



DOLLOREADIX

SUPPLEMENT FOR IRONCLAW

*Being Both a Treatise on the People and
Lands in the Sway of the Old Faith and
an Episode of Mystery and Peril*

To him who in the love of Nature holds Communion with her visible forms, she speaks a various language.

— *Thanatopsis*, William Cullen Bryant

DOLOREAU

Being Both a Treatise on the People and Lands in the Sway of the Old Faith and a Episode of Mystery and Peril

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Dedication

To Erin, my wife, love, inspiration, editor, and taskmaster. And to the Gilded (Gelded?) Halflings — you know who you are.

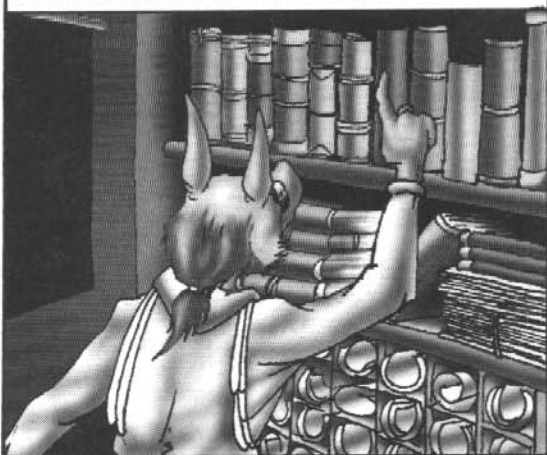
I, **LORD EVARD PASCALINE D'DOLOREUX**, WRITE THESE WORDS BY MY OWN HAND IN COMPLETE CONFIDENCE TO OUR HIGHEST OF HIGH, **THE ESTEEMED DUKE TYBALT D'DOLOREUX**, FOR HIS PERSONAL CONSIDERATION IN A MATTER OF ULTIMATE IMPORTANCE....



WOULD THAT THE DUKE FORGIVE MY *IMPROPRIETY* OF THIS DIRECT FORM OF ADDRESS, BUT WITH TIME AND CIRCUMSTANCES BEING WHAT THEY ARE, IT IS MY *DUTY* AS YOUR SERVANT TO INFORM YOU IN THE QUICKEST AND MOST DIRECT WAY OF THIS *THREAT* TO *GOOD PEOPLE EVERYWHERE*...



AS AN *ANTIQUARIAN*, I HAVE BEEN STUDYING THE HISTORY OF OUR PEOPLE. MY *PERSONAL LIBRARY* OF SCROLLS, BOOKS, MAPS, AND OTHER SUCH LORE IS THE LARGEST AND MOST ACCURATE OF WHICH I AM AWARE....



TO ACQUIRE SUCH A LARGE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE, I HAVE *TRAVELED EXTENSIVELY*, FOR TO SEPARATE THE *CONCRETE* FROM THE *CONJECTURE*, THE *FACT* FROM *FANCY*, IT IS NECESSARY TO VERIFY THINGS PERSONALLY...



IN MY QUEST TO KNOW THE *TRUTH*, I MUST CONFESS THAT I HAVE CONSORTED WITH *FOREIGNERS*. THEIR PERSPECTIVES, WHILE BIASED, OFTEN REVEAL THINGS THAT OUR PROXIMITY HIDES FROM US -- "*THE FOREST FOR THE TREES*," AS IT WERE....



IN ALL *CANDOR*, IT IS THE INFORMATION I *ACQUIRED* FROM THESE FOLK THAT HAS LED ME TO WRITE THIS LETTER -- FOR IF MY *CONCLUSION* IS CORRECT, THEN I FEAR *FOREIGN AGENTS* MAY BE AWARE, AS WELL....



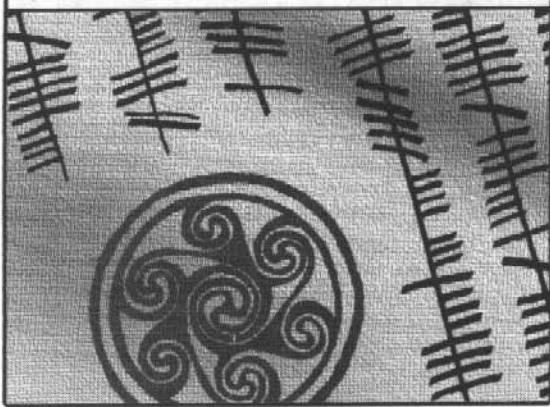
AS ALL GOOD *DOLOREAU*X ARE AWARE, THE *MOTHER-GODDESS LUTARA* IS NOT ALONE IN HER ATTENDANCE TO THE FAITHFUL. SOME PAY THEIR RESPECTS TO *BRUKES THE BLOODY-TUSKED*, WHOSE HAND GUIDES THE BRAVE WARRIOR'S SPEAR TO ITS MARK; TO *DAGA*, TIRELESS ATTENDANT TO THOSE WHO TILL THE FIELDS; TO FAIR AND GENTLE *LYRISICA*, WHO QUICKENS THE BLOOD AND LIGHTENS THE HEART; TO HOLLOW-EYED *REMORT*, WHO GUIDES THE DEAD TO THEIR NEXT OFFICE IN THIS WORLD....



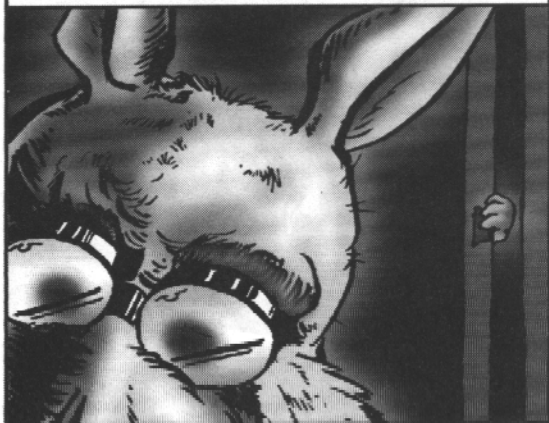
ONLY THE MAD OR THE WRATHFUL WOULD DARE CALL UPON THE NAME OF *SEPTAGUS*, LORD OF MISRULE, BRINGER OF SQUALLS AND STORMS AND SUBVERSIVE OF NATURE...



WHILE HIS WORSHIP IS PROSCRIBED BOTH BY CUSTOM AND BY LAW, *ICONS* AND *SIGILS* OF *SEPTAGUS* ARE NOT UNKNOWN -- THEY ARE SOMETIMES FOUND ABROAD IN THE COMPANY OF THE *MISGUIDED* OR THE *MISCREANT* WHO WOULD SEEK POWER AND KNOWLEDGE FOR PERSONAL GAIN....



THERE WOULD BE THOSE WHO WOULD DISMISS OUR GODS AS *FANCY*, AS *FOLK-LORE* AND MYTHS OF DAYS LONG AGO. THERE ARE OTHERS WHO WOULD SAY THE EVENTS OF OUR ORAL HISTORY HAPPENED IN SOME GREAT TIME BEFORE, IN A *FARAWAY LAND* OF LEGENDS...



TO THE NOVICE, SUCH A THEORY IS COMFORTING... WHO WOULD WANT TO BELIEVE THAT *THREE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-THREE* OF *MISRULE* WAS NEVER TO HAVE BEEN? AND THAT SUCH A *DARKNESS* UPON THE LAND MAY BE VISITED *ONCE AGAIN*?



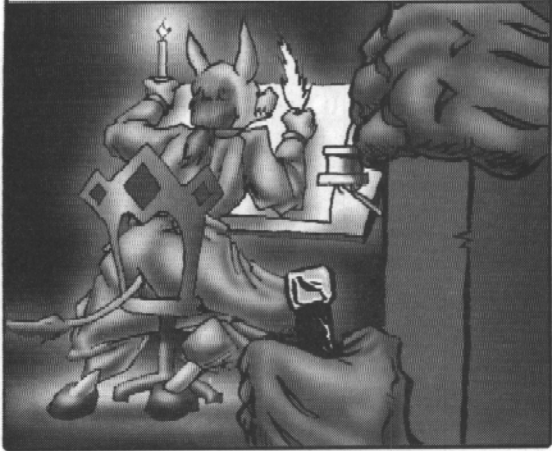
IT HAS LONG BEEN AN ASSERTION OF SOME LEARNED FOLK THAT SEPTAGUS, ENEMY OF ORDER, WAS *OPPOSED* BY THE OTHER GODS, AND THAT A *GREAT BATTLE* WAS FOUGHT TO END THE CENTURIES OF MISRULE. IN THIS WAY, THE FIRST CHILDREN OF THE MOTHER-GODDESS BECAME THE *FIRST CHAMPIONS* OF THE NATURAL ORDER. IT WAS THIS VERY BATTLE THAT *THE PATHS OF THE BLESSED WAYS* WERE FIRST USED FOR DREADFUL PURPOSES -- AND THAT THE *ANGRY GHOSTS* OF MISRULE STILL HAUNT THOSE WHO WOULD USE THE PATHS FOR VIOLENT PURPOSES AGAIN....



IN THE END, THE JUST AND RIGHTEOUS CLAIMED THE *VICTORY*. UNCHALLENGED FOR SO LONG, SEPTAGUS FELL, *RUN THROUGH* WITH HIS OWN SPEAR, THE FOCUS OF ALL HIS HATRED AND HIS VENGEANCE.



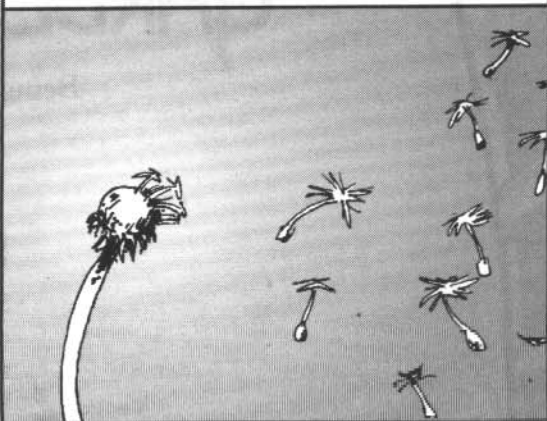
THAT OUR WORLD IS ONCE AGAIN BRIGHT WITH HOPE IS SELF-EVIDENT... WHAT IS NOT IS THE *FINAL FATE OF SEPTAGUS* -- FOR FURTHER STUDY REVEALS THAT A *THREAT* PERSISTS TO ALL THAT WE KNOW AND HOLD DEAR....



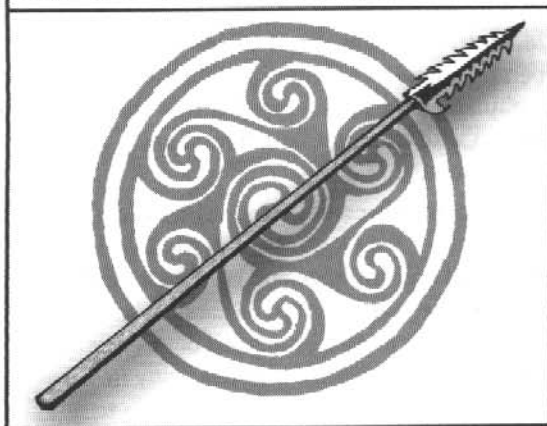
AS THE FAITHFUL KNOW, LIFE IS NOT A *LINE*, BUT A *CIRCLE* -- AS EACH SPIRIT LIVES OUT ITS ALLOTTED LIFE, IT PASSES ON TO THE NEXT *REINCARNATION*...



