

PARADIGM CONCEPTS

PRESENTS A



ESPIONAGE

4-hour Introductory Adventure

Intro #7

When nations play games with one another, they are often played with the lives of their citizens. When such games involve Canceri, everyone involved usually loses. Now, a Milandisian agent is held captive in the necropolis city of Kielmun, under threat of execution. Do you think you can arrive in time?

“When in the field, one should be willing to receive intelligence from one’s agents at any hour, for the fate of an army can change on a single report.” **Menisis val’Tensen**

An **Introductory** adventure optimized for **3rd level** characters.

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CREDITS

Author: Lucas Amodio

Editor: Jeff Huston, James Vacca

Cartographer: John Bellando

Special Thanks: Scott Carter & Cody Bergman

CAMPAIGN INTRODUCTION

Campaign Staff

Team Paradigm: Henry Lopez, Nelson Rodriguez, Pedro Barrenechea, Jim Beck, and James Zwiers.

Author Liaison: Cody Bergman

5e Rules Manager: Pedro Barrenechea

Living Arcanis Liaison: Henry Lopez

RUNNING AN ARCANIS ADVENTURE

When you run an Arcanis adventure you are charged with bringing the world to life. We pride ourselves on delivering a deep world where a player's actions are just as, if not more, important than their die rolls.

We ask our GMs to be familiar with the location the adventure is set in and the cultures the players may encounter. But we also understand that during convention play some GMs may be forced to run an Arcanis adventure on short notice. When cultural details come into play we will do our best to call them out in "Arcanis Cliff Notes" side bars.

Beyond that, the important job you have as a GM is to make the table as fun as possible by engaging players and drawing them into the story.

Pay close attention to the player's actions, not character's, players. Are they on their cell phone or tablet? Do they seem disengaged? Distracted? Don't be afraid to engage them or shift the spot light to their character a little.

To facilitate this, you are empowered to adjust and modify the adventure in a number of ways:

- You may make on the fly adjustments to the adventure if the players find a clever way to tackle a problem, especially when out of combat. As long as the idea is reasonable, run with it! When you must say "no" always try and say "no, but," This keeps the game moving and makes it fun for everyone,
- Don't be an adversarial GM. Some tables like to be challenged, but there is a difference between being adversarial and offering a challenge. At the same time, don't make an adventure so easy that the players become bored.
- Keep the pace going in order to keep players engaged. Switch the spot light, have them make some rolls, ask them what their character is doing. If the party is stuck, nudge them though some ability rolls or improvise some details, just keep the game going.
- During conventions and game days be aware if you are going short or long on time while running an adventure. Skip some encounters if necessary, but try and tell the entire story. Give the players closure, even if you need to fudge the numbers.
- Read-aloud text may be adjusted as you see fit, but make sure you give the players the appropriate hints and clues needed to keep the story going.

ADJUSTING ENCOUNTERS

Before you begin play you should determine the average strength of the party and compare that to the base level of the adventure. Each combat encounter has a box titled Adventure Difficulty guiding you on how to adjust the encounter to the party's power level.

These adjustments are suggestions; if a party is having an easy or hard time don't be afraid to adjust the difficulty.

To set the adventure difficulty you must first determine your tables Average Party Level.

Add up all the levels of all the characters, then divide by the number of players. Round up fractions to the nearest whole number. This is the Average Party Level

Consult the table below to set the adventure difficulty based on the APL.

ADVENTURE DIFFICULTY

This adventure has been optimized for a table of 5 players playing 3rd level characters.

# of Players	APL to BL	Adventure Difficulty
3-4	Equal	Easy
3-4	Greater than	Normal
5	Less/Equal	Normal
5	Greater than	Difficult
6-7	Less/Equal	Difficult
6-7	Greater	Perilous

SPELLCASTING SERVICES

While in a settlement, town, or city, characters may visit a temple or shrine to request spell casting at the cost of a substantial donation. You may only utilize these spell casting services three times per adventure. Any spell casting provided through the story of the adventure, such as an NPC casting a spell for the party, does not count against this limit.

Shrines do not house clergy with which to attend to the needs of the faithful. Instead, one or two itinerant priests tend to the shrine and the needs of the people.

Temples and churches are larger structures attended by full staffs of the faithful, including Templars.

The following services are common to all temples, with additional options available at specific temples as noted in each adventures.

Shrines, regardless of their deity, may only provide players with *cure wounds* and *lesser restoration*.

General Spell Services

Spell	Cost
<i>Cure wounds</i> (1st level)	10 gp
<i>Greater restoration</i>	450 gp
<i>Lesser restoration</i>	40 gp
<i>Prayer of healing</i> (2nd level)	40 gp

Initiate of the Gods background/Acolyte background/divine spellcasters receive **one free spell** as long as it is from a church or temple of the same religious faction (Mother Church for example)

If they worship the same god as a particular temple but are part of another religious faction, they can get a onetime 50% discount instead.

ADVENTURE RELATED INFORMATION

This adventure begins in the city of Ashvan and ends in the city of Kielmun, both located in Canceri.

GOODS AND SERVICES

While in Canceri, the Heroes are able to purchase standard items but only with Canceri currency. To do otherwise would attract attention and most Canceri merchants will not accept any other currency but their nation's.

A successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion or Deceit)** ability check will allow the Heroes to find a somewhat reputable moneychanger who will offer to exchange their gold and silver for Canceri currency. The moneychanger will charge a 50% fee for this service, although through good role-playing and ability checks the Heroes can haggle that down to 30%.

TEMPLES AND SHRINES

No temples are available in Ashvan during this mission. There are several in Kielmun; see Scene Three for more details.

ORGANIZATIONS

The Orthodoxy and Mourners in Silence have secret missions for this adventure.

PORTALS OF ANSHAR

Not available for this adventure.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

From the point of view of the outside world, Canceri has been a bastion of evil since its founding. The Cancereese have unleashed plagues, Infernals, and numerous other horrors on the nations around them. Many have tried to invade and wipe this blighted place from the

map, notably numerous attempts by Milandir. Most recently, in 1026 I.C., the Swords of Nier tried to conquer the land, but eventually failed.

Kielmun, which sits near the Milandisian-Canceri border, has been the first step in many of these invasions. The city has been taken many times in the past and used to protect supply chains. The city was always vigorously defended by its people who would take guerilla actions against the invaders.

The Swords of Nier decided that instead of occupying the city, they would raze it to the ground. With the help of the Sisters of Nier, the Swords were able to wipe out most of the population, finding and destroying many of the undead that were living in the catacombs. Despite this, Kielmun has resurged once more.

Three men worked hard to rebuild the city. Paluos val'Mordane, a vampire, became the Nihang, and appointed Keirig Kajal and Zartel val'Mordane as his two Akali.

Kajal banded together a large gang of survivors and other toughs displaced by the war. He called this gang 'Kielmun's Militia' and used them to enforce his will on the ruins. For a while he tried to set himself up as the King of Kielmun, but that didn't last.

Zartel val'Mordane, a priest of Neroth, came to the city after the re-ascension of the Dark Apostate Hegrish val'Mordane. He animated the dead to help clear away ruins and rebuild the city. It was slow work, but he attracted followers and slowly the city began to rise from the ashes. He established trade with other Cancereese cities and even with the Haina Empire. This influx of trade helped to rebuild city.

Forty years of relative peace followed. Until recently Milandir has been too busy with the Infernal Horde to bother Canceri, while for their

part, Canceri has done nothing to draw their attention.

With his region of Tralia abutting Canceri, Duke Konrad val'Holryn has watched closely for any signs of trouble. He regularly sends spies to watch and see what the Cancerese are up to. His efforts have headed off at least two nefarious plots, though nothing on a nationwide scale. Still, Duke Konrad believes in being prepared, and he knows that the Cancerese have spies in Milandir as well.

Whenever one of his spies is caught, the spy is tortured and executed. Duke Konrad does the same to Cancerese spies and the game continues on.

Four days ago, one of Duke Konrad's agents was captured; unfortunately, this time the spy is someone important to his wife. So to keep things quiet on the domestic front, he is planning on sending a rescue party.

Enter the Heroes.

ADVENTURE BREAKDOWN

Introduction: The Heroes are hired to rescue a Milandisian spy in Canceri.

Scene 1: The Heroes travel through the Mire and encounter the dangers of the area.

Scene 2: The Heroes attack the Reavers to rescue the young man.

Scene 3: The Heroes make it to Kielmun and explore the city trying to figure out their plan of rescue.

Scene 4-A/4-B: The Heroes meet with Grandfather who makes them a deal.

Or

Scene 4-C: The Heroes are rescued from the Reavers and meet with Grandfather who makes them a deal.

Scene 5: This is the battle for the condemned.

Scene 6: Grandfather collects part of his due.

INTRODUCTION

Key Concepts: The Heroes are hired to rescue a Milandisian spy in Canceri.

You are resting in Ashvan, in northern Milandir, when a page arrives at the inn at which you are staying. In a tremulous voice on the edge of manhood, he announces, "His Grace, Duke Konrad val'Holryn, is seeking able-bodied adventurers and heroes for an urgent matter. If you are interested, please let me know immediately and I will take you up to the keep."

For those who agree to attend the meeting, continue with the following:

You are led to the castle by the page and asked to wait in an antechamber with several other individuals.

Allow the Heroes to introduce themselves and RP a bit here. Encourage them to speculate on what they think the mission is going to be.

It seems that Duke Konrad's comment about this matter being urgent is true; as soon as you finish introducing yourself to your compatriots you are being ushered into the Duke's presence.

The room you are led to is large, though not a throne room. It has full size windows along one wall that overlook the countryside. As you enter, the Duke is staring out the window, his back to you. On each wall is a pair of guards, one human and one ss'ressen.

The page announces you, and then leaves the room. The Duke turns around and says, "Welcome. I appreciate you answering my call on such short notice. It seems that I have an emergency situation and need some special individuals to handle it. Please, let us sit and talk."

The Duke seats himself at the middle of the table where he can see the party. After everyone is seated (or standing if they wish), continue with the following.

GM's Note: The guards will ensure that everyone sits on the side of the table opposite of the Duke.

ROLE-PLAYING DUKE KONRAD VAL'HOLRYN

Duke Konrad is generally an agreeable ruler. However, at this point in time he is under a time crunch and needs the Heroes help and needs them to agree to his mission quickly.

What Duke Konrad can tell the Heroes:

- *He needs the Heroes to rescue one of his agents that was captured.*
- *The agent was captured four days ago in the Canceri city of Kielmun.*
- *Her execution date is four days in the future.*
- *Kielmun is two days north, just on the other side of the Canceri border.*
- *Canceri is a dangerous and evil place that has been a thorn in the side of Milandir for centuries.*
- *To get to Kielmun in time, the Heroes' will have to cross the Blighted Mire on the Cold Road.*
- *He has an agent in Kielmun named Parag Rarzi. Parag is a merchant on the outskirts of the city and can help the*

Heroes get into the city itself. The passphrase is "Uncle Tapel sent us to talk."

- *The Heroes will probably have to hide their religious affiliations to not draw attention.*
- *Secret Police are everywhere in Canceri!*
- *The Heroes need to be very careful about breaking any laws and/or drawing attention to themselves.*

Give the players Player Handout 1.

"I will answer any questions that you may have, but remember that we are running short on time already."

WHAT ELSE CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT KIELMUN?

"It was last destroyed over 40 years ago by the Swords of Nier. The Swords went through and wiped out most of the living population. Then they cleared out the catacombs of all the undead that they could find. But somehow, with the help of the Nerothians, the city recovered. Although it does not have a standing garrison, it is defended zealously by its citizenry and an active militia."

WHAT ELSE CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE BLIGHTED MIRE?

"Old stories suggest that there used to be a city there, a predecessor to Ashvan; then something truly evil happened. The city fell into ruin and the land around the ruins became corrupted. One story goes that the land sank in an effort to get away from the wickedness of the city."

CAN YOU GIVE US HORSES?

"I could, but they won't do you any good. This time of year, there are places on the Cold Road that may be flooded out, and a horse

would only slow you down. Horses don't do well traveling through the swamp, and I would advise against taking them."

WHAT IS THE PAY?

"Don't worry; I will compensate you well based on your level of success."

WHAT WAS YOUR AGENT SPYING ON?

"I find that having agents in the various cities help me to keep an eye on the Cancere. I like to watch out for troop movements near our border and other things that may affect Milandir. This particular agent was looking for division in the church of Neroth that we might be able to exploit."

THIS IS A LOT OF TROUBLE FOR ONE PERSON. WHY ARE WE RESCUING HER?

"I would like to claim nobility and say that I am doing this because I never leave one of my own behind. However, that is not the way of things. Normally I would let my agent be executed as I have done in the past. We treat the Canceri spies that we catch no differently. It is the way that things on the border are done and it keeps things from escalating into open hostilities."

"Elsie Krause, my agent, is the daughter of a distant cousin of my wife. It seems that my wife has found memories of playing with Elsie's mother when they were children and asked me to intercede."

"But there is another, more practical, consideration. Elsie has been deeply undercover for a couple of years and last I heard, she said she might have uncovered something important. I want to find out what she has learned. It may prove useful to us. As much as I want to know what she

knows, however, it was ultimately my wife's intervention that pushed me to hire you for this mission."

WHAT SUPPLIES CAN YOU GIVE US?

"All I can give you is Cancere traveling robes, so that you don't stand out. As for anything else, I need you to head out as soon as we are done talking, so there really isn't time for you to go shopping."

HOW DO WE RESCUE HER?

"I don't know. You will have to get there and figure out what the situation is. I am paying you to use your best judgment and creativity."

When the PC finish asking questions:

"SO I TAKE IT YOU WILL ALL ASSIST ME?"

(As long as they say yes, continue.)

"Thank you. I wish you every success. Report back to me here when return. But be very careful and remember, everything wicked comes from Canceri." With that the Duke gets up and leaves the room.

Allow the Heroes to figure out what gear they wish to take with them and maybe purchase some minor supplies. If they want to take an extended shopping trip, remind them of the time crunch that they are under.

At this point, give Members of the Orthodoxy and Mourners in Silence their secret orders to learn and report everything that they can about an individual in Kielmun called Grandfather. See Secret Orders Handout, Appendix B.

Development: Proceed to Scene 1.

SCENE 1: MIRED DOWN

Key Concepts: The Heroes travel through the Mire and encounter the dangers of the area.

The Blighted Mire is even worse than Duke Konrad described. A mist covers everything with a perpetual, grey gloom and prevents the sun from reaching this vile place. Occasionally, through the haze, you can make out old statues and ruins partially sunken in the mire. A couple of times you have seen clusters of wooden buildings raised up on poles. In most places, the swamp reaches the narrow, cobbled road on both sides. At night you hear strange noises, not natural to any swamp you have ever been in, and as you walk, you have the itchy sensation between your shoulder blades of being watched. The monotonous trudge down the road has been broken up a couple of times by flooding over the road, where you and your companions had to ford your way through the water until the road resurfaced. There also have been occasional groups of travelers that you have passed by. They have all stayed out of your way and moved to the side of road as you went by. Last night, you had to camp on the road itself. It was a soggy night, as fuel for a fire is extremely scarce in this bog.

At this point have each Hero make a **DC 13 Constitution saving throw** to see if they have contracted the disease mire blight. Additionally, every time the Heroes take a long rest while in the mire they must a Constitution saving throw to avoid becoming infected.

Mire Blight - The most common ailment of the Blighted Mire is the disease named after it. Affecting all who breathe in the mists, it weakens its victims, killing them over the course of a couple of weeks.

As soon as the creature contracts the disease, they are overcome with dull aches and fatigue.

The infected creature gains one level of exhaustion that cannot be removed until the disease is cured. While infected with mire blight, a creature cannot remove levels of exhaustion with a long rest.

