it has become widespread.

Ancient Records

Magi with an interest in history may be able, through extensive research into Infernal Lore, to uncover information about earlier flagellant heretics. Initially it is very difficult, from the sort of limited information available in most parts of the Order, to find a specific demon likely to be responsible for those ancient cults. There are specialists within the Order who can be consulted, and might be able to discover the signs of Abaissier's involvement. This allows the specialist to predict the early stages of the cult's development. After Abaissier and Fabrico come to terms and begin to work together, however, the historical precedent for the demon's behavior breaks.

After the flagellants begin to wear uniforms, the order's specialist can identify Abaissier more easily. He is proud, and typically signs his work. The red mark on the flagellant uniforms is one he has employed as a cultic symbol before.

Evangelism

Virtually all members of the cult believe they are doing wonderful things on behalf of the rest of the world. They have suffered so much that they must be free of all blame, and the leftover suffering contributes to the wellbeing of everyone else. They are saving the world one bloody welt at a time, and are happy to share this good news with whoever is willing to listen.

The leaders of the cult are doing work that is too important for casual disruption. They believe they have been singled out for rare honor by God. If approached by someone who could aid their work, and who plays on their spiritual Pride, they feel it is their duty to describe their visitations. They cannot reveal everything their angel has told them, for he has said not to, but they are able to describe him in sufficient detail that characters skilled in Infernal Lore can determine that he's an Angel of Punishment.

Following the Money

In the early stages, the cult supports itself with the goods of the flagellants and by accepting alms. Once the processions increase in size, they also take whatever they require, extorting useful goods from towns and receiving support from mysterious benefactors. Player characters who track down the sources of the food, shoes, clothes, jeweled crosses, robes, and other supplies used by the processions can learn two significant things.

First, some of the durable supplies have been gradually accumulated and stored for years, which is both unprofitable and, according to Church teaching, sinful. Some of the rarer items, like the processional crosses, have been sourced from artisans in distant countries. This may be the first hint the player characters receive of a Europe-wide conspiracy. Some of the supplies have not yet been used, and the destruction of its caches limits the activity of the cult.

Second, the players may also find out how these goods are distributed, which allows them to discover which nobles and churchmen are secretly supporting the flagellants. This knowledge is important when the crackdown against the flagellants begins. These secret supporters place themselves at the spearhead of the effort to stamp out the cult, while secretly sabotaging that crusade.

Internal Strife

At several points in the demons' scheme, bands of flagellants fall out with each other. Characters offering assistance to one side may be given information about the other. Since the two sides are likely identical in organization and operation, this provides a clear understanding of how the cult works.

Redcap Network

The Redcaps are perhaps the first people in Europe to notice that the same mes-

sage is being expounded in many places simultaneously. This implies the supernatural coordination of the cult's message. Its widespread distribution is, however, a weakness. Redcaps communicate with each other, but the leaders of the flagellants do not. This may provide the player characters with a significant advantage.

Redcaps, or other agents, can casually question participants in many areas of Europe, then pool the information these discussions provide. The cult members do not share information, and so cannot notice that the cult, as a whole, is being systematically interrogated. Player characters who embrace slow, careful information gathering across many of the cult's cells can build up a fair idea of the cult's structure and aims, without alarming its members or their demonic sponsors.

Resolution

There are many ways in which the characters can deal with Abaissier's plots.

Combat

Once the characters are sure that a demon is causing the problem, they may draw it into direct confrontation. Abaissier is a demon of Pride. It underestimates the danger the player characters represent, and can be goaded into battle. Alternatively, player characters might draw out Fabrico instead. His destruction does not end the cult, but erodes its popular appeal. This forces the cult, over time, to return to a cellular, secretive structure.

Damaging the Cult

The Cult is fueled by many factors, and each of these can be undermined to weaken the flagellants. Pious character may dispute with the demon's charismatic dupes. If they can be humbled and returned to orthodox practice, the cult crumbles. Characters can help offset the difficulties that lead people to join the flagellation cult, such as famine and dis-

ease. Prophecies can be proven false.

A large enough lie can also end the cult. Most flagellants believe they are expiating the sins of the world, to bring an end to the punishments meted out by God. A false miracle, supported by supernatural effects, which suggests that God is satisfied and urges mortals to return to the regular ministrations of the Church, may disrupt the cult.

Comedy is also a powerful weapon against the cult. One of the historical attempts to rekindle the flagellation movement was destroyed when the procession's participants were mocked as stupid by the laypeople of Rome.

Chapter Nine

The Divine Abbot

Its sinuous bulk stretched throughout the converted scriptorium, nearly seventeen paces long. The scales on its head and neck were a pearly, iridescent gray, growing darker as one walked the length of its body, becoming the rusty brown of dried blood at the end of its tail. Two enormous eyes stared into the room, the deep, solid black of a shark, surrounded at their rims by a luminescent ring of gold. Its mouth hung open, disgorging a thick mist that filled the air with the scent of sandalwood and spilled out across the stones. Eight legs stretched out from its bulk in various states of repose, each one thicker and longer than a man's leg and tipped with a sharp, four-toed claw absently kneading the air or the ground as it spoke. The dragon's voice seemed simply to emanate from it, a

sound beginning deep within the creature and issuing unnervingly from its still, smoking maw.

— From the Journal of Acumenis
Ex Miscellanea

The Dragon Abbot is a long-term foe, one who doesn't immediately desire conflict with the magi of the saga, but seeks to gradually change their environment in ways they will likely consider hostile as the Divine aura increases and regional resources become scarce. Some might consider the dragon an opponent most appropriate in a high-fantasy setting, while

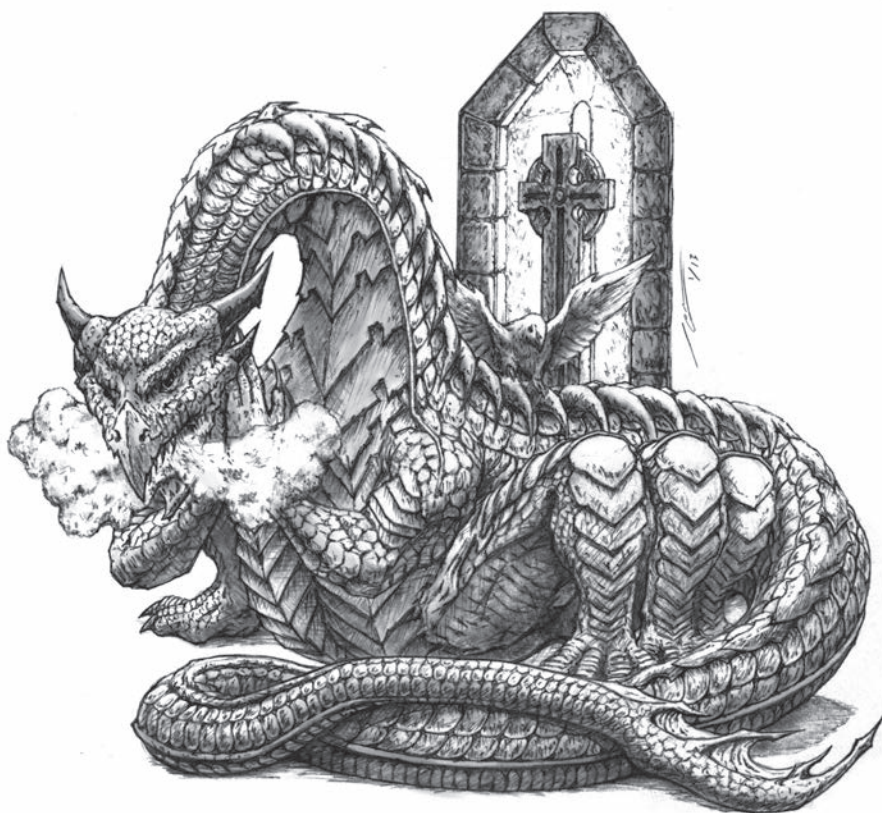
others may find it works better in a low-fantasy game where the exotic nature of the dragon stands out.

Background

Once merely a marauding serpent who gained a sliver of the knowledge and personalities of those it ate, Rasa slowly accumulated fragments of understanding and gained awareness until it became less a cunning predator and more a calculating opportunist. It has the memories of countless creatures and men, stretching back into antiquity. When it recognized this power to learn and incorporate some portion of what it consumed, the dragon ate fewer animals and began to ravage villages and caravans. After devouring a veteran of the Silk Road, its curiosity was piqued and the dragon journeyed east.

For years, it preyed on the travelers who braved the route between Rome and Cathay, learning a pastiche of a half-dozen languages and innumerable nuggets of information. Then, in a moment of chance, the dragon fell upon a missionary priest. Through him, the worm learned of the great cities and ports shining in the fading light of the Eastern Roman Empire. It left the Silk Road and went west. It dallied in places for a few decades to learn about a region and then moved on when curiosity struck. This habit only stopped centuries later, after it ate the abbot.

Over the course of those centuries, the dragon created its share of enemies. It once ate a Redcap lover of a Tremere, who then created an unsuccessful vexillation to hunt the beast. A jinn known as "Howling Knife of the Dunes" still harbors a deep enmity for



the dragon after it consumed a sorcerer who had purchased the jinn's protection, ruining the spirit's otherwise unblemished reputation. Stellatus (from *ArM5*, page 194) also hates the dragon with a passion, after it attacked and devastated a caravan Stellatus was accompanying. Stellatus' relationship with the merchant prevented him from transforming and immediately stopping the ambush, but the two dragons fought several times over the following decades.

Most recently, the dragon threatened to destroy and consume the occupants of a remote abbey. The pious abbot, a man of True Faith and selflessness, left the abbey to face the creature in an attempt to save his fellows and their home. He inadvertently succeeded through his sacrifice. When the dragon consumed him, it gained the understanding and Faith of the clergyman while experiencing an epiphany and a metamorphosis. It assumed the abbot's position and began to use its power and historical knowledge to further the will of God. The abbey's residents proclaimed the transformation a miracle and now devoutly protect and serve the Dragon Abbot and its plans.

Aims and Motivations

From within the incense-scented halls of its abbey, the Dragon Abbot works to expand and strengthen the Divine throughout the region, executing plans with the collected wisdom of a creature that has survived since the Great Flood. It thinks that increasing the power of the Divine brings people nearer to God and creates a better world, one closer to the beauty of Paradise where one can more easily live a worshipful life in accordance with God's laws. This view is slightly flawed given the dragon's secondhand understanding of the world, humanity, and the Divine, but its faith and nature are genuine. The dragon believes it can best accomplish this by improving the situation of the local population through the generosity of the Church, through the education of the people in crafts and profes-

sions, and by constructing greater works to glorify the power of God.

The Dragon Abbot cares little for the other powers in the area, except insofar as the creatures of the Faerie, Infernal, and Magic realms might be used to demonstrate the truth and potency of the Divine. In fact, it might even attempt to create conflicts with those creatures, trying to engineer situations where its fellow monks and friars can triumph over the very enemies it lured near. The dragon considers texts and artifacts of different realms suitable only for collection, seclusion, and eventual destruction, and sends out friars for this very purpose. Eventually, it hopes to relegate these other realms to insignificance, leaving only the brilliant glory of the Lord.

First Encounter

There are several ways the covenant might become aware of the presence of the Dragon Abbot. These encounters are meant to expose the player characters to

New Virtue: Font of Knowledge

Minor, Supernatural

Rasa's use of the *Taste of Memory* power over time has granted it the Minor Supernatural virtue Font of Knowledge. This virtue bestows the Ability Font of Knowledge 1. By succeeding in an Ability check (Intelligence + Font of Knowledge + stress die) against an Ease Factor of (6 plus (3 times number of uses of Font of Knowledge that day)) a creature with this Ability may attempt a task with any

untrained ability as if it possessed a score of 2. Failed attempts count towards the number of uses in a given day.

For example, if Rasa had previously used Font of Knowledge twice and attempted to use the Ability again to make a Magic Lore check, it would make an 4 Int (+4) + Ability (3) + stress die check against an Ease Factor of (6 + (3 x 2)), or 7 + stress die vs Ease Factor 12. If it succeeds, it may make the Magic Lore check.

Naming the Dragon Abbot

Naming the dragon depends on how personal you want to make the situation for the player characters. An antagonist simply known as "the abbot" places the focus on the enemy's position as an extremely active agent of the Divine. Giving the dragon an angelic name might highlight its transformation, while keep-

ing its previous name, "Rasa," accents its draconic form and history. The choice impacts the player characters' perception of their opponent, and may ultimately influence the course of action they choose when deciding how to deal with the abbot, so consider your group's likely response when first presenting this foe.

the creature's growing influence and impact on the region as it begins to implement its ideas. Encounters should leave the characters wondering what the abbot plans for the region and how their covenant fits within the plan. Additionally, this text often refers to "friars" or "monks," which might seem to imply the abbey has both friars and monks. Such an arrangement would be highly unusual, if even possible; abbeys are usually foundations of a given order, and no order in 1220 has both cloistered and mendicant regulars. Whether the abbey is made up of an order of friars or an order of monks (or an order of canons, or perhaps even some unusual combination) should be a decision made at the beginning of the saga.

Conflict Over Vis

The magi arrive at a vis site only to find signs of a recent campsite and an obvious trail heading back into more civilized areas. Following the evidence leads the player characters to a group of monks who harvested the vis for the abbot and now plan to rest

Rasa the Dragon Abbot

Divine Might: 50 (Vi)

Characteristics: Int +4, Per +2, Pre +8, Com +4, Str +14, Sta +8, Dex +3, Qik -2

Size: +8

Season: Winter

Age: n/a

Decrepitude: n/a

Confidence Score: 2 (10)

Virtues and Flaws: Magical Animal, Magical Monster, Senior Clergy (abbot); Greater Immunity (heat and fire); Font of Knowledge, Magic Sensitivity, Piercing Gaze, Premonitions, Second Sight, Self-Confident, Student of Dominion; Hunger for Any Magic,* Monastic Vows; Driven, Infamous (The Dragon Abbot may have one more Minor Virtue of your choice.)

* As Hunger for (Form), but Rasa may eat any vis.

Magical Qualities and Inferiorities: Gift of Speech, Greater Power (x3), Improved Abilities, Improved Attack (claws) (x2), Improved Damage (claws), Improved Defense (claws), Improved Fatigue, Improved Might (x8), Improved Powers (x3), Improved Soak (x6), Minor Virtue (Piercing Gaze), Minor Virtue (Premonitions), Minor Virtue (Magic Sensitivity), Ritual Powers (x6); Monstrous Appearance, Susceptible to Deprivation

Personality Traits: Driven +3, Pious +3, Curious +2, Hungry +2

Reputations: The Hungry Dragon Who Eats Travelers 4 (several different regions); The Reclusive Abbot of the Monastery 4 (local)

Combat:

Large Claws: Init -2, Attack +18, Defense +14, Damage +13

Large Fangs: Init -1, Attack +12, Defense +10, Damage +11

Constrict: Init -2, Attack +12, Defense +9, Damage n/a

Soak: +22

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-13), -3 (14-26), -5 (27-39), Incapacitated (40-52), Dead (53+)

Abilities: Area Lore: One Area 5 (trade routes), Area Lore 5: A Second Area (trade routes), Area Lore: A Third Area 4 (trade routes), Area Lore: Silk Road 5 (trade routes), Arabic (trade terms) 4, Artes Liberales 4 (rhetoric), Awareness 5 (humans), Brawl 6 (claws), Church Lore 2 (famous shrines), Civil and Canon Law 3 (mendicant orders), Concentration 3 (prayer), Divine Lore 4 (relics), Dominion Lore 4 (miracles), Etiquette 2 (scholars), Folk Ken 3 (scholars), Font of Knowledge 3 (lost battlefields), Guile 3 (scholars), Infernal Lore 2 (demons), Intrigue 3 (long-term schemes), Latin 4 (old dialects), Leadership 4 (scholars), (Living Language) 4, (Another Living Lan-

guage) 3, (Another Living Language) 2, (Another Language) 2, (Another Language) 2, Magic Lore 4 (pagan rituals), Magic Sensitivity 1 (spell effects), Philosophiae 3 (moral philosophy), Premonitions 2 (threats to its goals), Second Sight 2 (invisible material things), Stealth 4 (remaining unseen), Theology 4 (saints)

Powers:

Cleansing Flame, 2 points, Init +3, Ignem: Rasa breathes a gout of flame 12 paces wide by 12 paces tall by 55 paces long. Anything caught in its effect suffers a stress die +25 damage from the fire. R: Voice, D: Mom, T: Ind, Crlg 50 (Base 20, +2 Voice, +4 size): Greater Power (50 levels), Improved Powers, (partial, -3 Might cost)

Taste of Memory, 4 points, Init -10, Mentem: Rasa takes either a targeted memory of a specific action or event, 5 experience points of a skill, or a Virtue from a creature consumed. Skills are improved normally, but the consumed creature must be alive at the time of consumption. Virtues may only be taken once per year. Might spent in this manner for skills or virtues also reduces the dragon's Might Score and is recovered either by consuming 10 pawns of vis per point spent or resting for a season (and abstaining from the use of this power in this manner) in a Divine aura of 5 or greater. [Note: This is

at a local inn before returning to the abbey.

At the inn, it becomes evident the monks harvested several sites in the area, including some the magi either don't know about or know belong to other covenants. If approached in a friendly manner they refuse to hand over the vis, and their leader carries a small relic providing a modicum of Magic Resistance. Any attempt to coerce the group leads the monks to seek sanctuary in the local church after begging a member of the community to either seek out the resident lord or send word to the abbey for assistance. The peasant envoy is a decoy, as the group releases two of their

four pigeon messengers with their real plea for help. They refuse to leave the church until relief arrives, praying for protection and releasing another pigeon after two nights. One pigeon is kept in reserve, to be released as soon as the group is attacked.

The chance the abbot acts in time to save the monks depends on how far you place this vis site from the abbey, the sort of rescue the abbot dispatches, and how much respect the magi of your saga have for the sanctuary of a church. While the Divine aura may hamper spellcasting, it does little to stop forcible entry or wholesale destruction of the structure by mundane fire.

If you want the dragon's existence known from the start, the Dragon Abbot itself may liberate the monks. If you wish a more secretive abbot, the dragon may send a devoted knight and his retainers. In a strongly conspiracy-themed game, the dragon may not send help at all, knowing any response may betray its presence and preferring to investigate the aftermath. A quick response allows you to increase the tension of the situation rapidly, while a longer delay allows for moral debates and politicking between magi. It is best to decide the speed and manner of the abbot's rescue, if any, prior to beginning the adventure based on

Rasa the Dragon Abbot, cont'd

a non-Hermetic power, calculations provided for mechanical purposes only.] R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Ind PeMe 35 (Base 15, +1 Touch, +1 Cr requisite, +2 complexity): Ritual Power x2 (35 levels, -3 points)

Gift of Blood, 5 points, Init -12, Corpus: The dragon provides strength and stamina to those who drink its blood by granting the Toughness virtue until the creature reclaims its gift or the gifted individual dies. The Might points spent in this manner are not restored to the pool until the virtue is rescinded. Rasa may also use this power to heal itself of a Medium Wound or less. Might points spent on this healing effect are recovered normally. No Hermetic equivalent/CrAn 25(Base 20, +1 Touch): Ritual Power (25 levels)

Sign of Peace, 5 points, Init +3, Mentem: The abbot emits an incense-scented mist, filling the air within the building. The "mist" makes it almost impossible for creatures without Magic Resistance to commit violence or sin in the abbey. Those affected gain the Personality Traits Peaceful +4, Kind +3, and Obedient +3. Anyone attempting to act contrary to those traits must either fail an Ease Factor 9 check against the appropriate trait, or succeed in an opposing trait check with an Ease Factor of (9 + the appropriate effect trait bonus). For instance, a grog attempting to injure

someone in the abbey must either fail an Ease Factor 9 check with a stress die and a +4 bonus (for Peaceful) or succeed at an Ease Factor 13 (9 + 4) trait check for a trait like "Violent," "Angry," or "Vengeful." R: Voice, D: Moon, T: Structure ReMe 50 (Base 10, +2 Voice, +3 Moon, +3 Structure): Greater Power (50 levels), Improved Powers x2 (initiative)

Scale of Truth, 5 points, Init -7, Mentem: The dragon imbues one of its scales with the power to reveal falsehoods. While the scale is in plain sight, the eyes of those within the room who speak a lie or quibble flash red for a moment. Monks or friars aware of this item tend to speak looking down or with their eyes closed if they wish to conceal a fabrication, but always look their fellow conversationalist in the eye when listening to replies. The scale remains functional until the dragon rescinds the power, destroying the scale in the process. Might spent for this power cannot be regained until the power is rescinded. R: Sight, D: Sun, T: Room InMe 50 (Base 10, +3 sight, +2 sun, +2 room, +1 tethered to object): Greater Power (50 levels)

Gift of the Stigmata, 15 points, Init -26, Corpus: Rasa imbues a scale with the magic of this power and exchanges it with an individual for a lock of hair. Until the next full moon, any wounds

suffered by that person, while they possess the scale, are transmitted to the dragon. Rasa cannot Soak the attack, but does consider it against its scale of wounds. For instance, a blow with a long sword inflicting a damage total of 13 on a Size 0 friar would ordinarily be a Heavy Wound, but the dragon would only suffer a Light Wound. R: Arc, D: Moon, T: Ind CrCo 75 (Base 35, +4 Arcane Connection, +3 Moon, +1 Rego requisite) Ritual Power x3 (75 levels)

Equipment: None

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Vis: 10 pawns of Vim in Rasa's blood.