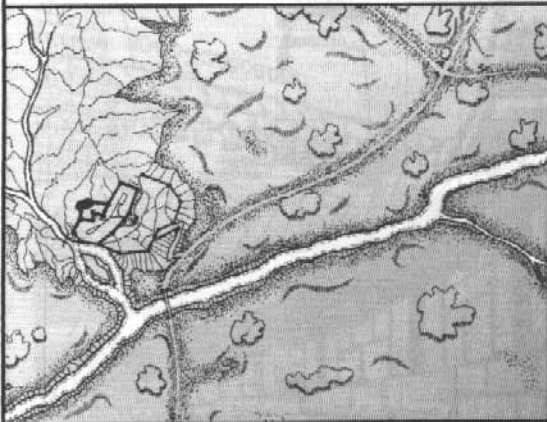
HOWEVER, THE SPIRIT OF SEPTAGUS IS THE *EPITOMÉ* FOR ALL THAT IS *CHAOTIC, SELF-SERVING, AND MISBEGOTTEN*.... THE FIRST CHILDREN OF LUTARA COULD NOT ALLOW A SPIRIT THAT HAD ONCE THREATENED ALL OF CREATION TO DO *REINCARNATE* AND DO SO AGAIN....



IT IS THE THEORY OF THIS WRITER THAT *SEPTAGUS'* BODY WAS NOT ALLOWED TO *DECOMPOSE* -- THAT *HIS SPIRIT* IS TRAPPED IN HIS MORTAL HUSK, PINNED TO THIS WORLD BY THE MATERIAL NATURE OF HIS OWN SYMBOL OF MISRULE, HIS *SPEAR*...



IF THE BATTLE TO DEFEAT SEPTAGUS WAS FOUGHT UPON *CALABRIA*, THEN THE SPEAR OF SEPTAGUS IS TO BE FOUND SOMEWHERE ON THIS ISLAND -- AND THE *WIELDER* OF THIS WEAPON MAY VERY WELL BE IN COMMAND OF FORCES *MOST TERRIBLE IN THE EXTREME*....



IT IS MY *FEAR* THAT THIS WEAPON MAY BE FOUND BY *FOREIGN AGENTS* THAT I WRITE THIS LETTER TO YOU. I HAVE KEPT IN *CONFIDENCE* WHAT I BELIEVE TO BE THE TRUE LOCATION OF THE *SPEAR OF SEPTAGUS*, AND IN MY ROLE AS SERVANT TO THE DOLOREAUX THAT I HERE TRANSCRIBE WHAT I BELIEVE TO BE THE LOCATION OF THE TOMB OF SEPTAGUS, BEFORE THE *FICKLE HAND OF FATE* WOULD PREVENT ME FROM DOING SO...





IRON TUSKS AND GARDENER'S SOULS

*Being a Brief but Cogent Discourse on the
Doloreaux People and Their History*

Introduction

Stubborn, boorish, and aggressive... ask a native of Calabria to describe a Doloreaux, and these are some of the adjectives you are likely to hear. This house of boars has long been regarded as having a collective case of bad manners and short tempers by the other residents of Calabria. To some extent, this reputation is a well-deserved one. Outsiders are not entirely welcome in Doloreaux lands. Often an innocent merchant or traveler will find himself standing before a magistrate under charges of spying or worse, under suspicion simply because they happen to belong to another race. The Doloreaux seem to have a penchant for starting arguments with their sarcastic humor and suspicious minds.

Looking closer, it becomes evident that these traits are part of the Doloreaux's passion for life, where things are writ large and painted in bold colors. They are easily moved to passion, so long as they are being moved by matters of pride or honor. A Doloreaux noble is just as likely to weep at the death of one of his peasants as to roar with bloodlust in a brawl.

They also have an abiding respect for the earth, and a love for nature's beauty. Gardens are a common sight all across the Doloreaux lands, and they are thought to be some of the most ordered and beautiful in all Calabria. This love of nature is inspired by their unique religion, which centers around a complex worship of an older pantheon of gods and goddesses.

There are other matters, too... secrets that the Doloreaux hide away from the face of the world, secrets that could easily lead to war with the other houses, and rebellion in their own house.

The Doloreaux way of life is under a quiet assault. The feudalistic ideal of "those who fight" and "those who toil" is threatened by the



Guilds of Triskellian and the rise of coinage and commerce. Their personal way of worship is under scrutiny by academics and under criticism by the "newer" apostles of S'allumer. Their stalemate with the other great houses has no clear, easy solution. However, every Doloreaux can see that changes are on the horizon, and they know that no good can come of it.

History of the Doloreaux

History is all too often an inexact science. Reliable records only exist for the last few centuries, and for much of that time what was written was dependent on the views of the elite, either gleamed from their written correspondence to each other, or from written work they themselves commissioned, which only naturally casts themselves in the best light.

Most everything known is passed down by oral tradition, stories that grandfathers tell to their grandchildren. Tales are spun, truths are embellished, and what is real and what is fabulous becomes blurred. For centuries, the Doloreaux have told their tales of history from generation to generation, without any form of written record. Only in this last century has any organized attempt been made at written history, and there are those among the Doloreaux who see this as a bad sign. The details of the past should be a personal thing, and while many dismiss the selectiveness and personal bias that comes with oral history, the old guard of the Doloreaux prefers to give information only on a "need to know" basis ... for after something is written down, whoever finds it could read it.

For whatever purpose, the ancestors of each of the races on Calabria came to this island with a definite purpose in mind. As the years passed, Calabria came to be seen as *a home* rather than a *destination*. The reasons for going there were forgotten, or took on the trappings of myths and fables. Most forgot that their ancestors had ever been somewhere else at all.

There are boars of House Doloreaux who have not forgotten their original purpose for coming to Calabria. The truth is only availed to those who need to know.

Arrival in Calabria and The Age of Legends

"All Doloreaux, it seems, know the story of their arrival on Calabria to a greater or lesser degree. In my travels through their holdings I heard it recounted many dozens of times. The first time stands out in my mind as particularly notable, however.

"I was journeying north of the Granvert, in sight of the dreadful Walls of Calabria. I was a student at the time, and had yet to begin in earnest my study of the Doloreaux. The Guild of Scribes in Triskellian had employed me to travel to a certain scriptorium in this vicinity that held books detailing the essentials of the wars between the Rinaldi and the Doloreaux. They wished me to return with them so that the knowledge they contained could be put to the printer's block. I recall that it was late in the year, and a cold rain fell relentlessly.

"I failed to find the place by nightfall and took shelter at an inn in the otherwise nondescript village of Grovepetite. In the common room a gray-muzzled old boar was finishing a story about the Battle of the Chevernaise Pass. As I sat down to warm myself, he began another tale. His accent was thick, and his voice cracked and tremulous with age, but his audience sat enraptured as he related a story of the Doloreaux before they came to Calabria. When I realized the significance of his story, I brought out my inks and pens and copied as many details as I could. I needn't have bothered. The memory of that night and the old boar stand as clear today as they did then, and mark the genesis of my interest in the affairs of House Doloreaux.



“The old land were dry and bare, and the folk therein was perishing. There were others there, too. Foxes an’ Wolves an’ Mice an’ Bats and the damned Horses and their ilk. All was perishing, by way of the good land being burnt up by them old kings an’ wizards. Mayhap even the goats were there, though my own grandsire said nay, they were here waiting for us. Whatever the truth of it the Doloreaux was perishing, and so they as put away their proud ways and cried out for ‘divine succor,’ as my great uncle called it. They as got it, too. Lutara herself sprouted up out of the ground and talked to the poor perishing ones what was left. ‘Sail ye towards the eastern star,’ she says. ‘Sail ye for seven weeks and ye shall find yourselves a place o’ good earth, and green grass, and clear water. The others’ll come, but they will nay know this next thing,’ she says. ‘I’ve as hidden in this place the best gift of all. Find it, and ye shall be the kings o’ the world.’

“So off they goes, and sails eastward for days and days. And soon they’d seen a good green land, just like what Lutara said. And they landed their boats, and made their way wit’ stumbling steps and slow ones, into the land east o’ the Old Lands. But to this day not one o’ us has found the secret thing what Lutara promised to us alone...and it ain’t for lack of looking, I’ll tell ye!”

— from *Lutara’s Path: The Shame And Triumph Of The House Doloreaux* by Pyotr the Scribe

The ancestors of the Doloreaux arrived on Calabria about two thousand years ago. Some say they came fleeing the desolation of the Autarch Wars; other legends say they were driven to find a new place to live by good omens. The Doloreaux claim to have been the first to arrive on Calabria, but there exists nothing to clearly substantiate such an assertion. According to some



reports, the Doloreaux came from the east, from the far-off lands of the Avami and their wind-swept deserts. Others claim a different direction of origin, or even to be native to Calabria.

Whatever the case, their refuge was not inviolate for long. Many fables tell of a mad wizard philosopher named *Septagus* who came to Calabria some time in the distant past to conquer it. All accounts portray him as a boar, though some give him more monstrous attributes than others. While the science of archaeology is in its infancy in the world of *Ironclaw*, most scholars believe the ruins they have found throughout the continent show evidence of *Septagus*' existence. He may have been one of the last of the Autarchs, or perhaps he was only following in their footsteps. Ancient engravings have been found in the Rothos foothills that make passing mention of "Septangar, Wizard Princeling of the Pigs and Prisoner of the Catacomb." Whether or not "Septangar" is the same person as "Septagus" is unknown. The meaning of the phrase "Prisoner of the Catacomb" has also been the subject of much debate.

Septagus is traditionally portrayed as an enormous russet-colored boar with long tusks. He currently fills the role of bogeyman in Doloreaux culture: children are warned to behave, or *Septagus* will take them to live with the Chevernaise in the caves and in the dark. This image has been heavily bowdlerized over the years. At one time the historical wizard was incorporated into Doloreaux religious beliefs as well—he is sometimes equated with darkness and once was seen as the male counterpart to *Lutara*, the Mother Goddess.

Doloreaux myths speak of 3 centuries of slavery at the hands of *Septagus*. Story-tellers usually quote the mystically significant figure "333 years." About this time a great hero arose, *Brugue the Strong*. He led the ancestors of the Doloreaux in battle against *Septagus* and finally defeated him in single combat atop the hill upon which the city named in his honor, *Bruges*, now stands. The modern leader of the house, *Duke Tybault de Doloreaux*, claims to be a direct descendant of *Brugue*. Among the treasures kept in his strong house are the legendary helm and spear of *Brugue the Strong*, rusted bits of martial finery that may or may not be authentic.

The centuries immediately after the end of *Septagus*' rule are even more obscure, historically, than the time under his reign. Doloreaux legends populate this time with the fantastic exploits of *Brugue* in his quest for *Lutara*'s Gift, and with preposterous stories about giant flying lizards, fey folk, and talking trees. If these stories are taken at face value, then during this period *Lutara* regularly appeared to the faithful, dispensing gifts and advice.

An ancient priestess known as *Clarimunda* is credited with writing down a number of long poems on the nature of mortality and of mortal relationships with *Lutara*. These poems, the "*Carmina Clarimundae*," exist as a record of oral legends about the arrival of the Doloreaux on Calabria. Whether these poems were all the work of *Clarimunda*, or whether she merely signed her name to them, is a topic of some debate.

Because her works were the first written records, *Clarimunda* became instrumental in unifying the worship of *Lutara*. A scriptorium in the town of *Perival* became famous for producing copies of her work. *Clarimunda* lived in a period before the rise of today's dynasty of Doloreaux—her poems contain numerous references to warring kings and chiefs. It is clear from her writing that even in this early date, the Doloreaux periodically clashed with the ancestors of the other Great Houses, who were invariably cast in the roles of the "bad guys."

Shortly after the founding of the Church of *S'allumer*, the pressure to "modernize" began within the Doloreaux. Written records of one kind or another are available from just about every single year for the last 800 years, mostly concerning the accounting of troops and oaths of fealty.



The Foundation of the Noble Houses and the Age of War

With the rise of literacy and correspondence, the Doloreaux found their way of life and their methods of warfare were becoming out-dated. Formerly, various small clans of a dozen or so, each with loyalty to their own lord, would meet mere days before a pitched skirmish. There were no battle lines, no precise formations – only a motley crew of screaming warriors descending on their foes, hurling curses and spears.