At the end of a long rest, the infected creature must make a **DC 11 Constitution saving throw**. If they fail, they gain another level of exhaustion and the DC for all subsequent saves increases by 2. If they succeed, they do not gain a level of exhaustion and the DC for all subsequent saves decreases by 2.

Once the save DC is reduced to 0 the disease has run its course and the creature can recover levels of exhaustion normally.

A *lesser restoration* spell will remove this affliction.

It is now late in the hazy morning on your second day of travel. You expect to arrive in Kielmun this evening. However, nothing is sure as there are no distance markers and no landmarks to tell you how far you have traveled. As you approach what looks like a refuse pile on the side of the road, a voice calls out to you.

The voice is speaking in Cancerese and says, "Excuse me, good masters, could you please help us?" If none of the Heroes respond, it will repeat in Cancerese. If there is no response at that point, and any of the Heroes are obviously val (grey or clear eyes, not hidden), the voice will switch to High Coryani. If there aren't any val, the voice will instead switch to Low Coryani.

The pile of refuse slowly begins to rise up and resolves itself into a humanoid figure dressed in heavy traveling robes that look like they have been through the swamp multiple times. The entire figure is covered by the robes, except for the face, which is instead covered by a cracked and filthy porcelain mask. The figure stands hunched over in a pose of supplication.

At this point the Heroes can make **Intelligence (Investigation)** and **Charisma (Persuasion)** checks if they wish.

Wisdom (Perception):

- **DC 10** Those robes are absolutely disgusting!
- **DC 12** The robes are Cancereese
- **DC 14** The robes look like they were finely made and you see no weapons on the figure.
- **DC 16** The robes look like they were repeatedly patched at one point and you are sure the figure has no weapons.

During the conversation

- **DC 25** Ramu is not breathing!

Charisma (Persuasion)

- **DC 13** – Many members and some of the servants of the val'Mordane family in Canceri generally wear porcelain masks in public.

If anyone thinks to check (via spell or ability), the figure in front of the Heroes is undead!

If attacked, Ramu will defend himself, pleading "I'm sorry, I mistook you for heroes." He will jump off of the road into the water and disappear under the murky water, never to be found. *Detect evil and good* has a 30' radius area and Ramu is moving out of range as quickly as possible. **Ramu's stats are in Scene 2.**

If not attacked, the figure will wait for the Heroes to speak before he will continue.

GM's Note: Roleplaying Ramu

Ramu is the obsequious servant in this encounter. He will do his best to ingratiate himself with the Heroes, but is not above using sarcasm, persuasion, and guilt to get the Heroes to help him. For example, if a

Milandisian knight talks against rescuing his master, Ramu will ask if the stories of Milandisian honor are just stories and not real. He will only use these tactics if the Heroes appear disinclined to help him.

The figure speaks with a slightly creepy voice, "Good Masters, could you please help me? My young master and his companion were taken by foul creatures in the swamp and I am trying to find someone to rescue them before they are eaten and killed."

WHO ARE YOU?

"I am Ramu. I am just a humble servant of my Master, Rahat val'Mordane. He tasked me with caring for his son, Daiwik, who is in need of rescue."

ARE YOU A SLAVE?

"No, I serve my master willingly. As I did his father, his father before him, his father before that, and so on."

WHY DO YOU WEAR A MASK?

"It is the custom of the family of my master, the val'Mordane, to wear such masks. Many times servants such as I will wear them as well."

CAN WE SEE YOUR FACE?

"If you wish, but many do not find it pleasant. Are you sure?"

If they say yes:

Ramu removes the porcelain mask to reveal his face, which is a skull with green pinpoints for eyes. He looks at each of you and seems to grin.

ARE YOU UNDEAD?

"Yes, I am happy to be so blessed. But, do not worry; I am not one of those mindless ones. One of my good masters saw fit to give me thought and speech, for which I am very grateful. As should you be; can you imagine me trying to explain everything about rescuing my young master in pantomime?"

Who took your young master?

He makes a spitting noise. "Reavers, foul creatures that live in the swamp. They prey on travelers that cross the Mire. I told young master not to travel this way. I could not properly protect the two of them, but he did not listen. The very young are often foolish."

WHAT ARE THESE REAVERS?

"Stories say that they are the descendants of those that used to live here before it became a swamp. It is said that they were corrupted by the swamp itself. Now they hunt in packs and capture travelers and eat them alive! Oh, my poor master."

ARE THEY LIKE THE DWARVEN REAVERS?

"No they are not related to dwarves, although they are short."

WHAT HAPPENED?

"My young master and his lady were running away from home to be together. Although I disagreed, I followed them to keep them safe as a good servant should. Early this morning, we were travelling down the road when those vile creatures popped out of the water all around us. I tried to fight them off while my master ran, but another group jumped out of the water and grabbed my young master and his lady, Faiza, and took them off into the swamp. I followed them back to their camp

in a ruin a little way off the road to know where they are. Then I came back to the road to find help."

WILL THERE BE A REWARD?

"I know that Daiwik's father is a priest of Neroth and will be happy to have him back safe. And his Grandfather is a powerful man in Kielmun, who might reward you. But I am just a humble servant and cannot make promises or commitments for such powerful men such as them."

IS THE LADY IMPORTANT?

"She is just a serving wench from the Dying Note tavern. Nobody important. Just a mushkenu, which is not nice to say, but Daiwik is of the awilu caste and the son of a priest to boot. She does not deserve him, though it is not for a humble servant like me to say."

HOW MANY REAVERS WERE THERE?

"I didn't get close enough to count, but I think around six or so."

WHY DID THEY TAKE THEM?

"To eat them, of course! Oh, my poor master."

WHERE DID THE REAVERS TAKE THE YOUNG MASTER?

"The Reavers took them to a lair in some nearby ruin."

HOW FAR AWAY IS IT?

"Just a little way away that way." He points behind where he is standing.

IS YOUR MASTER UNDEAD?

"I should think not; he is far too young to have missed out on life before hopefully receiving the Blessing of Neroth."

WHERE DID THIS ATTACK TAKE PLACE?

"Right here, good masters. I followed the route back from the ruin to this exact spot."

A **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)** check will show that there was a struggle here a few hours ago and that the ambushers were waiting in the water and then popped out.

If the Heroes go off into the weeds on their questions, Ramu will point out that he doesn't know how long it will be before the reavers get hungry again and decide to eat his "poor young master".

If the Heroes make a **DC 14 Wisdom (Insight)** check, on Ramu, they will not be able to ascertain any deception in him.

If they agree to help, he will thank them repeatedly and lead them off into the swamp. Also give each Hero a Fate Point.

"Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you, good masters. This humble one appreciates your willingness to help rectify this problem. Please just give me a second to get ready." With that he reaches into the swamp and pulls out a large scythe. "I am ready now, let us go." He calls out to the distance, "We are coming, master!"

Development: If the Heroes help Ramu then proceed to **Scene 2**.

If the Heroes do not agree to help Ramu or attack him, then proceed to **Scene 3**.

SCENE 2: THE DEVIL IS IN THE DETAILS

Key Concepts: The Heroes attack the Reavers to rescue the young man.

Ramu leads you east through the swamp. Or at least you think it is east. You are not sure how he knows which way to turn and where, but he does seem to be leading you much deeper into the swamp.

If anyone asks how far it is to the ruin:

Ramu looks at you and says, "Not far from here. I remember that knot in the tree; see where I scored it with my Soul Reaper to remember the way."

DC 12 Wisdom (Religion) check: Soul Reaper is the official title for Neroth's scythe, and many Nerothians name their scythes similarly in his honor. Any worshipper of Neroth will know this automatically.

Ramu continues to lead you for what seems to be an eternity through the bog, though the trip was probably only two hours long. You trudge through water and muck that is usually knee high and sometimes chest deep, requiring you to hold your gear above your head to keep it dry. Eventually Ramu stops and you hear inhuman, raucous laughter in the distance. He points, and you can just make out a ruin jutting out of the swamp in the distance. He whispers, "I scouted earlier and found an approach that we can take so that we won't be seen coming up on the ruin. The ruin is up at an angle, and we can come in on the blind side if you wish."

Ramu will sketch out a drawing of the ruin on the trunk of a tree to show the Heroes what is there. **Give them a crude drawing of Map 1.** Ramu will leave all of the planning and the set-up of the attack to the Heroes.

If the Heroes wish to surprise the reavers, have them make Dexterity (Stealth) checks against the reaver's **passive perception – 13**. If the PCs approach from the north side so that they can't be seen, give them advantage on the stealth checks. It is a Strength (Athletics) check DC 10 to reach the top of the platform.

When the Heroes approach the ruin read the following:

Part of some former platform sticks out of the swamp at an angle. Only 40 feet of it are out of the water. You can see how to get up onto the platform without being seen by those on it, but you will need to be careful on the platform because at that angle the footing could be treacherous.

When the Heroes first clearly see the reavers:

These small and muscled hairless humanoids have blotchy green and black skin marred by red welts. Their wide milky-white eyes, set high on amphibian features, search the area, while their hideous blue tongues jut, serpent-like, from their mouths, perhaps tasting the air. Their long arms end in slender fingers with filthy black nails.

When the Heroes step onto the platform:

The stone floor of this ancient platform tilts at a bad angle for fighting. At one point there may have been inscriptions in the stone, but that has worn away over the countless ages. A large pile of bones lies next to the edge of the water.

A group of reavers is surrounding two huddled figures on the platform. From the reavers' body language they seem to be taunting the huddled figures. As you step onto the platform, the reavers stop and turn to you, claws extended.

- **Two (2) Cancerese reavers per hero**

See Combat Appendix 1

At the beginning of combat, half of reavers are in the pool beneath the platform. They will only join the fight to replace a fallen companion.

Tactics: The reavers will group up and concentrate on one or two Heroes until they fall, then move on to another target. They will not kill any unconscious foes; they consider helpless prey to be fun to torture, and they prefer their meals living when they start to consume them.

Their poison comes from their saliva, and they are constantly licking their hands to spread it. After a creature falls unconscious, the reavers will be careful not to expose that creature to their poison so as to preserve their meal.

When there are only a quarter of the reavers left, the remainder will flee into the swamp.

Special Notes:

It takes half a Hero's movement to get onto the platform from the swamp. If the Heroes figure out a way to be stealthy, let them. Since the platform is at an angle, the Heroes will have to move at half speed **or** make a **DC 13 Strength (Athletics)** or **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check not to fall prone. The reavers have clawed feet and will not have any problem moving on the platform.

Daiwik is curled up on one side of the platform (the highest edge) cradling Faiza's partially eaten body. The reavers ate her bottom half and then gave him back the top to torture him. They plan to eat the top before they eat him. Daiwik has 1 hit point and 5 levels of exhaustion which reduces his speed to 0. He will not participate in the combat even if healed as he is in shock.

COMBAT

In all this combat consists of

Ramu will wait until after the Heroes attack, then he will join the fight, putting himself between his young master and the nearest creature. He will always remain adjacent to Daiwik, remembering his previous failure.

Aftermath:

If the Heroes are defeated, then proceed to **Scene 4-C**. They aren't out of the module yet; help is on the way!

If the Heroes win:

As the last reaver swims away, Ramu kneels in front of his charge. "Young Master, I am very happy to report that I was able to find these fine people to rescue you. We really should take you back to Kielmun for you to recover. Your parents will be concerned once they find that you went missing."

IF NO ONE SAYS THAT THEY ARE GOING TO HEAL DAIWIK,

Ramu turns to you and asks, "Would someone please help heal him so that we can get out of this accursed place?"

Daiwik, a young man of maybe 16, turns to Ramu weeping incoherently: "You weren't fast enough. They killed her. Ate her right in front of me and I could hear her screaming as they bit into her legs. They told me that they were going to finish her off from the bottom up and then eat me. It was horrible!! They told me that our love would be reunited, IN THEIR BELLIES!!!"

Searching the platform, the Heroes find the remains of two explorer's packs. There is also a cache of small coins and baubles next to the bone pile. The cache contains 160 gp worth of valuables and 40 gp in Cancereese baht.

It will take Daiwik a couple of minutes to recover, but kind words from the Heroes will help.

Once you manage to calm him down, Daiwik is actually a very polite, well-spoken young man. "Thank you for my rescue. I owe you a debt which I do not know how to repay, but you will at least have the hospitality of my father's house. I would like to take Faiza's body back to Kielmun to be properly interred. However, I am afraid that I am too weak to walk back. If you will give me a moment to summon some helpers, we can leave before the reavers return with more friends."

Allow the Heroes to ask him what he means.

"Well," he says, pointing to the bone pile, "We have plenty of components. I will just create some helpers quickly and they can make me a litter to carry me."

If any of the Heroes object, he will ask why. To him this is a natural thing to do. There is no sacrilege in it. The corpses are just raw materials to be animated. After all, their souls are already long gone and will not be destroyed in the process. Remember, Daiwik has 5 levels of exhaustion; that reduces his speed to 0 and camping out in the swamp isn't an option. He will argue with the Heroes a little, but if they come up with another solution where he does not have to walk in the muck, he will accept it. He will still act as if they are crazy though.

If allowed to continue, he will cast *animate dead* and command them to make him a litter. They will lash bones together to make the litter that will carry him, Faiza's body, and any gear the Heroes don't want to carry themselves.

On the trip back Daiwik begins to recover and starts to ask the Heroes about themselves. He presumes they are adventurers and wants to hear about their journeys. He will also get all of their names. He is 16 and thinks that the life of an adventurer sounds exciting. If the Heroes talk to him, they can find out the following:

- He is the fifth of eight children of Rahat val'Mordane of a priest of Neroth in Kielmun.
- His mother, Asha val'Mordane, is a stonemason and sculptress, a very prestigious job in Nerothian lands. She is currently working as a consultant with other stonemasons in Ventaka. Daiwik is very proud of her.
- He has been raised mainly by Ramu, who is his primary companion and friend.
- His father wants him to become a priest of Neroth, but he doesn't want to. He has been talking about running away to become a priest of Illiir (talk about teenage rebellion!).
- He met Faiza about six months ago at the Dying Note tavern where she worked. She was 18, worldly and exotic. They fell in love and decided to run away together.
- Last night he and Faiza took money from his parents and the bar owner and headed out to run to Milandir. They ran into the reavers on the way, and though Ramu tried to protect them, there were too many to fight off.
- His grandfather is one of the Akali in Kielmun. "Everyone calls him Grandfather, but he actually *is* my grandfather."
- The other Akali is Kajal Keirig, but everyone calls him King.
- He doesn't know anything about an execution. He doesn't pay attention to politics.
- He does know of Parag Rarzi; the man is an apothecary in the marketplace outside of town. Daiwik and some of the other boys have bought drugs and potions from him in the past.
- He is no longer upset about Faiza's death, now that he is away from the

reavers and had time to recover. If asked, he will just say that suffering is good for the soul.

Development: If the Heroes rescued Daiwik then proceed to **Scene 3**.

If the Heroes were defeated, then proceed to **Scene 4-C**.

SCENE 3: A STRANGE NEW WORLD

Key Concepts: The Heroes make it to Kielmun and explore the city trying to figure out their plan of rescue.

When you finally emerge from the Blighted Mire it is early afternoon and the walls of Kielmun are in sight. As you approach, the scars of the last time the city was razed are visible. Scorch marks still appear on the walls where the fires of the Swords of Nier were so hot that the stone melted. The walls have since been rebuilt and patrols are visible atop them. It takes about an hour of travel to make it to the outskirts of the city.

Near the walls of the city there is a collection of tents and small buildings. It looks like a small marketplace and some taverns are set up.

If Daiwik is with them:

Daiwik sighs and looks towards the gates. "I tried to escape this place, but I guess there is no getting away from here for me. I have imposed on you good people long enough. Thank you again for rescuing me, but now I need to accept the consequences of my actions. Later, I would like you to come by my house. No matter how angry my father is with me, I know he will want to reward you for saving me. I live at 44 Black Rose Road. Time to face my fate."