Appearance: The scales on its long, sinuous bulk begin as a pearly, iridescent gray growing darker along the length of its body, and becoming the rusty brown of dried blood at the end of its tail. Rasa is approximately seventeen paces long, including its eight-pace-long tail and its head, which is roughly three paces long. It sits low to the ground, like a crocodile, but is still just over two paces tall at the shoulder. Its large, gold-rimmed black eyes are nearly two palms across, and its teeth and claws are like daggers. It has eight legs and no wings. Note that Rasa has no power allowing it to change its shape to something humanoid. It can, however, contort and compress its body to squeeze through most common, human-sized doorways.

the nature of your troupe.

If you want to complicate matters further, other groups of magi arrive on the scene. They also tracked the clergy to this point and might not settle for just getting their own vis back. Some magi may see certamen as a reasonable resolution to the situation, while others feel dead monks are less likely to steal their vis a second time. If some of the other magi are aggressive and unconcerned about mundane casualties, they may choose to distract the player characters with debate or certamen while a magus and his grogs overrun and kill the monks.

How the characters respond to the situ-

ation greatly affects how the dragon views their covenant, as it consumes the pigeons to learn how the event passed and who was involved, regardless of the outcome. Those who kill the monks soon find their covenants aggressively targeted by the abbot's plans, and other covenants may even fall as a demonstration of Rasa's power.

The Friars Approach

This encounter presumes the covenant does not have a church. However, it could

be easily modified. The monks could ask to improve an existing church, or, if the church exists outside the covenant's *Aegis* or has an *Aegis* too weak to prevent the dragon's entry, Rasa might arrive during an evening storm and "accidentally" set fire to the church, warranting the reconstruction.

A rich man (possibly the local noble) dies without heirs. In his last will and testament and in conjunction with a donation to the local diocese (whose bishop approves the request), he grants the abbey the funds to rebuild a church that once stood in or near the covenant grounds. Perhaps he knew the covenant, and felt

the scholars needed a church for their community. Perhaps he had been considering rebuilding the church for some time, or maybe he simply wanted to see the church restored as a part of his legacy and respected the abbey's reputation for capable craftsmen. For whatever reason, representatives of the abbey arrive with their official writ and begin preparations to reconstruct the church. The local bishop and most of the nobility support the plan.

The friars seek contributions from the covenant if they appear wealthy and self-sufficient, questioning why the community had not already rebuilt the church. If the covenant seems to maintain a subsistence operation, or obviously lacks infrastructure, the clergy offer to expand their project to include additional buildings. They also offer to take some of the covenant's children as apprentices to their craftsmen, or assist with the community's tax obligations if a few of the covenant contribute labor. Regardless, it becomes apparent that the friars intend to establish a new congregation centered on this building.

How will the magi deal with the situation? Can they impersonate or manufacture an heir, and demand that the priests build in another, more deserving location? Can they convince the bishop that such a structure would be more appropriate in a larger town in his diocese? What if they sabotage the construction efforts? Any resistance to the church's construction confuses and frustrates the friars, who thought they

were helping improve a community. They do not aggressively oppose the covenant's attempts to move or halt the project, but they alert the abbot, drawing the dragon's attention to the activity. This, in turn, leads to increased scrutiny and conflict with the dragon, as it continues with its plans.

A Spiritual Encounter

In a similar vein to the previous encounter, a cognizant Faerie or a Magical nature spirit arrives, attempting to peacefully approach a group of covenant folk or grogs. It is too weak to cross the *Aegis of the Hearth*, and asks either for permission to enter or for the magi to come converse with it. The creature points out the growing Divine aura of the abbey and the surrounding towns, saying that this seems much more aggressive than in past years, and threatens to overrun its home. It offers an exchange with the magi if they assist it, identifying a previously unknown vis site, establishing an alliance, or offering treasure it has or knows of if they can find a way to reduce the Dominion and restore the creature's home.

The creature is desperate and disappointed should the magi refuse, seeking out other nearby covenants or attempting to convince bandits or outlaws to assist it. One of these groups agrees and begins to harass and intimidate the community. This activity

brings the attention of the local lord and the region's Quaesitor. Either investigation has an impact on the covenant, even if it does not immediately fall under suspicion.

If the magi agree, they find that the townsfolk have begun construction of a new church and graveyard on the site of the creature's glade. The old standing stone is being reworked into a great cross, and the thick woods are serving as the construction material. A friar of the abbey oversees the work, accompanied by a small detachment of soldiers from a nearby noble. They made a donation to the local lord and gained permission to provide the small community with a church — something it previously lacked. The friar happily describes how the abbot even intends to donate a bell to the parish and provide a relic of a local saint for the altar.

How do the characters respond to these developments? Do they seek out the creature that approached them, now interested in alliance? Do they attempt to destroy or capture the creature and eliminate any threats it may have created? What do they think of this new construction, so close to their own covenant grounds?

Failing Resources

The magi decide to expand their covenant, building their own scriptorium or adding a craft the local abbey specializes



How to Incorporate the Dragon

Rasa the Dragon Abbot is intended to be an antagonist who operates in the background, slowly increasing the Divine aura through its machinations. How would a storyguide go about implementing this kind of story arc?

First, consider the dragon's arc secondary in relation to another arc, and plan to use all four of the previously suggested stories, starting with "Conflict Over Vis." Then identify points where it might be appropriate to pause in the primary arc. At those points, offer the magi the hook for the dragon-associated stories and allow them to be pursued without negatively impacting the primary storyline. It is a good idea to keep two or three stories from the primary arc between stories in the dragon arc, in order to give an impression of the larger scale on which the abbot makes its plans.

For instance, if one were to use the Baron Geoffroi d'Arques (Chapter Two) as the primary arc, the initial stories might begin with the strange leper and progress to the Baron's acquisition of Infernal texts. At that point, the magi might

experience the "Conflict Over Vis" story on their return. Continuing with the primary arc, the Baron might offer a tournament and a hunt, which would lead into "A Spiritual Encounter." After these stories, the magi might notice vis sites produce less vis, and the Divine aura in the countryside has slightly increased. As Geoffroi's interest in magic increases, he might make his offer have to the magi and the Infernal goetic join his council after the fall of the stone from the sky — although it simplifies matters to have the stone's impact indirectly damage the church, perhaps through an overturned lamp. These events lead into "The Friars Approach" story, and with the repairs the Divine aura surges further. This increasing Divine aura combined with the dampening Magical aura drives the hedge wizards to join Geoffroi, and leads to the attempted theft of the Parma followed by a possible demonic incident. These continued distractions and Geoffroi's neglect of his realm cause the populace to turn more and more to the Dragon Abbot's charity. Seeking additional resources to

combat the Infernally tainted events, and perhaps looking to explain the growing aura, the magi might approach the abbey, leading to the "Failing Resources" story.

In this way, you incorporate the dragon within the saga while blending its story into the primary arc. One could continue braiding the stories further, utilizing the ideas of the abbey-sponsored fairs, Quaesitor investigations stemming from the baron's failed council, the abbot's rivalry with the jinn or Stellatus, the concerns of neighboring covenants regarding the growing Divine aura, or the increased mundane resources being redirected to abbey projects. Depending on the covenant's initial interactions with the dragon or the manner in which they observe its handiwork, the magi may consider Rasa a potential spiritual advisor or Divine ally. Then, either when the troupe recognizes the impact of the dragon, or when you deem it an appropriate challenge, a story arc focused on the abbot can take the primary focus as the magi decide how to handle the newly recognized issue.

in providing. Historically, the priests had always cooperated with the covenant, finding them decent neighbors and good customers. It is possible the monks even permitted the covenant to utilize their modest library or bookbinding workshop. Unfortunately, when the magi approach this time, they find many of the abbey's facilities closed and their presence unwelcome. Rumors in the surrounding community might even reveal that the dragon had threatened the abbey, but the abbot fended it off at a great cost to his health. Now bedridden and healing, the abbot closed much of the abbey to outsiders, keeping them in a small, detached portion of the grounds. The windows of the scriptorium are sealed with parchment, and there is no access to the abbey's library. At the same time, the abbot ordered the start of several new construction projects and sent friars abroad on special tasks.

This encounter has the greatest potential to reveal the nature of the abbot early in the story arc, as curious magi

decide to seek out the details of the encounter between the previous abbot and the dragon. The nearby battlefield might yield Arcane Connections that prove useful later. Attempts at scrying within the abbey might show glimpses of the dragon. The magi might try to seek out one of the dispatched friars, hoping to gain information from him on the road and learn what

new intrigues have been set in motion. How the magi choose to respond to this changing situation clearly sets the tenor of the relationship between them and the creature. Will they attempt to force an invitation to see the abbot or infiltrate the abbey grounds in order to confirm their suspicions? Is it possible they might attack, hoping to catch the dragon unawares?

What Sort of Items?

What kind of magical items or relics might the dragon display? The storyguide could introduce any number of non-Hermetic items from *Ancient Magic* — like Canaanite necromantic clay tablets, Defixio plates, ancient fetish fertility figures, pieces of automata, or lost texts by magi investigating any of these magics. Hermetic devices the dragon owns are generally practical, providing small effects no greater than

three magnitudes for tasks like moving stones, clearing brush, or other maintenance jobs. Small relics might include thorns of the Crown of Thorns, fragments of cloth from the robe of Jesus, slivers of the True Cross, or the bones of various saints. The items should elicit interest from magi in the covenant, possibly associated with their specialties, in order to draw them into conflict with the monks.

Friar or Monk of the Abbey

These men represent the bulk of the servants of the dragon, but only a few know the true nature of their abbot. Many believe that their original abbot defeated the dragon, but suffered terrible wounds requiring his sequestered recovery. The senior priests know the truth, but maintain the fiction that the abbot receives visions while bedridden and healing.

Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre +1, Com +1, Str +1, Sta +2, Dex +1, Qik +2

Size: 0

Age: 34 (34)

Warping Score: 0 (4)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Mendicant Friar or Priest; Clear Thinker, Improved Characteristics, Well-Traveled* or Long-Winded; Monastic Vows; Compassionate

* Indicates choice for an abbey member who has ventured out on tasks for the abbot.

Personality Traits: Pious +3, Dedicated +2, Loyal +2

Reputations: Trustworthy 2 (local)

Combat:

Dodge: Init +3, Attack n/a, Defense +4, Damage n/a

Club: Init +3, Attack +4, Defense +3, Damage +4

Staff: Init +4, Attack +6, Defense +6, Damage +3

Soak: +2

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Area Lore: Native Area 3 (towns and villages), Area Lore: Travel Area 3* (travel routes), Artes Liberales 2 (rhetoric), Athletics 2 (hiking), Brawl 2 (Dodge), Charm 2 (peasants), Chirurgy 2* (sword wounds), Church Lore 3 (local diocese), Civil and Canon Law 1 (regulations for the clergy), Dominion Lore 3 (saints), Etiquette 3 (Church), Folk Ken 6 (members

of the diocese), Intrigue 2 (parishes), Leadership 3 (preaching), Latin 4 (religious phrases), Living Language 4 (conversation), Native Language 5, Profession or Craft 3 (appropriate to position in abbey), Stealth 1* (hiding in brush), Theology 2 (scripture)

* Indicates choice for a friar.

Equipment: Monk's habit, sandals, walking stick (club)*

* Indicates choice for a friar

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: A typical friar or monk in a woolen robe.

The abbot sends members of the abbey on tasks requiring them to go into or beyond the local area surrounding the abbey. It also relies on them to handle the daily needs of the abbey and its maintenance. The abbey has three or four senior brothers, who oversee operations. Use the statistics for the priest (See **ArM5**, page 23) or Brother Julian from *Art & Academe* (page 85), if available.

The dragon is willing to cooperate with the magi, considering their presence a great gift from God, a resource capable of facilitating more effective execution of its plans. In this scenario, the dragon may offer to share its wisdom with the magi, negotiating a relationship where the covenant takes up the role of recovering relics, items, and vis for the abbey in exchange for a share of the salvage. This situation changes over time as the dragon demands more and more, dictated by its growing needs and the importance of its cause. The added stress combined with the increased Divine aura that begins to expand from the abbey and impinge upon the covenant might turn the one-time ally into a very close foe.

avoiding direct confrontation unless no other option remains. It operates in a very strategic and clandestine manner in its efforts to impact an area with generosity and kindness — not violently opposing covenants, but improving the Divine nature of an area and turning it increasingly hostile to the Magically oriented magi. It does this by sending out emissaries on specific missions to recover lost relics, unearth secreted ancient hoards, and build and improve local churches, and thereby expand the influence of the Divine.

Given its wide and varied knowledge garnered from the memories of thousands of people, the dragon often remembers the resting place of an important relic it hadn't previously recognized. Armed with these locations, its servants depart the abbey to recover the religious artifacts. The abbey certainly hands the objects over to the local bishop to be appropriately stored or distributed, but not before the dragon orders monks to parade the items through the area, inspir-

ing faith and promoting the good works of saints. It does this to build community spirit, which often rallies around a relic, and to allow the common people to benefit from the presence of the relic, be it miraculous or mundane.

Over the course of countless raids and ambushes, the dragon also built up a number of hoards, one for every lair as it traveled. Each one is packed with sacks and chests of coinage, jewelry, and weapons, plus whatever objects within its victims' possession interested it. Before the creature departed each lair, it buried these troves for retrieval at a later point. Now, when it knows it will require a windfall to fund a particular project, the dragon sends a member of the abbey out to collect what the brother can. Knowing these journeys could take considerable time due to the distances the servant must travel, the abbot takes this into account when designing its plans. A trusted clergyman or a penitent knight is usually given both a mule and a gift of stamina

Methods

The Dragon Abbot is a reformed evil-doer, saintly and enigmatic in demeanor,

from the dragon's blood to ensure he can recover the treasure and make the return journey alone.

The abbot then uses the riches to build and renovate churches, fund missions, and foremost, improve the lot of local communities. New and refurbished churches reinforce the importance of the Church as an organization, and through them, the importance of the Divine. Church construction draws the congregation together and

provides opportunities for employment while possibly improving infrastructure, like bridges, walls, or wells. New missions provide succor to the poor while attracting eager labor and establishing new footholds for expanding the abbey's reach and influence, while also bringing greater glory to God. Additionally, a share of this recovered wealth is spent bettering the lives of the common folk. The dragon manages this by sponsoring seasonal fairs (*City and*

Guild, page 106 has more on fairs) at the abbey and then quietly refunding table fees to peasants, paying for repairs on community goods like plows and wagons, or funding the purchase of such equipment or livestock when none exists. Additionally, excess monies are used to sponsor apprenticeships with craftsmen and professionals, paying for the necessary costs with the understanding that the future craftsmen will return to their home regions and add

The Prior of the Abbey

The prior is one of three kinds of man. One, he's a sincere man inspired by a miracle, the Peter to the dragon's messiah. Two, he's a pragmatist who has nothing recognizable as faith, but sees the potential in having an actual miracle to show people. Three, he's mentally unbalanced after confronting a Divine act, but since it involves a dragon and an ongoing miracle, he could act either way, becoming Paul or Judas. As a potential betrayer he continues to serve, gathering records, clandestinely requesting help, and learning its weaknesses and vulnerabilities to aid those who would actually kill the dragon.

Characteristics: Int +2, Per +1, Pre +1, Com +2, Str +0, Sta +2, Dex -1, Qik -2

Size: 0

Age: 43 (43)

Warping Score: 0 (2)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Senior Clergy; Monastic Vows; Intuition, Regular, Temporal Influence, Vow

Personality Traits: Organized +3, Calculating +2, Dedicated +2

Reputations: Trustworthy 4 (local), Wise 4 (regional)

Combat:

Dodge: Init +3, Attack n/a, Defense +4, Damage n/a

Soak: +2

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Area Lore: Native Area 3 (towns and villages), Artes Liberales 3, Athletics 1 (hiking), Brawl 2 (Dodge), Carouse 1 (remaining sober), Charm 3 (clergy), Church Lore 4 (local diocese), Civil and Canon Law 4 (regulations for the clergy), Dead Language: Latin 5, Dominion Lore 3 (saints), Etiquette 4 (Church), Folk Ken 4 (member of the diocese), Intrigue 3 (parishes), Leadership 3 (preaching), Living Language 5 (conversation), Native Language 5, Profession 3 (autocrat), Theology 3

Equipment: Monk's habit, sandals, walking stick

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: A typical friar or monk in a woolen robe.

Priors act in the abbot's stead, performing any tasks deemed necessary. They handle interaction with outside officials, supervision of monks, operations of the abbey, and any other activities directed by the abbot. This prior might be friendly and genial, brusque and perfunctory, or distant and calculating. He may be the loyal gatekeeper or the scheming manipulator, but he performs his duties as prior with excellence.

STORY SEED: THE TRAITOR WITHIN, THE TRAITOR WITHOUT

The dragon cannot change its shape, although it can squeeze and contort his shape to fit through doorways, and so several of the monks know their new ab-

bot is an unnatural creature. It's also true dragons are widely considered symbols of evil in most of Europe. Despite both Rasa's miraculous transformation and the epiphany that saved their home and lives through the previous abbot's sacrifice, a member of the abbey decides there is no way the creature truly changed its nature. After a monk discovers the abbot is a dragon, he decides the beast must be in league with Hell — after all, it ate the saintly abbot — and runs to the magi for help. This churchman might bring along extensive descriptions, Arcane Connections, or even (possibly incorrect) details of the dragon's plans. He might remain with the covenant, assisting with further planning and operations or acting as the constant reminder of the threat lying unresolved within the abbey. Or the monk might return to the abbey, playing the part of a double agent and inside man, feeding them more information and lying in wait for the magi to attack and finish the dragon's rule.

Some clever leaders cultivate double agents intentionally, and without the betrayer's knowledge — using them to feed misinformation to foes and create traps that cannot usually be discovered through the spy, who believes the intelligence to be genuine. Has the dragon deceived both this monk and the covenant? Does the dragon believe the magi are compromised Infernal agents? Is it attempting to lure the magi and their resources out, where it can better destroy them without collateral damage or suspicion?

Penitent Knight

Encountered while attempting to recover an item or harvest a vis site for the dragon, the knight does not know the abbot's true nature. He only seeks absolution for a wrong committed while traveling, and believes completing this task will provide it.

Characteristics: Int 0, Per -1, Pre +1, Com 0, Str +2, Sta +2, Dex +2, Qik +1

Size: 0

Age: 26 (26)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Knight; Wealthy; Affinity with Single Weapon, Improved Characteristics, Tough, Warrior; Oath of Fealty; Continence, Pious, Poor Student, Vow (complete the abbot's task), Wrathful

Personality Traits: Pious +2, Wrathful +2

Reputations: Pious 2 (local); Wrathful 2 (region)

Combat:

Dodge: Init +1, Attack n/a, Defense +5,

Damage n/a

Lance and shield (mounted): Init +3, Attack +14, Defense +12, Damage +10

Long sword and shield (mounted): Init +3, Attack +15, Defense +14, Damage +11

Long sword and shield: Init +3, Attack +12, Defense +11, Damage +8

Mace and shield: Init +2, Attack +10, Defense +9, Damage +10

Soak: +14

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Area Lore: Native Area 4 (castles), Area Lore: Travel Area 3 (travel routes), Athletics 4 (armored), Awareness 1 (battle), Brawl 4 (dodge), Chirurgy 1 (sword wounds), Etiquette 3 (court), Great Weapon 4 (lance), Hunt 3 (boar), Intrigue 2 (court), Leadership 4 (small groups), Latin 1 (religious phrases),

Living Language 4 (commands), Native Language 5 (commands), Ride 3 (battle), Single Weapon 5 (Long sword), Theology 2 (scripture)

Equipment: War horse, full chain mail, heater shield, lance, long sword, mace

Encumbrance: 2 (4)

Appearance: This lone knight wears a black surcoat over his armor and carries himself with a stoic sense of purpose. His gear and mount appear to be of good quality, and he otherwise appears as a typical knight leading a group of warriors.