The Doloreaux received a cruel awakening when they first met the Avoirdupois on the open plains. Even with inferior numbers, the Avoirdupois sergeants could, with but a few signals and commands, coordinate their fighters to act with one mind. Dense formations of Avoirdupois pikemen could take down Doloreaux mounted knights. Courage and spirit were not enough – soon the plains were yielded to the horses.

Living on the defensive would not do for the proud Doloreaux. Soon it was clear that, if they wanted to field large troops, they had to organize. The legends speak of three great warlords: the brave *Arnoux* who could throw a spear true to mark over two-hundred paces; the wise *Sacripant*, whose military strategies are studied even today; and the scrupulous *Mathilde*, who is credited with introducing new forging and metalworking techniques to create superior arms and armor. These three are described as being the founders of the “formal” dynasty of Doloreaux, having allied together by oath, under one banner. Unfortunately, like much of Doloreaux history, this compact is hard to prove – the Doloreaux often disapprove of putting things in writing, and these oaths were only verbal. Letters from the time prove that these warriors did ally together, though there were many others who also swore allegiance. Some historians believe that these three names are remembered because the “magic number” three goes nicely with romantic notions of the past.

What is notable about this time is a much more complex feudal structure. No longer were there simply “chieftain” and “clansmen”, but dukes, counts, and marquis, each loyal to the person above them. To inherit a name, one had to control a fixed amount of land – and to gain land, one had to stake it and claim it, usually from someone else. And since the Doloreaux court refused to recognize anyone else’s right to land, this encouraged rapid expansion through war with one’s neighbors.

The next 300 years are aptly named “The Age of War” by Calabrese scholars. Numerous noble houses formed, of all races and creeds, in an attempt to create a formidable power that could withstand its neighbors. The Doloreaux house, with its simple scheme of advancement, proved popular among its kin and strong against its foes. Under this new banner, they captured the Lyore River from the Avoirdupois to the east and crushed a minor house of squirrels, the Quennel, who had controlled the lands around Auriville. Westward, they forced the bears of Thierry from their fastness atop the Walls of Calabria. The Doloreaux would have pushed all the way to the coast, were they not rebuffed by the quality arms of the Rinaldi or the unforgiving tactics of the Avoirdupois.



Eventually, the Doloreaux idea of “titles by land” became a liability, when there was no more room to expand. Infighting developed among the marquis; border skirmishes developed. It became clear that some other method of royal advancement had to be created. Duke Harbin de Doloreaux is credited with creating the idea of “letters patent”, the creation of new titles from the authority of his crown, often with a large price tag attached. The idea of paying money for titles required that there would be money – coinage that would be universally accepted throughout the Doloreaux lands.

Critics of the Doloreaux accuse their ancestors of simply aping the likes of Constantin di Rinaldi and his book, *On the Discipline of Chivalry*. However, there is a fundamental difference, in that the Doloreaux put concern on land ownership and wealth first, fealty second.

The Doloreaux waged their fiercest battles with the Avoirdupois to the east and the Chevernaise to the north. Several ill-advised attempts were made to dislodge the Chevernaise from the Rothos, and once every generation or so, attempts were made to push the Avoirdupois eastward. The Bisclavret were mostly ignored, and indeed the two houses were allied against minor houses on occasion.

It soon became evident that no one house would be able to dominate the entire island. No single house has the resources or the mobility to extend their forces that far. As the years passed, a degree of racial homogeneity arose in the noble lands – something especially evident among the Doloreaux, where more than four-fifths of the population are porcine. The current house holdings have been nearly static for the last five hundred years – although infighting and civil wars have been all too common.

The Modern Era

Knights with swords shaped the political landscape of Calabria. Scribes with pens are threatening to change it forever. The technology of gunpowder is relatively new, and up until recently fickle and uncertain. The polyglot nature of Triskellian, however, has created a mixing of cultures and ideas. It has become common knowledge that it takes a special kind of kiln to make the kind of steel it takes to make the best guns ... and there are Doloreaux lords who have hired new engineers....

Every noble house has seized on the idea of using these new weapons to change the status quo of border raids and political plotting. For the first time in years, war is in the air – and a war fought not amongst households with their personal peasantry, but a war fought with dozens of companies rallied under the banner of their nation. The idea of actually invading and conquering the other houses has intoxicated many Doloreaux nobles. Soon, Calabria may well be facing a new Age of War.

Current Relations with the Other Powers in Calabria

Avoirdupois

The arrogant equines are hated almost universally by the Doloreaux. The chivalrous nature of the Avoirdupois makes them even more irritating! The Avoirdupois constantly threaten the Doloreaux's control of the river Lyore, and this threat has grown in recent years. The Doloreaux would also love to seize some of the Avoirdupois' western farmlands, but they realize that it would probably be too difficult to hold.

Scarcely a day passes without a border clash between the Houses, but neither side wants to commit fully, lest they reap the consequences from their other neighbors. The Avoirdupois stage irregular raids across the Lyore, hitting hard and pulling back before the beleaguered boars can respond effectively. The Doloreaux will only rarely strike back across the river, and only when they are sure



of a victory. These raids are intended as a test of strength, and are not meant to goad the Doloreaux into attacking.

The Avoirdupois have refrained from a full-scale annexation of the Lyore region because they fear a Doloreaux expansion into the lands south-east of Bruges. The Doloreaux could claim the only significant source of hardwood in the Avoirdupois holdings, as well as a sizable stretch of farmland, while the equine armies were busy pacifying the Lyore.

There is trade between the Avoirdupois and the Doloreaux, of course, but almost all of it occurs in the markets of Triskellian. Individual merchants and freemen will occasionally cross the border in either direction. To their credit, the Avoirdupois generally treat Doloreaux visitors to their lands with more charity than the Doloreaux do in return.

Bisclavret

House Bisclavret is not perceived as an immediate threat by the Doloreaux. The border between the two Houses is clearly demarcated by rivers and mountains, and easily defended for the most part. The forests held by the Doloreaux are much smaller than the wolves' own holdings, and assaulting the mountain villages, with their prepared defenses, considerable cannon, and militia seasoned from skirmishes with the Chevernaise, would be suicidal. Occasionally, battles will be fought on the shores of the Ruther river for control of the west bank. However, the Doloreaux population in this area is generally sparse, and any armies sent to this region must be drawn from elsewhere... leaving another area open to attack. Control of a small section of the Ruther is not worth the potential loss of the Lyore.

It is around the River Granvert that the most serious disputes occur. Just across the river from the Doloreaux holdings is a vast territory dotted with hardwood forests. If the Doloreaux could claim even a small portion of those forests, their situation would be greatly improved. So far, they have been unsuccessful. Adventurous locals will often sneak across the river and poach timber from the Bisclavret lands.

The Bisclavret are respected for their fighting prowess, but are looked down upon for their relative lack of sophistication – a rather ironic turn, as the clannishness and guerilla-tactics used by the Bisclavret harkens back to the fighting style of the Doloreaux from generations ago. Currently, there is unrestricted passage between the lands of the two Houses, although some localities suffer from intermittent border clashes. Bisclavret visitors are safe in Doloreaux lands, provided they keep their mouth shut and can prove they are there for a good reason.

Chevernaise

The goat-tribes of the Rothos Mountains have been a thorn in the Doloreaux side as long as anyone can remember. The Doloreaux lay claim to *all* the Rothos Mountains, including the areas which were settled long ago by the Chevernaise. In addition to several small forests and rich mines this area holds the Chevernaise Pass, the only safe land route to the markets of Epinian.

About forty years ago, Duke *Leal de Doloreaux* tried to “pacify” the Chevernaise tribes that rule the pass. A large army was raised and outfitted at great expense, with the best cannons and guns that the Duke could afford. The disciplined Doloreaux troops had several initial successes as they slowly advanced northward, but soon found they had been led into a trap. The Chevernaise blockaded the pass to the north and south of the army and trapped them there over the course of a bitter winter. The goat warriors made terrifying midnight raids on the Doloreaux camp, tumbling rocks down on their heads from the safety of the mountains. The boars had no choice but to dig in and wait for spring. Finally, after months of foul weather, starvation, and guerrilla raids, the Doloreaux forces were able to break out southward and limp their way back to Auriville. Barely one-quarter of the original army remained. This catastrophic defeat had a profound effect on the Doloreaux; whereas the Chevernaise were once seen as simple barbarians, they were now a terrifying bogeyman in the collective mind of the House. No atrocity is seen as too low for them, and the vilest rumors about their secret ways are believed without question.



The Doloreaux both despise and fear the Chevernaise. While they acknowledge that dislodging them from the Rothos would be costly if not impossible, they continue to raise small bands of mercenaries to conduct raids on the scattered settlements of the Chevernaise — favored targets are mines and sites of worship. Because of this aggression, there is almost no diplomatic relations between the two groups. A Chevernaise who dared to enter a Doloreaux city would quickly find themselves arrested and imprisoned. To a lesser extent, this prejudice extends to goats and rams from other regions as well, an unfortunate aspect of these xenophobic times.

The Chevernaise may have a grudging respect for the Doloreaux's stubborn bravery, but they are an insular people who keep to themselves; they do not appear to really appreciate anyone very much.

Rinaldi

In the past, the Rinaldi and the Doloreaux were bitter enemies. The Rinaldi controlled large numbers of mercenaries and their own elite, well-equipped troops schooled from birth in the art of war. But in these times, the foxes have fallen far from their previous glory, having become obvious pawns of the Guild Masters of Triskellian. The Doloreaux hope to profit from the current Rinaldi political infighting. After all, the southern lands need not be seized by military might — the declining Rinaldi may be forced to sell the land for one reason or another.

Triskellian and the Merchant Guilds

The Guilds of Triskellian may well hold the future prosperity of the Doloreaux in their hands. This realization has led the Doloreaux to curry favor from the various Guild Masters whenever possible. They do this for two reasons.

First of all, the guilds have access to some of the best weapons and armor on Calabria. Doloreaux-mined gold will outfit a company of soldiers with cannon and rifles, and can also hire mercenaries from the Sailor's Guild to carry those arms into battle. The other noble houses must pay in wood or grain, neither of which is attractive to most merchants. The friendlier the guilds are to the Doloreaux, the cheaper the goods.

Secondly, the Guilds have become a power in their own right. Many of them rankle at the thought of kowtowing to the decadent Rinaldi. Unlike other houses, the Doloreaux are not heavily mired in the concepts of "enfranchisement" or "divine right"; their practice of selling titles of nobility is envied by the commoners of Triskellian. Perhaps even now, deals are being made behind closed doors, blurring the line between commoner and marquis...

Minor Houses

The multitudinous minor houses of Calabria usually find themselves faced with two choices: they can sit idly by, while their remaining power and influence dies with each passing generation, or they can throw themselves in the politics game.

Of all the noble houses, the Doloreaux are the most friendly and supportive of the minor houses. The Avoirdupois are firmly convinced that they will one day rule all of Calabria — it would be counter-productive to help a minor house struggle back to a position where they might be a threat. The Bisclavret are more open to alliances, but make it very clear that they wish to use minor houses as "cannon fodder", expendable mercenaries, in their campaigns.

The Doloreaux are aware that they need to break out of their current stalemate. To that end, they foster relationships with as many minor houses as they can. Aid can take many forms: letters patent to enfranchise land or duties to those who crave status; gold and moneys to those who need wealth; the largesse of healers and medicine to those who need support.

A common ploy is to prop up a minor house, and then use the nobles of that house to sow discord in the Triskellian courts. Occasionally they will even play two of their own allies against each other, as anything that reduces the power of others can only make the Doloreaux stronger.