With all the courage of a knight heading off into battle, Daiwik turns towards the gates.

Ask the Heroes what they want to do now. If they ask around about a temple to heal up a disease or two that are festering in their bodies, they will find out that the temples are inside the city.

If they want to find their contact, then read the following:

You ask around in the marketplace and are directed to the stall of Parag Rarzi. Most of the stalls that you pass sell food, though others sell all manner of weapons, armor and charms. Parag's stall is a nestled in an aromatic section of the market where the spice merchants are situated. The sign over the tent says Parag's Apothecary. A dusty man of indeterminate age beckons you closer to look at his fine wares. "Come my friends and look at some of the finest herbs and poultices to be found in Canceri."

If the Heroes look around there is a dizzying selection of ground spices and herbs.

A DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine or Herbalism kit) check will reveal that many of these spices can be used for both healing and poisoning purposes.

The Heroes can buy healer's kits, herbalism kits, poisoner's kits, potions of healing, and alchemical potions.

All of the other goods in the market are standard issue, and the only weapons and armor available are those that are regional to Canceri. There are no slaves at this market. The charms are merely trinkets designed to separate the foolish from their money. Parag is one of the few merchants who will accept coinage from outside of Canceri, almost all the other merchants will only accept Cancereese baht for their wares.

When the Heroes mention that Uncle Tapel sent them: "Oh, Uncle Tapel. I always enjoy

hearing how he is doing. You must tell me what he is up to these days. Let me wrap up my business here and I will buy you a drink at the Rotting Wench. I swear the beer is better there than the name implies."

If anyone tries to talk to him more he will say,

"Not here. There are ears everywhere, and I don't want my competition to get the jump on me."

Let the Heroes finish any purchases that they want, and then he will call out his assistant to man the shop while he takes the Heroes to the bar.

The sign outside the tavern to which Parag leads you depicts a bar maid showing a lot of cleavage holding out a flagon of beer. Unlike in Milandir where a sign like this might have a healthy looking woman on it, on this sign the woman looks emaciated with a haunted look in her eyes.

When you get inside the bar, Parag tosses a few coins at the owner and says, "We need to discuss business; give us the back room and a round of that swill you call beer." The bartender winks and the coins disappear.

Parag leads you into a back room with one table that you can all sit around. A few moments later a living bar maid comes in and serves a round of drinks. After she leaves, Parag locks the door and takes a deep quaff.

After finishing his beer Parag begins, "If we speak quietly we won't be overheard. Please do not use Uncle Tapel's actual name because that will draw a lot of attention. So why are you here?"

If any Hero tries the beer themselves:

The beer is passable, although it does have a cloyingly sweet aftertaste.

When the Heroes explain their mission:

"I confess I am a little surprised that anyone was sent to help with this matter. It is not the usual method; he usually lets things run their normal course. Hmmmm..."

"I will tell you what I can. The execution is to take place two hours after dawn tomorrow in the Square of Suffering. Right now the condemned is in Akali Kajal Keirig's prison, under the Halls of Justice. She will be brought to the Square before dawn and displayed out there for people to see before the execution. At the appointed time, she will be tortured to death in front of the crowd. What do you have in mind?"

IF THE HEROES ASK ABOUT THE PRISON:

"Well, I suppose you could assault that, but it is very well guarded by "King" Keirig's thugs. If we knew where in the prison she was, we might be able to do something. Unfortunately, I do not have any way to get that information quickly. However, if that is what you desire, we can go into the city and scout the place out."

IF THE HEROES ASK ABOUT THE ROUTE FROM THE PRISON TO THE SQUARE:

"The prisoners are usually transported underground and come out of the Doors of Justice in the square. That way there are no interruptions on the route, such as last minute rescues."

IF THEY ASK ABOUT THE SQUARE OF SUFFERING

"It is a very large square. There are plenty of hiding places, and you could always disappear in the crowd. There is usually a line of guards between the crowd and the

condemned, to prevent the crowd from killing the condemned too quickly."

HOW CAN WE GET HER LEGALLY RELEASED? WHAT ABOUT JUSTICE? ETC.

"Right now there are only two ways that she can be released. The Nihang can order the Akali to release her, or Keirig can decide to release her on his own."

CAN WE BRIBE SOMEONE?

"You could try to bribe any one of three people: Akali Keirig, Akali Zartel, or Nihang Paluos. I don't know how much it would be, but I can imagine it would be very expensive."

IS THERE A RESISTANCE? ANY DISSENT WE CAN APPEAL TO FOR HELP?

"Unfortunately there isn't. Although some may dislike one of the Akali and side with the other, no dissenters are allowed to flourish here. There is a very strong fear that if you speak up then your neighbor will report you to the secret police, and there is a lot of truth to that. People generally keep to themselves."

WHO IS KING/AKALI KEIRIG? WHAT IS AN AKALI?

"The Akali are our Administrator-Priests. They run the city. Akali is a position for life, although the position can be inherited. They report to a Nihang, who rules the city-state like a governor. The Nihang here is Paluos val'Mordane, a vampire who leaves most of the day-to-day operation to his Akali."

"Keirig is one of the two Akali that we have here. He is nicknamed King because he tried to set himself up as the King of Kielmun after

it was destroyed by the Swords of Nier. He is a monster and runs a very large gang that he calls 'Kielmun's Militia.'"

"The other Akali is Zartel val'Mordane, though everyone calls him Grandfather. He and Keirig are bitter rivals, and the Nihang wisely plays them off each other so that they don't gang up on him. Their hatred of each other goes back forty years."

IF THE HEROES POINT OUT THAT THEY JUST SAVED GRANDFATHER'S GRANDSON:

Parag looks quite surprised at you. "You saved his grandson? That is great news! He definitely owes you a favor that you can go to try and cash in on. Exchanges of favors are the way that everyone does business around here. No one reneges on a contract, oral or written. Too many Sarishans around."

HOW DO WE GET INTO THE CITY?

I will pay the guards to get you passes that will allow you to go into the city as my associates.

DO YOU KNOW WHERE THE TEMPLES ARE?

Yes, I can take you to them, but don't forget; you are not allowed in them unless the priest invites you in.

In fact, one of the temples might offer you a slim chance of success in your mission, if you elect not to approach the Nihang or one of the Akali. The Confraternity of the Just Death is an order of Illiirite monks who preach that a meaningful death can absolve the stain of an ill life. They seek to convert those on their deathbed to the embrace of Illiir, that they might be not be Judged so harshly by Nier.

Hah! The more fool they. Still, who am I to judge the beliefs of another? The order is barely tolerated, and generally executed when they make too much of a nuisance, but many of them are native Milandisians, and might be willing to assist you.

When the Heroes are finished:

"My best suggestion for our next step is to go into the city and see what we can figure out. I will be happy to guide you wherever you want to go. Please, try not to draw attention to yourself. Our ways are not your ways, and many things may seem strange to you. If you do things that draw attention, we may well attract the notice of the secret police. They are paid to be very suspicious of everyone.

Before we go anywhere, you need to clean yourselves up. You still smell like you came from a swamp. I will pay for a bath for you all, and then please change into clean clothes. Your current smell is overpowering, especially in such close quarters."

He will pay for them to wash in the bathing room of the tavern, and will get the Heroes Cancereese travelling robes, if they don't have clean ones. They do need to pay him back for the robes at the cost of 1 gp each.

When they are ready to go through the gates read the following:

As you near the gates of the city, you notice that there are no buildings or tents within a hundred feet of the walls. No grasses or other vegetation grow in this area either and you don't even see any dogs or cats approaching the city except on the path to the main gate. Before the gate is a line of people waiting to get in. It looks like the guards are talking to everyone before letting them pass. When it is your turn, Parag leans in to whisper to the guard and money quietly changes hands. The guard waves you on into the city.

Kielmun seems to be bustling just like any other city, but then you see something that you would never see in a city outside of Canceri. A devil, with the mark of Sarish on his forehead, walks down the street with a group of schoolchildren wearing porcelain masks on their way home from their lessons. Down another street, a zombie loaded down with bags shuffles behind a lady returning home from a shopping trip.

The architecture is impressive; every available surface is carved with some kind of decoration. The death motif is everywhere, from the drinking fountains to the rain gutters, even the bar, restaurant, and shop names.

A lot of men and women have shaved heads and wear dark clothing. Most of the men have beards, some of which are capped with glinting metals. You also see several people of indeterminate gender wearing identically painted porcelain masks.

One other major difference between this city and most that you have visited is the smell. Everyone here, even the slaves, seems to be clean and perfumed with scented oils.

GM's Note: There are many places that the Heroes can explore. Keep an eye on how careful they are about hiding their identities. If they aren't too careful, give them the Secret Police scene. Also give them the Funeral Scene between their first and second stops.

THE SQUARE OF SUFFERING

The Square of Suffering is a large square with several raised platforms. On each platform is someone being whipped or otherwise tortured. One woman is walking on broken stones and leaving a bloody trail. Another

man is whipping his own back so roughly you can almost see the muscle. Most of the victims appear to be there voluntarily. The square is lined with balconies and recessed alcoves, allowing plenty of places to watch and listen to the suffering. The acoustics of the square are such that each sigh, moan or scream carries, echoing throughout the area. The Square is deep within the city and getting out of the city after a rescue and past the guards appears to be impossible. The militia could easily overwhelm any group traveling through the streets.

A successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check** lets the Heroes identify the lay of the land in the Square including possible patrol routes, the best hiding spots and shadowy exits to use. Any Hero who succeeds on this check will gain advantage when rolling Dexterity (Stealth) checks at the Square.

TEMPLES

The Heroes can visit the temples to get healing. Remember, that they cannot enter a temple without an invitation, and they won't get one for the temples of the Dark Triumvirate. However, each temple has a small chapel next to it where petitioners can visit.

Asking around for a temple will get the Heroes directed to the Temple of Neroth. There are also chapels to Sarish and Nier in the city that they can visit. All three of them can supply spells as listed under 'Spell Casting Services' in the front text of this adventure (p. 3). The Temple of Neroth will give any val'Mordane one free spell with a successful **DC 11 Charisma (Persuasion) check**.

If any hero asks, they can find a temple of Cadic behind a bar with a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check** (clerics of Cadic and val'Borda gain advantage on this roll). This temple is secretly part of the Milandric Church

and can offer services to acolytes and clerics of that religious faction as per the normal rules.

THE CONFRATERNITY OF THE JUST DEATH

The Heroes can find the Confraternity with a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** while looking for temples. This is reduced to **DC 13** if they are looking for the Confraternity specifically or heard about it from Paraj Rarzi. Unfortunately, contacting the Confraternity will trigger a visit from the Secret Police when they leave (pg. 23).

Hidden in a cellar dug from the earth beneath an abandoned warehouse, the Confraternity of the Just Death maintains a small, well-kept temple to Illiir. Candles flicker all around you, pale in comparison to Illiir's brilliance, but still a light in this dark place. The poor and the enslaved who have no taste for the lash come here, quietly, to have their wounds tended.

The abbot of the order, an older Milandisian monk, greets you as you enter.

Healing and curing any remaining swamp affliction will be done free of charge, though the order would appreciate donations if possible. They will not discriminate based on race or religion, though they will be very careful to make it clear that this healing comes from Illiir so as to give worshippers of other faiths a chance to gracefully decline the healing.

Chronicler's Note: The abbot, Erich Stutterheim, can supply any of the information in Appendix 3 to the Heroes while speaking to them, but ensure that it happens organically as conversation, rather than as an information dump.

The abbot knows Grandfather quite well, though he will NOT divulge this. If the Heroes ask for help in staging a rescue, the abbot's first recommendation will be to talk to Grandfather:

"We have no real power here, and though we will help you if you ask it of us, it may go better for all involved if you were to talk to Akali Zartel. His rivalry with Kajal is well known, and he has often proven himself to be an honourable individual; a rare thing indeed, in Canceri.

If the Heroes insist on not going to Grandfather, Erich will agree to assist them directly. The Confraternity will arrange something similar to what Grandfather could as far as an escape into the catacombs, the timetable of the execution, and a map of the square, but they will not be able to delay the Nerothian priest.

KAJAL'S PRISON

The prison is a small building, just two stories tall. The building itself has no windows, and only one set of doors which are guarded by a dozen guards in the uniform of the Kielmun Militia. Parag leans over and whispers, "The cells are beneath the building."

The Heroes can approach the guards, who will ask them for papers before allowing them entrance. With this many other guards, none of the guards will accept a bribe to allow the Heroes entrance, since there's no way of telling if one would rat on the rest.

DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) or Intelligence check – This prison is impregnable without knowing the layout of the underground tunnels.

KAJAL'S PALACE

Kajal's Palace is an extremely large building. It is covered in ornamentation and gilt past the point of ostentation. The palace is surrounded by expensive looking gardens filled with trees and bushes that are not native to Canceri. Fences around the gardens are made of wrought iron, allowing those who pass to see the wealth of the owner. Inside the fence, groups of guards patrol the grounds with demonic-looking dogs on tight leashes.

If the Heroes approach the palace or try to get in:

The guards direct you to a smaller though equally decorated building across the street. Inside the building an officious looking woman asks you to state your business with King Keirig.

Whatever the Heroes do, they will be asked to wait before being sent to talk with an official in a side room. If asked about the spy and releasing her, the official will tell them it will cost 5000 baht (gp). The high cost is because of the late date and the loss of face that Keirig would suffer because he has already announced the execution date. This price cannot be negotiated.

Speaking with the official will cause him to warn Keirig that there may be trouble, as they are now aware there are individuals interested in securing the spy's release. This means that there will be **2 more guards at the execution**. These are in addition to any extra's added by attempting to visit the Nihang's Palace.

NIHANG'S PALACE

The Nihang's palace is an unadorned black stone block with no windows. It is guarded by a mix of Kielmun Militia and Death's Head guards.

When you approach the guards, you are escorted to a receiving room, a large empty room free of ornamentation. A porcelain-masked individual sits behind a desk at the far end. "Yes?"

Whatever the Heroes do, they will be asked to wait, before being sent to talk with an official in a side room. If asked about the spy and releasing her, the official will tell them it will cost 10,000 baht (gp). The high cost is because of the late date, and the fact that there is no

real motivation for the Nihang to get involved in this issue. This price cannot be negotiated.

Speaking with the official will cause him to warn Keirig that there may be trouble, as they are now aware there are individuals interested in securing the spy's release. This means that there will be **2 more guards at the execution**. These are in addition to any extra's added by attempting to visit the Keirig's Palace.

A+ DAIWIK'S HOUSE

GM's Note: Heroes can only go here if they rescued Daiwik.

44 Black Rose Road is a town-house in a row of nice town-houses. If it wasn't for the skulls and scenes of death covering everything (and the two infernals patrolling as guards) this street could be right out of a Milandisian city. The knocker, shaped like a skeletal hand, causes a loud booming noise when it hits the door. A few moments later a small panel slides to the side and the top half of a porcelain mask peers out at you. A familiar voice calls out, "Who are you and what do you want?"

Once the Heroes explain who they are:

"Wait here," the voice replies, and the panel slams shut. A couple of minutes later, a figure in a porcelain mask and black formal clothing opens the door. "It is good to see you again, masters. It is I, Ramu. Daiwik was hoping that you would come by and visit him. He will be sorry that he missed you."

WHERE IS HE? IS HIS FATHER HERE?

"Daiwik and his father are currently speaking to Grandfather in the Administrator's Hall. Master Rahat told me that if you came by, you were to go there and talk to Grandfather. But I wouldn't head right over. With how well I know those three, you will have to wait

at least an hour or two more while they talk before they will be ready to speak with you. I would suggest you go and see some of the city. It will be more interesting than sitting in a reception hall for hours. Trust me, I do it all of the time."