The knight wears a black surcoat until the completion of his quest to reflect his sinful state. Extremely dedicated to his goals, nothing will dissuade him. He travels with a group of men-at-arms; use the statistics for one grizzled veteran (ArM5, page 21) and four standard soldiers (ArM5, page 22).

to their local economies when their education is complete. The abbot prefers this sort of assistance because of its long-term nature and community focus.

Finally, the abbot realizes the importance of good intelligence. Utilizing its *Taste of Memory* power, the dragon reaps great benefits through the consumption of trained birds — by eating the birds when they return, it learns what the animal saw or heard, what the conditions somewhere were, and what the relative strength of an enemy group was. Because the birds are naturally trained and non-magical, there is no interference from the Parma (although neither the birds nor the dragon know of the Parma). In order to execute this strategy, the abbot orders the monks to maintain pigeon aviaries. The birds also provide supplemental income and foodstuffs. Occasionally, the dragon eats dogs or cats for this purpose, and offers a small prayer of thanksgiving before doing so.

The dragon does not dine with guests or travelers, but asks an elder monk or the prior to convey its apologies and dine in

its place. No one lies for the abbot, they simply state he is unavailable or unable to dine at that time. The prior acting as the abbot's proxy handles other duties traditionally performed by the abbot, such as inspecting sleeping quarters. The monks and the abbey's leadership, and perhaps even those supervising or just outranking the abbot, such as the archdeacon, revere the dragon as miraculous, cooperating to maintain the dragon's secrecy and execute its plans. If anyone becomes overly curious or intent to see the dragon unbidden, and the creature's unwanted discovery appears imminent — despite the effects of the dragon's *Sign of Peace* power or the machinations of the abbot's supporters — a plan exists to have the abbot "die" while a trusted elder monk or the prior is elected abbot to serve as the dragon's public representative. Should the local nobility somehow attempt to influence the election of a new abbot, the monastery's members don't contest the results but work to bring the replacement abbot into the fold while the dragon remains hidden either nearby or in the monastery's cellars.

Investigation

The spread and increase of Divine auras, which negatively impact Magic auras, are the most likely events that draw magi to investigate the dragon's behavior and discover its existence. Local Quaesitors or Hoplites performing their own investigations may approach the covenant. Magi working at the very edge of their abilities and in correspondence with peers may notice the effects first, or the mystery could be an issue assigned to the magi at the Tribunal gathering.

The encroaching Divine would likely anger any Faerie creatures in the region, who may seek out the magi to determine the cause of the growing aura. This might present the covenant with opportunities to better establish ties or alliances with local fae, or introduce fae-blooded characters sent to cooperate with Hermetic investigations. Such an alliance might even serve as a springboard to unrelated or tangential adventures, as the magi explore possible leads within the surrounding faerie communities.

In a similar manner, a waxing Divine influence would drive local Infernal creatures to seek places with more sinful and less penitent inhabitants — like some covenfolk or grogs who are known for their violent, rough, and sinful lifestyles. The fact some covenants lack a regular priest makes their garrisons even more vulnerable to suggestion, corruption, or possession by Infernal agents. A strong *Aegis of the Hearth* may keep demons from entering directly, but a demon possessing a member of the covenfolk or grog turb may still infiltrate the grounds. Those Infernals unable to ride the covenant's servants might lurk just outside the *Aegis*, causing incidents and harassing suitable targets as they go about their business in the outside world. Magi are likely to simply eradicate such invaders, and it may take several incidents over the course of many seasons before a demon is interrogated prior to its destruction or banishment.

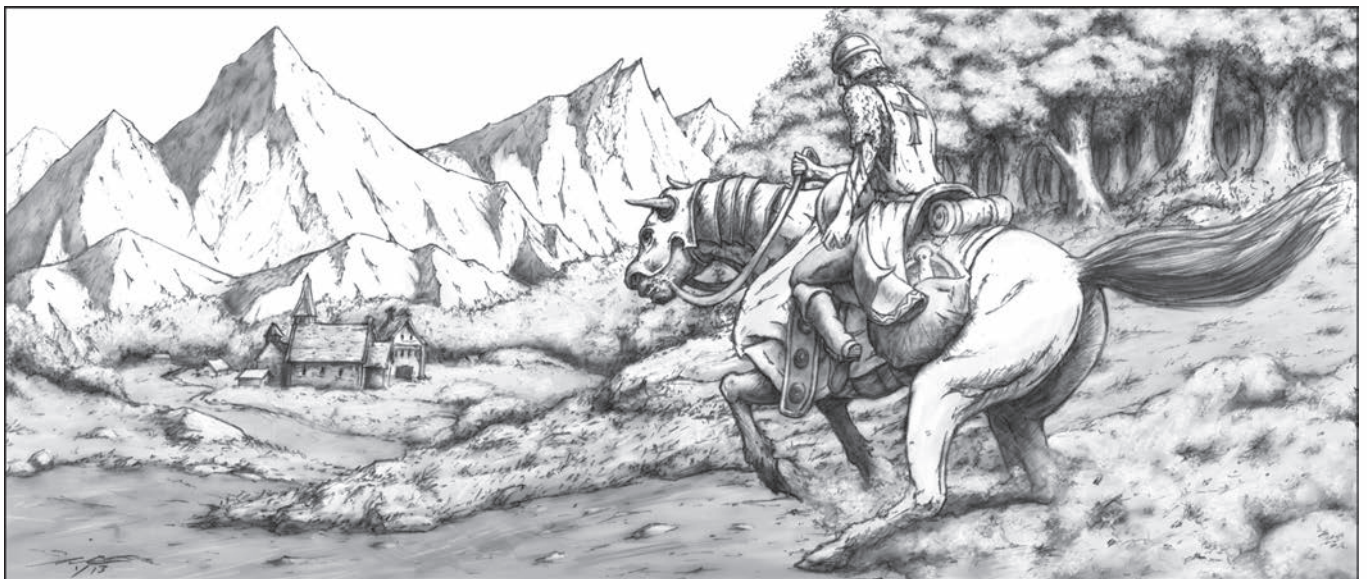
Possible hooks aren't limited to creatures. A growing Divine aura might reduce or eliminate both claimed and uncontested vis sources, and create friction between player covenants and other covenants in the region. For example, the magi arrive to harvest the vis only to find a certamen challenger waiting for them. Victory may earn them the vis they rightfully own, but some civil interaction is necessary in order to learn what is driving other magi to attempt resource poaching. Multiple incidents may create a matter for debate

at Tribunal, as the members of the Order argue about the effect — the disappearing sites — rather than its cause — the growing power of the Divine.

As the abbot's plans progress, the influx of wealth and devout craftsmen into the region likely begins to change the nature of the surrounding communities. As magi and covenfolk travel throughout the area, they may notice this transformation. At first, they may not care about the arrival of additional masons or carpenters, or the new projects funded by the abbey's coin. However, this is just a more subtle barometer of the increasing Divine aura, as the additional infrastructure and improved quality of life encourages the population to greater acts of devotion and worship. The covenant may not immediately connect the cause and effect until they attempt to acquire some of these craftsmen for their own projects, or negotiate the education of apprentices and find them unwilling to train or work for anyone but the abbey. What might initially seem an annoyance may become a more desperate situation as aspects of the covenant fall into disrepair, or as the magi are forced to take time away from important research or personal projects to travel significant distances in order to obtain the expertise they need.

This monopolization of labor and resources could also cause friction between the local nobility and the abbey. A clever nobleman, or one who has previously cooperated with the covenant, might seek

out the covenant in frustration over the growing power of a secretive and seemingly incorruptible abbot who operates through subordinates and grows more popular every day. The magi might be asked to clandestinely act against the abbey in exchange for some form of limited autonomy or relief from regular feudal obligations — the sort of freedom nearly every covenant eagerly desires may be too great a reward to ignore. Only after they accept the arrangement and put their own plans in motion will they begin to discover the scope of the dragon's actions and the nature of their foe. Worse yet, the nobleman is unlikely to accept failure, and what had initially begun as a simple plot to quickly "deal" with a Church official may spiral into something far greater as the frustrated lord threatens the magi with civil punishment for unacceptably slow progress. If the magi are reckless, this situation carries the additional possibility of the covenant being brought up on charges at Tribunal for serving as court wizards to a mundane lord in violation of the Hermetic Code. The player characters must carefully conceal their operations not only from the Dragon Abbot but other members of the Order in the area, who may arrive to discuss the changing environment with their neighbors. The fading Magic aura could become the least pressing of their worries as they face an impending trial at Tribunal, either attempting to find a Quaesitor advocate willing to take their case, or



preparing their own defense. Both options potentially distract the characters from the still-growing influence of the Dragon Abbot and from their own research.

The abbot also has the potential to limit a covenant's access to other resources — grogs may take on vows and go on crusade, regional supplies are redirected for abbey construction projects, covenant folk might desert for pilgrimages, scholars and craftsmen refuse to work with men of questionable repute, and texts once available for loan are gathered and locked away deep within the abbey.

Additionally, the abbot eagerly seeks to recover relics and non-Hermetic magic items from ancient sites and battlefields. It often dispatches abbey clergy for this purpose. When possible, the abbey safely uses these devices on behalf of the local populations, presenting them as Divine objects and demonstrating how they are "really" tools of God. If the very nature of the item prevents this use, the dragon either destroys the item or locks it away. These quests are not the only missions that servants of the abbey undertake; the dragon must consume vis due to its magical nature, and sends trusted friars to many lesser vis sources with instructions for harvesting the vis. The creature recognizes that, if successful, it will eventually destroy the very sites it needs to survive.

Through everything, the dragon views opposition by the player characters as a test of its faith and determination sent by God, never blaming them for their actions.

the characters could extol the importance of a distant pilgrimage, or discuss the insights and enlightenment only possible in an ascetic hermitage far from any trace of civilization. These possibilities require blunting the creature's missionary zeal and engaging it in regular discussion — a task that might prove difficult for a magus not seeking a more pious path or one who isn't a dedicated student of the Divine. Once this is accomplished, the dragon could be convinced to undertake a pilgrimage to a distant but significant religious site like Jerusalem or the Sea of Galilee in the Levant, the great library of Saint Catherine's Monastery at Mount Sinai, the Way of St. James and Santiago de Compostela in Spain, or the Canterbury Cathedral in England. This trip effectively removes the dragon from the saga as it decides to remain at its chosen destination, but might produce later consequences as investigators from the dragon's new home come to the Tribunal seeking the creature's origin.

Depending on the time frame and location of the saga, the abbot might be convinced the most Christ-like action it could undertake would be its own sacrifice on behalf of its adopted congregation. An impending attack of pagan Mongols, or of a conquest-minded army like the Fourth Crusade or an expansionist Moorish or Arab force, might serve as a sufficient threat to motivate the dragon. This becomes much more possible if the magi take the time to gather evidence and eyewitness testimony of the merciless and destructive aftermath of such an attack, appealing to the dragon's growing sense of selflessness.

order to accomplish this task, magi need to damage the dragon's support structures, such as the monks who perform many of the tasks, the abbey's supply infrastructure, which maintains those monks, and the abbey's means of profit, which funds the monks' operations.

Because they travel abroad, the clergy become the easiest targets for the magi. Grogs and paid agents might ambush them on the road, in towns, and while completing tasks for the creature. Depending on the nature of the people assigned to such attacks, there may be failures as holy men beg for mercy or assassins simply lose their desire to kill a man of God. There might be a negative impact on the region's reputation as disappearances mount or the local populace discovers slaughtered corpses.

Another option, relying more on subterfuge than violence, is to impersonate the monks and perform outrageous or distasteful acts among the people living around the abbey, such as stealing in the name of the abbot, bouts of drunken debauchery and rabble-rousing, or plain violence. This also requires agents with questionable morals, willing to not only terrorize innocents, but to masquerade as servants of God while they do so. Aspects of the plan might become prematurely revealed if any members of the operation attend confession nearby.

The magi might also conspire to use the Church organization itself against the abbey and the monks. Other members within the Church hierarchy might somehow get the idea that the abbot and his monks are fomenting heresy, or that they have violated canon law in some way — maybe by stealing from the diocese, through fornication, or by bearing false witness. Such violations could cause conflict as priests are accused of civil crimes such as murder, and invoke their right to be tried by Church courts, thus creating friction with local authorities or possibly drawing the unwanted attention of higher-ranked and less understanding Church officials to the abbey. This forces the dragon to expend resources either resolving or concealing the issue. If the dragon's true nature is revealed, the Church might well decide to remove it as abbot; it is, after all, not even a human being.

The land surrounding the abbey also

Resolution

There are two broad ways in which the problems with Rasa can be resolved.

The Soft Way

The least-violent options for dealing with the negative effects of the Dragon Abbot might involve simply persuading the creature to leave the area. After establishing a peaceful rapport with the monks and learning the abbot's nature,

The Hard Way

Charging the abbey and engaging the dragon in combat is implausible for almost all magi, especially given the dragon's Might combined with both the Divine aura of the place (the abbey and scriptorium should have a Divine aura of 4 or 5) and the subsequent mundane and Hermetic consequences of attacking a house of God. Covenants seeking a permanent end to the dragon need to consider using the abbot's tactics against it, to reduce its power base and draw it into the open. In

presents a viable target for magi. By interfering with the abbey's crops, the characters can cause food shortages and impact the raw materials used for trade good production. *Wizard's Autumn* (PeHe 15) is low enough level to allow most magi to affect a field, as is a spell to salt the earth for a moon duration (CrTe 15, Base 3, +1 Touch, +3 Moon) even with a Divine aura present. A specialist might have a high enough casting total to use spells like *Clouds of Rain and Thunder* or *Clouds of Summer Snow* (CrAu 25). A very experienced magus would be needed to summon the *Curse of the Ravenous Swarm* (CrAn 45), especially since the abbey has an aura greater than 3. A covenant might be able to disguise such spells as natural phenomena, at least the first few times. Mundane tactics, such as fire or trampling beasts, could be just as effective but they blatantly alert the abbot to the fact that someone means the abbey harm.

Livestock could suffer a similar fate, with debilitating spell effects still possible at low levels — like destroying the wool of a flock of sheep (PeAn15, Base 3, +2 Voice, +2 Group). Specialists might be able to cause cows or goats to stop giving milk or chickens to stop laying eggs (PeAn 25, Base 5, +2 Voice, +2 Group). Reavers, bandits, or even Mentem-affected locals could be encouraged to steal or poach livestock. In a similar vein, magi might drive natural or magical predators into the area, using them to kill and harass the abbey's animals while the monks waste time and effort trying to protect them.

Another option for limiting the abbey's resources lies in disrupting its trade with outside customers. Covenants could choose to damage or curse goods leaving the abbey, making them impossible to sell and thereby denying the monks the income necessary to meet their obligations.

Depending on the monetary reserves of the abbey, this tactic may take some time to seriously impair operations. Possible variations on it might include hexing merchants coming to trade with the monks, using Mentem magics like *Pains of Perpetual Worry* (CrMe 20) to sour their mood or make them greedy, or *Panic of the Trembling Heart* (CrMe 15) to chase them away, or a moon-duration *Recollection of Memories Never Quite Lived* (MuMe 5) to make them believe they were cheated during their last transaction at the abbey. Those preferring a mundane approach might feed information about the departure times and dates of trade good shipments to bandits or unscrupulous local lords, and allow them to do the covenant's dirty work.

Finally, once the dragon has been lured from the abbey, or for those looking to challenge it directly, there is the possibility of seeking out a dragonslayer or another dragon to attack the abbot. A dragonslayer may only need the bare evidence of the dragon's existence, believing the worm has deceived the monks. Armed with his own righteous belief, such a proxy champion might weaken the dragon enough for the covenant to finish the job. Another dragon could fulfill this role equally well, and even prove to be a better combatant. However, another dragon might also require more convincing or some sort of compensation before it would be willing to attack.

This way, likely through a combination of tactics, the covenant could frustrate the abbot's plans sufficiently to draw it out into the open, forcing it to deal directly with the threat presented by the player characters. By carefully gathering Arcane Connections beforehand and negating its greatest defense — the spell-dampening effect of the Divine aura within the abbey — the magi would stand a good chance of defeating this unusual foe.

The Enemy of My Enemy

Some may decide the best way to eliminate the abbot is to manipulate another foe into performing the deed. Magi might convince or lead another nearby covenant into striking down the dragon. They could search out the eternal enemy of the Divine and find demons willing to attack the abbot. The covenant could reveal Rasa's true nature to higher ranking and unsympathetic Church officials, like an archbishop. They might galvanize the whole of the Tribunal into an action against the creature, arguing that the dragon constitutes a unique and obvious threat to the Order of Hermes. Or faeries might be convinced to take part in a grand story involving the dragon's death. Any such allies are dependent upon the creatures and groups near the covenant and the diplomatic efforts of the magi.

Whatever the nature of the foe they enlist to eliminate the dragon, there is the chance the magi have leapt from the proverbial frying pan and into the fire. Storyguides should carefully consider the lingering consequences of involving a third party to deal with the dragon. Quaesitors may not leave, wondering what other issues lie hidden and require attention. Clergy may instigate small-scale crusades or purges. Demons would not stop at removing the dragon, but continue to subject the region to their evil machinations. Fae may feel their role has evolved from the triumphant hero into the despotic conqueror. Truly deviant magi may attempt to use the dragon as a means of eliminating various supernatural threats they cannot handle themselves. The consequences of such machinations are beyond the scope of this chapter, and so left to the storyguide's imagination.

Chapter Ten

The Queen of Gold and Glass

In this series of stories, a powerful faerie noblewoman provokes the player characters, to trick or convince them to participate in a sequence of eight encounters. This faerie, called the Queen of Gold and Glass, is a dispenser of labors — a type of faerie that draws vitality from setting a series of quests. The Queen's schemes threaten the prosperity of the player characters and appear to threaten their lives, but the Queen does not want the player characters to die. She may even aid them against threats from third parties.

The Queen's scheme has a second goal, beyond forcing the player characters to complete these stories. The Queen is able to craft faerie duplicates of skills that hu-

mans use while completing stories she has instigated. If she witnesses a wide variety of Hermetic spells, she becomes able to create a faerie magus to serve in her court. Each of the scenarios the Queen of Gold and Glass designs encourages player characters to cast spells from one of the Forms, so that her minions can witness them.

Background

As the Roman Empire was first stretching its covetous hands out over Europe to seize the lands of the barbarian tribes, a

skilled mortal artisan made a perfect mirror as a gift for his beloved. She proved false, and the craftsman cursed the mirror and buried it. It was found by a faerie, and given to a princess. When she first stared into the mirror, the Queen of Gold and Glass reached out from Faerie, and stole her shape, her life, and her place in the mundane world. In the centuries since, the Queen has played games with mortals and made faerie versions of her foes.

Aims and Motivations

The Queen of Gold and Glass wants to mold the role of one or more of her subordinate faeries into that of a court magician. She is, however, a connoisseur of mundane detail. She wants her servants to act as real magicians do, and simulate the powers that real magicians have. To research wizards accurately, the Queen selects a group of young magi and carefully provokes them.

In each of the challenges she arranges, the Queen considers herself to have been victorious if the magi cast spells her servants have not witnessed before. As her servants observe, or suffer the effects of, each spell, her court wizards gain the ability to simulate it. The wider the variety of spells the player characters are tempted to use, the more amusing the Queen's wizards become. The Queen is immortal, so she feels no need to rush: the longer the player characters are given to mature, the more interesting the spells they have time to study.



Methods

The Queen lures the player characters into stories approximately once every four years. There are three reasons for the Queen's lengthy pauses between challenges. First, she is immortal, and so has the time to waste. Second, she knows the player characters are mortal, and so become more powerful as they age, so there is no reason to persecute them while they

are unformed. Finally, more regular challenges might sidetrack the characters.