The most notable of the Doloreaux supported houses is *House Avinge*. The Avinge were never a major house, but they had some fairly sizable land-holdings just east of the Phelan tribes. Over time



they lost them, and now lay claim only to the town of Mortemere and its immediate environs. About a century ago, they were intimidated into a bargain with the Doloreaux. The Avinge gave them the right to gather taxes on their lands in exchange for military support over their rebelling citizens. In the years since, the Doloreaux have essentially taken over the northern settlement of Mortemere, and the few remaining Avinge nobles resemble rich farmers more than noblemen.

Phelan

The atavistic wolves of the northern forests are very nearly a non-entity to the Doloreaux. The treacherous terrain between the lands of the Doloreaux and Phelan makes interaction between the two impractical, at the least. Additionally, there is no central authority to the Phelan— they are numerous tribes each with their own mores and beliefs, so there is no “head of state” to appeal to.

The Doloreaux consider the Phelan to be ill-mannered barbarians, fit only for service in mercenary armies. In the past, certain nobles have considered using them as a tool against the Bislavret, but it seems that the Phelan have no interest in hiring themselves out *en masse* as mercenaries to any noble house. Some Doloreaux romantics have spoken of how the Phelan are more “in touch” with nature and their roots, and how modernism and technology has estranged the modern folk from their “true” place.

The “Old Faith”: Religion among the Doloreaux

Before being united under a single banner, the Doloreaux were a disparate people of many customs and traditions. Each village had its own priests and priestesses, its own rites and conventions, and its own ceremonies for marriage and burial.

After the Compact of Three, the people became more unified in thought and deed; their methods of worship became more cohesive as well. Constant warfare brought with it constant suffering and inevitable death; people had need for sympathy and for medicine. Before marching into battle, generals sought the advice of those who could read the omens to see how the fighting would be that day, and who could bless the troops to keep them safe from bad luck and false enchantment. A common set of expectations gave rise to a common set of principles and *mores*.

Minor deities and major spirits became blurred and amalgamated. The popularity of the *Carmina Clarimundae* brought certain characters to prominence. And the figure of *Lutara* of the Shining Tusks, sometimes simply known as “The Lady,” became the first deity in the minds of the Doloreaux.

Lutara is first and foremost a deity of fertility, birth, and growth. Older legends considered her the “Sower of Death,” but without any macabre intent — the truly devout believe in reincarnation.

Lutara is usually portrayed as a radiant, beautiful sow, several feet in height. Her tusks glow with a strange light, and she is usually clothed in white. This conception of her is fairly modern — the oldest shrines usually portray her as pregnant and naked, with multiple breasts. Modern Doloreaux accept these old images intellectually, but are uncomfortable with them and certainly do not discuss them with outsiders.

Doloreaux worship of Lutara, also known as *Lutarism*, extends back into prehistory. She was the goddess that first told the Doloreaux to seek out Calabria, and she was certainly worshipped long before that. The religion was first codified by the priestess Clarimunda about a thousand years before the present day in her poetry, and Lutarist worship has evolved dramatically over the years. However, at its core it remains the same faith as the one practiced by the earliest ancestors of the boars.

The religion centers around the idea of fertility, growth, and prosperity. Lutara is the personification of ultimate fertility; she is the soil, the womb from which all life springs. She is the sun, which grants the energy for life, and the moon, that heavenly body whose phases tell of the passage of seasons and give direction on planting and harvest. She is goddess of mines, from which mineral wealth is brought, and the goddess of words and language, which bear the fruit of wisdom



in the mind of the reader. Almost everything good in Doloreaux culture is attributed to her in some way.

A "canonized" priest or priestess of Lutara is called a *hierarch*. Hierarchs instruct one another in the mysteries and the secret lore of how to speak with the spirits in the dominion of The Lady—it is forbidden to write down these mysteries. After a long period of study and proof of one's great works, a hierarch may advance further by passing certain secret tests, held on particular holidays in particular places. Those who know the ultimate secrets are known as the *Mystes of Lutara*. While the religion allows for both men and women to become hierarchs, to date only women have advanced to the ranks of the *Mystes*. Whether there are ranks beyond those of *Mystes* is not for the lay folk to know.

Lutarist hierarchs are forbidden from fighting and from the taking of arms against another. In the eyes of the Great Mother, all folks are sons and daughters of someone else. However, given that many Doloreaux seek advancement by taking new territory, this bodes a curious predicament for the ambitious hierarch! If one does not serve as a soldier, how can one gain prizes of war? Many hierarchs use their knowledge of healing ways and Herbalism to tend to those wounded in battle; the more accomplished ones can become skilled advisors to heads of state.

Hierarchs do not "tithe" or take collections from the faithful. Some live the life of the ascetic, carrying no worldly goods and abiding by the generosity of others or the bounty of nature. Others find trades, till the land, or find other occupations as befits "honest, hard-working folk." The concept of one who does not toil but instead reads and studies words all day in some ivory tower, far removed from the earth from whence all life springs forth, seems ridiculous to many Doloreaux.

Because of their reserved nature, few Lutarist hierarchs control vast amounts of wealth. Those that do often come from long lineages of counts and marquis who have controlled estates for many generations. Rare but not unknown is the hierarch who has become a wealthy person or head-of-household. Unfortunately, some of the "necessary evils" of running an estate, such as policing and defending the land, are forbidden to the non-violent hierarch. Such folk have need of the *vidame*, a "defender of the faith" and knight who swears fealty to a marquis-hierarch to perform those rankless tasks. In the oldest parts of Doloreaux lands, the office of *vidame* is one of the few ways for a commoner to advance to the ranks of nobility without traveling far from home.



The Penitents of S'allumer and the Devout of Lutara

Worshippers of Lutara differ from those of S'allumer. There are no Lutarist cathedrals with giant windows and grand columns in ostentatious display. Worship is done in the home, or outside, or at the rare but simple shrine. The holiest of places, the "Sacred Groves", are forbidden to all but the Mystes.

There are no Lutarist missionaries or evangelists — unlike the S'allumer, who aggressively recruit new members to their faith. The stoic Doloreaux believe faith is a private and discrete thing, and the "badgering" of S'allumer proponents is frowned upon and rarely tolerated.

It is forbidden to write down the secret ways of Lutara. There are no bibles or pamphlets to circulate, and even the printing of the *Carmina Clarimundae* does not meet with approval of devout hierarchs. By contrast, the penitents of S'allumer encourage literacy and the spreading of the printed word, especially of the miracles of Helloise and the marvels of White Magic.

Many hierarchs are Blessed, or have the gift of Second Sight. Some are capable of supernatural feats of ability, but such powers are not brazenly presented to the populace to convince them of Lutara's generosity. Conversely, the clerics of S'allumer are actively encouraged to study White Magic and to show off its marvels to the lay folk. The Mystes of Lutara worry that the modern selfishness and lack of deference to the earth of the Penitents of S'allumer may have hidden dangers to the world as a whole.

It is possible to follow the way of S'allumer and Lutarism at the same time. Lutarists accept the existence of any number of deities. It is not uncommon for Doloreaux peasants at harvest-time to offer prayers and gifts up to Lutara and some local patron god of planting and sowing.

Rituals of the Lady

Lacking formal structure and published bibles, exact rituals differ from place to place, but some methods of Lutarist worship are common everywhere. Lutarists do not congregate on one day a week. The shrines are open every day, and always have a hierarch or two in attendance. Worshipers go there whenever they feel the need to seek guidance from The Lady or make an offering.

There are eight recognized holidays in the year, including the solstices and equinoxes of the year — the days that mark the passing of the seasons. Lutarists gather together make a special offering and receive the blessing of the hierarchs in attendance. These occasions are always festive, and take the form of public feasts where the attendees reaffirm their devotion to Lutara as the source of all good things.

The holiest days take place in early Spring and late Autumn and are known respectively as The Day of Receiving and The Day of Hoping. The precise date varies from year to year and is dependent on the divinations of the Great Mother and the direction of Lutara herself. On each day, two ceremonies take place simultaneously — one is conducted by the High Priestess at Lutara's Garden in Bruges, and the other is run by the Great Mother in Lutara Grove. The ceremonies in Lutara Grove are *only* open to married noblewomen who are also hierarchs, and the Mystes of Lutara. All others may attend the ceremony in Bruges, along with the remainder of the nobility.

The ceremonies that proceed in Bruges on these holy days are well documented. On The Day of Receiving, the High Priestess emerges from her keep just before dawn and prays a blessing for all those in attendance. As the sun rises, she sprinkles the seed of a fruit tree on the ground and makes a prayer to Lutara. Providing all is well, the tree will begin to sprout and grow before the eyes of the worshippers. (see the Grow spell in the chapter "Lutara's Blessing.") The High Priestess then commands that the fruit of the tree be distributed to all those in attendance, and gives thanks to Lutara for sustaining her people during the long winter. She commands the nobles in attendance to return to their lands and reap the harvests and in so doing return to Lutara what is hers.

In autumn, the ceremony is nearly reversed — it takes place just before sundown. The tree that was planted in spring time is cut down. The fallen tree is burned in the center of the garden as darkness falls. The High Priestess leads the worshippers present in a song of thanks to Lutara for the bounty of the previous year, and prayer that she will provide through the coming winter.



The secret rituals that take place in Lutara Grove are very different. They are not so much religious ceremonies, as a communing to the goddess Lutara, where the Mystes receive guidance channeled by the Great Mother. These instructions deal with everything from who should be allowed to bear heirs to what direction the heads of households should be given. True to their names, it is at this moot that the Mystes discuss the great secrets of the Doloreaux.

The Secret of House Doloreaux

The House Doloreaux is very much a matriarchy, and the female hierarchs hold great sway. They decide who the noblemen marry, they provide advice on what crops to grow, what products to sell, and when to go to war. The highest rank of Lutarism, the Mystes, is “publicly” open to all devout ... but men have yet to joint their ranks—only women have served in this role.

Men who pursue the calling of Lutarism find themselves facing a “glass ceiling” of sorts. Males are discouraged from learning the higher rituals, if not banned outright. Most lords demand that their subjects serve in the military, and tradition dictates that all men must serve at least one tour of duty ... and violence marks one as unfit to follow the calling of the hierarchs. Some male Doloreaux assume the role of “vidame” as a compromise, to at least peripherally learn the secrets of Lutarism while still fulfilling one’s military duties.

There is some question as to whether some hierarchs are “predicting” the future ... or are causing it. Some Doloreaux nobles are painfully aware of the Mystes’ control, and chafe at it. But since the Great Mother has the ear of the Duke himself, they soon find themselves sent off to manage desolate holdings, or find their livestock is barren, and that they are unable to father an heir.

Other houses find the clout of the female Mystes a curiosity. The Bislavret are quaintly amused. The Avoirdupois, being Avoirdupois, use this knowledge as one of the many supports in their argument of “superiority”. The Doloreaux refuse to discuss such matters—some out of deference to their way of life that has served their people well for so many years; others out of stubbornness to waste effort blustering at the uncouth unbelievers.

A notable number of Doloreaux are recent converts to S’allumer, and married to women who never entered the clerical training. The way of Penitence is more amenable to the ambitious, given the aggressive encouragement of the Church of S’allumer to convert new members and to build institutions to promote the faith. Clerics from Triskellian hope to raise tithes to build more churches in Doloreaux lands—but the Mystes will have none of that.

Few outsiders are aware of the true power structure of House Doloreaux. It is known that outsiders are not allowed in Lutara Grove, and certain areas of the Inner City in Bruges. It is known that the hierarchs spend a lot of time “counseling” noblewomen, and that it is not uncommon for a priestess of humble beginnings to be elevated by marriage to a local knight.