Ramu can give the Heroes directions to the temples and other locations on their list if they ask him. He will also suggest visiting the Monument to the Rebuilding of the city.

MONUMENT TO THE REBUILDING

On one end of this square is a burnt-out, rubble-strewn ruin, with crumbled stone everywhere and nary a soul in sight. On the other end is a well-built area with outdoor restaurants and shops and the bustle of people going about their daily business. In between these two sides is a large mural carved in stone and inlaid with different colored stones and metals. The mural tells the story of the fall of the city to the Swords of Nier and then the alliance between three men to rebuild it; Paluos val'Mordane, Kajal Keirig, and Zartel val'Mordane. Each one provides one of the three pillars that Kielmun is built on; faith in Neroth, a strong military force, and trade with the outside world.

A FUNERAL PROCESSION

GM's Note: The scene should happen between the Heroes' first and second stops.

You hear the sound of bells and low chanting. The noise gradually gets nearer and a funeral procession turns the corner ahead of you, coming in your direction. About a dozen pallbearers support a huge glass casket and are led by two priests carrying smoking censers. A train of relatives follows in the casket's wake. Apparently, the deceased was someone of importance.

As you step aside to let the procession pass, you see that the casket contains more than one body. Through the glass you see what appears to be a married couple, dressed in their wedding clothes, locked in a final embrace. Then, to your horror the groom, a young man in his early twenties, looks up and meets your gaze, his eyes red from weeping. He pounds on the glass of the coffin, to no avail. His fists leave bloody smears on the inside of the glass.

The procession winds its way toward a newly built crypt. Obviously, they intend to bury the man alive with his wife.

If the Heroes stand by and do nothing, read the following:

As the coffin is interred, an old man attempts to brush past the priests. You hear a muffled cry from within the coffin, and the old man is seized and brought to his knees. A black-cowled crow of a priest looms over him. "Do you defy our traditions?"

The old man's voice trembles, "I did not consent to this. This marriage was not our choice. Please, spare him."

"Silence," the priest scowls, "The union brought your house honor and money. Now Neroth has called the mistress of this house to him and the dutiful husband must follow." The crypt is sealed and the old man is left discarded on the steps, like a puppet whose strings have been cut.

If the Heroes move to interfere:

A very round and rich looking man with a shaved head moves imperiously in front of you. "What do you think you are doing? Have you no respect for the dead? This is my mother's funeral and it will not be disturbed by the likes of you!"

WHY ARE THEY BURYING THAT MAN WITH YOUR MOTHER?

"That is her latest husband. As is our custom, when one spouse dies, the other is interred with them. This insures that the line of inheritance is upheld. He is a pretty man from a poor family." The man shakes his head in disgust. "Mother married him as a plaything in her old age. He got well taken care of while he was married to her. But now he has to honor the other part of the marriage contract. It is a shame for his sake that he didn't take better care of her."

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO HIM?

"He will most likely die in there of thirst. Although my mother could be blessed by Neroth and arise as an undead. If that happens, then she will free them and they will 'live' in the catacombs together. Unless when she awakens she decides to eat the little pretty boy." With that he chuckles gleefully.

THAT'S BARBARIC!

"Is it any worse than feuds that go on for generations about who should inherit what? Gold diggers who marry for their money? Or people who kill their spouses for their money? Like all customs there are reasons for it. All know that it is how the marriages end in Neroth's eyes. He knew as well."

WHY WASN'T SHE BURIED WITH YOUR FATHER?

"Because my father is still alive, he is that man over there. They got divorced long ago."

"Now excuse me, while I see to the disposition of my mother's remains. Good day!"

If the Heroes insist on interfering, move on to the Secret Policemen scene.

After the man and the corpse of his wife are sealed up in the crypt, the people disperse. Two guards and a priest remain behind to perform last rites, and then stand on vigil to make sure the groom's relatives do not try to rescue the man.

SECRET POLICEMEN HAVE A BALL

Chronicler's Note: Use this encounter if the Heroes have not been too circumspect; letting people know where they are from, not hiding their country of origin or deity of preference, asking around about the Confraternity of the Just Death, not using Cancere currency, or if they interrupted the funeral.

Walking down the street, you see a group of four Kielmun militia headed in your direction. Looking to the sides and behind you, the streets are clearing of people as more militia members are coming in to surround your group

Allow the Heroes a moment to panic. If they talk about running, point out that they will have to get past a ton of guards at the gate. To be honest, if they are talking about running, then they are delaying and that will give the militia a chance to completely surround them. If one of the Heroes says that they take off immediately, then let them get away.

The Kielmun militiamen have completely surrounded you. They all have their clubs out and are looking at you menacingly, but don't make any moves towards you. A few moments later, the guards part to allow two men to come through. One is very round and overweight, but his well-tailored yet stained uniform still fits. His skin and brown hair are very greasy, but he smells pleasantly of herbs. His partner is a slightly taller and very skinny gentleman with blonde hair and a perpetual squint.

The larger one rasps, “Well it’s about time. I’m very happy to meet you folks. My name is Rajeet (Ra-zhi-t) and this is my partner Anu (A-new). We are here on behalf of the Kielmun militia investigating a report of a group of suspicious, out-of-place characters who might be trouble.” He leers at your group, “Have you seen anyone meeting that description?”

Rajeet will ask questions of the Heroes and there are a few samples listed below. Feel free to come up with more invasive questions based on the Heroes’ answers. Anu will walk around the Heroes, looking them up and down and trying to make them nervous. He may point things out to his partner, poorly hidden holy symbols and the like. Anu’s **passive Perception** is 14. In general, these two are here to try to shake the Heroes down for some money. They are very corrupt and usually blackmail non-Cancerese visitors to Kielmun. They don’t take much, or their behavior would be reported.

Role-playing the secret police: Try to make sure that the slime drips off of these two, while keeping the Heroes off-balance. The Heroes are supposed to be scared. There are plenty of stories of the Cancerese secret police disappearing people in broad daylight. Ask a couple of questions of one Hero, and then ask different ones of the second Hero. Then start over when you get to a third; see if you can get them to mix up their stories.

Some of the questions that may be asked:

- So what is your purpose in coming to Kielmun?
- How long are you planning on staying?
- Do you have a permit for that flintlock?
- What is in that bag?

- Why are you wearing <insert symbol> out in the open?
- Are you spies for an invasion force?
- Who do you work for?
- How much to buy <pick an attractive Hero, male or female>?
- Let me see your papers of passage into the city.
- Do you have any controlled substances? (No such thing in Canceri.)
- Do you have any banned magic items? (No such thing in Canceri.)

They will be completely unbelieving if the Heroes say that they rescued Grandfather’s grandson.

The secret policemen really won’t answer any questions, except that they are trying to figure out if this well-armed group is dangerous.

If a Hero succeeds on a **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight)** ability check (Heroes with a criminal-type background gain advantage) will figure out that this a shakedown. The Heroes can be abrupt or sly about asking the two policemen how much it will take to get them to go away. They won’t actually say outright that this is what they are here for. That would be too crude.

The bribe they are looking for is 2 gp per Hero. However, it will be 10 gp if one of the Heroes ran, whether they escaped or not.

After the two receive their bribe, “Well, it is very nice to see such clever businessmen like yourselves in this area. We of Kielmun appreciate your business and trade here.”

The Heroes can fight them, although this is a tough fight and will draw lots of attention – 16 militiamen and 2 elite secret police, plus 6 new militiamen and a secret police every round until the Heroes are beaten into unconsciousness. If this occurs, continue to **Scene 4-C** and adapt as necessary. Basically, Grandfather rescues them

because they were causing problems for Keirig's militia.

SHOPPING IN KIELMUN

The Heroes are able to purchase standard items but only with Canceri currency. To do otherwise would attract attention and most Canceri merchants will not accept any other currency but their nation's.

A successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion or Deceit)** ability check will allow the Heroes to find a somewhat reputable moneychanger who will offer to exchange their gold and silver for Canceri currency. The moneychanger will charge a 50% fee for this service, although through good role-playing and ability checks the Heroes can haggle that down to 30%.

There are no magic items available. One shop does have a set of Cancere Gothic plate adorned with skulls for sale, but that is 1500 Baht (gp), and the players can't try it on, or even touch it.

GOSSIPING IN KIELMUN

The players may want to gather information by gossiping with the locals at a bar or the like. This is fine. Refer to Appendix A for what they can learn about based on their rolls. Buying drinks will be helpful.

Development: If the Heroes decide to go see Grandfather, proceed to **Scene 4-A** (if they saved Daiwik), or **Scene 4-B** (if they did not even attempt to rescue Daiwik). If the Heroes got in a fight with the Secret Police, proceed to **Scene 4-C**. If the Heroes are taking the aid of the Confraternity of the Just Death, proceed to **Scene 5**.

SCENE 4-A: A KINDLY GRANDFATHER, SORT OF

Key Concepts: The Heroes meet with Grandfather who makes them a deal.

The Administrator's Hall is a large and ornately carved stone building off the Main Square. It is a tall building reaching up out of the city so as to look over it. The guards at the doors are dressed in Cancere Gothic plate and wielding wicked looking scythes. Their faces are obscured by death's head helmets.

After a cleanly shaven acolyte at the front door takes your names, a guard leads you up a couple of flights of stairs past a set of very large bronze double doors, covered in motifs of Neroth as the Lord of Tombs. You come to a stop in a receiving room with chairs and not much else. The guard hands you off to a woman in tan robes with a shaven head and a wooden symbol of Neroth around her neck. "The Akali asked that you wait here. Would you like some refreshment?"

A few moments later a breathless acolyte also in tan robes appears carrying a tray of cheeses and meats and a pitcher of what smells like mead.

The woman keeps an eye on the Heroes, but won't answer any questions. She will say

"The Akali is very busy and told me to tell you to wait here until he is ready."
About half an hour later; at no signal you can see, the woman says, "The Akali will see you now."

You are led into a large office decorated with an eclectic collection of bric-a-brac. The room has floor to ceiling windows that overlooks the city. In front of the window is a very large

black desk. Behind the desk is a well-tanned val man with a shorn head. He wears plain tan robes and a silver holy symbol of Neroth around his neck. He looks to be in his late twenties. In a deep voice he says, "Welcome, please make yourselves comfortable. I am sorry for the wait, but I wanted to make sure that I got the complete story of your adventures from more than one source."

"Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Zartel val'Mordane, but you may call me Grandfather. Everyone around here does. I am one of the Akali here in Kielmun and Daiwik really is my grandson."

On that note, thank you for rescuing him. He is a rash boy; reminds me of myself when I was young and alive. And I am happy that he is safe."

"Now, would you please introduce yourselves?"

A successful **DC 25 Wisdom (Perception)** check will discern an odd feeling, as though the Heroes are not alone with Grandfather in the room.

GM's Note: This is intended to be next to impossible to discern. There are three members of the Obsidian Order—a group of Cadican assassins—in the room, shrouded in shadows. They are Grandfather's personal bodyguards, and they will not hesitate to kill anyone who threatens Grandfather.

Allow the Heroes to introduce themselves. When they have, continue:

"I am quite sure that Ramu did not meet you on the road by chance. There has to be a reason a group of adventurers is traveling along the Cold Road from Ashvan to Kielmun. What dangerous mission are you on and for whom?"

Role-playing Grandfather: Grandfather is very relaxed with the Heroes. He has heard about them from both Daiwik and Ramu and is very grateful to them. He is not worried about being attacked because he has bodyguards hidden in the room.

He will let the Heroes squirm a little, but if they are honest and upfront with him, he will be pleased.

If the Heroes seem hesitant to talk to him:

"Do not be afraid to speak to me about anything. As my guests here, you have my protection and nothing you say will leave this room. I owe you a debt for recovering my grandchild and will not hold anything that you say against you. Now what did you come here for?"

Once the Heroes explain their mission:

"And you figured that I might be willing to help you? Either by interceding with the Nihang or helping you to rescue this spy? Is that what you had in mind?"

Wait for acknowledgement.

"Hmmm. This is an interesting proposition that you have handed to me. A chance to bloody Kajal's nose, possibly even embarrass him in front of the people, and be completely above suspicion? <Pause> I like it. I suppose you have a plan?"

If not:

"Adventurers without a plan? Why, in my day we always had a plan or two up our sleeves." He shakes his head; "Standards must be slipping."

He will listen to their plan, murmuring little words of encouragement.

"Ahh, this brings me back to when I was a young, living adventurer. We had such a great time. Oh well, that life is more than forty years gone; I am an administrator now."

"You have some interesting ideas, though you lack some necessary information. I can show you what the layout in the Square of Suffering will be like tomorrow so you can plan your tactics. I would suggest your best option would be to attack once the torture has been set up, as many of the militia will be engaged in holding back the citizens. You'll have to come up with your own plan of course, one that complements your unique skills. Then, more importantly, after you recover the agent I can get you out of the city through the catacombs. I am sorry that I can't provide you with more direct help, but I don't want to tip my hand. Would that work for you?"

Wait for acknowledgement. Grandfather needs two things in exchange for his help.

First, he needs the information that the spy has learned. She hasn't talked yet.

Second, he will have a letter for the Heroes to deliver to Duke Konrad.

These are non-negotiable.

"Do you have any questions?"

A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine)** check will reveal that Grandfather has not breathed or blinked during the entire audience.

ARE YOU UNDEAD?

"Yes. I have been one of the Blessed of Neroth for over forty years now."

WHY DON'T YOU LOOK UNDEAD?

"My servants are very skilled in the various

arts of disguise."

WHY DO YOU HATE KING KAJAL SO MUCH?

"He is a mindless thug and a brute. We have been rivals for power here for over forty years. He thinks the way to rule is by strength and uses strong arm tactics to get his way. I think that he is a fool and does not have the best interests of the city in mind. The city would be much better off without him, but he does keep that rabble he calls a militia in line."

WHY DON'T YOU HAVE HIM KILLED?

"I have all the time in the world to wait. He is mortal and getting closer to death every day. Besides, going around murdering people who get in your way isn't very effective in the long run. What kind of place do you think Canceri is?"

WHY DOES EVERYONE CALL YOU GRANDFATHER?

"When I started working here in Kielmun, I took the orphans created by the Swords of Nier attack under my protection. I treated them well and protected them from Keirig and his men. I looked old to them and they started calling me Grandfather. The name stuck. Now that I have grandchildren of my own, I am very happy with the title."

WHY DO YOU WANT THE INFORMATION THE SPY HAS?

Grandfather looks at you askance and says, "Every invasion of my country by the Milandisians has come through this city. If this agent has found out something that might convince the Milandisians to attack us, I want to know. I may be able to deal with it, or find a way to assuage their fears before it

comes to an invasion. If the information pertains to Keirig specifically... well, let's just say I wouldn't be sad to have some more rope with which to hang him."

WHAT IS IN THE LETTER?

"I don't know; I haven't written it yet. But it will be a good way to open the lines of communication to keep the tenuous peace along our border. After all, with the Infernal Horde out of the way the Milandisians will soon be itching for another Crusade, and I don't want us to be the target again."

YOUR GRANDSON WANTS TO BE A PRIEST OF ILLIR

Grandfather chuckles. "I'm not sure if he really knows what that entails. I think that he is just saying that to annoy his father. And it is working quite well. Rahat can be quite inflexible. Daiwik, on the other hand, is a restless soul. I think he will make a good adventurer someday, but he needs to grow up a little more before he is ready."

WHY DO YOU CARE ABOUT YOUR GRANDSON SO MUCH? YOU HAVE SO MANY GRANDCHILDREN.

"I care about all of my grandchildren, both those of my body and those I have adopted. Family is very important. What kind of monsters do you think we are?"

HOW CAN YOU HAVE CHILDREN?

"My wife got pregnant before I became undead. I only have two children of my body, the rest are adopted."

ARE YOU STILL MARRIED?