Spells that affect faeries are less interesting to her than others, because she can already mold her servants. The time the wizards spend developing countermeasures against her might leave them overspecialized, and vulnerable to the many other threats they face in Mythic Europe.

If the suggested frequency or number of encounters does not suit a saga, its players should, of course, alter the Queen's plan.

PRELIMINARY ENCOUNTERS AND NECESSARY SYMBOLS

Before the Queen of Gold and Glass can usefully provoke the magi, she must complete two tasks.

First, the Queen must mark the magi as her protagonists, by a story event. She does not appear in person. The magi are marked sufficiently, for her purposes, if they have had an encounter with one of her minions. The encounter must be so notable that,

Notes for Troupes Not Using Realms of Power: Faerie

Faeries in *Ars Magica* are not like the monsters in most roleplaying games. They are living story elements. This has effects that new players need to be aware of.

FAERIES CANNOT THINK LIKE PEOPLE

It's important to remember that the Queen needs to do certain things, even if they are ill advised, because she is not a human being. In the same way that a banshee must predict the death of her descendants rather than prevent it, or a brownie given a suit of clothes must pick them up and leave the house they were offered in, the Queen must perform her role. She has no more choice than a rock has about whether to fall.

The Queen, like all faeries, has a role instead of a soul. This means she must:

- Mark her work with repeated insignia.
- Run the characters through a series of stories.
- Confront the magi after their stories are complete.
- Not sidetrack the story. She cannot just pay the PCs their weight in gold to do what she wants, for example. She is feeding on the emotional energy of the player characters as they complete the stories; she wants them to follow the stories, rather than give her something specific.

The Queen, unlike most other faeries, is Highly Cognizant. This means she

is aware of what she is, she knows about her dependence on story elements, and within certain limits, she can take all the advantages her role allows.

Players, and their characters, are meant to notice that the Queen does not act like a human. This makes her vulnerable to counterplays, allowing players with characters not strongly suited to combat to defeat the Queen's designs. Troupes can, in character, have fun with the tropes of the story being told. The dispenser of labors has been chosen as the Queen's role because it is very similar to the role of final boss in computer games. The Queen shares many of the traits of a computer game character, the most obvious being that she tailors the strength of her minions to suit the player characters, and she scatters collectable tokens which, when combined, allow the player characters to confront her.

Players are meant to enjoy this, and, during these stories, add elements of their own that suit her theme. Players suggesting that a key taken from a faerie should, in this story, fit any lock, or that their foes should die in a shower of coins, should be rewarded for their insight. Groups that prefer a more historically realistic style of *Ars Magica* can instead reward players who note and use other tropes from period stories with dispensers of labors.

FAERIE POWERS

When calculating the cost of Faerie Powers, Hermetic magic is used as a

guide, but many levels differ, as noted in *Realms of Power: Faerie*. These differences come from three main sources.

Faeries are creatures of magical energy, which construct bodies out of stray matter. This means that many of their powers are actually a type of shapeshifting. For example, when the faerie knight below makes his sword shed slivers of glass spines, when he makes his armor dissolve into smoke, or when he makes his horse appear, he is actually just shifting the shape of his body. The bodies of faeries, and this includes the props they carry as part of their role, are not resisted by the Parma Magica.

Hermetic magic is weaker in all forms of travel magic than faeries are. Flight, for example, is difficult and dangerous for magi, but simple for faeries.

Many things that faeries do break Hermetic limits. The most obvious example of this here is the Queen's Attribute Duplication Virtue. It's a non-Hermetic virtue that allows the Queen to do what her role as a dispenser of labors and duplicator of mortals requires. It's not treated as a Power, because it has no Might cost, and is not cast at player characters, so it doesn't need a Penetration score.

Highly cognizant faeries — those who know that they are spirits that require human vitality and can use a variety of stories to force humans to give it to them — are able to redesign the lesser faeries who serve them. This is not represented with a Virtue, but is particularly important in this scenario.

New Virtues and Flaws

ATTRIBUTE DUPLICATION

Several Major Virtues (Supernatural)

This miscellaneous package of Virtues allows the Queen to use the non-Hermetic powers required for her role in this series of stories. It allows her to use Arcane Connections in the unusual ways described in the text, and to craft her minions. The Queen may craft into her minions mortal attributes that they witness, provided she has a symbolic object

for the witnessed human. This power has some limitations: for example, she cannot replicate Infernal or Divine attributes.

This Virtue package is not suited for player character faeries.

SUPERNATURALLY FRAGILE

Major Flaw (Supernatural)

This character's form is made of living glass. Her Soak score is reduced by 9.

once the stories have begun and the player characters know her symbols, they can look back upon the event as the moment when the cycle of stories started.

The Queen's second task is that she must gather, through her servants, a number of symbolic objects that represent each magus. Arcane Connections can serve as

symbolic items, but any other item that makes the character strongly express emotion is also suitable. Like many faeries, the Queen can create Arcane Connections through exchanges of speech and gifts of food. She can fashion these social connections into symbolic objects. The power of these symbolic objects does not fade away, as Arcane Connections do. The Queen can, alternatively, use items that represent the covenant as whole as symbolic objects for all members of that covenant.

If she uses one of her minions to gain the objects, then that minion needs, eventually, to be revealed as hers. This can be as simple as the faerie having her symbol, a mirror, about itself somewhere. The mirror needs to be memorable, but its presence does not need to be stressed to the player characters. It might be a design sewn into a heraldic surcoat, a real mir-

The Queen of Gold and Glass

The Queen of Gold and Glass is a mystically powerful, but physically fragile, faerie. She has the appearance of a barbarian princess from the Roman period. The princess whose appearance the Queen of Gold and Glass has stolen is captive in the Queen's Faerie realm. She may be rescued by the player characters, if they kill the Queen.

Faerie Might: 40 (Imaginem)

Characteristics: Int +3, Per 0, Pre +3, Com +1, Str -1, Sta 0*, Dex +1, Qik 0

* Supernaturally tireless

Size: 0

Virtues and Flaws: Attribute Duplication, Greater Faerie Power x 4, Highly Cognizant, Increased Faerie Might (Major x 2), Spirit Away*, Faerie Sight, Humanoid Form, Increased Faerie Might (Minor), Passes for Human, Personal Faerie Power, Supernaturally Fragile, Traditional Ward (Absolute darkness**)

* Spirit Away is a complicated power that is described fully in *Realms of Power: Faerie*. This power, without Might cost or dice rolls, allows the Queen to keep a prisoner in a mirror and borrow her form, and also

powers the frame that the characters assemble as the scenario proceeds. If you are not using *Realms of Power: Faerie*, then for the purposes of this scenario, this power does nothing else.

** If not using the detailed rules in *Realms of Power: Faerie*, assume the Queen avoids darkness the way vampires avoid garlic.

Personality Traits: Vain +3, Cares nothing for mortal suffering +2.

Reputations: None.

Combat: (The Queen avoids combat, due to her glass-like fragility. She uses her minions to fight for her.)

Hands: Init 0, Attack +2, Defense +2, Damage -1

Soak: -9

Fatigue Levels: Tireless

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Broken (16-20), Shattered (21+)

Pretenses: Any appropriate. Her Order of Hermes Lore is 2 (Arts), which leads her to make mistakes when designing her challenges for magi.

Powers:

Allure, 1 points, Init -1, Mentem. R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Ind. Adds +3 to all rolls which impress or convince oth-

ers. (Costs 10 spell levels (Base 3 +1 Touch +2 Sun)

Eidolon, 2 points, Init -2, Imaginem. R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Ind. Creates an illusory form that acts, sounds, and moves as directed. The Queen prefers to make her eidolon appear on reflective surfaces. (Costs 20 spell levels (Base 2: +2 move at direction, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +1 intricacy)

Extend Glamour, 0 points, constant, Mentem. R: Touch, D: Until (while she remains present), T: Boundary (although it does not need to be as formally delineated as in Hermetic magic). This power allows the Queen to take control of a small mundane area, making it an extension of her Faerie kingdom. For more detail see *Realms of Power: Faerie*, or just assume she can create any cosmetic change that suits her theme, she can summon any of her servants, sense anything that occurs in the area, and appear at any point in the area. Her use of this power creates a Faerie aura of 6 in the area. (Costs 25 spell levels: (Special))

Guide, 3 points, Init -3, Mentem. R: Voice, D: Conc, T: Group. Subtly influences the victim toward a cer-

ror carried in a pocket with other jumbled miscellanea, or a symbol painted on an inn sign. This is part of the process of marking her protagonists, mentioned previously.

Example First Encounters

This section suggests various initial encounters between the servants of the Queen and the magi. Several options are offered, so that the storyguide can select the one that best suits her saga.

- A faerie aids the covenant against a foe, in exchange for a symbolic object that is obviously worthless. For example, a faerie smith helps the covenant repair a damaged magic item, but in exchange he asks for the decanter from which

A Brief Note on the History of Mirrors

The Queen's name comes from the technology used to create mirrors until the end of the Roman Empire. These mirrors were glass, with gilded backs. Such mirrors are no longer made in Mythic Europe, except perhaps by magi who keep some of the crafts of

the Empire alive. Medieval mirrors are made of steel, silver, polished marble, and, in some places, glass with a lead backing. When the Queen's powers refer to "reflective surfaces," things that can reflect an outline, rather than detail, are intended.

the magi drink during their council meetings; or a faerie knight aids the characters in combat against a demon, but demands in exchange a token that has previously been used for an *Aegis* ritual, but is not currently empowered.

- A sprite steals a trivial item, at great danger to itself, while the magi are traveling and are therefore outside the

protection of the *Aegis*. If the characters have any equipment that is owned communally and marked with the sigil of the covenant, that suits the sprite.

- A faerie bard engages the player characters in a game of riddles, or offers another challenge or wager, with the penalty that if they lose, she will take from them, forever, the ability to pro-

The Queen of Gold and Glass, cont'd

tain course of action. The Queen uses this power to force humans to use the skills she wants to duplicate. (Costs 30 spell levels (Base 5, +2 Voice, +1 Conc, +2 Group))

Hound, 2 points, Init -2, Corpus. R: Arc, D: Conc, T: Ind. Allows the Queen to know the direction and distance of her prey. (Costs 20 spell levels (Base 3, +4 Arc, +1 Conc))

Limited Entrancement, 4 point, Init -4, Mentem. R: Eye, D: Conc, T: Ind. This power allows the Queen to place a person in a meditative state, utterly dominating the victim. It is limited in that she can only give a single instruction: to stare endlessly and without thinking at one's own reflection. A human trapped like this eventually collapses from exhaustion, which breaks the effect. A character in this state can be rescued by being shaken, or by having a hand passed before his eyes. Costs 20 spell levels (Base 25, +1 Eye, +2 Conc)

Spirit Away: A complicated power with an extensive description in *Realms of Power: Faerie*. Although the Queen has this power, and has used it to trap the princess whose body she is

duplicating, she will not use it further in this story.

Travel Through Mirrors, 0 points, Init 0, Corpus. This power allows a faerie to emerge from Faerie into the mortal world through a mirror. The converse power, fading into Faerie by unknitting its material body, is not a power at all; it's a natural ability of all faeries, although they rarely use it, because they lack the ability to return as swiftly as the Queen can. (Costs 25 spell levels: Greater Powers. (Special))

Equipment: The finery of a barbarian queen, from the period of the Roman expansion.

Vis: When the Queen dies, she shatters into pieces of gold-backed glass. The largest piece, which is shaped like a heart, is a mirror. Within it the characters can see the barbarian princess who gave the Queen her form. Characters can reach into the heart and pull the princess out, which shatters the glass. These shattered pieces of glass contain 8 pawns of *Imaginem vis* in total. This is not, however, the anchor (personal vis) of the Queen: it's a distraction to prevent the PCs finding her vis. The Queen's spirit is anchored to

a gold and glass bead, which the princess wears. This also contains 8 pawns of vis. It is the princess' most prized possession, because wearing it has the same effect as the spell *Aura of Rightful Authority*. Over time the Queen can move to another object, or rebuild her body, if this vis is not harvested.

Appearance: The Queen has stolen her appearance from a Germanic princess whom she has taken prisoner, using her *Spirit Away* power. She appears to be in her early twenties, and has piercing blue eyes and red hair. She is tall and broad shouldered. The Queen's possessions are made of faerie glamor, as is her body, but appear to be made of mortal materials. She wears a cloak apparently made of alternating strips of leather and spotted animal hide. This is fastened with a thorn at her right shoulder. The dress underneath is form-fitting and appears to be linen, embodied with purple thread. It is sleeveless. She seems to wear sturdy boots with intricately tooled upper surfaces. The Queen, and her clothes, look slightly translucent, and the color of her body and accouterments is paler than it should be.

Story Seed: Breaking the Story

If it seems like a story likely to interest the troupe, then the pieces can be used as Arcane Connections to each other. This lets the player characters arrive at some of the Queen's stories before she has finished preparing them. This allows the player characters to destroy her plans, and the players to have fun in a bizarre setting where the elements of a standard *Ars Magica* story are just loosely scattered about. Faerie NPCs repeat likely pieces of dialogue over and over, characters wander on set routes through territory the player characters

are likely to cross, and pieces of setting and scenery are missing but the NPCs don't seem to notice.

Alternatively, the storyguide can play this straighter, and just have the player characters encounter a normal setting, with the non-player characters not sure why they are there.

To avoid all this, the storyguide may assume that the missing pieces of the puzzle are in Faerie, and the Queen only releases a new one into the mortal world each time the player characters begin one of her stories.

nounce a single word of their choice. She has faerie treasure and valuable information to offer as her stake. Spending her valuables or following her clues merely draws the characters to other servants of the Queen.

- A faerie offers the characters hospitality, taking binding oaths she will not harm them while they remain in her home. She offers a safe bed, food, and wine. Afterward, she takes their bathwater to her mistress. She also takes the shaven stubble from the cheeks of the magi, if she can. The hostess is content that she, personally, does the characters no harm.
- A fisherman reports someone acting strangely downstream from the covenants, casting nets but freeing any fish captured. This is a simple country lad, sent by a faerie to cast his nets in the waters for a year, and bring back what is drawn up. So far, the net isn't catching anything, according to the human pawn. Magi examining the net carefully will, however, find that it is capturing human hair that is leaving the covenant as part of the refuse that is poured into the river.

CAREFUL SELECTION OF MINIONS

The Queen calibrates her challenges to suit the power of the magi. Sometimes her estimations are wrong, but generally her weaker minions face younger magi or mundanes, and her more powerful servants are reserved for senior magi. Characters who

discover that many of the events in their lives have been orchestrated by a single antagonist may conclude that either their foe is becoming more powerful over time, or that the foe is deliberately not using overwhelming force during their encounters.

The Queen's faerie minions are described at the end of this chapter. In addition to her faeries, the Queen uses human hirelings, mortal dupes, and captured monsters to pressure the player characters into casting spells. She needs to do this because all of her faeries have similar powers, so repeatedly challenging them does not force the magi to use a variety of spells. The Queen's mortal pawns are not given statistics, since these can be easily extrapolated from grogs or companions given in other supplements.

The Eight Challenges

The Queen presents eight stories, to tempt magi to cast spells. Each story is linked to an Art. The Queen's plots are deliberately linked to, but do not actually force, the use of spells of a particular Form. The Queen does not understand Hermetic magic clearly, so her plans are flawed. Player characters who recognize the pattern can subvert her design. This forces her to become more directly involved in the stories she creates, allowing the player characters to encounter the Queen outside her court.

The challenges here are presented in alphabetic order by Art, but storyguides

should present them in whichever order suits their saga. Creatures and environmental puzzles need to be made more difficult to overcome as the characters age. In fleshing out these challenges, the storyguide should remember that the Queen lacks originality. When describing detail during the stories, be sure to recycle motifs, stories, and events from the lives of the player characters. This information is gathered for her by Shadowy Servants (described at the end of the chapter). This reflection of the experience of the player characters stresses the Queen's theme, mirrors.

The Queen of Gold and Glass does not challenge the magi to use Vim or Imaginem spells. As a spirit she is a mistress of Vim magic already, and does not want her minions to have powerful spells to cast against spirits such as herself. Faerie glamour and Imaginem are, in some sense, related. She is not familiar with the subtler uses of this Art, so she sees no reason to challenge the player characters in Imaginem. The examples given below are simply suggestions: the storyguide should tailor the challenges to fit her troupe's magi.

THE FRAME OF GOLD

After each challenge is overcome, the characters may discover what appears to be a piece of gilt picture frame. Intellego Vim spells can determine that it is made of faerie glamor, but does not include useable vis. When placed between two mirrors, the completed frame becomes a corridor that leads to the Land of Gold and Glass. In this form it is a complete faerie, and contains 8 pawns of Rego vis. If the players lose or destroy a piece, that doesn't matter; the Queen arranges for a replacement if she wants the characters to visit her realm. Storyguides wishing to stretch this story further may make quests for the pieces of the frame into separate stories. Instead of finding the frame pieces at the end of each of the Queen's stories, the player characters instead discover clues that assist them to find each piece.

The frame is not a mortal object. It is a Threshold Guardian, a faerie creature that wishes to be reassembled. This allows it to use its Spirit Away power to continue the story for which it was molded. The pieces of

the frame, as parts of a faerie, can sense their surroundings, communicate with each other, move when they are not being watched, and subtly manipulate their surroundings. Each piece can also alter the dreams of any person lacking Magic Resistance who verbally identifies herself as the piece's owner. The pieces also trick their owners into proximity, so that they can be bought together.

ANIMAL: THE PLAGUE OF ANIMALS

A plague of small creatures, unnatural to the area about the covenant, is loosed by the Queen's Hazy Servants (described near the end of the chapter). The animals are destructive to the area's agriculture, so they must be dealt with. Some of these animals, marked by a different color, contain a small amount of vis. Other versions of the creatures are gigantic in size, and ferocious, even if their species is generally docile. These huge variants do not contain vis.

The Queen hopes the characters create predators, corral the creatures magically, and directly destroy them so that she can steal these effects. To mark her responsibility, she sends her Distinguished Huntsman to capture some of the creatures her lesser servants have loosed. He focuses on the enormous versions of the creatures, and until the characters determine that these contain no vis, he may seem like a rival, snatching away their valuable prey.

Most of the creatures are absolutely natural, if corralled and released by faer-

What if the Magi Don't Play Along?

If the magi, for example, solve the Animal challenge by destroying all of the creatures with magical flame, that's fine. The Queen is a Highly Cognizant faerie, so she's adaptable. She just adds another story with an Animal theme and considers whether the Ignem story is still necessary. If the players are still enjoying the stories, it doesn't matter that the Queen, with her tiny score in Order of Hermes Lore, has misunderstood how magi use

their powers. The Queen often cannot know whether the player characters have strained the limits of their Arts or not.

If the players are beginning to tire of this set of stories, then assume the Queen knows the characters are no longer emotionally invested in her gambits. She either leaves them alone, until their interest revives after they have had other experiences, or she changes her plan and moves onto the concluding confrontation.

ies. Natural animals can cross the *Aegis of the Hearth* and infest the covenant, provided they migrate. The vis-containing and gigantic versions of the creatures cannot cross the *Aegis*, because the first have Might and the second are influenced by a spell-like effect.

Deep in the guts of one of the larger versions of the creatures, the player characters might discover a chunk of what appears to be gilt picture frame.

AQUAM: UNPRECEDENTED FLOOD

The Queen's servants cause a flood by placing mirrors in the bottom of a major river, and allowing its waters to flow through reflective surfaces in a small town near the covenant. Characters can stem the tide by smashing the reflective surfaces, although some are difficult to approach due to the force of the water surging from

them. Even after the characters stem the flow of new water, the remaining floodwaters need to be dealt with, as the damage they cause to buildings and crops increases the longer the land remains saturated.

The Queen's powers can't easily penetrate the *Aegis of the Hearth*, so the rivulets leaking from shiny possessions cannot directly damage the covenant. Once they have been transported, however, the floodwaters are entirely natural, so they can seep through the *Aegis* from affected areas outside.

After the flood subsides, the characters may find a piece of gilt-edged frame in the body of a huge sturgeon, lying at the high point of the flood.

AURAM: SICKENING VAPORS

The people of a village near the covenant begin to sicken. After an investiga-



The Smoothfaces

Smoothfaces are faeries that appear entirely human, but have the ability to wipe away their faces, leaving featureless skin. Regardless of their lack of features, they can still see and smell. Smoothfaces are drawn to travelers and those who fear strangers. These victims the faeries terrify, for fun and vitality. If a smoothface terrifies a victim to death, it can duplicate that person's face. Smoothfaces do not, however, engage in combat save in self-defense, and do little other harm.