Lutara’s followers have one other great secret—the true identity and role of the Great Mother. She is the secret head of the Lutarist faith, and the true power behind the Ducal throne of Tybault de Doloreaux. Some speak of her as the earthly incarnation of Lutara, infallible and wise. By tradition, the position of Great Mother is served by the oldest Mystes. Upon the death of a Great Mother, the High Priestess descends into the catacombs under her keep in the great garden of Bruges. She spends one night in the crypt that holds the remains of all the previous high priestesses, before an image of The Lady, in adjuration of Lutara herself. The Goddess will reveal to the High Priestess who the next Great Mother will be. Currently the position of Great Mother is held by the Duchess Calendre d’Doloreaux.

Spirits of Stream and Field: The Other Deities

The miscellaneous Doloreaux religions are ones of laity, and their rituals are the traditions, taboos, and superstitions passed down from one generation to the next. Devout Doloreaux characters will likely pay their respects to one of these gods in addition to Lutara, and most regard all of them as real in some way. The Game Host should feel free to add to this pantheon, as appropriate.



While these deities do not enjoy the same level of passionate worship as the Mother Goddess Lutara, most folks will give polite thanks to them over coincidences and minor bits of luck that happen in their daily affairs.

Brukes the Bloody-Tusked

A god of war, soldiers and mercenaries may call upon him for assistance or for aid, since the Mother Goddess is not associated with violence. Brukes' favor is traditionally sought the morning before a battle by sprinkling wine or ale on a small wooden figure in his likeness. (A truly devout captain will burn rowan branches as an offering in his name; see the front cover image.) The name may be related to Brugue, the semi-mythical warrior.

Daga

A god of agriculture, harvest, and farming, he is worshipped by farmers in the small pocket of arable land just south of Bruges. At harvest time, many will traditionally leave the last sheaf of wheat or bushel of roots behind in the field as an offering to Daga. These offerings often disappear during the night; though there may be a very mundane explanation for this, the devout know better.

Lyrisica

A goddess of poetry and music, Doloreaux bards (and would-be bards) often open their songs with a brief homage to her as their muse. Lyrisica is also popular as a champion for the causes of young lovers, because she is portrayed as more passionate and less matronly than Lutara.

Femort

She is death, winter and sadness. Old legends claim she was the mother of Septagus, and some claim that she and Lutara are sisters. Femort is seldom mentioned, and worshipped only by those who feel wronged by injustice and the need for violent revenge. Rarely, some will beseech her for release from life, or for a better reincarnation within the next life, as the devout Lutarists believe in life after death. Femort is usually portrayed as a wizened sow with blank holes where her eyes should be.

Iron Tusks: the Armed Forces of the Doloreaux

The bulk of the Doloreaux fighting force is drawn from the peasant militia. All males between the ages of twelve and thirty are expected to respond to the call to arms in a time of war, with the enfranchised nobles (the counts and marquis) serving as the captains. During peacetime, all potential militiamen are expected to spend one day a month training and refreshing their skills. Every settlement of a hundred folk or more has an armory, where the militia arms and armor are stored: pikes, spears, crossbows, guns (if any), and metal armor. (Swords are not for commoners; they are a symbol of nobility and wealth.) The armory is a small, windowless stone building with an iron door, kept locked at all times. The local magistrate or mayor will be the only person with a key for the armory's lock. In smaller settlements, weapons are kept by individual land-owners and distributed to their farm hands and tenants as needed.

Each militiaman is assigned a pike (usually a full-stone spear), a *francisca* (a quarter-stone axe designed for throwing), a metal helm, and studded leather armor. Short bows will also be distributed to one in every dozen militiamen. On the battle-field, the militia are almost always formed into blocks and ordered to await the enemy charge. Bow men are usually positioned near the rear on one flank, and will concentrate their fire on mounted enemies.

The Doloreaux usually prefer to stand their ground and fight defensively, using terrain such as forest to their advantage. While their knights are well-trained in the methods of cavalry and



mounted combat, they find themselves disadvantaged when fighting the other great houses out in the open. The Doloreaux conservative fighting style does not work well in open spaces.

The total population of the Doloreaux army numbers over 70,000. However, a mobilization of that magnitude would take weeks to organize, and while it was in operation, homesteads would be left undefended and fields of crops would not be sown or reaped. Only a very great threat would cause the Doloreaux to attempt a mass mobilization across their lands, such as a simultaneous attack by the Bisclavret and Avoirdupois.

Far more common are temporary local mobilizations along borders, for small battles called *skirmishes*. These battles can be as simple as a land-owner and his farm hands fighting off a small band of thieves. However, it also includes cases of open warfare between lords of the great houses, when all the inhabitants in threatened border areas are required to either report for battle duty or prepare defenses.

Those Who Fight: the Nobility

House Doloreaux is governed by a system known as *feudalism*, the concept that ownership of land belongs to those who defend it. The Duke of House Doloreaux gives out titles to the heads of households, with the greater, higher-ranking titles going to those who own the greatest amount of land. In turn, these nobles appoint their own knights to maintain the land by collecting taxes, administering justice, and defending the land in times of war. The Doloreaux who own the land are known as *land-lords*, or simply *lords*.

It is the duty of these knights to train constantly and maintain arms and armor, and the Doloreaux nobles take this role seriously, if not overly so. There are over three thousand professional soldiers in the Doloreaux dominion, responsible for the full-time defense of border keeps and noble estates, as well as keeping order in towns, in the role of police.

The ranks of nobility among the Doloreaux are:

- The *Duke and Duchess*, who are the “highest of the high” among the Doloreaux. Their word is supreme throughout all of Doloreaux dominion.
- The *Marquis*, of whom there are no more than a dozen. These folk moderate the disputes





of the smaller households, and they pay their tribute directly to the Duke. The mayors of Bruges and Auriville belong to this rank.

- The *Counts and Countesses*, who are the heads of the major households. Each controls an estate of many acres. The mayors of the smaller towns belong to this rank.
- The *Viscount and Viscountesses*, essentially poorer versions of counts. Since Doloreaux nobility is equated with owned land, counts might fall to this rank if they lose too much land to a foreign house or, even worse, to a neighboring Doloreaux household who claims ownership of their territory.
- The *Barons and Baronets*, who pay respects to Counts and Countesses. They serve as captains in times of war, giving orders directly over the militia-men. The baron is the lowest title in Doloreaux lands that is hereditary.
- The *Chevalier*, or mounted knight. A Baron will want to support two or three of these folks, as the mounted knight is still considered to be the “ultimate war machine.” There is a romantic notion that a peasant child can be chosen to become an *Ecuyer*, or squire, to a Chevalier and thus be trained as a knight. In practice, the Chevaliers reserve this role for their own sons. However, it takes a Baron or greater to knight a Chevalier—squires who fail to pass certain tests of warfare by their fifteenth birthday will find themselves “disenfranchised” and out of luck. The Chevaliers are the lowest rank to be able to mete out “low justice” — that is, they may judge commoners and lower-folk in matters of the law.
- Rare but still not unknown, the *Vidame* is a sort of knight who serves a prominent hierarch. Vidames are the guards of Sacred Groves (see page 27), and they follow the orders of the Mystes first and the Duke second. Unlike a “true knight”, vidames are not permitted to mete out low justice over commoners, but they themselves are entitled to “high justice,” and may only be called before the rank of Baron or higher when accused and tried for crimes. Politically, the Vidames are the arms and armor of the Mystes, permitted to exist because the Lutarists can demonstrate a need to be protected. However, this division of “church and state” makes some Barons uncomfortable.

Those Who Toil: the Peasantry

While the picture of grand warriors atop their fortress walls is a romantic one, most folk are resigned to the roll of *vassal*; they live on their land, raising livestock and crops in return for giving some to their lord. They must declare bond to their land-lord, and they must work the land to the best of their ability, lest they be evicted, sold into slavery, or worse. Vassals are one step below the rank of *freeman*, since they are bonded to work their lord's land and may not leave without permission. Entire generations of a family may work the same land, as there is little opportunity for a vassal to improve their lot, unless they are accepted into the army, become an apprentice for a lord, or pursue a higher calling such as the priesthood of Lutara.

This simple system of “those who toil” and “those who fight” has become challenged by new methods of technology and philosophy. The population of all lands continues to increase, while the actual land to hold them does not. New trades such as weaving, stone-cutting, ship-building and spell-craft require specialized skills that take years of study — formerly, these were the office of the richer lords, but the Guild Masters of Triskellian have been cultivating a class of commoners who have become masters of these trades. This new class of artisans, or *bourgeois*, generally lives better than mere vassals, enjoying greater wealth and status. The folk of Triskellian even cultivate their own mercenaries and methods of warfare. There are those in the Doloreaux lands who look upon this new breed of commoner with envy.

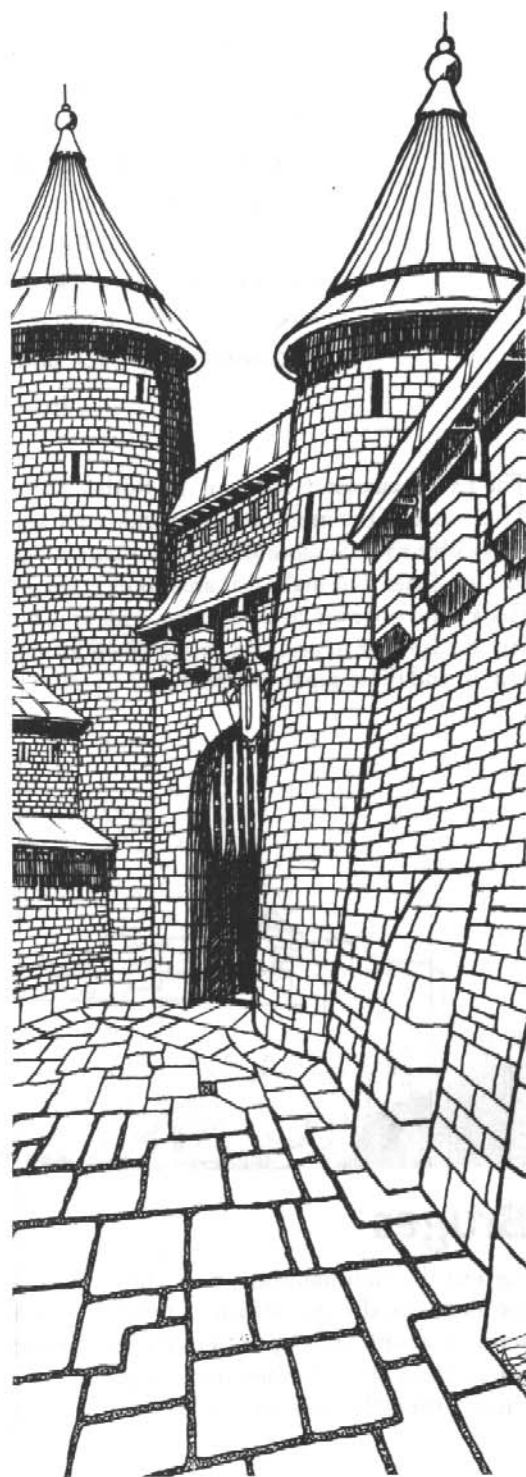
The Warriors among the Lay-Folk

Ideally, full-time Doloreaux watchmen are armed with a half-stone spear, half-stone crossbow, a heater shield, chain-mail, and an open-faced helm. In practice, the ones who serve poorer Chevaliers and viscounts must make do with what is available.

The Doloreaux are experimenting with the formation of musketeer units, but these are still rare. Muskets and guns require steel that is very pure, which can only be forged in the hottest ovens – such as the ones found in Auriville. Bullets are driven not by the size and strength of the fighter, but by the powder which fires them ... and even the best armor offers only moderate protection ... so many nobles see this as a method of upsetting the balance against the superior arms of the Avoirdupois. Unfortunately, the skill to create guns is rare, and the distrustful Doloreaux are reluctant to hire outside engineers to make their weapons of war.

The Doloreaux are lacking significantly in mounted troop strength. Destriers and other mounts require large amounts of land to support them, and most of the arable land is needed to support people first. Individual knights with destriers make up the majority of Doloreaux cavalry, but in times of need they will field mercenaries to supplement them.