"No, sadly my wife and I parted ways decades ago. I stayed here to rebuild Kielmun and she

disappeared long ago. Now I am married to Kielmun."

WHAT DOES AN AKALI DO?

"We are the administrator-priests of the cities. Each of us has a district to deal with."

If one of the Heroes makes an aggressive move towards Grandfather: Grandfather holds up a hand and says, "Are you sure you want to do that?"

If the Hero continues then subject them to the following:

Note: There are three (3) members of the Obsidian Order hidden in the room who will target the offending Hero.

An arrow speeds out of a pool of shadows, inflicting 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage. If the Hero persists in their attack, the next assassin will fire an arrow made of pure shadow dealing 5 (1d6+2) poison damage and forcing the victim to succeed on a **DC: 14 Dexterity saving throw** or become immobile as strands of shadow erupt from the room, restraining them for 1 minute. If the Hero still persists, the third assassin will fire an arrow made of pure shadow, dealing 23 (5d6+2) poison damage. If the Hero still continues the assassins no longer hold back and will deal full damage and entangle the attacking Hero, focusing all attacks on one target at a time if necessary. For practical purposes, Grandfather has more than enough hit points to survive any successful assaults to his person.

REMEMBER THE ANCIENT CORYANI PROVERB: STUPIDITY LEADS TO CHARACTER CREATION.

If the Heroes agree to the plan,

Grandfather says, "Thank you. I'm glad that I could help you. Now I have other things to attend to. My assistant will provide for all of

your needs.”

Then he will have them escorted to a smaller room to iron out the details. They will be given a map of the Square of Suffering (**Player Handout 2**) and the time table for the execution (**Player Handout 3**). They will also be given access to a suite of rooms to rest until morning. If any of the Heroes are suffering from mire blight, then the assistant will heal it by casting *lesser restoration* on them.

Allow the Heroes to figure out where they are going to be and do some planning. They can go out and explore the city more if they want and visit any of the places from Scene 3. When they are ready proceed to Scene 5.

Development: When the Heroes are ready, proceed to **Scene 5**

SCENE 4-B: GRANDFATHER V. BIGOTS

Key Concepts: The Heroes meet with Grandfather who makes them a deal.

Chronicler’s Note: Only use this scene if the Heroes did not attempt to rescue Daiwik.

The Administrator’s Hall is a large and ornately carved stone building off the Main Square. It is a tall building reaching up out of the city to look over it. The guards at the doors are dressed in Cancere Gothic plate and wielding wicked looking scythes. Their faces are obscured by death’s head helmets.

At the front door, a cleanly shaven acolyte takes your names and asks your business with the Akali.

Allow the Heroes to tell her whatever story they wish. She will let them in because they are

foreign visitors and well-armed, thus potentially interesting and useful to the Akali.

A guard leads you up a couple of flights of stairs past a set of very large bronze double doors, covered in motifs of Neroth as the Lord of Tombs. The double doors swing open to a large receiving room.

In the middle of the room is a large throne carved of black rock and covered in carvings of bones. The throne is flanked by ten more guards in the Death’s Head helmets. As you approach, you can see a man seated on the throne with his hands steepled. He is a well-tanned val with a shaven head. He wears the plain tan robes and a silver holy symbol of Neroth hangs around his neck. He looks to be in his late twenties.

Parag steps forward and bows deeply before him.

Ask the Heroes how they react to the val. A successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight)** check will suggest that bowing would probably be a good idea.

A deep voice emanates from the man on the throne. “Parag, please have your companions introduce themselves. They have the hard looks of a group of adventurers.”

Allow the Heroes to introduce themselves.

Role-playing Grandfather: Grandfather does not know these people and does not have any reason to trust them. This is why he is cold and aloof to them. He is handling a business transaction and doesn’t have much time for pleasantries. He is currently investigating what happened to one of his grandsons.

“And I am the Akali Zartel val’Mordane. You may call me Grandfather if you wish, everyone else does, and I do not mind. Do not be afraid to speak to me about anything.

As my guests here, you have my protection and nothing you say will leave this room. If we decide not to do business, you will not be harassed about in any way about what you have said. Now how can I help you?

Once the Heroes explain their mission:

"And you figured that I might be willing to help you? Either by interceding with the Nihang or helping you to rescue this spy? Is that what you had in mind?"

Wait for acknowledgement.

"Hmmm. This is an interesting proposition that you have handed to me. A chance to bloody Kajal's nose, possibly embarrass him in front of the people, and be completely above suspicion? <Pause> I like it. I suppose you have a plan?"

If not:

"Adventurers without a plan? Why in my day we always had a plan or two up our sleeves." He shakes his head, "standards must be slipping."

He will listen to their plan, murmuring little words of encouragement.

"Ahh, this brings me back to when I was a young, living adventurer. We had such a great time. Oh well, that life is more than forty years gone; I am an administrator now."

"You have some interesting ideas, though you lack some necessary information. I can show you what the layout in the Square of Suffering will be like tomorrow so you can plan your tactics. I would suggest your best option would be to attack once the torture has been set up, as many of the militia will be engaged in holding back the citizens. You'll have to come up with your own plan of course, one that complements your unique skills. Then, more importantly, after you recover the agent I can get you out of the city through

the catacombs. I am sorry that I can't provide you with more direct help, but I don't want to tip my hand. Would that work for you?"

Wait for acknowledgement. Grandfather needs three things in exchange for his help.

First, he needs the information that the spy has learned. She hasn't talked yet.

Second, he will require the Heroes to owe him a favor to be redeemed at a future date.

Third, he will have a letter for the Heroes to deliver to Duke Konrad.

These are non-negotiable.

"Do you have any questions?"

A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine)** check will reveal that Grandfather has not breathed or blinked during the entire audience.

Any personal question not outlined below will be responded to with the following:

"I don't think we know each other well enough to talk about that."

Any other question not outlined below will be answered with:

"I am a very busy man. Do you wish to make the deal with me or not?"

ARE YOU UNDEAD?

"Yes. I have been one of the Blessed of Neroth for over forty years now."

WHY DON'T YOU LOOK UNDEAD?

"Good unliving."

WON'T YOUR GUARDS SPEAK OR TELL WHAT THEY SEE?

"They are a loyal to me."

WHY DO YOU HATE KING KAJAL SO MUCH?

"He is my rival for power in Kielmun. He is nothing more than a thug and a brute, when there are so many more elegant ways to get things done. He has one of the major failings of the living: always in a rush because he feels the hand of death slowly closing on him."

WHY DON'T YOU HAVE HIM KILLED?

"I have all the time in the world to wait. He is mortal and getting closer to death every day."

WHY DOES EVERYONE CALL YOU GRANDFATHER?

"When I started working here in Kielmun I took the orphans created by the Swords of Nier under my protection. I treated them well and protected them from Keirig and his men. I looked old to them and they started calling me Grandfather. The name stuck."

WHAT KIND OF FAVOR WILL YOU ASK US TO DO?

"I will send you on a dangerous mission; it is, after all, what you adventurers do. It is what you are doing for Duke Konrad at this very moment."

WHY DO YOU WANT THE INFORMATION THE SPY HAS?

Grandfather looks at you askance and says, "Every invasion of my country by the Milandisians has come through this city. If this agent has found out something that might convince the Milandisians to attack us, I want to know. I may be able to deal with it, or find a way to assuage their fears before it comes to an invasion."

WHAT IS IN THE LETTER?

"I don't know. I haven't written it yet. But it will be a good way to open the lines of communication to keep the tenuous peace along our border. After all, with the Infernal Horde out of the way, the Milandisians will soon be itching for another Crusade, and I don't want us to be the target again."

If one of the Heroes makes an aggressive move towards Grandfather: Grandfather holds up a hand and says, "Are you sure you want to do that?"

If the Hero continues then subject them to the following:

Note: There are three (3) members of the Obsidian Order hidden in the room who will target the offending Hero.

An arrow speeds out of a pool of shadows, inflicting 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage. If the Hero persists in their attack, the next assassin will fire an arrow made of pure shadow dealing 5 (1d6+2) poison damage and forcing the victim to succeed on a **DC: 14 Dexterity saving throw** or become restrained as strands of shadow erupt from the room entangling them for 1 minute. If the Hero still persists, the third assassin will fire an arrow made of pure shadow, dealing 23 (5d6+2) poison damage (sneak attack + shadow arrow). If the Hero still continues the assassins no longer hold back and will deal full damage and entangle the attacking Hero, focusing all attacks on one target at a

time if necessary. For practical purposes, Grandfather has more than enough hit points to survive any successful assaults to his person.

REMEMBER THE ANCIENT CORYANI PROVERB: STUPIDITY LEADS TO CHARACTER CREATION.

If the Heroes agree to the plan,

Grandfather says, "Thank you. I'm glad we could do business. Now I have other things to attend to. My assistant will provide for all of your needs."

Then he will have them escorted to a smaller room to plan. They will be given a map of the Square of Suffering (**Player Handout 2**) and the time table for the execution (**Player Handout 3**). They will also be given access to a suite of rooms to rest until morning.

Allow the Heroes to figure out where they are going to be and do some planning. They can go out and explore the city more if they want and visit any of the places from Scene 3. When they are ready proceed to Scene 5.

Development: When the Heroes are ready, proceed to **Scene 5**.

If the Heroes don't agree to Grandfather's terms, the module is over. Proceed to **Conclusion D**.

SCENE 4-C: ADVENTURERS IN PERIL

Key Concepts: The Heroes are rescued from the reavers and meet with Grandfather who makes them a deal.

Chronicle's Note: Only use this scene if the Heroes tried and failed to rescue Daiwik. You can also use this scene if the Heroes come to blows with the secret police although you will

need to adapt it appropriately.

The paralytic effect of the reaver's poison running through your veins takes hold as you fall to the ground. For the next few hours, all you can do is moan and move your eyes as the reavers roughly secure you and your companions on the platform. They taunt you about the effectiveness of your rescue attempt, and continue to mock Daiwik with the failure of the rescue. Of Ramu, there is no sign.

You must have dozed off, because loud noises of fighting and screams of pain awaken you in the darkness. It is over soon and you can make out a large group of black-clad individuals in heavy armor disposing of the bodies of the dead reavers. One of the individuals approaches and kneels over your body. When the helmet is taken off, you are staring into the face of a man with a large beard and a shaven head. He says in Low Coryani, "Well it looks like we found them all. Let's get them back to Grandfather." With that darkness retakes you.

You wake up lying on a bed in a well-lit room. The walls and ceiling are made of stone and are decorated with carvings of skulls and bones. A young man with a beard and a shaved head wearing a tan robe is leaning over you, removing a damp cloth from your head. As you look around you find that your companions are all in the room on other beds being tended to by similar individuals. "Ah, you are awake. Good. Sir, this one is recovered." An individual with tan robes and wearing a porcelain mask walks through the room and looks over you and your companions. A male voice says, "Good, let's get them ready for their audience."

You look yourself over, and see that your wounds are healed and you feel well-rested. The masked man says, "You are all safe here

in the Temple of Neroth in Kielmun. You were just rescued from those reavers by the Nerothian Reapers. Although we appreciate you trying to rescue young Daiwik val'Mordane, maybe next time you should leave heroics to the professionals. However, in recognition of your bravery, if not your intelligence, one of the High Priests here would like to meet with you. Please use the chamber next door to clean yourselves up.

The Heroes can now clean up. Their gear will be in the room with them. All of it is there except their weapons. The bags and persons have been thoroughly searched. If asked where their weapons are, Maikel will say "I was not told that."

If the Heroes ask how long they were out, "You came in a couple of hours ago." If they ask the date or time, it is 3:00 am the night that they fought the reavers. She will direct them to the towels, oils, etc. The robes have no markings on them, and are made of a nice fabric. If asked who they are going to meet, she says, "The High Priest of Neroth."

When the Heroes are ready:

Maikel leads your group down a corridor with doors on each side to a waiting room. At the far end of the waiting room is a set of very large bronze double doors, covered in motifs of Neroth as the Lord of Tombs. The double doors swing open to a large receiving room. In the middle of the room is a large throne carved of black rock and covered in carvings of bones. The throne is flanked by ten more guards in the death's head helmets.

As you approach, you can see a man seated on the throne with his hands steepled. He is a well-tanned val with a shaven head. He wears plain tan robes and a silver holy symbol of Neroth hangs around his neck. He looks to be in his late twenties.

Ask the Heroes how they react to the val. A successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight)** check will suggest that bowing would probably be a good idea.

A deep voice emanates from the man on the throne. "From what I have been told, you are a group of adventurers that decided to rescue one Daiwik val'Mordane from a group of reavers, but it proved to be a little more than you could handle. Is that correct?"

Role-playing Grandfather: Grandfather does not know these people and does not have any reason to trust them. But he is handling a business transaction and wants to make it work out so he is positively disposed to them.

Wait for a response.

"The attempt at least was very heroic of you. Many in Canceri would not act in the interests of a stranger. Please introduce yourselves."

Allow the Heroes to introduce themselves.

"Good, it is very nice to meet you. I wanted to meet you and thank you for trying to rescue my grandson. It is a good thing that Ramu ran into you, although I am sorry that you weren't quite up to the task."

"I suppose I should introduce myself. I am Zartel val'Mordane, one of the Akali here in Kielmun. But you may call me Grandfather; everyone else does."

"So what brings a group of adventurers from Ashvan along the Cold Road heading to Kielmun? What dangerous mission are you on and for whom?"

Grandfather already knows their mission, as his own spies in Tralia have already reported to him. He wants to see what they will tell him. The Heroes probably will not trust him; after all,

at this point they do not know that he isn't the Akali that is executing the Duke's agent. But let them squirm a little bit, and see how creative they are.

If they lie:

"I see. And your mission is this, rather than heading out on the word of Duke Konrad val'Holryn to rescue one of his agents from the clutches of the vile Cancerese?"

If they tell the truth:

"Ahhh, it is nice when people are wise enough to know when to tell the truth and when to lie."

He continues.

"I will make this easy on you, since you tried to rescue my grandson. The Duke's agent is being held by Kajal Keirig, the other Akali here in Kielmun. I would like to take advantage of the opportunity that you have presented. Keirig and I are rivals for power and I would like to use you to humiliate him. I will set you up so that you can rescue your agent, and you give me a chance to bloody Kajal's nose, possibly embarrass him in front of the people, and be completely above suspicion? Does this sound good to you?"

Wait for agreement.

"Alright, I think your best option would be to attack during the execution, which will be in a few hours. I can show you what the layout will be so you can plan your tactics. Then, more importantly I can get you out of the city through the catacombs. I am sorry that I can't help you with more direct help, but I don't want to tip my hand. Would that work for you?"

Wait for acknowledgement. Grandfather needs three things in exchange for his help.

First, he needs the information that the spy has learned. She hasn't talked yet.

Second, he will require the Heroes to owe him a favor to be redeemed at a future date.

Third, he will have a letter for the Heroes to deliver to Duke Konrad.

These are non-negotiable.

"Do you have any questions?"

A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine)** check will reveal that Grandfather has not breathed or blinked during the entire audience.

Any personal question not outlined below will be responded to with the following:

"I don't think we know each other well enough to talk about that."

Any other question not outlined below will be answered with:

"I am a very busy man. Do you wish to make the deal with me or not?"

ARE YOU UNDEAD?

"Yes. I have been one of the Blessed of Neroth for over forty years now."

WHY DON'T YOU LOOK UNDEAD?

"Good unliving."

WON'T YOUR GUARDS SPEAK OR TELL WHAT THEY SEE?

"They are a loyal to me."

WHY DO YOU HATE KING KAJAL SO MUCH?

"He is my rival for power in Kielmun. He is nothing more than a thug and a brute, when there are so many more elegant ways to get things done. He has one of the major failings of the living: always in a rush because he feels the hand of death slowly closing on him."

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If the Hero continues then subject them to the following:

Note: There are three (3) members of the Obsidian Order hidden in the room who will target the offending Hero.