In this story, the Smoothfaces wish to keep the Gifted child. They think the child will be able to draw faces to order.

Smoothfaces are best created by taking another character, which the smoothface is pretending to be, and altering it slightly. Add 10 Might, the Virtues and Flaws below (or add Infiltrator if appropriate), Personality traits, Powers, and Vis. So, as an example, the Basic Soldier from *ArM5*, page 22, becomes:

BASIC SOLDIER SMOOTHFACE

Smoothfaces can be player characters. The example given here needs higher Characteristics and six Minor Flaws to balance. Its player might also consider the Damaging Effect power.

Faerie Might: 10 (Corpus)

Characteristics: Int -1, Per 0, Pre -3, Com 0, Str +1, Sta +1, Dex +2, Qik +2

Size: 0

Virtues and Flaws: Greater Faerie Powers; Faerie Sight, Humanoid Form, Increased Faerie Might, Personal Faerie Powers, Narrowly Cognizant, Passes for Human, Personal Power (Shift Human Shape), Traditional Ward (crowds).

Personality Traits: Enjoys fear +3, Jovial +2

Combat:

Axe and Heater shield: Init +0, Attack +12, Defense +11, Damage +7.

Brawl: Init +2, Attack +8, Defense +8, Damage +1.

Soak: +8 (Full metal scale armor)

Wound Penalties: 0, -1 (1-5), -1 (6-10), -3 (11-15), -5 (16-20), Incapacitated (21-25), Dead (26+)

Pretenses: Area Lore 3 (lonely places), Athletics 3 (chasing people), Awareness 3 (victims), Brawl 4 (punching), Carouse 3 (luring people outside), Charm 4 (luring people to lonely places), Etiquette 3 (blending in), Folk Ken 4 (fitting in), Guile 5 (victims), Single Weapon 5 (axe)

Powers:

Gripping Fear, 0 points, Init -2, Corpus. R: Sight, D: Sun, T: Ind, constant. If humans see the creature's smooth face, they are gripped by terror and forced to flee. This causes Fatigue loss. Several creatures may work together, ambushing victims as they stop to rest, or a single creature may use a mixture of the Invisibility and Shift Human Shapes Powers to torment a victim. (As *Panic of the Trembling Heart*, *ArM5* page 148, +1 for constant, +2 intricacy points to reduce cost) (ReMe Base 5, +1 Eye, +2 Sun, +2 intricacy points to reduce cost)

Invisibility, 2 points, Init -2, Imaginem. R: Per, D: Sun, T: Ind. A personal version of *Veil of Invisibility* as *ArM5* page 146.

Loss of Sense of Direction, 0 points, Init -2, Corpus. R: Eye, D: Sun, T: Ind. This is a version of the *Guide* power. Using it, the smoothface ensures that its victim flees toward an abandoned place, where he or she can be attacked again.

Shift Human Shapes, 0 points, Init -1, Corpus. R: Per, D: Mom, T: Part. Allows the character to melt its face away by wiping it with a hand, or restore it as easily. It also allows the faerie to take various human forms. The faerie uses invisibility to overtake an exhausted human, to take a comforting shape, and then terrify him again. (Base 3, +2 Sun, +1 intricacy point for cost reduction)

Vis: 2 pawns, Corpus, an eggshell

Equipment: As per disguise

Appearance: A humanoid with a face as smooth and white as eggshell.

tion, the player characters determine that sickening air is being released by a well. The Queen's servants are sending bad air from a distant swamp through mirrors to the well. This can be prevented simply by placing a well cover on it: the well's surface isn't reflective in the dark.

The player characters can treat those who have become ill. Magi can create breezes that disperse the cloud of sickening air that has formed over the village, and sweep the fumes out of the village's recesses. The magi can remove the threat caused by the well permanently either by making covers for it so that its surface is never struck by light, by casting a spell that has a similar effect, by removing a piece of gilt frame that is buried in the sediment at the bottom of the well, or by lowering an intact mirror into the well.

CORPUS: PEOPLE ARE CORPUS, TOO

For this challenge, the Queen doesn't need magic: she just needs money. Her servants hire bands of pirates, rogues, and thieves to terrorize the roads and ports around the covenant. Afterward the Queen is likely to be disappointed. Corpus magic doesn't work the way she thinks it does: magi don't need to use it to fight people just because people are of the form of Corpus.

The Queen, at the storyguide's discretion, may supplement her strategy. She continues her bandit attacks, but also transports plague-ridden corpses to the area, hiding them in strategic places. These bodies wear foreign garb, because the Queen has brought them from far away. She underestimates the destructiveness of her strategy, because the corpses have come from different places and carry a variety of lethal diseases. These work synchronously to grind down the local population. The Queen may intervene with aid if the sicknesses spread too far, or kill too many.

After defeating a particularly skilled and well-supplied band of cutthroats, the characters may recover a piece of the gateway from the enemy leader. He is absolutely sure that the frame piece is a vast gold nugget, reflecting his avaricious desires. The Queen has played tricks on his mind, to make sure he didn't lose the piece before the characters had a chance to seize it from him.

HERBAM: STOLEN CHILD

The Queen sets this challenge in a forest in the hope it will force the player characters to do interesting things with the wood that surrounds them. One of her servants, the Distinguished Herald, kidnaps a Gifted child, and gives it to a troop of smoothface faeries as a gift. The servant then spends some time among mortals gossiping the news that a baby has been stolen by the faeries, and that the child could do a minor magical trick. This trick could be anything — poke his finger through stones, float in the air, change the color of his eyes when he burps — so long as it marks the baby as Gifted and sparks the interest of the magi, when their companions, hearing the tale, bring it to their attention.

Although the smoothface faeries are weaker than the Queen, and are enemies for the player characters in this story, they may prove a useful allies in the final confrontation. The Queen hates these faeries because they despise mirrors. They do not know of her, but may be convinced that the magi are powerful, and that the Queen has placed them in danger by the gift of the child.

If the characters return the baby home, they find a piece of gilded frame in the baby's crib.

IGNEM: THE ICE WYRM

The Queen's servants capture an icy wurm and transport it, using mirrors, to a secluded spot near the covenant. The creature causes the surrounding seven miles to gradually freeze, forcing the characters to seek it out. Fire magic is the most efficacious defense against the wurm and the environmental difficulties its presence creates. A piece of gilded frame is hidden in its small hoard of shiny treasures.

MENTEM: THE OBVIOUS LIAR

The Queen sends a servant to hire an actor, who appears at the covenant pretending to be a merchant seeking his lost son. The man he is pretending to be is actually dead: he was killed by one of the Queen's Distinguished Servants. The actor's tale of woe recounts his son vanishing while at a

Ice Wurm

Ice wyrms are faeries of the far north. Some represent a geographical boundary, as between the arable lands to the south and the snow-clad northlands, or between the sterile mountaintops and the pastures below. Others represent the leaching of life from the world by winter. This one is a mastery faerie: that is, it needs to be destroyed by humans in an epic battle that goes down in local legend. In the interim, it seeks warm life to suck the heat from.

Faerie Might: 30 (Animal).

Characteristics: Cun 3, Per -2, Pre -6, Com -6, Str +9, Sta +2, Dex +2, Qik -4

Size: +4

Virtues and Flaws: Faerie Beast, 2 x Greater Faerie Powers, Huge, Faerie Sight, Increased Characteristics, 5 x Increased Might, Personal Faerie Power (Constant Damaging Effect); Incognizant

Personality Traits: Inquisitive +3, Hungry +2

Fangs: Init -4, Attack +14, Defense +1, Damage +10

Constriction: Init -4, Attack +11, Defense +1, Damage +10

Claws (if appropriate): Init -5, Attack +13, Defense +6, Damage +5

* +6 to Defense vs. grapple attacks

** An orm may grapple its own Size 0 enemies.

Damage statistics above do not include the Constant Damaging Effect power, which adds +5 when appropriate.

Soak: 10, +12 plates of ice.

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-9), -3 (10-18), -5 (19-27), Incapacitated (28-36), Dead (37+)

Powers:

Conjuration of the Indubitable Cold: 0 points, Init -4, Ignem: (3 intricacy points spent on cost). As the spell of the same name, *ArM5* page 142.

Constrict:* When successfully struck with a constrict attack the character is encoiled and unable to use mêlée weapons. The wurm automatically does damage in each subsequent round, without requiring an Attack roll. The victim may still Soak damage. At the end of each round, including the round in which the constriction attack succeeds, the character may attempt to break free by an opposed Strength roll. To do this, the character rolls Strength + a stress die, and compares it to the wurm's Strength

+ a stress die. Success indicates he is free, and may attack normally in the following round. For each character assisting him to break free he may add +1 to the Strength roll, but an assistant is unable to attack the wurm in that round. A character unable to break free for 30 seconds (6 combat rounds) needs to make deprivation rolls, as described on *ArM5* page 179.

Constant Damaging Effect, 3 points, constant, Auram: The terrible cold radiated by this wurm does +5 Damage each round, and is always active. 25 spell levels (Base 5, +1 Part, +2 Sun, +1 Constant)

Spreading a Mantle of Ice: 0 points, Init -4, Auram: (3 intricacy points spent on cost). The cold that seeps from the wurm freezes all water for one mile around and, if it would otherwise rain, causes snow to fall. The air also becomes biting cold, so magic or preparation is needed before the creature can be hunted. One advantage for the player characters is that if they have spells that detect how warm or cold the air is, they have a method of precisely locating the wurm: it is always surrounded by the coldest air. Note that, because the cold is magical, it is not felt by characters with an Auram Magic Resistance of 30 or higher.

Venomous Bite:* When the wurm attacks, compare its Attack Advantage to the victim's armor Protection (not his Soak). If the wurm's advantage is higher, the victim suffers the effects of adder venom as listed in the Poison Table on page 180 of *ArM5*, regardless of whether the bite inflicts an actual wound. The storyguide may adjust the required Attack Advantage for special circumstances.

Pretenses: Area Lore 3 (watering points for prey), Awareness 3 (prey), Brawl 7 (crushing), Hunt 4 (rodents), Faerie Speech 5 (threats), Folk Ken 1 (human prey), Stealth 3 (stalking prey)

Equipment: A small pile of frozen treasure, including a piece of the gold frame.

Vis: 6 pawns, in a piece of lost string

Appearance: Wyrms are vast snakes, normally smeared in toxic mucus. In this case the mucus has frozen into hard plates, which neutralize its poison but add Protection. It appears as an enormous serpent, with sickly blue skin and sapphire eyes.

pilgrim's stop on a nearby route. His "son" disappeared, although blood was found in his bedding, and a lump of wood was found nearby matted with gore and hair. The characters may use Mentem magic to see through the act, or instead use it to interrogate the pilgrims who stayed at the stop.

The pilgrims do not recall a missing boy. They do recall a merchant, using the same name as the one who sought out the player characters, who went missing. The actor and the merchant he is impersonating do not look much like each other. The player characters can find the corpse of the dead merchant buried by the roadside, and can speak to his ghost with Mentem magic.

The player characters eventually see through the actor's ruse. If they capture him in a nearby town he confesses that he is not really a merchant, and explains that he had no choice but to play his part. When he was a very young man, with his first major role, he attracted the aid of a patron who helped him financially. The patron then asked him to impersonate a grieving husband to recover a small locket full of hair from a corpse. Every four years since that day the patron has appeared and asked him to perform some increasingly difficult imposture. On one occasion he refused, but found that not even his friends could recognize him until he finished the task set by his patron. If the characters do not catch the actor swiftly, he is spirited away to another kingdom and given new tasks by the Queen's Steward, to help perfect her Distinguished Spy.

The piece of gilt frame for this story is being held by the nearest church as a deodand. A deodand is any object that has killed a person, which is sold and the money raised either given to the person's family or kept by the church, depending on the scrupulousness of the local clergy. The local priest believes the frame was used to bludgeon a missing pilgrim to death.

TERRAM: WE DID THIS ALREADY!

The Queen is not truly capable of original thought, which is demonstrated here. She uses exactly the same challenge as for the Herbam story, but uses faeries who dwell in a mine as her dupes. This replication may tip off the player characters that the two stories have been directed by an external force.

Investigation

The Queen does not mind if her tricks are detected, once she has the symbolic objects that she needs. She wants the player characters to know that someone is orchestrating these activities, and later she wants the characters to come to terms with her, and even to assail her kingdom. Player characters may distinguish the pattern of her activities in several ways.

NOTICING STORY CONNECTIONS

The Queen gives the characters the pieces of frame so that her manipulations are clearly identified. After the second piece is found, it should be clear to the player characters that the two stories are connected in some way.

NOTICING THAT STORIES MATCH THEIR SKILLS

Other victims of the Queen's schemes may cross paths with the player characters. During one of the current schemes, "The Obvious Liar", the Queen's servants introduce the characters to one of her other victims. Meeting other victims, and hearing their stories of repeated challenges that test their developing skills, gives a hint as to the motive of their persecutor.

Skilled questioning of another of the Queen's victims (Communication + any appropriate Ability against an Ease factor of 15) reminds the character of the event in which his symbolic object was taken. This allows player characters to search their memories, and make appropriate rolls to recall their own first encounter.

DETECTING THE QUEEN'S AGENTS

The Queen's servants are often marked with the symbol of the mirror. Mirrors are



Ghosts of Miners

Knockers are faeries that pretend to be the ghosts of Jewish miners killed in accidents. They aid mortal miners by making alarming noises before cave-ins, or by tapping to lead men to seams of valuable ore. These faeries do not have reflections, in keeping with one piece of lore about ghosts, and so have no use for mirrors.

If approached peacefully, the knockers are happy to negotiate. They are particularly amenable to characters who are either miners or Jews. The faeries are sincerely religious. They are unable to explain why, after death, they were transformed into ethereal dwarfs, but aren't able to remember this theological quandary for more than a few seconds. Knockers find whistling incredibly rude.

The knockers are willing to surrender the child to humans. In exchange, they demand binding oaths that the child will be raised properly. Characters who fail to live up to these agreements earn the hatred of the knockers. They may undermine the foundations of the covenant, move subterranean water courses, or come up with other tricks as revenge.

The knockers know a great deal about the Queen. Even if the player characters attack the knockers, they may still tip them off as to her weakness. The knockers attack the humans for a few rounds while armed with mining tools and mirrors, then shout at each other that the mirrors aren't working this time, before trying to escape along tunnels or through rock.

Faerie Might: 5 (Terram)

Characteristics: Int 0, Per +2, Pre -3, Com -2, Str -1, Sta +3, Dex +2, Qik +4

Size: -2

Virtues and Flaws: Immunity from Terram, 2 x Great Characteristic; Faerie Sight, Faerie Speech, Humanoid Faerie, 2 x Improved Characteristics, Intangible Flesh, Observant; Little, Traditional Ward (offerings)

Personality Traits: Vengeful +3

Combat:*

Brawl (fist): Init +4, Attack +9, Defense +11, Damage +3

Pick/Tool (two handed): Init +7, Attack +8, Defense +11, Damage +11

* Includes +1 for Pretense specialization

Soak: +6, Immunity from Terram

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-3), -3 (4-6), -5 (7-9), Incapacitated (10-12), Dead (13+)

Pretenses: Athletics 2 (digging), Awareness 2 (hazards underground), Bargain 5 (with mortals), Brawl 6 (fist), Craft (smith) 5 (weapons), Great Weapon 5 (pick, as pole arm)

Powers:

Guide, 3 points, Init -3, Mentem. R: Voice, D: Conc, T: Group. Subtly influences the person toward a certain course of action. The knockers use this power to reward good miners, by urging safety or drawing them to ore, and to punish evil miners, by getting them lost in tunnels or leading them into mortal danger. Costs 30 spell levels (Base 5, +2 Voice, +1 Conc, +2 Group)

Loosely Material, 1 point, Init +1, Mentem (2 intricacy points reduce Might cost).

This power allows the faerie to create a temporary, solid body, complete with all equipment. (Costs 25 spell levels)

Equipment: Professional mining gear

Vis: 1 pawn, discarded mining tool.

rare and valuable in Mythic Europe, and so highly noticeable. The style of mirror the Queen is thematically linked to, glass backed in gold, has not been manufactured since Roman times, save by Hermetic magi. That aside, gold attracts attention. These rare mirrors are so distinctive that all Awareness rolls concerning them are +3 easier than usual.

SEARCHING FOR PREVIOUS VICTIMS

Once the player characters have noticed that they are being manipulated, and that the symbol of their tormentor is a mirror, they may seek answers in the history of the Order. An Intelligence + Order of Hermes Lore roll against an Ease Factor of 15 recalls or finds an account by a Bonisagus who died centuries ago. She records a previous attempt by the "Queen of Gold and Glass" to make "a faerie like unto a magus, skilled in our Arts, who would be

her courtier." If the storyguide wishes, this roll also gives a reference to a rare book describing the Queen's powers and weaknesses. Gaining access to this book, which through bad luck is far away at a reclusive covenant, allows a connected but thematically unrelated story.

An Intelligence + Faerie Lore roll about faeries associated with mirrors also grants information:

RESULT	INFORMATION
12+	Gives the title of the Queen and notes that her servants can travel through mirrors.
15+	As above, and that her servants are reflections of real people, epitomes of human cultural roles.
18+	All above, and that some of her servants are shadows and reflections, which act as spies.
21+	All above, and that she has a kingdom in the faerie lands, which can be entered through mirrors.

Resolution

The most likely resolutions are that the player characters fight the Queen, or they come to an agreement with her. In either case they enter her land, which is filled with twisted glass reflections of mortal objects.

Combat

The Queen has many subjects, and they rally to her defense.

THE DISTINGUISHED

The Queen has played this game before, creating a class of servants who are faerie approximations of the epitome of a human social role. She has only one of each of these servants. Distinguished characters

have a score of 9 in Pretenses (faerie abilities) suited to their role. They have no ability to perform the lesser tasks in which a mortal, in that role, would become skilled. Each has a symbolic object embedded deep inside its head, which contains vis.

The Queen of Gold and Glass is loath to allow the loss of one of these creatures, but uses them if it forces the player charac-

ters to cast interesting spells. Many of her Distinguished Servants have External Vis sources, which means they are unlikely to be permanently destroyed if magi defeat them in battle. The Queen is also willing to ransom her Distinguished Servants, much as a mortal monarch would be. If the Queen of Gold and Glass has, at the storyguide's discretion, a ready replacement for one of

her Distinguished Servants, she is entirely unsentimental about its destruction.

THE UNDISTINGUISHED

Although the Queen of Gold and Glass has only a single Distinguished Servant for each of the roles in her court, she has many other servants that can fill related roles. These faeries are also being molded into human functions, but they are incomplete. The Queen is far more willing to lose one of her Undistinguished Warriors than her Distinguished Knight.

Undistinguished characters have a Pretense of 6 in skills of primary importance for the role in which they are being developed. Their Might scores vary from 5 to 20, depending on how close they are to completion. The powers of the Undistinguished vary, but many have some of the powers of the Queen or the Distinguished Knight.

Each Undistinguished Servant is still being created, and so is incomplete. Parts of its body are missing or transparent. Each does, however, have a perfectly rendered human face. Every Undistinguished Faerie has a symbolic object, which contains vis, wedged in its head. None can smash a mirror, or attack a person carrying one.

THE HAZY SERVANTS

The Hazy Servants are faeries that the Queen of Gold and Glass has never molded to suit a role. They flit about the edges of her court, taking on supplementary roles as required by her whims, and by the deeds of nearby humans. In their natural shape they look a little like humans seen in the distance, blurred by smoke or fog. Hazy faeries may snap into a shape if a more powerful creature pays them sufficient attention.

Hazy Servants change their characteristics regularly, because their roles are fluid. Use any suitable NPC from any *Ars Magica* supplement. Add 10 points of Faerie Might. Select powers from the list for the Distinguished Knight or Queen of Gold and Glass. Each Hazy Servant loses focus if others cease to pay it attention. Player characters may notice the slight delay between noticing these faeries and their snapping into focus. Hazy faeries,

Distinguished Knight

This is the Queen's champion and, if the player characters attack her realm, her final bodyguard. He is not designed as a player character.