A scholarly counterpart to the knight is the “warrior-wizard.” It is rare for a person to have both the presence of mind to summon forth supernatural, destructive power, and to have the skill to fight and to survive on a heated battlefield ... but for those who have both, the rewards can be great. Modern-minded barons have hired teachers to school those Doloreaux who may excel at these modern arts, much to the dismay of the Mystes, who feel the channeling of such violent forces will anger the spirits that have served them so well for so long. In a strange turn, the folk most likely to be warrior-wizards are the Vidames, since their calling takes them to ken the supernatural, but the “necessary evil” of their lifestyle denies them the Blessed Paths.



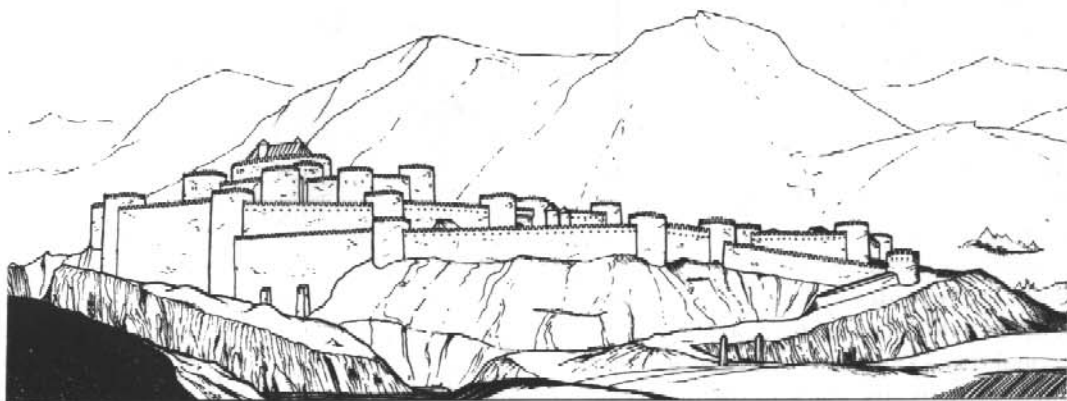
LANDS BELOVED OF THE LADY

*Being a Gazetteer of Places of Note within
the Dominion of the Doloreaux*

"...On the fourth day of walking I crested a hill and caught my first glimpse of Bruges just one mile away. Though secondary in size and grandeur to my native Triskellian it was clearly a mighty citadel and settlement. I paused on the road for a moment to regard the black and green pennants flapping crisply from its watch-towers, which had been luridly rouged by the rays of the setting sun. Even from this distance, the famous gardens were visible. Beyond the city the grim peaks of the Rothos rose suddenly, grim and terrible. Shivering a little, I shouldered my pack and headed onward."

— from *Lutara's Path: The Shame And Triumph Of
The House Doloreaux* by Pyotr the Scribe

The Doloreaux lands south of the Rothos Mountains are full of green meadows and rolling hills. This is one of the most pleasant regions of Calabria, as well as one of the most populated. It is impossible to walk more than a few hours without seeing a town or village. Unfortunately the very qualities that make this area so picturesque also make it untenable. The soil is generally chalky and poor for growing crops. This area is the Doloreaux bread basket...but very few farmers are able to produce enough food for sale. The area does hold a number of orerich mines, and these represent the surest route to wealth for the Doloreaux.



Bruges

Against the mountain-side, built on a stepped plateau, surrounded by stone walls and elaborate fortifications, the city of Bruges stands as a monument to the authority of the Doloreaux. In terms of wealth and population, Bruges can only be compared with Epinian and Triskellian. At the foothills of the Rothos mountains, this city is at the center of the over-land trade routes and thus controls the taxes and industry between the major cities of Calabria.



Bruges is built upon three distinct plateaus, rising almost ten stories above the plain. The highest level is also the oldest, home to the court of Duke Tybault de Doloreaux and the Great Garden Shrine of Lutara. The middle level is home to the marketplace, the richer merchants, other nobles, scholars, artisans, skilled laborers, and their servants. The outer city houses the yeomen, apprentice guildsmen, as well as inns, schools, and the more common businesses. In the outskirts of the walls, more buildings have been made as the city has grown outside of its walls, home to the poorer and more desperate citizens.

The following indices refer to the map found on page 24.

1. Caswallan's Tower

Hundreds of years ago, Duke Caswallan commissioned the construction of this watch-tower which offers a spectacular view of the valley below. When important people are expected to visit, such as foreign dignitaries or perhaps even the Duke himself returning from abroad, a great signal fire will be lit on top of the tower from a brazier three paces wide— the light can be seen for miles around.

2. Main Gate

How the city was constructed shows the Doloreaux mind-set clearly. With stone walls often ten paces thick at regular intervals, the high castle is considered to be unassailable. In typical Doloreaux utilitarian style, the walls of Bruges are thick and square without special adornments, reliefs, statuary or other pretensions. Having no shortage of ore, and some of the largest, hottest ovens, the Doloreaux have been able to smelt their own "bombards," or heavy brass cannon in wooden cradles, as well as some old but reliable catapults.

The main gate is two thick wooden doors that take several strong bodies to open, or at least two drays. There is a smaller door set in the larger one to admit the daily traffic. At night, the doors are shut tight and folk are not permitted to enter or leave unless they have special privilege due to noble rank or some sort of letter of passage.

There is a surplus of nobility all eager for advancement in the military field; the garrison is overbooked with warriors, all in competition to show each other up should their superiors feel the need to re-assign someone to less glamorous duty. As such, the walls are meticulously maintained, the war-machines are in excellent working order, and the warriors on duty are eager to show off their fighting practice. This is one of the many reasons criminals and ne'er-do-wells stick to the outer city and the outskirts.

3. Lower East Side

The lowest level of the city of Bruges is also home to its poorest citizens. Many buildings here are dilapidated, and some have fallen into ruins. The eastern-most block, nearest the wall, is in particular the most dangerous – the stone structures have been gutted by fire and are filled with ash, and any who linger here are the criminal and the desperate. During the day, stiff-legged Doloreaux watchmen patrol the streets. At night, however, there are no patrols, and those who would brave the shadows take their lives in their own hands.

4. Marketplace

In some parts of the year, this is just a stretch of rocky, dirty ground with the occasional patch of weeds. Around harvest-time and the holidays, tents are put up, temporary stands are built, arenas are fenced off, and the Marketplace of Bruges is open. By Doloreaux law, shop-keepers are required to buy a license (though there are extra-legal ways around that license). In some ways, the Market is typical of other cities, with all sorts of wares for sale; in other ways, it is uniquely Doloreaux, with fetishes and talismans for sale, dances around "may-poles" to the accompaniment of lively music, and the chance to witness a Lutarist ceremony.



5. Lower West Side

Where the East Side suffers from decay and neglect, the West Side is very much the opposite. The continued economic prosperity of the Doloreaux has attracted all sorts of folks from all corners to take up residence in the city, which has resulted in many refurbished buildings and facades in all manner of architectural styles. To the more conservative Doloreaux, the mish-mash of races, creeds, and cultures of the Lower West Side is disappointing. To social climbers, the Lower West Side is a place to meet the *nouveau riche* and to hobnob with the well-to-do.

The Lower West Side is more hospitable to adventurers. There are inns, blacksmiths, stables, taverns, bawdy houses, counting houses, theaters, and markets. There is currently only one Temple to S'allumer, staffed by a small but dedicated crew. This part of the city is populated by the usual cast of thieves, bards, magicians, barbarians, dilettantes and other types found in prosperous, urban areas. The outer city is also the most "cosmopolitan" part of Bruges, and thus is a place to find non-boar adventurers – indeed a majority of the population isn't Doloreaux or even boars. A good swordsman, mage, or scribe will readily find employment and excitement.

Most of the buildings are made of soft wood and plaster, with clay tiled roofs. The narrow, twisting streets are filled with the stink of dray dung and rotting food. Despite the occasional squalor of the setting, the Doloreaux love of gardens is strong here as well. Every home has a flower-box, and local temples have small walled areas protecting a flowering tree or two from the hustle and bustle of the city.

6. The Oak and Rowan Inn

Located on a popular corner, with its stout timbers, painted walls, and shuttered windows, *The Oak and Rowan Inn* stands out from the rest of the buildings crowded together on the meandering streets. Owned and operated by Chloe Javert (see p. 63), this tavern is a popular restaurant and hostel for those who have the means to afford its above-average fare and services.

7. Towers of the Sun and Moon

These towers are probably the oldest structures in all of Bruges. Long ago, they probably served the same function that Caswallan's tower serves today, when the city limits ended at the walls of the middle level. Today, the towers stand as a historic landmark, with their brass-plated bas-reliefs of a sun and a moon meticulously maintained by the Duke's household. The gate at the top of the rise is much like the Main Gate, only smaller. (The construction is almost identical, and typical of the Doloreaux traditionalist, no-frills ethic.)

8. Mid-Level City

Real estate is at a premium in this upper-class section of Bruges. Every baron, count, and viscount vies to maintain some sort of household in this part of the city, if only to show off that they have one. The few shops and businesses to be found here are the ones that cater to the rich tastes of the nobility – most prices are in the "if you have to ask, you can't afford it" category. There are no inns to be found in this section, either; one is either invited by one of the locals to stay as a guest, or one simply isn't welcome.

The mid-level city is built almost entirely of gray stone, and while its architecture is not particularly inspired, the Doloreaux are capable engineers. Buildings are squat and box-like, and rarely taller than two stories, with precisely-cut stone and a minimum of mortar. Only the Duke's keep is taller than three floors. Real estate in the mid-level city is at a premium – only the richest Counts can afford residence there. Many have spent large amounts of money to add elaborate engravings and bas-reliefs to their square homes, almost always in a nature theme of vines and plants. The most affluent keep small gardens. There are no inns or shops here – anyone visiting here either enjoys the hospitality of a friend, or they don't stay here at all.



9. Sacred Grove of Lutara

At the center of the inner city is a magnificent walled garden about two hundred paces long and half again as wide. This is the city's Sacred Grove of Lutara, where nobles may pay their respects to The Lady and take the counsel of the hierarchs. The garden is a magnificent collection of flowering trees planted in orderly rows that somehow manage to look like they had grown naturally. No one outside the ranks of the High Mystes may enter without special dispensation, and such clearance is not given without a very good reason. The Sacred Grove is the site of yearly meetings of the leaders of the Old Faith, where those who would seek advancement into the ranks of the High Mystes are judged, and where matters of great import are debated and decided.

In the center of the garden there is a small wooden building of two floors, which is home to the gardeners and the High Sacred Mother of Lutara. The current Sacred Mother in residence is Selene DeLume, a sow of advanced years. When she dies, her body will be buried in crypt below the garden in accordance with the five-hundred-year-old tradition. DeLume is the official head of the worship of Lutara in Doloreaux lands, being the wisest and most venerable. The garden walls are regularly patrolled by zealous Doloreaux watchmen, and access to the garden is only through a guarded wooden gate.

10. Lord Pascaline's Manor

Without heir or great influence in court, Lord Evard Pascaline is unlike other members of the Doloreaux nobility. Whereas most folks devote their lives to traditional worship, to the arts of warfare, or to hard labor, Lord Pascaline stands apart as a scholar and academic. His library of scrolls, books, and maps is quite large, possibly second in size only to the Duke's Hall of Records. Those of a studious and bookish inclination may want to pay the Lord a visit, to trade information or to peruse his collection; Lord Pascaline is known to be a "soft touch" and willing to receive company.

11. The Duke's Courtyard

Only those on urgent business for the Doloreaux throne, or those who are members of the royal staff, are permitted entrance to this courtyard. Inside the thick stone walls are newer, wooden buildings, which include the stables for the Duke's destriers, quarters for the servants, and barracks for the Duke's personal guard. At rigid times of day, the Castellan, or highest-ranking member of the guard, drills his soldiers to a very precise beat.