An arrow speeds out of a pool of shadows, inflicting 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage. If the Hero persists in their attack, the next assassin will fire an arrow made of pure shadow dealing 5 (1d6+2) poison damage and forcing the victim to make a successful **DC: 14 Dexterity saving throw** or become restrained as strands of shadow erupt from the room entangling them for 1 minute. If the Hero still persists, the third assassin will fire an arrow made of pure shadow, dealing 23 (5d6+2) poison damage (sneak attack + shadow arrow). If the Hero still continues the assassins no longer hold back and will deal full damage and entangle the attacking Hero, focusing all attacks on one target at a time if necessary. For practical purposes, Grandfather has more than enough hit points to survive any successful assaults to his person.

REMEMBER THE ANCIENT CORYANI PROVERB: STUPIDITY LEADS TO CHARACTER CREATION.

If the Heroes agree to the plan,

Grandfather says, "Thank you. I'm glad we could do business. Now I have other things to attend to. My assistant will provide for all of your needs."

Then he will have them escorted to a smaller room to plan. They will be given a map of the Square of Suffering (**Player Handout 2**) and the time table for the execution (**Player Handout 3**). They will be brought all of their equipment, including weapons. They will also be given access to a suite of rooms to rest until morning.

Allow the Heroes to figure out where they are going to be and do some planning.

Development: When the Heroes are ready, proceed to **Scene 5**.

If the Heroes don't agree to Grandfather's terms, the module is over. Proceed to **Conclusion D**.

SCENE 5: SUFFERING THROUGH A RESCUE

Key Concepts: This is the battle for the condemned.

There are four balconies that the Heroes can use for sniping or dropping down from. There are two barricades that the Heroes can climb over and several alcoves that they can hide in before anyone gets there. So this will be quite an ambush if they do it right. They don't need to clear the board, just get the prisoner to the exit and discourage anyone from following.

Heroes hiding in the balconies will not need to make **Stealth** rolls as they can be fully concealed. There is a 20-foot drop to the ground from the balconies.

Heroes hiding in the alcoves will need to make a **Dexterity (Stealth)** checks and record the results. If they cased the Square earlier and

succeed on their Intelligence roll, they receive advantage when they hide.

Spellcasting will be noticeable because the crowd is hushed to hear every moan, cry, and whimper.

The Heroes can set-up at any hour, but past 5:00 am they will be seen entering the Square unless they are stealthy.

GM's Note: The following box text is a list of the events that will occur. The Heroes are welcome to interrupt you anytime that they wish and act. Pause between each paragraph to give them a second. However, they can act at any time and make sure that they know that.

At 5 AM, four pairs of guards dressed in the uniform of the Kielmun Militia remove the two people collapsed on the northeast platform. They look around the area and peer into the different alcoves.

Roll the guards' active **Wisdom (Perception)** checks against the Heroes' **Dexterity (Stealth)** for the alcoves. If found, the Heroes will be presumed to be citizens and roughed out beyond the barrier unless they start a fight then and there.

The guards begin to set-up a wooden barrier with slots for people to see through. The barriers fit into holes in the street and limit the public's approach to the platform.

The barriers are 10 feet tall and require a **DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** or **Strength (Athletics)** to climb. They have slits in them for people to see through, which make for great climbing holds. Read each section as appropriate, give the Heroes a change to interrupt and intervene whenever they want.

At 5:30 AM, a group of four workers show up and scrub down the platform and the surrounding area. The workers also install a

table onto the platform.

At 6:00 am, a crowd starts to wander in and look for places to stand. There are several food vendors out there that are peddling their wares. The crowd is rather subdued.

At 7:00 am, as the sky begins to lighten, there is a murmur through the assembly as the prisoner appears. She is shackled hand and foot and is being carried by two burly guards. The prisoner is wearing a grey shift and looks unmarked. The three of them are in turn surrounded by another eight guards who use clubs indiscriminately to keep the crowd away from the prisoner.

The guards carry her to the platform and the two men attach her manacles to the table. Then the guards tilt the table up and point it towards the crowd. The crowd cheers briefly.

At 7:15:00 am, the doors to the Torturer's Guild open behind the platform and two men walk out. One is a very large and smiling man; the other is a mousy man who looks like an official. The mousy man steps out onto the platform and says, "I would like to present to you, your torturer for today, the merciless Nigus Castavail!!" The large man steps out onto the platform where the crowd can see him and raises his arms above his head. The crowd cheers loudly. With the acoustics of the square, the noise is almost deafening. The official signals for quiet and the crowd silences instantly.

Then two other men exit the door carrying large wooden boxes. When they get to the front of the platform they open the boxes which are display cases of instruments of torture. The crowd applauds. Nigus grabs a tool from one of the cases and makes a complicated series of movements in the air, like he is using the instrument on an invisible victim. The crowd forgets itself and cheers again, quickly silenced by the official.

Nigus takes his time directing the two men on how to set up the boxes. He makes a show of looking at the condemned and carefully picking and choosing his tools. At one point he holds a tool up to her face and then puts it back in the box as if something about it is not right.

If the Heroes went to the Confraternity for aid instead of Grandfather:

A priest in the robes of Neroth comes out of a doorway behind the platform with his escort of skeletons. He must be there to raise her body when the time comes.

If the Heroes accepted Grandfather's aid:

Nigus is just finishing up his preparations when the chime sounds 7:30. The official takes out a large piece of paper and starts to read. "On behalf of his greatness, Akali Kaja Keirig." To which the crowd shouts "KING!" "And on behalf of his illustriousness Nihang Paluos val'Mordane. We bring forth this prisoner who has been convicted of the vile crimes of espionage against the state and praying to false gods. For these crimes she has been sentenced to death by torture. Once she has expired, her remains will be reanimated and auctioned off to you. In this way she may serve the people of Kielmun for an eternity to make up for her crimes."

He turns to the prisoner, "However Akali Keirig is not without mercy. He states that if you admit to these crimes, disavow your former comrades and false gods, and beg for his mercy. He will grant it, and when you expire, your body will be burned to ashes. What say you?"

Elsie looks defiantly ahead in reply. The official says, "She is all yours Nigus."

Nigus reaches onto a small table set-up next to the prisoner. He grabs a set of pliers and holds it up for the crowd to see. They applaud. He then grabs the prisoner's mouth and holds it open as he puts the pliers deep into her mouth. With a quick tug he pulls the pliers out and shows the crowd the molar that he removed. They applaud.

At this point the Heroes should be fighting. If they aren't then something is wrong with them. This will be an epic battle and may take a while.

COMBAT

In all this combat consists of

- **One (1) torturer**
- **Two (2) apprentices**
- **Four (4) guards**
- **One (1) priest of Neroth***

- **Four (4) skeletons***

* If the Heroes either rescued or tried to rescue Daiwik, then the priest of Neroth and his skeletons will not be in attendance as they were delayed.

See Combat Appendix 2

Adventure Difficulty

- **Easy:** Remove 1 guard
- **Difficult:** Add 1 guard
- **Perilous:** Add 2 guards

Tactics: The torturer and his apprentices will work together, focusing on the most heavily armed fighters first.

The guards will focus on locking down any casters, particularly healers, forcing them to waste time on movement.

The priest will direct his skeletons to attack anyone trying to free Elsie. He himself will focus on healing and using his spells.

Special Notes:

The manacles are locked, requiring a **DC 16 Dexterity (Thieves' tools) ability check**. There are four of them, one on each leg. One of the two guards that locked her up has a copy of the key. Nigus does as well.

The manacles can also be pulled out of the table with two **DC 16 Strength (Athletics) checks**, one for the arms and one for the legs. The difficulty is so high to prevent harm coming to the prisoner. Note that in this case, she really can't run because she is still manacled and will have to be carried. But if released from the manacles, she can run on her own.

There may be additional guards if the Nihang's official, Keirig's official, or the secret police know that the Heroes were interested in the spy, up to a maximum of 10 total guards.

The crowd itself will become an environmental danger. There are guards blocking the crowd from getting to the platform. That is their orders no matter what happens, and thus they are not included in the fight. Consequently, the crowd will start to throw things, like bottles or stones, every other round. The crowd will be very angry at the rescue since their entertainment is being taken away.

The door that Grandfather said would be open is. It leads into a small room with a staircase down. After the last Hero passes down the stairs, there will be a small cave-in to prevent anyone else from following.

Development: If the Heroes succeed with Grandfather's help, proceed to **Scene 6**.

If the Heroes when to the Confraternity instead of Grandfather, **proceed to Conclusion C**.

If the Heroes fail, they are summarily killed. Grandfather will recover their bodies and have them sent back to Duke Konrad with a note of apology. Not that this helps the Heroes.

SCENE 6: DEAD INFORMATION

Key Concepts: Grandfather collects part of his due.

Chronicler's Note: If the Heroes opted to request the aid of the Confraternity of Just Death instead of Grandfather, skip this Scene and continue immediately to **Conclusion C**.

Your escape from an angry mob and the guards was a narrow one, but successful. Now as the dust settles from the ceiling collapsing after you, a light approaches from further down the corridor. A figure wearing familiar armor with a death's head helmet beckons for you to follow.

Ask if they do. If they hesitate, point out that they have no real idea where they are and cannot go back the way that they came.

The guard leads your group through several chambers filled with sarcophagi and shuffling forms in the darkness. After going down a couple more staircases, you are finally led into a large round room with eight exits all around. In the middle of the room stands Grandfather, surrounded by about two dozen of his death's dead guards.

Grandfather's tone depends on how he dealt with the Heroes before, so paraphrase if necessary. He will be very harsh if they try to go back on their deal.

"I see that you were successful. I look forward to hearing what happened. While you tell me, allow my assistants to tend to your wounds." Two women with shorn heads in the robes of priests of Neroth step out from the group of guards.

If allowed, the two priests will heal the party. They will also remove any poisons that the Heroes are suffering from. They will not heal any diseases unless specifically asked to.

Grandfather will stand in rapt attention as the Heroes tell of their tale of glory. He will be suitably impressed with their bravery, prowess, and/or cleverness and will make comments to that extent.

Once the tale is over, he will say, "Well, all that remains is for us to finish our bargain. Here is the letter I composed to Duke Konrad val'Holryn. I would ask that only he open it, but I know about Milandisian paranoia, so I have made sure that it contains no surprises." Hand them Player Handout 4, folded closed. "I thank you for taking it to him. And now, for your part, I need to know what the woman found out."

Elsie will be very hesitant to tell her information. The Heroes will have to convince her but remember that she had kept from telling anyone even while being vilely tortured. They will have to role-play this out. Make sure that they have time to do this, and make sure to not make it too hard to do.

Arguments that would help to persuade her include: "We just rescued you from being tortured," Speaking to her in Milandisian, mentioning why the Duke ordered her rescue, pointing out that this is a part of the deal for her escape (but her telling her sources is not required). Other creative ideas will work as well. It just requires one argument that you think is good. Or the Heroes can just do a die roll.

If the Heroes want to roll, then it will be a **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check**. This will be harder if she is still in chains (**DC 20**). **Intimidation** will not work in this case.

Grandfather will be extremely patient during all this and will not say anything except to confirm that he cannot let them leave until he has the information. And even if they were to run away, where would they go. They are deep within the catacombs of Kielmun and it is unlikely that they will make their way out without running into the undead that live down here.

If they get her to tell, then read the following:

Elsie says, "In six months' time, all of the Akali and Nihangs of Canceri are having a meeting to discuss the future of Canceri. I found out that one of the items on the agenda was the invasion of Milandir! We have to get back to the Duke and warn him!"

At this point you hear a loud and booming laugh reverberate throughout the chamber. Grandfather is standing with his hands on his hips laughing hard. A large smile covers his

face, and he speaks as the laughter subsides. "Oh yes, please warn Duke val'Holryn. And while you are at it, I will let you in on a secret. That item has been on the agenda of every meeting of the Akali and Nihangs since the founding of Canceri!"

He laughs a little bit more at his own joke before coming back under control. "Thank you for that. I have not laughed like that in over a decade. Kajal is humiliated in public, and all over intelligence that is centuries old! But yes, we are having a meeting to discuss the situation in Canceri and advise the Dark Apostate on which direction Canceri should take in a post-Infernal Horde world. Some of my more militant fellows will try to bring up the idea of an invasion, while Milandir is recovering from the Crusade. But more patient heads will prevail, they always have. That is, unless Milandir does something stupid and tries to invade us again!"

"Well I must be going now. These two will show you the way out. It was a pleasure working with you. I may call on your services in the future." His laughter continues to echo down the hallway as he walks away.

Two of Grandfather's guards lead the way through the catacombs. You walk for a long time before finally coming to a door where cracks of light seep through. The door exits a small mausoleum that is a couple of miles away from Kielmun. One of guards gives you a small map that notes how to go around the Blighted Mire on the eastern side and then get back to Ashvan. It is a longer route, but much more traveled and safer than back through the swamp. Without a word, the two guards go back through the door and disappear into the darkness.

Proceed to **Conclusion A**.

If they don't get her to tell, then they can run. Although Grandfather said it was unlikely, they will not run into any undead because most of

the residents of these catacombs were killed by the Swords of Nier and there hasn't been time to refill the catacombs.

You rush through one of the exits of the room. Running as quickly as you can to avoid the inevitable pursuit, you stumble around in the dark, traveling through room after room of sarcophagi. Some intact, some smashed open and the remains of the former occupants still strewn around the room. You are always on alert listening for sounds of pursuit or undead occupants. Eventually you find a shaft of sunlight coming through a collapsed ceiling in one of the rooms. You are able to clamber out of the hole in the ground and emerge into the sunlight. Off in the distance you can make out the walls of Kielmun. But you know you are now free to make your way back to Ashvan and the Duke.

Proceed to **Conclusion B**.

Development: If the Heroes got the agent to tell Grandfather the information, proceed to **Conclusion A**.

If the Heroes ran, proceed to **Conclusion B**

CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSION A

When you reach the gates of Ashvan, you are immediately ushered into the presence of Duke Konrad val'Holryn. Unlike last time you are in a formal receiving room and there are around a dozen guards protecting the Duke. "I see you have brought Elsie back with you. Very good. So tell me what happened."

When they mention the note from Grandfather.

Interesting, please show me the note.

When the Heroes produce it,

He waves to a guard who takes the note and quickly moves out of the room.

When the Heroes are finished:

"And Elsie, what do you have to report?"

Elsie takes a deep breath and says, "Sir, before I was captured, I learned that the Akalis and Nihangs of Canceri are having a meeting in six months in Nishanpur. I managed to look at the agenda, and saw that one of the items on it was the invasion of Milandir." The Duke sits up at this news. "However, Grandfather also knows that we know. He stated that this agenda item has been on the agenda since the first meeting. He said that it would not come to pass as long as we don't make any threatening moves toward Canceri." The Duke sits there for a minute and says, "Thank you, all of you, for your service. You all have done very well for me and I will reward you well." With that you are dismissed to wash the reek of Canceri off of you.

CONCLUSION B

When you reach the gates of Ashvan, you are immediately ushered into the presence of Duke Konrad val'Holryn. Unlike last time you are in a formal receiving room and there are around a dozen guards protecting the Duke. "I see you have brought Elsie back with you. Very good. So tell me what happened."

When they mention the note from Grandfather.

Interesting, please show me the note.

When the Heroes produce it,

He waves to a guard who takes the note and quickly moves out of the room.

When the Heroes are finished:

"And Elsie, what do you have to report?"

"Elsie takes a deep breath and says, "Sir, before I was captured, I learned that the Akalis and Nihangs of Canceri are having a meeting in six months in Nishanpur. I managed to look at the agenda, and saw that one of the items on it was the invasion of Milandir." The Duke sits up at this news. "This is very disturbing news indeed." The Duke sits there for a minute and then says, "Thank you, all of you, for your service. You all have done very well for me and I will reward you well." With that you are dismissed to wash the reek of Canceri off of you.