Faerie Might: 25 (Imaginem)

Characteristics: Int +1, Per +1, Pre +3, Com +1, Str +6, Sta +3, Dex +2, Qik 0

Size: +2

Virtues and Flaws: Huge, 4 x Increased Faerie Might; Cognizant within Role, Faerie Sight, Faerie Speech, 2 x Great Characteristic, Humanoid Faerie, Observant*, 4 x Improved Characteristics, Improved Damage (sword), 3 x Personal Faerie Powers, Puissant Militant Pretense, Sovereign Ward (blinding light), Sovereign Ward (The Dominion)

* This character has more Pretense experience than his Virtues permit. Only player character faeries need to balance their Virtues to their Pretenses, and only at character creation.

Personality Traits: Loyal +3, Proud +3.

Combat:

Brawl (gauntlets): Init 0, Attack +5, Defense +7, Damage +8

*Great sword and mirrored beater shield:*** Init +2, Attack +17, Defense +15, Damage +22

** Also includes +5 for Improved Damage Virtue and +5 for Damaging Effect Power. The mirrored shield may contain a Hazy Servant.

Soak: +12

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-7), -3 (8-14), -5 (15-21), Incapacitated (22-28), Dead (29+)

Pretenses: Area Lore 9 (the kingdom), Awareness 9 (enemies), Brawl 9 (mortals), Charm 9* (ladies), Etiquette 9 (faerie court), Faerie Speech 6 (taunts), Leadership 9

(tournaments), Ride 9 (horses), Single Weapon 9+2 (tourney field).

* Although the knight can charm ladies, he has no idea about sex at all.

Powers:

Damaging Effect: 2 points: Init -6, Terram (supernaturally sharp), 2 intricacy points spent on cost. Tiny slivers of glass that break off and stay in wounds. Costs 15 spell levels (Base 5, +1 Part, +1 Diameter. This Base is lower than might appear usual in Hermetic magic.)

Flight: 2 points, constant, Corpus. R: Per, D: Sun, T: Ind. Costs 15 spell levels: (Base 4, +2 Sun, +1 constant. This base is deliberately lower than Hermetic magic might suggest.)

Shift Human Shapes: 0 points, Init -1, Corpus. Allows the knight to don or remove armor simply by willing it. (1 intricacy point to reduce cost). R: Per, D: Mom, T: Ind. (Costs 5 spell levels (Base 3, +2 Sun))

Equipment: Armor made of magical scales of faerie iron. Lance with pennant and other weapons. Attendant as squire. Trappings marked with the mirror motif. The champion's glamor produces a faerie horse for him, which shares his vis, Might, and Magic Resistance. As it is an extension of his glamor, the champion's mount flies when he does.

Vis: 5 pawns Imaginem, a rusty piece from human-sized armor.

Appearance: An immense human figure clad in shining scaled armor, that can turn into a huge, but superficially charming man. His fastidious chivalry exceeds that of the humans he impersonates, and he enjoys challenging humans to duels over minor shortfalls of conduct.

uniquely among the Queen's servants, can smash mirrors, although they appear to die when they do this. Hazy faeries cannot abide bright, clear light, and flee from it.

THE SHADOWY MINIONS

The Queen's Shadowy Minions are little more than afterthoughts or plans, given life by her glamor and the fear of humans. Shadows lack substance, and cannot touch objects or attack people. They can, however, act as spies. Their appearance can frighten people into altering their behavior, dogs into barking, and horses into bolting. Shadowy Minions have a Might of 1, and no powers.

Negotiations

The Queen may be convinced to cease her meddling in several non-violent ways.

TOO BORING TO MANIPULATE

Perhaps the least satisfactory ending, and yet one which players can most easily engineer, is for the characters to steadfastly refuse to take the bait. The Queen leaves the player characters alone if it becomes clear to her that they want to spend their entire lives hiding in their laboratories. She does not want a servant who is a recluse.

TOO CLEVER TO MANIPULATE

Characters are considered too clever to victimize if they discover the Queen's involvement in stories, and strike back. In addition to her challenges for the player characters, the Queen ceaselessly plays similar games with other mortals, to mold her various minions. Player characters who intervene repeatedly in these games can force the Queen to come to terms with them.

TOO DANGEROUS TO MANIPULATE

If the characters develop the ability to destroy powerful faeries, and the Queen knows about it through her spies, she ar-

ranges a final confrontation through the Distinguished Ambassador. During this talk, she negotiates a perpetual peace between her agents and the player characters. There are other magi in Mythic Europe, and she's happy to target them instead if the player characters become too much trouble. As part of this agreement, she will request the aid of the magi to acquire the symbolic objects of their replacements.

It's far easier for magi to openly enter the *Aegis* of her new victims and take an appropriate object than for her to wait for her new victims to leave on expedition. The

player characters need to leave a common mirror in the place of the stolen object, so she is linked to the beginning of this new iteration of the story. When explaining this, the Queen describes how she captured the symbolic objects of the player characters.

TOO INVOLVED IN OTHER REALMS TO MANIPULATE

Characters who regularly have the aid of angels or demons are too unpredictable for the Queen to victimize. Also, their be-

Undistinguished Warriors

If the wizards try to raid the Queen's court, they are resisted by her Undistinguished Warriors. Undistinguished Warriors are not suitable as player characters.

Faerie Might: 20 (Imaginem)

Characteristics: Int 0, Per +1, Pre +1, Com 0, Str +2, Sta +2, Dex +2, Qik +1

Size: +1

Virtues and Flaws: Cognizant within Role, Faerie Sight, Faerie Speech, Humanoid Faerie, 3 x Improved Characteristic, Improved Damage (varies), 3 x Increased Faerie Might, Large, Observant,* 2 x Personal Faerie Powers, Sovereign Ward (blinding light)

* This character has more Pretense experience than his Virtues permit. Only player character faeries need to balance their Virtues with their Pretenses, and only at character creation.

Personality Traits: Loyal +2, Proud +1.

Combat:

Brawl (gauntlets): Init +1, Attack +9, Defense +9, Damage +9*

Each Undistinguished Warrior has one of:

Bow: Init 0, Attack +12, Defense +10, Damage +13*

Flail: Init +2, Attack +12, Defense +9, Damage +15*

Greatsword: Init +3, Attack +14, Defense +10, Damage +16*

Long Spear: Init +4, Attack +12, Defense +9, Damage +14*

Pole Axe: Init +2, Attack +14, Defense +8, Damage +18*

Warhammer: Init +1, Attack +15, Defense +8, Damage +19*

* Includes +5 for Damaging Effect.

Soak: +10

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-6), -3 (7-12), -5 (13-18), Incapacitated (19-24), Dead (25+)

Pretenses: Area Lore 6 (the kingdom), Awareness 6 (enemies), Brawl 6 (mortals), Faerie Speech 6 (taunts), Single Weapon or Bow 6 (as weapon).

Powers:

Damaging Effect: 2 points: Init -6, Terram (supernaturally sharp), 2 intricacy points spent on cost. Tiny slivers of glass that break off and stay in wounds. Costs 15 spell levels (Base 5 +1 Part +1 Diameter. This Base is lower than usual in Hermetic magic.)

Flight: 2 points, constant, Corpus. R: Per, D: Sun, T: Ind. Costs 15 spell levels: (Base 4, +2 Sun, +1 constant. This base is deliberately lower than Hermetic magic might suggest.)

Shift Human Shapes: 0 points, Init -1, Corpus. Faerie dons or removes armor by willing it. (1 intricacy point to reduce cost). R: Per, D: Mom, T: Ind. (Costs 5 spell levels (Base 3, +2 Sun))

Equipment: Armor of magical scales of faerie iron.

Vis: 4 pawns Imaginem, a rusty piece from human-sized armor.

Appearance: These soldiers are each slightly different from each other: one is a bowman, one a spearman, one a swordsman, and so on. Some are amputees, although the absence of a leg does not limit their mobility, and the lack of a hand does not prevent them manipulating their arms. Many are missing pieces of their heads.

Undistinguished Magi

The Undistinguished Servants likely of most interest to the player characters are those for which they have served as templates. Storyguides should choose how many of these there are, and how complete they are, as suits their use in confrontations with the Queen. One per player character seems excessive in short sagas, though it may suit longer ones with more powerful magi. Duplicates that combine the features of two or more player characters may prove amusing.

Storyguides can determine what spells are available to the duplicates in several ways. The most scrupulous way is to note every spell the players cast in the presence of the Queen's minions, and add it to a great list. This is likely impractical.

They may instead just list the maximum level of spells thus far cast for every Technique and Form pair. Alternatively, they could only allow these creatures to use the signature spells of the player characters, supplementing them with spontaneous magic whose level feels justified by comparison to that of the player characters, and the needs of the story.

The duplicates not only reflect the appearance and magical abilities of the magi, they also copy their most overt Personality traits. These are caricatures at the early stages of the duplication process. Undistinguished magi molded for many years may, with clothes that cover their physical imperfections, pass for the originals, even among friends.

havior is impossible for her followers to duplicate. The Queen allows groups involved in diabolism to sink into their own mire, after ordering the pieces of frame they have collected to escape or withdraw into Deep Faerie. She continues to watch groups aided by the Divine, because piety is far from universal, particularly over generations, but she does not victimize them until the hand of the Lord is a little less ready to meddle.

TOO INTERESTING TO MANIPULATE

A group of magi that engages in some other, truly epic, endeavor will attract the interest of powerful faeries. If enough of these can be drawn to the spectacle of the lives of the player character magi, the Queen of Gold and Glass ceases to meddle so as not to disappoint the teaming masses of other observers.

TOO POWERFUL TO MANIPULATE

Characters capable of raiding the Kingdom of Gold and Glass are permitted to, using the frame scattered about during earlier stories. If the characters are wildly destructive, the Queen is more careful about provoking them in future.

TOO USEFUL TO MANIPULATE

A group that realizes what is going on is able to offer alternative terms to the Queen. A Merinita magus who is undergoing the Mystery of Becoming would be a perfect alternative for her, but why would such a magus agree? Could he become a power behind her throne, or redefine her role? A less extreme solution is to let the Queen's minions to serve and observe the magi, as allies.

The Queen of Gold and Glass does not suggest this initially. The personalities of her minions are different if the models that they reflect are aware that duplicates are being made. This makes her minions less perfect, from her perspective. The players might, however, entice her with offers of access to many new types of humans, or by offering her symbolic objects for other magi, who they will then challenge with her assistance.

A Faerie Magus?

If the Queen succeeds in making her faerie magi, she uses them as pawns in future stories. This may not harm the Order, provided she is circumspect: some faeries already pretend to be magi, after all. Covenants occasionally need to deal with such impostors, especially when they harm the interests of noblemen or the Church, so that local potentates do not blame the Order for the actions of the impostors.

The problem with the faerie magi the Queen creates is that they are surprisingly accurate. They cast spells exactly like magi do. They wear precisely the right symbols for magi to wear. They sound just like magi sound. It's very difficult, even for magi, to swiftly discover that her duplicates are not real members of the Order of Hermes. Of course, casting Intellego Vim on them would reveal

the deception in a moment, but casting Intellego Vim on another magus is a violation of the Code, and would not be done without good reason. The Queen's duplicates are good enough copies that they do not give a good reason.

STORY SEED: FIREBRAND TYTALUS

A young Tytalus magus begins a campaign against a local king. He forces the king, and his subjects, to use their skills and talents to the utmost, challenging them to grow through adversity. This is a breach of the Code, but the Tytalus ambushes and humiliates the Guernicus sent to investigate. The young Tytalus is actually a duplicate: the Queen wants to design a new steward, so she uses her pawn

to force the mortal administering the kingdom to stretch his talents to the utmost.

STORY SEED: BLOOD OF THE GLASS

A woman comes to the covenant demanding a baby bond (or whatever the local equivalent is) for her child, who was fathered by one of the magi. The magi have no knowledge of this, but her child has very strong Faerie Blood of a new type. He has the ability to create a broad array of imperishable Arcane Connections, much as the Queen can. The child is obviously important as a source of guaranteed Insight for Original Research, but his skill also has use in Wizard's Marches. Do the characters make the child's talents public?

The Waimie

The Waimie is an immense serpent who has lived long ages, and grown magically strong over that time. She craves vis, because it is the only way she can retain that which she has learned, and it is essential for her to continue to grow in power. To this end, she gives birth to smaller serpents who are sent out into the world to retrieve vis for their mother.

Throughout the course of her interaction with the characters, they suffer the depredations of her offspring on their vis sources. Eventually they are lead back to her home, and a tumultuous confrontation with the fearsome serpent in the Magic Realm itself.

pressure from her larger daughters, who occasionally form coalitions with their younger siblings.

She spends half the year living in a lair in the Magic Realm, sharing her cave there with her current favorite (that is, the least stupid) from among her brood. She sends her smaller offspring out into the world to satisfy her curiosity about all things magical and she has picked up much from these spies — including knowledge of the Order of Hermes. She has seen through borrowed eyes how magi search out and hoard vis, and has struck upon a simpler way to feed her cravings.

The Waimie's Brood

The statistics of the Waimie's offspring vary with the years they have survived. At the end of this chapter are those statistics that change with age; assume all other statistics are the same as their mother's. All powers acquired at different life stages are described in her statistics block. The brood begin looking like snakes, but as they increase in size their heads become more elongate and wedge-shaped, like that of a crocodile. The scales become thicker and overlapping, and develop ridges and spines.

The Waimie and Her Brood

The Waimie is a colossal and exceptionally powerful creature of the Magic Realm. She continuously produces offspring; many of these do not survive the fierce competition with their siblings. Those that do grow bigger and more powerful over time, but the larger ones often fall victim to Acclimation, failing to grow in Might more quickly than Acclimation can sap it.

The Waimie has little affection in her cold heart for her offspring, instead seeing them as useful tools to achieve her aims. She is content to allow the most capable to survive, although she has discovered that if she permits too many to live, they are prone to making attempts on her life, seeking to become the mothers of their own broods. She is thus under constant



A Waimie By Any Other Name

The creature described in this chapter is called the Waimie (pronounced "WAY-mee") in the manner of northern England and southern Scotland, meaning simply "worm" (as in dragon, rather than earthworm). However, in sagas located in other parts of Mythic Europe, the

Waimie would go by some other name. In northern Europe she would be called the Orm; in French-speaking areas she would be the Wivere; to the Basques the Suge; to the Cantabrians the Mengue; to the Greeks the Hudra; and in the Rhine Tribunal she might be called the Lindwurm.

Each year, a Waimie's offspring gains 5 Might, and 5 more points of Magical Qualities. The Gigantic Quality is bought with these points from the second year onwards,

and other Magical Qualities with the remaining points. The Waimie's offspring stop growing after ten years. Don't forget to add the aura modifier to Magic Resistance, and

to subtract the serpent's Magic Sensitivity score. Note also that Animal spells targeting the brood need one or more Size modifiers once they exceed Size +1 (one Size modifier for Size +2 to +4, two for Size +5 to +7, three for Size +8 to +10; *ArM5* page 113).

The corpse of each of the Waimie's brood has a pawn of Animal vis per 5 points (or fraction) of her Might, in her eyes.

Variations on a Theme

The storyguide can alter the Waimie to be more suitable to her troupe or saga.

The Waimie

Season: Autumn

Magic Might: 49 (Animal)

Characteristics: Int 0, Per -1, Pre -6, Com -6, Str +18, Sta +2, Dex +2, Qik -5

Size: +9

Confidence Score: 2 (6)

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Animal; Magical Monster; Greater Immunity (blades); Arcane Lore, Improved Characteristics, Lightning Reflexes, Personal Vis Source, Student of Magic; Difficult Underlings; Driven (Minor), Infamous

Magical Qualities and Inferiorities: Gigantic x 9, Greater Power (Serpent Spies), Greater Power (Two Heads Are Better Than One), Greater Power x 2 (The Envenomed Gift); Gift of Speech, Improved Attack (Fangs) x 3, Improved Defense (Fangs) x 3, Improved Powers x 3, Improved Soak x 4, Minor Virtue (Great Quickness), Minor Virtue (Improved Characteristics), Minor Virtue (Magic Sensitivity), Minor Virtue (Tough), Personal Power x 2 (Scion of the World Serpent); Major Flaw (Hunger for Animal Magic); Minor Flaw (Afflicted Tongue), Minor Flaw (Clumsy), Minor Flaw (Poor Eyesight), Reduced Fatigue, Reduced Might, Restricted Power (must bite to use The Envenomed Gift)

Mundane Qualities: Ambush Predator,

Loathsome Appearance, Slippery, Venomous

Personality Traits: Serpent +6*, Brave +3, Hungry for Vis +3, Territorial +2
* Essential Trait

Reputations: Venomous 4 (Local)

Combat:

Fangs: Init -3, Attack +18, Defense +8, Damage +19

Constriction: Init -5, Attack +12, Defense +1, Damage n/a

Soak: +14

Fatigue Levels: OK, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-14), -3 (15-28), -5 (29-42), Incapacitated (43-56), Dead (57+)

Abilities: Area Lore: Local 6 (vis sources), Area Lore: Regional 4 (vis sources), Area Lore: Magic Realm 5 (Animal boundaries), Awareness 3 (prey), Brawl 6 (fangs), Hunt 4 (vis), Leadership 4 (brood), Local Language 5 (common dialect), Magic Lore 5+2 (Magic Realm), Magic Sensitivity 5 (vis), Organization Lore: Order of Hermes 2 (covenants), Stealth 4 (stalking prey), Survival 2 (grassy areas), Swim 4 (rivers)

Powers:

Constriction (non-magical): The Waimie can only constrict a victim whose Size is less than her own. Constriction is based on the grappling rules (see "Non-Lethal Combat," *ArM5*, page

174). As long as the Waimie maintains the grapple, her opponent is considered deprived of air (see *ArM5*, page 180). The victim must make a Stamina check every five rounds, or suffer the normal effects of deprivation. Once the Waimie has successfully grappled an opponent (and begun constricting), on subsequent rounds she can continue constricting and still attack with her bite. These attacks may be directed at the grappled victim, or at another opponent.

The Envenomed Gift, 0 points, Init, Vim: Anyone bitten by the Waimie can be affected by this power in addition to the non-magical venom. If the Waimie decides to use this power, the victim gains the effects of the Painful Magic Flaw as her venom taints his Gift. The effects fade after a day. No Hermetic equivalent: Greater Power x 2 (50 levels, -5 to Might cost, +5 to Init)

Serpent Spies, 2 points, Init Qik -4, Animal: At a touch the Waimie can establish a mental link with one of her offspring that permits her to see and hear everything the young serpent does. She can create this link with any number of her brood simultaneously and each link remains active indefinitely, but she does not regenerate the Might pool used to establish the link until she allows the

A WEAKER WAIMIE

This is easy — simply use one of the Waimie's brood to represent her mother. Slow the development of the brood so that they take two or more years to increase in Size and Might.

Currently, the Waimie's offspring grow by gaining 5 points of Might every year. However, weaker offspring can be created by alternating the gain of 5 Might with a gain of 5 points of Magical Inferiorities instead. This is more work for the storyguide, but makes the Waimie's Might much lower (gaining only half the increases), and gives more weakness-

Size and Magical Qualities and Inferiorities

Note that Magical Qualities and Inferiorities that affect the Size of Magic Animals do not alter their Might score; subtracting Size from the Might score occurs before purchasing Magical Qualities and Inferiorities

during character creation (see *Realms of Power: Magic*, pages 30–36). Changes in Size due to Virtues and Flaws do affect the character's Might, however. This is a clarification to the existing *Ars Magica* rules.

es and vulnerabilities. Suitable Magical Inferiorities include: Minor Flaw (Anchored to (Land)*, Baneful Circumstances*, Clumsy, Environmental Sensitivity*, Essential Flaw*, (Form) Monstrosity*,

Lesser Malediction, or Poor Characteristic), Reduced Attack, Reduced Might, Reduced Powers. Flaws marked with * can be found in *Realms of Power: Magic*, pages 47–51.