12. The Duke's Palace

To many lay-folk, the Duke's palace is an awesome display of wealth, a grand testament to the glory of the Doloreaux throne. To the more worldly, such as visitors from Triskellian, the palace looks old and out-of-date, with its blocky construction, worn statuary, and lack of vibrant colors. As resistant to change as everything else in Doloreaux demesne, the palace is only slowly being converted to modern styles, not because it is the subject of jokes among the Great Houses, but because it has become impossible to find architects and builders who can repair the centuries-old styles. During most times of the year, the Duke and Duchess of Doloreaux reside within the palace, except for the rare times they leave to be entertained by other nobles eager for advancement, or when they must travel.

13. Nyevernaise River

Cold and swift, the Nyevernaise flows from the Rothos Mountains and past the city. This river is at the end of both the sewage system and the "improvised" trash disposal system; in the summer during the holidays (when the city population is at its highest), the water can become quite foul.



14. Falls of Nyever

Marking a steep-drop off in the mountain plateau, these falls mark the end of any travel up-river by boat. Charlatans sometimes sell maps to tourist rubes, which depict a complex of caves behind the falls that lead to hidden riches. In reality, there's only a small concavity behind the torrent of water, and would-be treasure-hunters find themselves poorer and wetter.

15. Barrow Island

The Doloreaux have lived on this land for centuries, and they have a great respect for the ancestors that came before them. For many years, people had buried their dead in the deep barrows in this island. As the catacombs filled, only the most honored among the Doloreaux were designated worthy enough to be interred among the ancient and revered. By decree of the High Mystes and by the Duke's order, no one is permitted to set foot upon the island without the written permission of both the Great Mother and the Duke – anyone found there without such documentation is assumed to be a "grave-robber", one of the most despised sort of criminal in Doloreaux lands. Barrow Island is irregularly patrolled by both Bruges Watchmen and Vidames; the exact schedule is not commonly known, to discourage interlopers.

Lutara Grove, the Harvest Haunt

For the Doloreaux, the holiest of all places on Calabria is undoubtedly the Lutara Grove, known to peasants as the "Harvest Haunt." It is here that the goddess Lutara is sometimes said live in physical form. The grove lies a day's journey to the south-west of Bruges, and covers a considerable area (ten square miles) that could otherwise be used for farmland.

The Grove is made up of old growth fruit trees—cherries, apples, plums, and other temperate fruits, as if a massive orchard which has been allowed to grow and spread for centuries, one from which fruit is never collected. In spring time the sweet scent of blossoms can be smelled as far away as Bruges, and the bright colors can be seen from Rothos peaks.

No one is allowed deep into the Grove except noblewomen, priests, priestesses, and their specially invited guests. A regular patrol of vidames ensures that everyone else stays out – only the sacred may trespass within the Grove. These guardians of the Grove are not so foolish as to fight to the death, though – if they find themselves overwhelmed by a large force, they will send word out to the nearest garrison for help. Rituals of purification can be done later.

Lutara Grove lies at the heart of the mystery that is the Doloreaux faith. Outsiders have made many a lurid guess about the rituals that occur hidden by the eaves and blossoms of the forest.

Foolhardy adventurers or lucky worthies who press their way through the forest will be struck by how unusually light and airy the woods are, and how unusually quiet. The faithful will feel reassured as they penetrate deeper... others may find the sickly smell overpowering and find themselves discomfited by the sheer *lushness* of the place. They can almost see things growing...moving...shifting...creeping...

At the very heart of the Grove is a clearing, the holiest place of all to the Doloreaux. In this clearing, there is an ancient stone well near an elaborately-carved shrine that houses a stone throne. On the proper nights, during the proper festivals, the Sacred Mothers perform their secret rites of dance and chanting, to divine the purpose of the Great Mother.



Three Corners Fort

Built by the Rinaldi many years ago, the Three Corners Fort stands out as a monument to the influence and power of the once-proud house. Today, the Fort is maintained by the Constabulary of Triskellian, with the garrison within paid by tolls and contributions from the Guilds. While House Doloreaux has kindly consented in writing to take over the duties of maintaining the fort, the Guilds of Triskellian have refused. The Three Corners Fort is a strategic defense against the aggressive forces of young Doloreaux knights, each eager for spoils in battle, dissuaded only by the fort's war-machines. Daringly, Doloreaux land-holdings run to within a stone's throw of the Fort's walls.

If the political situation were to change, the Doloreaux might consider trying to take Three Corners by force. Such a move would be very costly, but it would put them in an ideal position to take Triskellian. Unfortunately, taking the fort would most likely result in such an extreme loss of life on the Doloreaux's troops as to leave them vulnerable to an assault by either the Bisclavret or the Avoirdupois.

Physically, the fort is enormous. Stone walls built on top of earth ramparts defend an inner keep are lined with cannons that cover every approach. Doloreaux merchants and mercenaries are usually welcome to visit.

The Rothos Mountains Region

This chain of rocky peaks is claimed in its entirety by the Doloreaux...but in reality their control extends only a few leagues beyond the southern foothills. The Chevernaise have lived in these mountains for hundreds of years and won't be easily dislodged. However, the rich mines of the Rothos are the Doloreaux's major source of income, and they won't be giving it up without a fight, either.

Some of the peaks reach over a league in height. The tallest within the Doloreaux-controlled area is Mount Eisengrim, which has never been climbed or properly surveyed.

Up to about half a league, the mountains are covered with pine forests. Above that altitude, they are too sheer and rocky to support any kind of trees, and above two-thirds of a league, rare indeed. Beyond that, feet snow lingers year round and very little animal life can be found.

In contrast to the grim sterility of the mountaintops are a number of lush valleys. These valleys shelter a number of small Doloreaux mining towns and farming communities. Life in the valleys is usually good and uneventful. There are few passes in the Rothos, so visiting a neighboring community can involve days of hiking and climbing over the mountains -- to say nothing of dodging Chevernaise war-parties. Because travel through the mountains is so difficult and dangerous, there is little trade or travel between Rothos settlements - almost all travel is southwards, towards Bruges. The average villager never leaves his valley.

The biggest concern for the Doloreaux inhabitants of the Rothos is not the potential for attacks by the Chevernaise - the mountain-folk are pretty rugged, and they rarely have much worth stealing compared to make it worth the risk of battle to the goats. The villagers worry more about a harsh winter that could destroy what meager food-stores they can grow in their inhospitable land. The Chevernaise, meanwhile, go after the richer trade caravans that move through the pass.

Broken Tusk Ridge

This iron mine is located about two leagues north of the Walls of Calabria, on the slope of Mount Gremarte. In many ways it can be considered typical of the dozens of mines in the Rothos.

The mine entrance is located on a flat outcropping about "eight chains" (about 175 paces) up the side of the mountain, very near to the peak. A wooden wall has been built to protect the mine entrance from snow and wind during the winter when the peak is generally inaccessible. In summer months, a canvas roof is placed on this wall to give miners some protection from the elements while sorting ore for transport down to the camp.

Some seventeen stories below is the permanent mining camp. The camp is a collection of log bunkhouses in a forest clearing, where the sixty or so miners live during the late spring, summer, and early fall when the mine is operation. There are no more than two dozen permanent residents — a young Doloreaux family that maintains the camp all year round, and a dozen bachelor miners who have no other home to go to. Depending on how things are going, there may be a slave-encampment or two.

Feurebouche

This mine is the largest and deepest in all of Calabria. Silver is the largest export, but gold and other precious gems are also dug here. Physically, the mine is located almost a league up the side of the fearsome Mount Eisengrim, which rises about six leagues north of the Lyore between Bruges and Auriville. This silver mine is more elaborate than most, and it boasts a car-rail system that carries ore from deep within the mountain to the pit head. It also has a system of winch-powered elevators, usually crewed by two slaves. The Feurebouche mine is one of the oldest still in operation, founded some two hundred years ago, and it now penetrates a quarter-league underground and two-thirds of a league horizontally into the side of the mountain. Inside the dark can be found prisoners-of-war, condemned criminals, and captured slaves who may toil the rest of their lives without seeing the sun.

One-third of a league down the side of Mount Eisengrim is the town of Feurebouche, which has a sizeable migrant population. Feurebouche boasts a number of taverns and inns, and is a common destination for ore caravans from smaller mines. Honest adventurers looking for work can find it escorting ore caravans southward to Bruges. Dishonest ones can try to raid the caravans and steal the booty — a man can steal a fortune just by filling his pockets.

All the amenities and vices of a large city can be found in Feurebouche — but at a much greater cost. There are fewer vendors, and the local mineral wealth has increased prices. Anything more than the necessities of life can cost three times the usual rates, and luxuries can run as much as twenty times that.

Mortemere

The northernmost settlement of any size in Calabria, Mortemere is situated well outside the Doloreaux holdings proper, on a narrow strip of land between the northern peaks of the Rothos and the sea. Originally a stone keep with a wooden palisade around it, it was built as a potential site for a sea port. However, the rocky shoals around it and the unpredictable currents make it impossible to land a vessel with a longer beam than thirty paces, and Epinian has proven to be a better port for maritime trade. In the years following its construction, a small town formed around the keep, but the treacherous waters of the northern seas have limited maritime activities to fishing and whaling during the summer months. Mortemere depends on the fisheries to survive.





While some crops are grown, the climate is just too cold and the land alternately too rocky and too boggy for the inhabitants to grow enough to survive on. In the winter months, ice forms inside most harbors; the fishermen must carry their boats over long stretches of ice.

Until about a hundred years ago, the town was ruled by a minor house of shrews, the Avinge. Since that time it has been ruled in their name by a series of Doloreaux noblemen. The Doloreaux co-opted the settlement from the Avinge in an attempt to secure some kind of seaport. The current "governor" is Sir Simon Cattermeaux. He was sent here some fifteen years ago as a kind of punishment for courting a married woman. At first he hated the place, but in the intervening years he has come to love the uncomplicated lifestyle of his Avinge and Doloreaux subjects.

Mortemere is a barren, cold place with an odd kind of desolate beauty. The village is surrounded by mountains to the south, boggy moors to the east and west, and a rocky shore to the north. In spite of the bleak surroundings, the Doloreaux love for gardens is as strong as ever here. In the brief summer months almost every home in the village takes pride in displaying their small flower gardens.

Very few merchants or outsiders come to the town, and the most common visitors are independent miners looking for a place to spend their wages, or the desperate looking for employment. The town has only one inn, *The Rusted Anchor*, a clean and austere place run by a retired whaler and his wife.

Vosges

A farming community in the Rothos, this village is significant in that it has never been touched by war or plague. Outsiders credit this to the fact that the valley Vosges is located in is almost inaccessible by land. The villagers claim that they are protected by a Sacred Grove located in the woods nearby. The local Chevernaise recognize them as "harmless" and poor, and leave them alone.

The villagers live a quiet and simple life with almost no contact with the outside world. There are no inns, and there is only one tavern, the *Bent Reed*. The tavern owner will allow visitors to sleep in his loft for no charge, provided they are quiet and buy all their meals from him.

The inhabitants of Vosges are highly suspicious of outsiders, but not outwardly hostile. However, any tragedies that occur while outsiders are present will almost certainly be blamed on the strangers.

The Lyore Region

Eastwards from the Bruges, the Lyore River stretches, a narrow blue ribbon caught between the plains of the Avoirdupois and the Rothos Mountains. In between the river and the mountain is a thin strip of land ruled by the Doloreaux. This territory is often wracked by open warfare, with frequent raids from the Avoirdupois or the Chevernaise. The locals have grown accustomed to hearing the call of arms and are used to defending themselves.