CONCLUSION C

The monks of the Confraternity of Just Death have done their jobs well. They obtained the information you needed, they provided you a way out, and they even ensured safe passage through the catacombs. You walk for a long time before finally coming to a door where cracks of light seep through. The door exits a small mausoleum that is a couple of miles away from Kielmun. You can see the city in the distance in the noonday sun. The monk gives you directions to follow Sarish's Crescent, a road that skirts the outside of the Blighted Mire that will return you to Milandir.

When you reach the gates of Ashvan, you are immediately ushered into the presence of Duke Konrad val'Holryn. Unlike last time you are in a formal receiving room and there are around a dozen guards protecting the Duke. "I see you have brought Elsie back with you. Very good. So tell me what happened."

When the Heroes are finished:

"And Elsie, what do you have to report?"

"Elsie takes a deep breath and says, "Sir, before I was captured, I learned that the

Akalis and Nihangs of Canceri are having a meeting in six months in Nishanpur. I managed to look at the agenda, and saw that one of the items on it was the invasion of Milandir." The Duke sits up at this news. "This is very disturbing news indeed." The Duke sits there for a minute and then says, "Thank you, all of you, for your service. You all have done very well for me and I will reward you well." With that you are dismissed to wash the reek of Canceri off of you.

A few weeks later, you each receive a letter, bearing the seal of Neroth.

The letter is not trapped. Presuming the Heroes read it:

"Your actions, though well-intentioned, have cost the lives of many good men. The Confraternity of the Just Death has been discovered as a result of the aid they offered you, and deemed to be more than a mere nuisance. They were executed to a man. I am most displeased with this. It may be wise for you to avoid Kielmun in the near future. – Akali Zartel val'Mordane."

CONCLUSION D

Despite your protests you are forcefully escorted out of the city until late morning the next day. You are led to the road called Sarish's Crescent. From there your escort accompanies you south on the road to return to Milandir.

Your mission has failed and Duke Konrad val'Holryn does not see you in Ashvan. But his messenger thanks you for trying. He says, "It was a longshot to try and recover her. I guess next time we need to go with more experienced people."

THE END

ADVENTURE REWARDS

After the adventure, fill out an Adventure Chronicle for each player. Note the experience gained, the treasure reward received, any favors or boons received and any other pertinent information. Hand it to the player before signing so that they can add in any gold or fame they spent during the adventure and make any choices required on the Chronicle. Once the player is done, sign Chronicle.

EXPERIENCE REWARDS

Arcanis adventures do not necessarily reward experience points for winning combats. Instead Arcanis adventures reward experience for achieving particular tasks or reaching important story points.

Story Point	
Total Exp Award.	450 xp

FOUND ITEMS

Players may keep any item without an Item Certificate that they find during the adventure. Remember that carrying a flintlock without the right to do so is a crime.

When a player keeps an item, the item's sale value is removed from the shared treasure reward the party splits at the end of the adventure. If the amount removed is greater than a player's share of the coin, the player in question must make up the difference or the other players can chip in from their shares.

The number and distribution of items found in a Living Arcanis adventure is always calculated using the base level of the adventure and a table of 5 players. Even if the party goes through the adventure at a higher difficulty and fights more enemies, any items beyond what is listed here are unsalvageable, lost or confiscated. This helps the Campaign Staff have a better grasp on campaign economy.

SCENE 2

- 60 gp worth of baubles and Milandisian coins.
- 40 gp worth of Cancereese coins.

Total possible treasure: 100 gp

SCENE 5

The Heroes are not able to salvage anything from this encounter because they have to flee with the spy into the tunnels.

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER AWARDS

For successfully rescuing his agent in Canceri, Duke Konrad val'Holryn gives you your choice of either 150 gp or a silvered weapon or set of ammunition.

FAME

Arcanis is filled with secret societies and powerful organizations that constantly scheme and maneuver behind the scenes. Players may be part of these organizations or even attract the attention of organizations they are not part of, for good or ill.

Task, Achievement	
Orthodoxy Enlisting the aid of the Confraternity of Just Death and getting them killed in the escape.	Members Only -1 Fame
Orthodoxy Reporting everything learned about Grandfather, specifically about his rivalry with Kajal Keirig.	Members Only +1 Fame
Mourners in Silence: Enlisting the aid of the Confraternity of the Just Death and getting them killed in the escape.	Members Only +1 Fame
Mourners in Silence: Reporting everything learned about Grandfather, specifically	Members Only +1 Fame

about his rivalry with Kajal Keirig.	
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STORY AWARDS

FAVORS, BOONS, CURSES

Conclusion A or B:

Favor of Grandfather – One of the Akali of Canceri owes you a favor. This favor can be used to get out of jail in Canceri. Other uses may appear in the future.

If the Heroes failed to rescue Daiwik (or didn't try):

A Favor Owed to Grandfather – You owe one of the Akali of Canceri a favor and you never know when he will collect.

NOTICE OF THE HARVESTERS

This only pertains to characters that use arcane magic.

Every time during the adventure an arcane caster casts spells in a public place or within sight of common people there is a chance that they had been spotted by a Harvester or an informant.

Unless the caster goes out of their way to hide such spell casting, news of their abilities will, eventually, reach the ears of the “wrong” people.

If the Hero was open about their spell casting in public or failed two consecutive attempts to disguise it, they get 1 point of Harvester Notice.

COMBAT APPENDIX 1

SCENE 2

CANCERESE REAVERS

Small Humanoid

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 27 (5d8+10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Amphibious. The reaver can breathe air and water.

Pack Tactics. Reavers have advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of the reaver's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Multiattack – The reaver makes two attacks with its claws.

Claw – *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Poisonous Claws – If the reaver makes two successful claw attacks on the same creature, the target must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or suffer an additional 2 (1d4) poison damage.

COMBAT

In all this combat consists of

Two (2) Cancerese reavers per hero

At the beginning of combat, half of reavers are in the pool beneath the platform. They will only join the fight to replace a fallen companion.

Tactics: The reavers will group up and concentrate on one or two Heroes until they fall, then move on to another target. They will not kill any unconscious foes; they consider helpless prey to be fun to torture, and they prefer their meals living when they start to consume them.

Their poison comes from their saliva, and they are constantly licking their hands to spread it. After a creature falls unconscious, the reavers will be careful not to expose that creature to their poison so as to preserve their meal.

When there are only a quarter of the reavers left, the remainder will flee into the swamp.

Special Notes:

Daiwik is curled up on one side of the platform (the highest edge) cradling Faiza's partially eaten body. The reavers ate her bottom half and then gave him back the top to torture him. They plan to eat the top before they eat him. Daiwik has 1 hit point and 5 levels of exhaustion which reduces his speed to 0. He will not participate in the combat even if healed as he is in shock.

Ramu will wait until after the Heroes attack, then he will join the fight, putting himself between his young master and the nearest creature. He will always remain adjacent to

RAMU

Medium undead

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 26 (4d8+8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +3

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Damage Resistances necrotic

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

Languages Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

ACTIONS

Scythe – *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12+3) slashing damage.

Daiwik, remembering his previous failure.

COMBAT APPENDIX 2

SCENE 5

COMBAT

In all this combat consists of

- **One (1) torturer**
- **Two (2) apprentices**
- **Four (4) guards**
- **One (1) priest of Neroth***
- **Four (4) skeletons***

* If the Heroes enlisted Grandfather's help, then the priest of Neroth and his skeletons will not be in attendance as they were delayed.

Adventure Difficulty

- **Easy:** Remove 1 guard
- **Difficult:** Add 1 guard
- **Perilous:** Add 2 guards

Tactics: The torturer and his apprentices will work together, focusing on the most heavily armed fighters first.

The guards will focus on locking down any casters, particularly healers, forcing them to waste time on movement.

The priest will direct his skeletons to attack anyone trying to free Elsie. He himself will focus on healing and using his spells.

Special Notes:

The manacles are locked, requiring a **DC 18 Dexterity (Thieves' tools) ability check**. There are four of them, one on each leg. One of the two guards that locked her up has a copy of the key. Nigus does as well.

The manacles can also be pulled out of the table with two **DC 16 Strength (Athletics)** checks, one for the arms and one for the legs. The difficulty is so high to prevent harm coming to the

prisoner. Note that in this case, she really can't run because she is still manacled and will have to be carried. But if released from the manacles, she can run on her own.

There may be additional guards if the Nihang's official, Keirig's official, or the secret police know that the Heroes were interested in the spy, up to a maximum of 10 total guards.

The crowd itself will become an environmental danger. There are guards blocking the crowd from getting to the platform. That is their orders no matter what happens, and thus they are not included in the fight. Consequently, the crowd will start to throw things, like bottles or stones, every other round. The crowd will be very angry at the rescue since their entertainment is being taken away.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD: DEBRIS RULES

Every other round, the crowd will throw stuff at the Heroes. Each creature out in the open on the Square must make a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw or suffer 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage from flying debris.

NIGUS CASTAVAIL

Medium humanoid

Armor Class 14 (leather)

Hit Points 22 (4d8+4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Intimidation +4, Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack – Nigus makes two attacks, one with each dagger.

Dagger – *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target.

Hit: 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage

GUARDS (4)

Medium humanoid

Armor Class 16 (chain shirt, shield)

Hit Points 11 (2d8+2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Spear – *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6+1) piercing damage.

APPRENTICE TORTURERS (2)

Medium humanoid

Armor Class 14 (leather)

Hit Points 11 (2d8+2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Intimidation +3, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

ACTIONS

Dagger – *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

PRIEST OF NERO+H

Medium humanoid

Armor Class 13 (leather)

Hit Points 33 (6d8+6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Deception +5, Religion +2

Senses passive Perception 11

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. The priest's spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11; +3 to hit with spell attacks).

Cantrips (at will): *resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *command, inflict wounds, shield of faith*
2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness, hold person*

ACTIONS

Multiattack – The priest makes two melee attacks.

Sickle – Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4+2) slashing damage.

SKELETONS (4)

Medium undead

Armor Class 13 (armor scraps)

Hit Points 13 (2d8+4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 9

Vulnerability bludgeoning

Damage Immunities: poison

Condition Immunities: exhaustion, poisoned

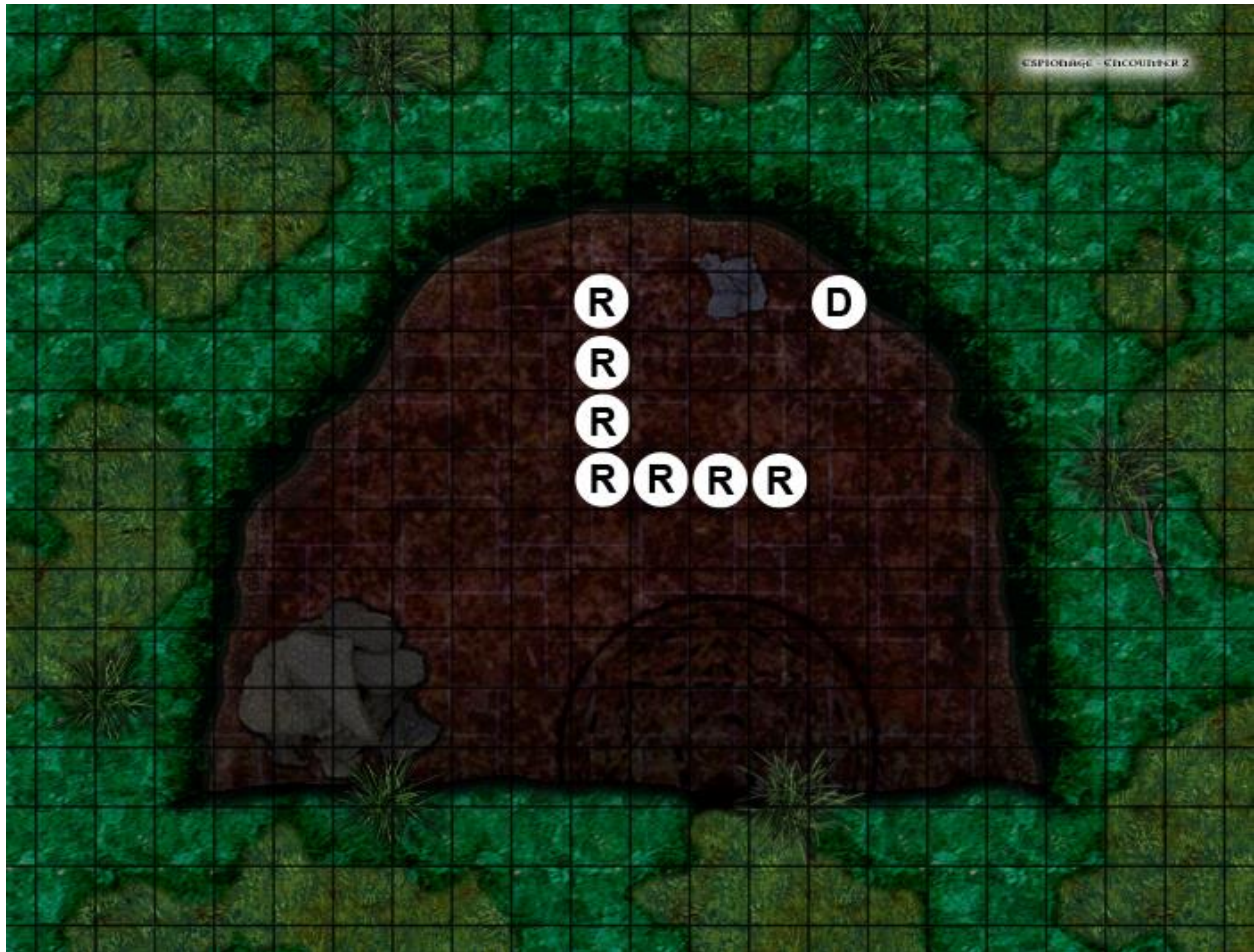
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

ACTIONS

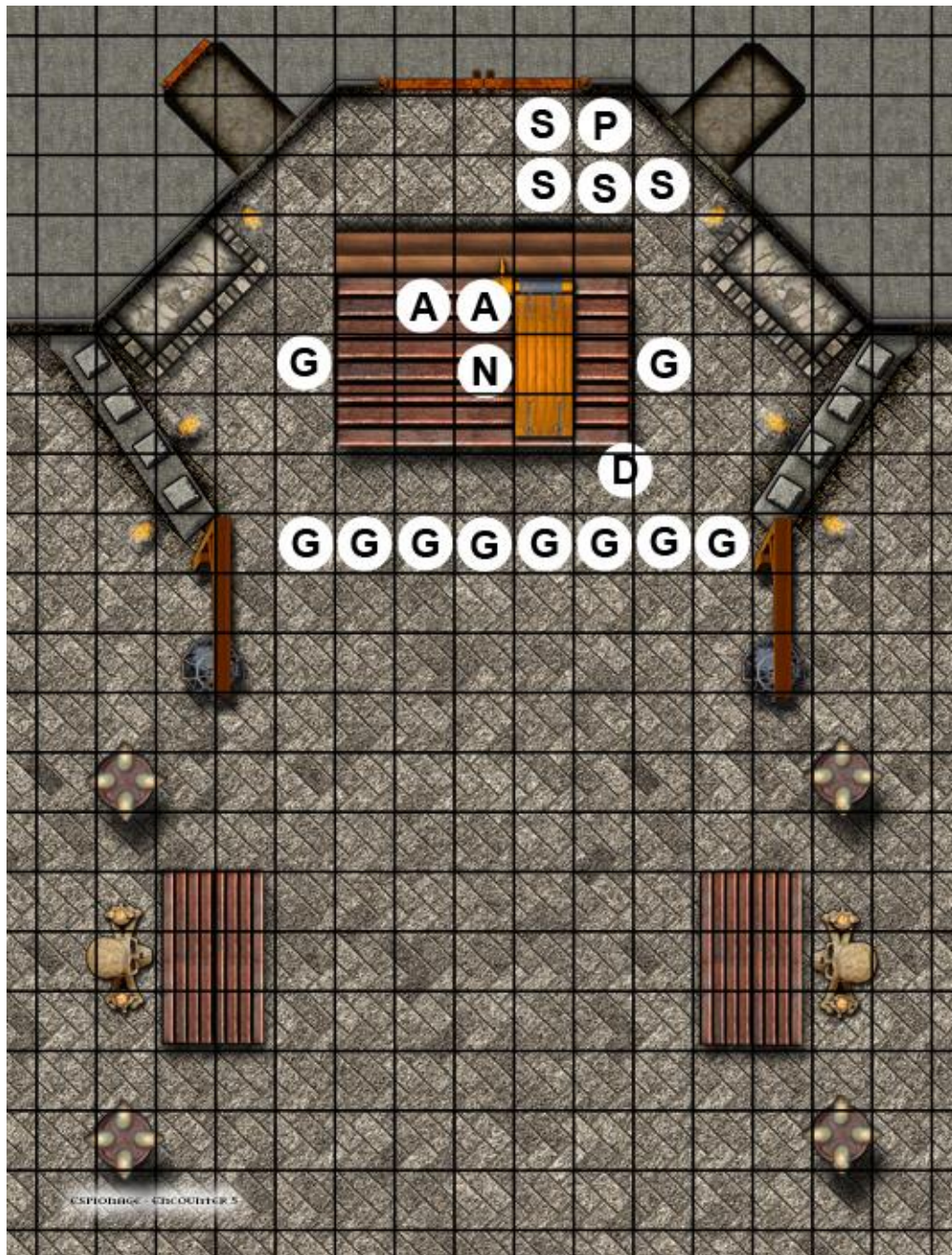
Shortsword – Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Shortbow – Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage

COMBAT MAP #1: REAVER'S RUIN



COMBAT MAP #2: SQUARE OF SUFFERING



APPENDIX 3 – GOSSIP IN KIELMUN

Gossip Topics

These details can be found out using **Charisma (Persuasion)** or **Intelligence (Investigation)** depending on approach. Some of these items, marked with *, can be found out using **Intelligence (History)**.