The Waimie, cont'd

power to lapse. InAn 40 (Base 15, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +1 extra sense, +1 constant) Greater Power (40 levels, –2 Might cost)

Scion of the World Serpent, 0 points, Init –2, Animal: The serpent grows tremendously in length and girth, assuming any Size from 1 larger than her current Size up to Size +12. For every point of Size, the creature gains +2 Strength and –1 Quickness. Wound ranges also change. At Size +9 (shown here), the Waimie is 130 feet long and six feet diameter; at Size +10 she is 170 feet long by seven feet diameter; at Size +11 she is 210 feet long by ten feet diameter; and at Size +12 she is 265 feet long by thirteen feet diameter. The effect must be restored at sunrise and sunset to retain the increased size; if she is distracted at either of these times the power may lapse. Further, when this power is used, the serpent's natural attacks become magical in nature and must Penetrate any Magic Resistance of her opponents. Use the Waimie's original Size to resolve Animal spells. MuAn 30 (Base 4, +2 Sun, +4 Size to affect Size +12) Personal Power x 2 (30 levels, –3 Might cost, +1 Init)

Swallow Whole (non-magical): The Waimie can swallow whole any creature that is at least 5 points of Size smaller than she is. If the creature has not first

been subdued with a Constriction attack (see above) it can struggle to escape, but it continues to be affected by constriction while swallowed. It is impossible to breathe inside the Waimie, requiring deprivation rolls (ArM5, page 180) even if the victim escapes the grapple. Three rounds after being swallowed, the victim reaches the stomach. The powerful acids inflict +9 damage every round, and complete immersion quadruples this to +36 (ArM5, page 181). A character may be able to brace himself and avoid complete immersion: make a Strength + Athletics roll each round; Ease Factor 6 results in only half immersion (triple damage), Ease Factor 9 results in immersion of a limb (double damage), and Ease Factor 12 means just a splash (normal damage). The Waimie cannot swallow a second creature until the previous one has reached the stomach.

Two Heads Are Better Than One, 1 or more points, Init –4, Animal: The Waimie's head divides longitudinally into two (or more) heads, each one allowing the creature an extra attack. The Waimie can produce one extra head for every additional Might point spent. The serpent acts as a trained group of as many individuals as she has heads, and there is no Leadership limit for the total Group bonus. Note

that physical attacks made while using this power must Penetrate any Magic Resistance. MuAn 50 (Base 25, +2 Sun, +3 Size): Greater Power (50 levels, –4 Might cost and +1 Init from Improved Powers)

Venomous Bite (non-magical): When the Waimie attacks, compare her Attack Advantage to the victim's armor Protection (not his Soak). If the Waimie's advantage is higher, the victim suffers the effects of adder venom as listed in the Poison Table on page 180 of ArM5, regardless of whether the bite inflicts an actual wound.

Vis: 6 pawns of Animal vis in eyes, 4 pawns of Perdo vis in teeth.

Appearance: The Waimie is an immense dragon-like serpent, lacking legs or wings. She is 130 feet long, and the widest part of her body is over six feet in diameter. Her body is covered with thick, horny scales that have a central ridge elongated into a spine that runs flat against her body, and she has belly scutes like those of a snake. Her head is eight feet long and wedge-shaped, with a hooked tip and wicked-looking curved fangs. Overall she is a mottled green in color, with occasional darker scales close to her back and lighter scales closer to her belly. Her voice is a whisper, with a sibilant vibrato caused by her forked tongue.

Story Seed: The Queen's Vis

The Waimie has her own vis source, which satisfies her Hunger for Animal Magic Flaw. Every year she sends one of her brood to a distant grove to gather three sprigs of marjoram as the star Regulus rises. The serpent then returns to the lair, her venom temporarily nullified by the magical herb. Of all the vis the Waimie eats, it is this vis she craves most.

A character can discover this by watching her lair and following the smaller serpent as she leaves. If he manages to secure possession of the marjoram from the offspring, he has a powerful tool with which to strike a bargain with the Waimie. He may be able to negotiate temporary suspension of thefts while he holds this vis as ransom.

The Rebellious Daughter

The Waimie brooks no challenges to her position at the head of the brood. She deliberately excludes her eldest offspring from her cave in the Magic Realm (see later) so that they suffer Acclimation (*Realms of Power: Magic*, pages 52–54) and do not grow to challenge her supremacy. Some resort to cannibalism to get the vis they need, while others range far afield in search of their own vis, but it is barely enough. Denying her offspring the ability to grow also prevents them from establishing their own families, since these serpents need to grow to their mother's size before they can produce their own brood.

If the player characters do not adopt an immediately hostile approach to the Waimie's offspring, they may find that one of her elder daughters seeks freedom from her mother's tyranny. She needs a sufficiently powerful Magic aura to prevent Acclimation, so that she can grow to her full size. She also needs a suitable mate, a creature reasonably serpentine or draconic. If the characters can help her with these requirements, they secure the alliance of the Waimie's daughter against her mother. Whether she can be trusted once the characters have fulfilled their part of the bargain remains to be seen.

A STRONGER WAIMIE

The Waimie herself is pretty strong already, but she can be made more of a challenge by giving her greater resources and removing some of her restrictions. She could easily find a use for a group of human servants, perhaps using a power similar to the Entrancement Ability to maintain control over them. These servants form the Cult of the Serpent, and their prime purpose is to gather information and vis for their Scaly Queen. Such a cult is headed by a charismatic leader, a hedge wizard with The Gentle Gift and a selection of serpent-related powers. He has Magical Blood of the serpent, and is somehow related to the Waimie's brood.

Removing the Difficult Underlings Flaw from the Waimie allows her to coordinate her offspring better, sending them

out in groups to attack the player characters. If she can defeat them totally, then she need not share any vis sources with them at all.

Initial Encounter

The characters' initial encounter is with the Waimie's children rather than the Waimie herself. They first become aware that something is up when they visit a regular vis source and discover that the vis has already been harvested. This vis source should be in a form that is portable, and that does not require the use of magic or skill to obtain.

Initially this proves an annoyance, but they discover that the same happens the

following year. If they leave a guard on this vis source, he witnesses the approach of a snake (one of the Waimie's brood, a yearling), who attempts to take the vis. She is acting contrary to a natural animal — she knows where the vis is and how to get it, and may or may not be successful, depending on the actions of the characters on guard.

If the Waimie's yearling met with resistance, the next year a two-year-old offspring arrives to steal the covenant's vis. It may be the same serpent (assuming she escaped), still bearing the scars of the previous year's encounter. It may be an entirely different creature, or it might be impossible to tell. Every year, the Waimie sends a bigger member of her brood until one escapes with the vis; she'll then send a similar-sized serpent in the subsequent years until that one meets with a run of failures, when she sends a bigger serpent again. Ideally, the Waimie needs her offspring to bring back vis at least every other year on average, so she'll send a big enough offspring to do the job. Of course, the offspring leave vis behind in their corpses, so the covenant may just accept that their vis source has become a contested vis source, and even welcome the occasional extra Animal vis. Before the characters get too used to this strategy, the Waimie starts to send a much smaller offspring out with each larger one. The job of this tiny serpent is to bring back the eyes of a slain sibling, because this is where the vis resides.

The Theft Spreads

After a few years of the magi fighting the Waimie's offspring for vis, she decides that these magi could easily provide her with more vis than they currently do, so she sends one of her hatchlings to follow them back to where they live. The youngster lurks near the covenant, remaining out of sight, but attempts to follow any groups of characters as they leave the covenant, in the hope that they will lead her to another vis source. It is perhaps best to allow the hatchling to be successful in one such mission, allowing the Waimie to start exploiting another vis source belonging to

the covenant. Of course, if the covenant does not have any other suitable vis sources, then the Waimie is out of luck.

After a second vis source has been located by the Waimie, she tries to find a third using the same method. This time the characters might notice that they are being followed; the Waimie's hatchlings are quite stealthy, but hardly invisible. There are only so many times that one can pass off another snake as a coincidence.

Once spotted, the hatchling tries to escape, but while the characters are chasing it, the Waimie sends one of her bigger offspring (one year older than the characters have faced so far) into their covenant to look for vis using her Magic Sensitivity Ability, with an Ease Factor of 12 – number of pawns of vis. It is possible that this offspring might be repelled by the covenant's *Aegis of the Hearth*; the Waimie has no knowledge of such things. If the *Aegis* is of sufficient Level and Penetration, the covenant may end up fighting the Waimie's offspring outside the covenant. The worst case scenario for the characters would be for the covenant to have both a weak *Aegis* and no sentries, leading to the discovery of the Waimie's daughter when she is already in the covenant's vis stores, helping herself to whatever bounty is gathered there. The time that the Waimie's brood has in the covenant and the distribution of the vis stores determines how much vis the serpent is able to steal before she is discovered. If the covenant is prone to keeping a single large vis store, then the creature could manage to consume three-quarters of the vis before she is discovered. If instead the vis is stored in the sanctum of each magus, she might only have the opportunity to raid two or three sancta. Of course, the brood could be stopped by any physical or magical traps protecting the vis stores or sancta.

Once discovered, the Waimie's offspring attempts to escape in the most expedient manner possible, seeking to return to her mother with whatever she has managed to purloin. The exception to this is if she faces only minor opposition, in which case she will take her chances at killing the grogs so as to continue her raid. After leaving the covenant, the offspring returns home and regurgitates whatever vis she has acquired.

Investigations

By the time the Waimie's offspring have pillaged multiple vis sources and attacked the covenant, the characters are probably sufficiently motivated to learn more about the serpents who are dogging their steps.

Local Lore

It is reasonable to assume that the Waimie and her offspring could not live in the region and remain entirely unknown to the populace. The characters may therefore look to the local people for rumors and legends about the Waimie. Alternatively, they may encounter a local in a tavern on the way to (or less helpfully, on the way from) the cave who might be enticed into recounting the story.

Apparently, the creature first appeared in the region a century ago. She was originally caught as a small eel-like creature when a sinner went fishing on a

Sunday; disgusted with his catch he cast her down a well. The creature grew, and the villagers found that if they fed her milk they could sate her terrible appetite for livestock. However she did not stop growing even on this diet of milk, and the sole dairy farmer in the valley found it hard to produce sufficient milk to keep her satisfied. Several knights tried to kill her, but each time she was wounded, her blood solidified in the wound healing the injury, and even severed sections just grew back together. She was eventually slain by a champion, who covered his armor in metal blades and fought her while astride a river; when the serpent tried to envelop him she cut herself to pieces. The blood was washed downstream, preventing the pieces from regenerating. However, each one grew into a small serpent who has swum in the river ever since, waiting for someone to fish her out on a Sunday.

This story raises objections from those listening in. One old man has also heard the story, but in his version the beast was completely invulnerable on the outside, and was eventually slain by thrusting a sod



The White Stuff

If anyone thinks to ask why there was only one dairy farmer in the valley, the answer will come back that all milk from cows fed in the valley has a horrible acrid taste, except for those pastured on a particular parcel of land. The freeman who owned the land no longer lives there; he died without issue and willed

the land to the Church, which now leases it to local serfs for growing garden crops. Those who are aware of the Waimie's appetite for vis might guess at the reason for her taste for milk. If the land were to be returned to pasture and cows fed there again, the characters could extract Creo vis from their milk.

of burning peat down her throat on the end of a spear. New serpents grew wherever the burning blood touched a marjoram plant.

A third gaffer disagrees with both versions told so far, claiming that the serpent was a princess turned into a hideous creature by her evil stepmother, and the spell was eventually broken by her brother. The transformation rebounded on the witch who had laid it, and it is she who still haunts the region with her brood.

None of these stories are true, but one of them contains a hint of truth concerning the Waimie's vulnerability — she cannot be harmed by bladed weapons. However, there is no way that the characters could know that, or which of the mutually contradictory tales might be true.

Following a Serpent to Her Lair

An obvious tack is to follow one of the serpents back home. The smaller a serpent is, the harder she is to follow; conversely, the bigger serpents can be easily spotted. Whatever size they are, they avoid inhabited regions and use rivers or the sea wherever possible to travel home. They are reasonably inattentive and not possessed of a great deal of wisdom, so as long as the characters do not draw too much attention to themselves, the offspring will not notice she is being followed.

THE LAIR

The Waimie's lair is described in more detail in a later section. Its location should be chosen to suit the needs of the saga;

but the following characteristics should be taken into consideration:

- The lair is a cave in the wilderness, some distance from human habitation;
- The cave is situated near water, either on the coast or by a major river;
- The cave is in a Magic aura of at least 5, and some local feature should explain the presence of this aura. Magic auras form around natural and preternatural tethers (*Realms of Power: Magic*, page 8); add the tether scores together to get the aura strength. The labyrinthine caves constitute a natural tether of 2, and the Waimie has lived here for ages, which counts as a preternatural tether of 2. Other features that might improve the aura include: a beautiful waterfall (natural tether 1), wave-carved stone arches and columns (natural tether 1), or a site of powerful ritual spells (preternatural tether 1–2).

The Waimie herself is not present during this first visit to her home — she must spend at least half the year in the Magic Realm to avoid Acclimation, and this happens to be her absent season. That is not to say that the cave is empty; on the contrary, it is filled with serpents of all sizes who are the various offspring of the Waimie. The smaller serpents are the most numerous — at least a hundred hatchlings, maybe half as many yearlings and two-year olds — and there should be just a handful of the elder offspring, but enough to give the characters a scare!

If the characters are up for a fight, have them face a serpent who is a couple of years older than any they have faced so far. A serpent of this size should appear to them to be the master of them all, and if

they are able to defeat her they may consider their problem solved. For a tougher fight, the characters may have to face a horde of smaller serpents attacking at the same time, acting as an untrained group.

There may be ways in which to defeat the serpents *en masse*, such as with fire or spells. Spells that affect an area, such as Creo Ignem or Creo Aquam spells with multiple Size modifiers, can potentially include more than one serpent in an affected area considering how densely packed the brood is. For example, a base Individual of Ignem can completely immerse one creature of Size 0. This is equivalent in volume to two creatures of Size –1, five creatures of Size –2, ten creatures of Size –3, twenty creatures of Size –4, and so on. So a *Pilum of Fire* can simultaneously damage two hundred hatchlings (Size –7); or else fifty hatchlings, five yearlings (Size –4) and one two year old (Size –1). Once the serpents are aware of the characters' presence they will spread out to attack them from all angles, reducing the efficacy of these area effect spells by one half to one third. Note that as magical creatures they are immune to hunger, thirst, and suffocation; if sealed inside the lair they simply wait until their mother or some misadventure frees them.

Attacking the Waimie's offspring makes no difference to the depredations on the covenant's vis sources; the Waimie herself is still alive and can give birth to more children to replenish those the characters have slain. Some of her larger offspring have also accompanied her to her lair in the Magic Realm, and are of an appropriate size to begin raiding against the characters' vis sources.

Depending on the power level of the characters, it would be good if this encounter exposes them to specimens of the Waimie's offspring larger than they have met before, but still quite junior in the overall hierarchy. This increases the impact of the arrival of one of the truly immense creatures in the next part of the story.

Besieged

Once the characters have been a sufficient nuisance to the Waimie — having prevented her from claiming too much vis,

and probably slain many of her young — she desires revenge. She sends one of her elder offspring (at least eight years old) to besiege a locale important to the characters. This is probably their covenant, but may be an important vis site, or even a village. Using her *Scion of the World Serpent* power to greatly increase her size, the offspring throws her coils around the chosen locale, completely encircling it. At her maximum Size of +12 she is 265 feet long, and can enclose an area of 70 feet diameter in her coils. If the covenant's fortress is smaller than this, she overlaps the coils, making multiple circuits, but her head is always near the main entrance. If the covenant has a high enough *Aegis of the Hearth* with sufficiently strong Penetration to stop the Waimie's offspring from entering, then she lays her coils around the boundary that defines the *Aegis*.

The colossal creature blockades the covenant, attacking anyone trying to enter or leave. Any doors on the outside of the covenant that open outwards are blocked by the creature's bulk and do not open. Any supplies brought to the covenant are swallowed whole or else hurled a great distance with a flick of the creature's head. If magi have a sufficiently high *Parma Magica*, they may be immune to the creature's attacks (it has a Penetration Total of Magic Might + Aura modifier when using this power), although they could still be swallowed whole. They are unharmed by this experience, but it is profoundly disturbing. Everyone else is trapped unless they can fight their way out or escape the serpent's attention.

The Waimie's offspring are not particularly attentive and have weak eyesight, so a stealthy character may be able to evade notice. However, their Magic Sensitivity actively hinders magical attempts to sneak past the offspring with invisibility spells and so forth.

The giant serpent remains until killed or driven off. If the player magi deduce that the growth effect must be a power (they might notice the flickering of the creature's size at sunrise or sunset), they can attempt to disrupt the creature's attention when the power fades — as long as they do not give her the opportunity to reuse her power, they may have a chance at defeating her.

Final Showdown

The final encounter between the characters and the Waimie occurs when they follow her offspring back to their caves and manage to penetrate deeply enough to find her lair in the Magic Realm. Here they face their enemy and put an end to her thefts, hopefully for good. Note that the Waimie is an exceptionally tough target, especially on her home turf, and characters might need to find a solution that does not involve direct confrontation.

The Waimie's Cave

As mentioned earlier, the Waimie's lair is located in a cave system near water. A river mouth is perfect, or a set of sea caves. The exact layout of the caves is not important, suffice to say that there are a dozen or so interlinked caverns, some of them joined by narrow caves through which humans (and some of the larger offspring) cannot pass. The caves near the entrance of the complex have a Magic aura of 3; this gradually increases as one penetrates deeper into the complex until one cavern has an aura of 8. This cave does not have a direct route to

it, but the passageways that link the other caves to this one are the widest, averaging ten feet in diameter. The caves themselves are beautiful works of nature, with fluted columns of stone that sparkle with glittering colors that seem to shift under the light of the characters' torches. The tunnels that link the caves have perfectly smooth walls that have been worn by the passage of many thousands of serpents, and they bear the faint ripple marks of their belly scales. The cave walls are banded with malachite, a deep green stone with whorls of jade and verdigris, and occasional emeralds can be found in the ceiling and floor.

Every cave is occupied by the Waimie's brood of various sizes. They resent any intruders into the caverns, although they do not communicate well with each other, and characters only need to face one cave-full at a time. Also, they are not particularly bright, and are easily tricked by illusions, shape-shifting magic, distractions, and so forth.

The Cave in the Magic Realm

The final cave, where the Waimie spends her time when in the mortal realm, has a Magic aura of 8 and is the site of a

Story Seed: Wrong Side of the Fence

Some of the characters are away from the covenant when the Waimie's offspring besieges it. They are trapped on the outside, while the others are trapped on the inside. Assuming that the characters manage to communicate with each other,

they discover that vital resources for driving off the serpent (such as vis, the casting tablet of a ritual, or an enchantment) are inside the covenant, and they must devise a way to retrieve them without being intercepted by the giant creature.

Story Seed: Not Alone

The Waimie is a difficult antagonist to face, but the characters need not do it alone. Through a redcap, the magi discover that a Hermetic rival is also a victim of the Waimie's depredation. The redcap suggests some form of summit to discuss the problem of the larcenous

brood, and perhaps forge an agreement to work together towards her destruction. Some suspect the rival covenant of ulterior motives when they suggest that this meeting take place at the players' covenant, but surely they are on the level, aren't they?



regio with a Magic aura of 10. If the regio is entered (a task with an Ease Factor of 11 for the appropriate Supernatural Ability; see *ArM5*, page 189), the characters find that the floor of the cave in the regio is a huge mound of solid malachite, and there is a deep spiral trough inscribed into the sides of the mound. If the characters walk around the spiral, following it to the top of the mound and the center of the room, they find themselves passing through a gate into the Magic Realm.

Here, the Waimie's lair is an insula enclosed within an Animal Boundary of level 4. This means that the effective Magic aura is 14, or 18 for any Animal-related effects, including the Waimie's Magic Resistance and Penetration totals. There are also four additional botch dice for any magical activity. It is like the cave in the mundane realm, but vastly bigger. Rather than just one mound, the insula is filled with hundreds of them, each one inscribed with a spiral groove in the malachite. Each mound is a different size; some are just a few feet across, whereas others are the size of hills. On some of these the spiral is clockwise, on others it is anticlockwise, and many of them

interlink with each other and interlock with neighboring symbols. From a high enough vantage point, the spirals appear to be some sort of map or possibly writing in a foreign, curlicue alphabet. What's more, the landscape is in a state of subtle, constant change; it is too slow to be seen in action, but there is a definite redesign of the mounds and spirals as they change in size and shape. It resembles nothing else than a nest of snakes all writhing against each other, sinuous and languid.