Kielmun (Persuasion or History only)

DC 10 - It is a city on the border of Canceri and Milandir.

DC 12 - It is a trade hub between Canceri and the outside world

DC 13 - The Swords of Nier destroyed the town forty years ago.

DC 15 - It is the first stepping stone of every invasion into Canceri.

DC 16 - It is run by Nihang Paluos val'Mordane. He has two Akali under him, Kajal Keirig and Zartel val'Mordane.

King Kajal Keirig

*DC 10 - Everybody calls him King, because he tried to set himself up as the King of Kielmun after the city fell to the Swords.

*DC 13 - King runs the militia with an Iron Fist. If you cross King, he will send the militia after you.

DC 16 - King is a priest of Nier, but no one has ever seen him lead services.

DC 20 - King is getting old, and is planning on putting his son up to replace him. The son is as ruthless as he is.

The Kielmun Militia

*DC 10 - The Militia is both a police force and the city's army.

*DC 13 - The militia is made up of toughs, mercenaries, former prisoners, and other nasties. King keeps them in line because he is a very tough individual and not afraid to make examples of people who don't obey his orders.

*DC 16 - King's militia is very corrupt and can sometimes be bribed into looking the other way.

DC 20 – The militia will sometime abduct people for their own pleasures. Not many survive.

Grandfather/Zartel val'Mordane

*DC 10 - Everyone calls him Grandfather, but no one remembers why.

*DC 12 - He is a priest of Neroth.

*DC 13 - He worked to set-up trade with the rest of Canceri and the outside world to rebuild the city.

DC 15 - He was an adventurer before he came back to Kielmun to help rebuild it.

DC 16 - He hasn't aged a day since he came to Kielmun. He must be undead.

DC 18 - He is ruthless and has been known to reanimate some of his opponents after they die, so that they can serve him.

DC 20 - It is rumored that he has this fate in mind for King.

Paluos val'Mordane

DC 13 - He is the head of the Church of Neroth in Kielmun, a position that he uses to annoy Grandfather and keep him in line.

*DC 15 - He lets King and Grandfather fight among themselves as long as it doesn't interfere with the running of the city.

DC 16 - He is a vampire.

DC 18 - He is absolutely ruthless and will eat people who cross him.

Rahat val'Mordane

DC 13 - I think that he is a priest of Neroth, one of Grandfather's favorites.

The Church of Neroth

DC 10 - The church here was rebuilt by Paluos val'Mordane.

DC 13 - The Church of Neroth is the main church in Kielmun and a temporary temple to Neroth was the first building that was set-up when the city started to rebuild.

DC 20 - I hear that they know about the Confraternity of Just Death in the city, but leave them alone.

Current Happenings

DC 10 - King captured a Milandisian spy and they are going to execute her tomorrow at the Square of Suffering.

DC 12 - Tensions between King and Grandfather are very high right now.

DC 13 - Fights have broken out between their followers. I hear one of King's patrols was found dead.

DC 16 - Garv's wife just passed away. I know that she was rich, but jeez marrying a woman that old is asking for trouble. I hope that he enjoyed living the life of luxury, because now it is over. (Garv is the one in the funeral scene.)

DC 20 - I hear that in an effort to make peace between Grandfather and King. King is talking about offering one of his granddaughters to marry Grandfather. **DC 15 Intelligence (History)** – sometime the living will marry the undead, to continue family lines and the like. The children are engendered by third parties but considered to be part of the family line.

HANDOUT 1 (INTRODUCTION)

THE LAWS OF CANCERI

It is forbidden to abuse another, except in your own defense.

Combat in urban centers is illegal. If a fight breaks out, and the combatants arrested, whoever has the greatest number of eyewitnesses supporting his claim is innocent. The instigator receives a flogging, or imprisonment if death or mortal injury results. In cases where there are no witnesses, they drop the case, and levy a small fine against both combatants. In Nerothian lands, this law extends to undead. Destroying undead is a crime, and the penalty is always execution and animation as a zombie or skeleton to replace the lost resources.

It is forbidden to strike a priest of the Church of the Dark Triumvirate.

The priesthood, including all Val nobles and the practicing clergy, is careful to set protections for their order. With the threat of death, or years of torture in Nerothian lands, most priests are safe in Canceri's cities. The ecclesiastical courts do not recognize self-defense as a reason for violence against the priesthood. Other possible punishments include slavery, entombment, and slow death.

It is forbidden to enter a temple without the consent of that temple's priest.

The populace can enter the temple on holy days, when the priests throw the door open wide. All other times, the temple's doors stand shut.

It is forbidden to deprive a priest of his belongings.

Thievery in Canceri's cities is a way of life. If one allows himself to be robbed, he deserves to suffer. However, as part of the ruling estate, the state affords priests and nobles special protections. A thief caught in the act of robbing a priest faces terrible punishments, like entombment or slow death.

It is forbidden to interfere between a slave and his master.

Slavery is legal in Canceri; it is a way of life. Interference in slavery, including liberating slaves, carries a hefty penalty, including a 5 gp fine, and liberating a slave imposes a fine equal up to the three times the slave's replacement cost. The exact penalties vary from city to city, and some have laws forcing the interfering party to serve as slave until they meet the cost of the slave.

It is forbidden to approach a city's walls except to enter its gates.

All cities prevent any entry into the city by any means other than the main gates by killing anyone within 100 feet of the walls. This prevents smugglers from moving untaxed goods into the city, slaves from escaping, and spies from sneaking inside.

A native val is a priest in the eyes of the law.

All native vals – the val'Mordane, val'Mehen, val'Mehan, and val'Virdan – have rights under the law as priests, and crimes committed against them carry the same weight of punishment as if committed

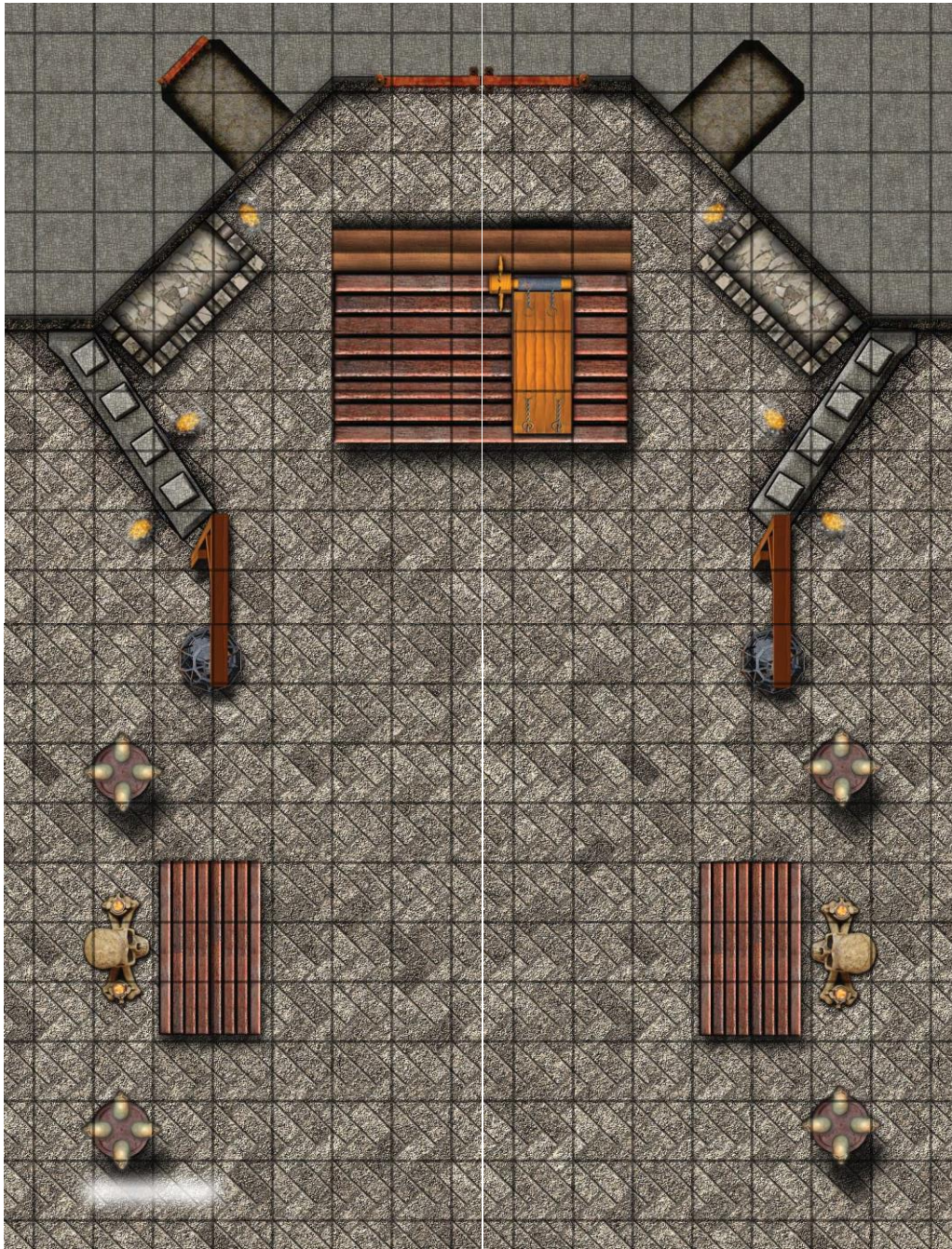
against the church. This custom stems from the oaths sworn by the noble houses to their respected gods, thereafter consecrating not just those swearing the oath, but the entire family line.

The law is binding to natives and foreigners alike; it applies to all.

In Canceri, there is no such thing as extenuating circumstances. Ignorance does not grant mercy. Foreigners breaking a law face the same punishments as a native of Canceri.

PLAYER HANDOUT 2

Map of Square of Suffering



PLAYER HANDOUT 3

Normal Execution Time Table.

5 AM - The corner of the square where the execution is to take place is cleared.

6 AM - The prisoner is roused and prepared for the ceremony with oils and rites

7 AM - The prisoner is brought out to the square and tied to the table, which will be upright to show her off to the crowd.

7:30 AM - The prisoner's list of crimes will be read aloud and the prisoner will be given a chance to repent and confess all.

Immediately after the torture will begin and will continue

9 AM - The prisoner will be allowed to die.

Immediately afterward the prisoner's body is raised as an undead and auctioned off to the crowd.

PLAYER HANDOUT 4

To His Grace, Duke Konrad val'Holryn;

It is a pleasure to formally make your acquaintance. I am writing you this letter so that we may open a line of communication between ourselves to allow for unofficial communications. With the tension on our mutual border I feel that it would be wise to be able to talk and avoid misunderstandings that may prove disastrous to our respective lands.

I will not apologize for the actions of any of my countrymen, whether or not I knew or approved of their actions, just as I will not expect you to apologize for your countrymen's incursions or actions in my country. We come from very different peoples with very different beliefs and I do not see our two countries ever becoming friends, but I would like to avoid outright war.

The past forty years of relative peace have allowed us to rebuild from our disastrous civil war, and I would like keep hostilities from breaking out along our borders.

To that extent, I propose that we use your agent Parag Rarzi as our messenger. I will ensure that he is not bothered and kept from harm.

I am asking for no concessions, favors, or anything else from you, but just that we may be able to use this as a way to communicate as the need arises.

Sincerely

Zartel val'Mordane

Akali of Kielmun, High Priest of Neroth

Humble Servant of the Dark Triumvirate

PLAYER HANDOUT 5

Secret Faction Orders

Orthodoxy: It has come to our attention that you are travelling to Kielmun in Canceri. We are very interested in the state of the Church of the Dark Triumvirate at this time. To this extent we need you to investigate two things.

Goals: First, we want to learn everything you can about a Nerothian known as Grandfather.

Second, we would like you to make contact with the Confraternity of the Just Death, an Illiirite monastic order working in the city.

Report back with what you learn.

Orthodoxy: It has come to our attention that you are travelling to Kielmun in Canceri. We are very interested in the state of the Church of the Dark Triumvirate at this time. To this extent we need you to investigate two things.

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Second, we would like you to make contact with the Confraternity of the Just Death, an Illiirite monastic order working in the city.

Report back with what you learn.

Mourners in Silence: It has come to our attention that you are travelling to Kielmun in Canceri. We are very interested in the state of the Church of the Dark Triumvirate at this time. To this extent we need you to investigate something.

Goals: You are requested and required to learn everything you can about a Nerothian known as Grandfather.

Mourners in Silence: It has come to our attention that you are travelling to Kielmun in Canceri. We are very interested in the state of the Church of the Dark Triumvirate at this time. To this extent we need you to investigate something.

Goals: You are requested and required to learn everything you can about a Nerothian known as Grandfather.

No Orders: Congratulations, you don't actually have any secret orders at this time. Your faction or secret society doesn't have any specific plans for you to carry out. Just carry on as normal, everything will be fine. Just fine. Trust me. Wing it. You'll be okay. Maybe they'll have a mission for you later. Or if you don't happen to have a secret faction or society at this time, that's all right. This missive shouldn't lead you to believe anyone else does either. Secret societies are a myth, just a figment of someone's overactive imagination, right? No reason to be paranoid. No one is out to get you, or has any reason to interfere with your plans, other than the guys you're out to defeat, anyway. Just carry on. Nothing to see here, really...move along...

Goals: Just carry on as usual. Really. You're doing just fine. (Special Thanks to the Evansville Gaming Guild for this nice tidbit!)

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Goals: Just carry on as usual. Really. You're doing just fine. (Special Thanks to the Evansville Gaming Guild for this nice tidbit!)