INHABITANTS OF THE LAIR

The Waimie is the most obvious inhabitant of this insula, her vast bulk stretched out among the malachite. The cave is sufficiently vast that she may not be spotted at first, and she uses surprise to her advantage. She resents intrusion into her hiding place, and it will be difficult to resolve this encounter without bloodshed. For a more difficult challenge she may be accompanied by one or more of her mid-sized offspring (years six to eight). Keep track of the number of wounds she suffers during the fight; in the magically charged atmosphere of her lair, the blood falling from each wound quickens into a living serpent who joins the fight in defense of her mother. A Light Wound results in a one-year-old offspring, a Medium Wound in a three-year-old serpent, and a Heavy or Incapacitating Wound in a five-year-old. These children of her blood do not spawn their own offspring if wounded.

Even with the Waimie dead, the lair may not be empty. The insula is big enough for one of her offspring to hide here and eventually grow big enough to pose a challenge to the characters. Also, the boundary of this insula is permeable to occasional visitors from elsewhere in the Magic Realm; serpents and dragons seem particularly drawn here. The storyguide should populate the hidden reaches of this vast cage with any creatures she chooses.

THE SERPENT MAP

The strange landscape of the Waimie's lair is in actual fact both a map and a text.

Story Seed: The Serpent's Husband

One possible inhabitant of the insula is the father of the Waimie's brood. As is common with snakes, the Waimie's husband is much smaller than the Waimie herself, and he appears to be human. After the characters have begun to explore the insula, he approaches them and greets them in a friendly manner. He explains who he is, but seems to desire no revenge — or even display any emotion — at the demise of the

Waimie. He explains the working of the Serpent Map (see below), and proves to be an asset to the characters. However, is he all that he seems? Remember, the Serpent of Eden was a snake who took human shape.

His exact powers are left to the storyguide; he is almost certainly a shapechanger, but he may be a magical human who can become a serpent, or a snake who can walk as a man.

It is not written in a human language, but is instead a physical representation of the speech of serpents. If an intelligent snake slithers across the surface of this insula, it will start to comprehend the knowledge encoded within. The lair is a giant map of the Magic Realm — or a portion of it at least. Further, the map is annotated with details of the wonders and dangers therein. Even humans can gain an inkling of the information contained therein. For each season spent studying the Serpent Map, it acts as a Summa on Area Lore: Magic Realm, Level 5, Quality 4. If the character can understand the language of snakes through the Animal Ken Virtue, then the Quality is equal to his score in the Animal Ken Ability instead, if that score is higher than 5. A Bjornaer magus with a snake heartbeast has an effective Language score of 5 (*Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, page 23), and uses this as the Quality instead. If the character assumes the shape of a serpent for at least half the season, then the Quality is treated as 3 points higher.

At the option of the storyguide, the map can be used to try to divine the locations of Magic auras, vis sources, or gates to the Magic Realm. This requires time to study the map — at least one week per 3 points of the Ease Factor — and an Intelligence + Area Lore: Magic Realm. The Ease Factor varies according to the information sought:

LOCATION	EASE FACTOR
Magic aura	9 + aura
Magic regio	12 + highest-level aura
Vis source	15 + yearly pawn harvest
Magic Realm gate	18

Story Seed: Have We Made Things Worse?

Killing the Waimie frees her offspring from her tyrannical rule. The younger offspring will be confused and lost, and probably remain in the caves until they become normal serpents thanks to Acclimation, or else are eaten by their elder siblings. The surviving older serpents flee the lair and search for Magic auras of their own in which to set up a home, and for vis sources to prey upon. Some

might even survive long enough to reach maturity and take on the statistics of the mother Waimie. Should they find mates, they could then start their own broods. Depending on the density of suitable Magic auras in the region, there could be several Waimies that compete for the same vis sources, or the characters might simply have to survive a battle royale until one achieves dominance.

Alternative: A Non-Violent Ending

The Waimie is a creature of remarkable power, and is intended to be a difficult challenge for even experienced magi. Storyguides might instead wish to allow the characters to come to some sort of ac-

cord with the Waimie. She will certainly demand a tithe of vis from the characters, but this tithe might be less than what she could have her offspring steal — and without the possible loss of life.

Story Seed: Unwelcome Visitors

The existence of the Serpent Map is known to a few other creatures in the Magic Realm, and the characters' possession of it will not go unchallenged indefinitely. Some of those seeking it out are simply chancing their luck, and can

be nothing more than a nuisance to the characters. However, the map's encoded knowledge is of use to more powerful entities, so that one is bound to come visiting before long. Such creatures could be many times worse than the Waimie.

If the roll succeeds, then the character may trace the location of the place found from any known aura in the mundane world.

EXITS TO OTHER INSULAE

Like most regions of the Magic Realm, the Waimie's insula is connected to others through either boundaries or vestiges. The storyguide should determine the exact destinations for these features, and what perils and experiences face the characters when using them. The following are only examples of the sorts of features that characters might find:

- A stream runs through one portion of the insula. It serves as a boundary to another insula, this one aligned to Aquam.

- Against one wall of the cave is the root of a huge ivy that grows up out of sight. If climbed, a person can cross this Herbam boundary into a plant-dominated insula.
- On top of one of the smaller mounds is a small statue carved from the same malachite as the cave. It is an abstract piece apparently made of arches and rings, but if examined from different angles, it appears to be suggestive of a dancing woman. This Terram vestige of level 4 represents a Mystery Cult of dancers who enhance fertility through their efforts, and is also present in a Mentem and a Corpus insula.
- A phantom mouse runs through the lair. It is generally only seen out of the corner of one's eye, or heard as the pattering of tiny feet. This is a Imaginem vestige of level 2, which is linked to the dream of a cat who happens to be a magus' familiar. The vestige can be found in several different insulae, and if someone can catch the mouse they can travel with it to those insulae.

For details on crossing over into other parts of the Magic Realm, see *Realms of Power: Magic*, page 23. The base Ease Factor for crossing any boundary (ignoring any Familiarity modifier) is 18. The base Ease Factor for using a vestige is (10 – vestige level) x 3.

The Waimie's Brood

HATCHLINGS

Magic Might: 0 (Animal)

Characteristics: Cun -1, Per +2, Pre -6, Com -6, Str -14, Sta +2, Dex +2, Qik +9

Size: -7

Virtues and Flaws: Lightning Reflexes; Infamous

Magical Qualities and Inferiorities: Improved Initiative, Minor Virtue x 5 (Improved Characteristics x 3, Piusant Stealth, Sharp Eyes); Miniature, Temporary Might

Combat:

Fangs: Init +12, Attack +8, Defense +13, Damage -13

Soak: +3

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1), -3 (2), -5 (3), Incapacitated (4), Dead (5+)

Abilities: Awareness 2 (prey), Brawl 2 (fangs), Hunt 4 (rodents), Stealth 4+2 (stalking prey), Survival 3 (grassy areas), Swim 1 (rivers)

Powers: Venomous Bite

This serpent is about three feet long and about one inch in diameter at her fattest point. Serpents of this size were born this year. Because of their tiny size, hatchlings receive a +3 bonus to any rolls involving hiding.

ONE YEAR OLD

Magic Might: 5 (Animal)

Characteristics: Cun -1, Per -2, Pre -6, Com -6, Str -8, Sta +2, Dex +2, Qik +6

Size: -4

Virtues and Flaws: Lightning Reflexes; Infamous

Magical Qualities and Inferiorities: Greater Power x 2 (The Envenomed Gift); Improved Powers x 2, Minor Virtue (Improved Characteristics); Temporary Might; Restricted Power (must bite to use The Envenomed Gift)

Combat:

Fangs: Init +6, Attack +8, Defense +10, Damage -7

Soak: +3

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1), -3 (2), -5 (3), Incapacitated (4), Dead (5+)

Abilities: Awareness 2 (prey), Brawl 2 (fangs), Hunt 4 (rodents), Stealth 4 (stalking prey), Survival 3 (grassy areas), Swim 1 (rivers)

Powers: Venomous Bite, The Envenomed Gift

This serpent is over six and a half feet long and about three inches in diameter at her fattest point. This makes her the size of a particularly large adder. Yearlings have very different Magical Qualities than hatchlings; many features have been exchanged for others.

TWO YEARS OLD

Magic Might: 10 (Animal)

Characteristics: Cun -1, Per -2, Pre -6, Com -6, Str -2, Sta +2, Dex +2, Qik +5

Size: -1

Virtues and Flaws: Lightning Reflexes; Infamous

Magical Qualities and Inferiorities: Gigantic, Greater Power x 2 (The Envenomed Gift); Improved Powers x 2, Minor Virtue (Great Quickness), Minor Virtue (Improved Characteristics), Minor Virtue (Magic Sensitivity); Temporary Might; Restricted Power (must bite to use The Envenomed Gift)

Combat:

Fangs: Init +5, Attack +8, Defense +9, Damage -1

Soak: +3

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-4), -3 (5-8), -5 (9-12), Incapacitated (13-16), Dead (17+)

Abilities: Awareness 2 (prey), Brawl 2 (fangs), Hunt 4 (rodents), Magic Sen-

sitivity 1 (vis), Stealth 4 (stalking prey), Survival 3 (grassy areas), Swim 2 (rivers)

Powers: Venomous Bite, The Envenomed Gift

This serpent is about 13 feet long, and has a diameter of about six inches at her widest.

THREE YEARS OLD

Magic Might: 15 (Animal)

Characteristics: Cun -1, Per -2, Pre -6, Com -6, Str +2, Sta +2, Dex +2, Qik +3

Size: +1

Virtues and Flaws: Lightning Reflexes; Infamous

Magical Qualities and Inferiorities: Gigantic x 2, Greater Power x 2 (The Envenomed Gift); Improved Powers x 2, Improved Soak, Minor Virtue (Great Quickness), Minor Virtue (Improved Characteristics), Minor Virtue (Magic Sensitivity), Minor Virtue (Tough); Temporary Might; Restricted Power (must bite to use The Envenomed Gift)

Combat:

Fangs: Init +5, Attack +8, Defense +7, Damage +3

Constriction: Init +3, Attack +8, Defense +5, Damage n/a

Soak: +8

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-6), -3 (7-12), -5 (13-18), Incapacitated (19-24), Dead (25+)

Abilities: Awareness 2 (prey), Brawl 2 (fangs), Hunt 4 (rodents), Magic Sensitivity 2 (vis), Stealth 4 (stalking prey), Survival 3 (grassy areas), Swim 3 (rivers)

Powers: Constriction, The Envenomed Gift, Venomous Bite

This serpent is about 21 feet long and has a maximum diameter of nine inches. She is now big enough to use constriction attacks against human-sized targets.

The Waimie's Brood, cont'd

FOUR YEARS OLD

Magic Might: 20 (Animal)

Characteristics: Cun -1, Per -2, Pre -6, Com -6, Str +6, Sta +2, Dex +2, Qik +1

Size: +3

Virtues and Flaws: Lightning Reflexes, Infamous

Magical Qualities and Inferiorities: Gigantic x 3, Greater Power x 2 (The Envenomed Gift); Improved Attack (Fangs), Improved Defense (Fangs), Improved Powers x 2, Improved Soak, Minor Virtue (Great Quickness), Minor Virtue (Improved Characteristics), Minor Virtue (Magic Sensitivity), Minor Virtue (Tough); Temporary Might; Restricted Power (must bite to use The Envenomed Gift)

Combat:

Fangs: Init +3, Attack +10, Defense +7, Damage +7

Constriction: Init +1, Attack +8, Defense +3, Damage n/a

Soak: +8

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-8), -3 (9-16), -5 (17-24), Incapacitated (25-32), Dead (33+)

Abilities: Awareness 2 (prey), Brawl 2 (fangs), Hunt 4 (rodents), Magic Sensitivity 3 (vis), Stealth 4 (stalking prey), Survival 3 (grassy areas), Swim 3 (rivers)

Powers: Constriction, The Envenomed Gift, Swallow Whole, Venomous Bite

This serpent is about 33 feet long and has a maximum diameter of 16 inches. She is now capable of swallowing whole characters of Size -2 or smaller.

FIVE YEARS OLD

Magic Might: 25 (Animal)

Characteristics: Cun -1, Per -2, Pre -6, Com -6, Str +8, Sta +2, Dex +2, Qik 0

Size: +4

Virtues and Flaws: Lightning Reflexes, Infamous

Magical Qualities and Inferiorities: Gigantic x 4, Greater Power (Two Heads Are Better Than One), Greater Power x 2 (The Envenomed Gift); Improved Attack (Fangs), Improved Defense (Fangs), Improved Powers x 3, Improved Soak, Minor Virtue (Great Quickness), Minor Virtue (Improved Characteristics), Minor Virtue (Magic Sensitivity), Minor Virtue (Tough); Temporary Might; Minor Flaw (Clumsy), Minor Flaw (Poor Eyesight), Restricted Power (must bite to use The Envenomed Gift)

Combat:

Fangs: Init +2, Attack +11, Defense +7, Damage +9

Constriction: Init 0, Attack +9, Defense +3, Damage n/a

Soak: +8

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-9), -3 (10-18), -5 (19-27), Incapacitated (28-36), Dead (37+)

Abilities: Awareness 2 (prey), Brawl 3 (fangs), Hunt 4 (rodents), Magic Sensitivity 3 (vis), Stealth 4 (stalking prey), Survival 3 (grassy areas), Swim 3 (rivers)

Powers: Constriction, The Envenomed Gift, Swallow Whole, Two Heads Are Better Than One, Venomous Bite

This serpent is about 42 feet long and has a maximum diameter of 20 inches. She is now capable of swallowing whole characters of Size -1 or smaller. The creature's vast size makes her ungainly.

SIX YEARS OLD

Magic Might: 30 (Animal)

Characteristics: Cun -1, Per -2, Pre -6, Com -6, Str +10, Sta +2, Dex +2, Qik -1

Size: +5

Virtues and Flaws: Lightning Reflexes, Infamous

Magical Qualities and Inferiorities: Gigantic x 5, Greater Power (Two Heads Are Better Than One), Greater Power x 2 (The Envenomed Gift); Gift of Speech, Improved Attack (Fangs) x 2, Improved Defense (Fangs), Improved Powers x 3, Improved Soak x 2, Minor Virtue (Great Quickness), Minor Virtue (Improved Characteristics), Minor Virtue (Magic Sensitivity), Minor Virtue (Tough); Temporary Might; Minor Flaw (Afflicted Tongue), Minor Flaw (Clumsy), Minor Flaw (Poor Eyesight), Restricted Power (must bite to use The Envenomed Gift)

Combat:

Fangs: Init +1, Attack +13, Defense +6, Damage +11

Constriction: Init -1, Attack +9, Defense +2, Damage n/a

Soak: +10

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-10), -3 (11-20), -5 (21-30), Incapacitated (31-40), Dead (41+)

Abilities: Awareness 2 (prey), Brawl 3 (fangs), Hunt 4 (rodents), Magic Sensitivity 3 (vis), Stealth 4 (stalking prey), Survival 3 (grassy areas), Swim 3 (rivers)

Powers: Constriction, The Envenomed Gift, Swallow Whole, Two Heads Are Better Than One, Venomous Bite

This serpent is over 53 feet long and has a maximum diameter of two and a quarter feet. She is now capable of swallowing whole characters of Size 0 or smaller. Note that from this age onwards the offspring can speak, but her voice is hampered by her divided tongue, and she can barely speak above a whisper.

The Waimie's Brood, cont'd

SEVEN YEARS OLD

Magic Might: 35 (Animal)

Characteristics: Cun -1, Per -2, Pre -6, Com -6, Str +12, Sta +2, Dex +2, Qik -2

Size: +6

Virtues and Flaws: Lightning Reflexes; Infamous

Magical Qualities and Inferiorities: Gigantic x 6, Greater Power (Two Heads Are Better Than One), Greater Power x 2 (The Envenomed Gift); Gift of Speech, Improved Attack (Fangs) x 2, Improved Defense (Fangs) x 2, Improved Powers x 3, Improved Soak x 3, Minor Virtue (Great Quickness), Minor Virtue (Improved Characteristics), Minor Virtue (Magic Sensitivity), Minor Virtue (Tough); Temporary Might; Minor Flaw (Afflicted Tongue), Minor Flaw (Clumsy), Minor Flaw (Poor Eyesight), Restricted Power (must bite to use The Envenomed Gift)

Combat:

Fangs: Init 0, Attack +14, Defense +8, Damage +13

Constriction: Init -2, Attack +10, Defense +2, Damage n/a

Soak: +12

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-11), -3 (12-22), -5 (23-33), Incapacitated (34-44), Dead (45+)

Abilities: Awareness 2 (prey), Brawl 4 (fangs), Hunt 4 (rodents), Magic Sensitivity 4 (vis), Stealth 4 (stalking prey), Survival 3 (grassy areas), Swim 3 (rivers)

Powers: Constriction, The Envenomed Gift, Swallow Whole, Two Heads Are Better Than One, Venomous Bite

This serpent is about 67 feet long and has a maximum diameter of three feet. She is now capable of swallowing whole characters of Size +1 or smaller.

EIGHT YEARS OLD

Magic Might: 40 (Animal)

Characteristics: Cun -1, Per -2, Pre -6, Com -6, Str +14, Sta +2, Dex +2, Qik -3

Size: +7

Virtues and Flaws: Lightning Reflexes; Infamous

Magical Qualities and Inferiorities: Gigantic x 7, Greater Power (Two Heads Are Better Than One), Greater Power x 2 (The Envenomed Gift); Gift of Speech, Improved Attack (Fangs) x 2, Improved Defense (Fangs) x 2, Improved Powers x 3, Improved Soak x 4, Minor Virtue (Great Quickness), Minor Virtue (Improved Characteristics), Minor Virtue (Magic Sensitivity), Minor Virtue (Tough), Personal Power x2 (Scion of the World Serpent); Temporary Might; Minor Flaw (Afflicted Tongue), Minor Flaw (Clumsy), Minor Flaw (Poor Eyesight), Reduced Fatigue, Restricted Power (must bite to use The Envenomed Gift)

Combat:

Fangs: Init -1, Attack +14, Defense +7, Damage +15

Constriction: Init -3, Attack +10, Defense +1, Damage n/a

Soak: +14

Fatigue Levels: OK, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-12), -3 (13-24), -5 (25-36), Incapacitated (37-48), Dead (49+)

Abilities: Awareness 2 (prey), Brawl 4 (fangs), Hunt 4 (rodents), Magic Sensitivity 4 (vis), Stealth 4 (stalking prey), Survival 3 (grassy areas), Swim 3 (rivers)

Powers: Constriction, The Envenomed Gift, Scion of the World Serpent, Swallow Whole, Two Heads Are Better Than One, Venomous Bite

This serpent is about 84 feet long with a maximum diameter of three and a half feet. She is capable of swallowing whole characters Size +2 or smaller. Brood this size and up tire easily carrying their bulk, so have one less Fatigue level than normal.

NINE YEARS OLD

Magic Might: 45 (Animal)

Characteristics: Cun -1, Per -2, Pre -6, Com -6, Str +16, Sta +2, Dex +2, Qik -4

Size: +8

Virtues and Flaws: Lightning Reflexes; Infamous

Magical Qualities and Inferiorities: Gigantic x 8, Greater Power (Two Heads Are Better Than One), Greater Power x 2 (The Envenomed Gift); Gift of Speech, Improved Attack (Fangs) x 3, Improved Defense (Fangs) x 3, Improved Powers x 3, Improved Soak x 4, Minor Virtue (Great Quickness), Minor Virtue (Improved Characteristics), Minor Virtue (Magic Sensitivity), Minor Virtue (Tough), Personal Power (Scion of the World Serpent); Temporary Might; Minor Flaw (Afflicted Tongue), Minor Flaw (Clumsy), Minor Flaw (Poor Eyesight), Reduced Fatigue, Restricted Power (must bite to use The Envenomed Gift)

Combat:

Fangs: Init -2, Attack +16, Defense +8, Damage +17

Constriction: Init -4, Attack +10, Defense 0, Damage n/a

Soak: +14

Fatigue Levels: OK, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-13), -3 (14-26), -5 (27-39), Incapacitated (40-52), Dead (53+)

Abilities: Awareness 2 (prey), Brawl 4 (fangs), Hunt 4 (rodents), Magic Sensitivity 4 (vis), Stealth 4 (stalking prey), Survival 3 (grassy areas), Swim 3 (rivers)

Powers: Constriction, The Envenomed Gift, Scion of the World Serpent, Swallow Whole, Two Heads Are Better Than One, Venomous Bite

This serpent is about 106 feet long with a maximum diameter of five feet. She is capable of swallowing whole characters Size +3 or smaller. This is the largest the Waimie's offspring grow, she herself is one Size increment larger (see her *Scion of the World Serpent* power for her Size progression).