There are very few real settlements of any size in this strip of land. Mostly, it is taken up by small farms and the occasional small keep. There is very little traffic along this stretch of land, as just about everything can be more easily transported on the Lyore. Merchant caravans will occasionally travel this path on their way to Auriville and the Chevernaise Pass, and mercenary companies generally find it cheaper to march there than hire a ship.



Auriville

This is the largest Doloreaux settlement in the northeast, and is the eastern-most point over which the Doloreaux hold unquestioned sway. The town is the historic site of several clashes with the Avoirdupois and has also been raided by the Chevernaise on a number of occasions. As a result, Auriville houses a large contingent of Doloreaux troops and has more the flavor of an armed camp rather than a settlement.

Auriville is also home to numerous mercenaries. Merchants looking to brave the Chevernaise Pass usually stop here to hire a few good swords to see them through, and the pay is generally excellent. Of course, the risks are extreme as well.

Arms and armor are not permitted inside the Auriville city limits, a law that was passed to keep mercenaries out of the city, since having so many swords-for-hire in one place tends to foster lawlessness. Failure to comply with will result in a fine if the scofflaw is lucky; after all, there is always need for more criminals to work in the mines.

There are ways around this law, however. People entitled to "high justice" — that is, the nobility — are exempt from it due to their increased status. The richer mercenaries will buy "letters of marque" (in game terms, Investiture) from city officials as a license to bear arms, effectively becoming a member of the militia. And guards and such can always be bribed.

There are a couple of shops and inns outside the town walls, and these play host to the needs of the mercenaries who do not try to brave entrance to the city. The most popular of these is the *Goat's Head*, a seedy tavern run by Mercer the Fat (see page 58).

The town has always been fortified, first by "ramparts" of stacked earth, which were steadily replaced over the years by thick walls of stone, complete with watchtowers. The western and northern walls have four cannons apiece. Inside the town, quarried stone walls support two watchtowers around the inner city. The town is surrounded by a small area of farmland, but most of the food needed by the residents is shipped up the River Lyore from Bruges. Many buildings inside the walls have the box-like, thick-walled structure typical of the Doloreaux be-ready-for-siege mindset.

Chevernaise Pass

The Chevernaise Pass is the only easy land route from the mineral-rich Doloreaux lands to the seaport city of Epinian. The Doloreaux lay claim to this Pass but effectively have little control over it, since the Chevernaise have lived there for hundreds of years, have fought off any armies sent to dislodge them, and have no intentions of leaving any time soon.



The Doloreaux maintain a stone keep and barracks at the southernmost end of the pass. Non-Doloreaux merchants are charged a hefty toll, usually about one-fifth (20%) of the total value of the goods they are carrying. The Doloreaux feel that if they cannot have the pass, they may as well keep the Chevernaise from getting the merchant money that is “rightfully” theirs. As a result, there’s a lot of smuggling in the area.

There are rumors that some canny merchants have found a way to set up negotiations with the Chevernaise, to pay a “fee of passage” and thus be free from attack. This rumor is largely dismissed — the Chevernaise are not one political body, but numerous warring clans and tribes, so it is hard to believe that one could pay in one lump sum and buy *all* of them off. What is more likely is that some folks know which particular Chevernaise tribes to negotiate with, both for safe passage and for “protection” against other tribes. Such a game would require sharp wits indeed.

Lyore Ford

Located about twelve leagues east of Bruges, this is the only spot where the Lyore may be crossed readily. (It’s hard to build a proper bridge when two Great Houses contest ownership of the whole river.) At this point, the river is no more than sixty paces wide, and less than two paces deep for much of that width. It suddenly drops off to about seven fathoms (13 paces, or more than four stories) in depth for in the middle section, so most ships may still pass.

There are two methods of crossing the river. You can swim (which is not too hard, since the current is very slight here), or shout for the ferryman to send across the ferry, a floating wooden platform large enough to hold 320 stone, or eight people and their mounts, at one time. This takes time if the ferry is on the opposite bank. The ferryman and his assistant must row across in a small boat, towing a rope. The rope is attached to the ferry, which is pulled across. Usually, it is kept on the Doloreaux side of the river. After the ferry is loaded, he will row back across, towing it behind him. This can take some time if the ferry is heavily loaded, and the service costs at least two denarii, perhaps more if the ferryman feels the load is suspect or is corrupt.

Swimming across is free, and on a good day requires a test of 2d8. On each Failure, suffer one Fatigue and try again until you either Succeed, give up, or pass out and begin drowning.

The ferryman and his assistant are low-ranking Doloreaux nobles, appointed to this post either because they are young and are trying to prove themselves or because they roused the displeasure of some superior somewhere else and are being punished for it. The ferryman will not be found outside after dark — he will pack up the oars and head back home, to a nearby garrison. He will not ferry obviously hostile parties. Avoidirpoids may cross unless the two houses are in a state of war, but will be closely watched in any case.

Located near the bank of the river is an Inn, simply named *The Lyore*. Close by are some small stone houses, a stable, and a blacksmith. There is also a stone watchtower which houses five Doloreaux soldiers, a light cannon, and (at night) the ferryman and assistant.

Walls of Calabria

These high cliffs overlook the chaotic meeting of three rivers; the Granvert, the Lyore, and the Ruther. The waters around their base tend to be violent, with many rapids. River-barges traveling through this area require skilled pilots, who are well paid for their services.

The rivers waters extend almost to the base of the cliffs. What land there is between them is usually a half-mile strip of treeless, lifeless rock. There are no villages or towns below the cliffs. Travelers through this grim and frightening terrain can expect little hospitality.

The cliffs are almost perfectly vertical, and at certain times of the day they shed a long and dark shadow over the land. First-time visitors to the area usually find themselves developing a crick in their neck as they constantly gaze straight upwards into the sky. The cliff faces are riddled with caves, and adventurers looking for a place to camp or hide may find them useful. Here and there



a traveler can find evidence of ancient carvings and drawings on the walls. Some of these are carved high above the ground, in what appear to be impossible-to-reach parts of the cliffs.

The cliffs are *almost* incapable of being climbed. There are no flat places to rest, no trails, and nowhere to shelter except for a rare cave set in the side of the Walls. It can be done, but it could take *days* to reach the top — assuming one doesn't slip and tumble down to the rocks below. The safest way to reach the top of the Walls is a gradual ascent through the Rothos. There is one other way: a monastery at the base of the cliffs maintains series of metal pegs and resting platforms all the way up the side of the Walls, but such a climb takes many hours and is only for the strong and hearty.

Above the cliffs it is another matter entirely. At the top of the Walls is a large, wind-swept plateau that extends northwards to a forest of dark pines, and thence into the Rothos. There are about half-a-dozen isolated villages on the plateau, and a small castle — the home of the Baron Fergeas Debuss and his wife. The peasants here are able to eke a bare existence from the thin soil of the plateau, supplemented by hunting on the outskirts of the woods.

The Monastery

The only place to find a meal and bed beneath the Walls of Calabria is an unnamed monastery about half-a-league west of where the Lyore flows into the Granvert. The monastery is home to a dozen Doloreaux converts to S'allumer, though the monastery building itself is believed to pre-date the founding of that religion.

Physically, the monastery is a gray stone box with a chimney and door, surrounded on three sides by a 6 foot wall of loose stone. The walls run right up to the cliffs. The walls protect an herb garden, a livestock pen, and the monastery building itself. The resident monks will provide travelers with simple food, a bed, and basic medical attention.

Of more interest to adventurers is the "ladder" of stout metal pegs hammered into the cliff face that the monks maintain. The monks will allow travelers to climb this ladder in exchange for a small offering to S'allumer; while coins are accepted, tools and food are appreciated more. About every 18 stories, there is also a three-pace long and two-pace wide wooden resting platform of thick planks. These are big enough for two or three average sized people to sit with their legs hanging out over an awful void, or for one courageous soul to sleep on.

At the top of the ladder there is a sign pointing to Baron Debuss' castle.

Septagus' Stand

If the Lutara Grove is the holiest place of all to the Doloreaux, this is considered the most damned. No logging is done in this dark pine forest atop the Walls of Calabria. Travelers to the mines in the Rothos skirt the forest through the rougher terrain to the east. In olden times Septagus' Stand was considered the home of Septagus, a dark sorcerer of myth and legend. This belief is no longer approved by the Doloreaux as a whole, but it is still whispered among the peasantry in the area.

People do live in the woods, no more than fifty. There are occasional trappers and hermits here, and a small tribe of feral Doloreaux atavists has a village in a clearing near the center of the wood. The village itself is a rude collection of a dozen stone huts and tents centered around a moss-covered stone pillar. Rumors persist that there is a great treasure buried under this pillar — the lode of Septagus himself.

The tribe is a hold-over of a much older age. They share most of the faiths and practices of the Doloreaux at large, but it is suspected that their rituals are still true to the old ways — bloody and cruel. The village elders have sworn loyalty to the local Baron, but pay no tax and are more or less free to do as they please. They will keep a close eye on travelers through the wood, but will probably not do anything to stop them unless they threaten the village or the forest. One of the natives, a young boar named Guntar, occasionally travels into town to sell skins. He can be hired to guide adventurers through the woods.

ROLE-PLAYING IN DOLOREAUX LANDS

In Which New Rules are Presented for the Benefit of Player-Characters

New Careers

The following Careers are appropriate to folks found within the Doloreaux lands. Although they are common to those of Doloreaux stock, any character can have these Careers, either as their first choice or as an Extra Trait.

Hierarchy

Requirements: The Gift of Hospitality (2 points), The Flaw of Pacifism: Self-Defense Only (-3 points)

The keepers of the secrets of the Mother Goddess, the Hierarchs of Lutara are the priests and priestesses who convey the will of the divine to the people on earth. There are different sub-types of Hierarch, who differ in their duties. The types of Hierarch suitable for Player Characters include:

- The *Acolyte* is the lowest rank of Hierarchs – someone who has just been taught the most basic of the mysteries. Many find that they lack the ken to proceed further, so finding someone with a mere d4 or d6 in Hierarch is not altogether unusual in Doloreaux lands.
- The *Almoner* is a Hierarch who wanders a lot, bringing enlightenment and spirituality to those who need it. Unlike the clergy of S'allumer, however, Almoners are not very "aggressive" in seeking new converts but rather offer their wisdom and services to those who request them. An Almoner is a Hierarch with a second Career such as Ascetic, Homeopath, or Midwife (p. 35).
- A *Sacristan* sees to maintaining the Sacred Groves – keeping the grounds, felling sick or dying trees, planting new seeds, etc. Like all Hierarchs, Sacristans are forbidden to take up arms; if they suspect poachers or other unsavory types about, they will summon a Vidame (p. 35).
- After achieving adequate understanding in the ways of the Hierarch (in game terms, a Career Trait of d12 or more), one may declare oneself a *Postulant*, one who aspires to join the ranks of the Mystes, the keepers of the ultimate secrets of Lutara. The Mystes meet once a year, during which the Postulants must be present and must show proof of their devotion. There is no set "test" – the Mystes will ask questions and demand evidence apparently at random. It is not unusual for Postulants to wait ten or twenty years before finally gaining admission.



Applies to: Augury, Herbalism, Lutarist Lore, Psychology

Midwife

The Doloreaux do not maintain large bodies of learning or schooling, and the formal process of medicine and doctors is an import from Triskellian, available only to the wealthy. Most country-folk will rely on the services of a Midwife for their medicinal needs. Midwives are the popular choice for delivering babies, an “unglamorous” duty that many Calabrese doctors still know little about. While almost all Midwives are women, there are a few men who practice their arts—sometimes even “book-learned” doctors curious to learn new techniques. Midwives are “skilled labor” and thus charge for their services like any other kind (*Ironclaw*, p. 111), but they are almost always paid in barter, given the general poverty of the folk they serve.



Applies to: Augury, First Aid, Herbalism, Physician

Militia

With the constant threat of robber-bands and the armies of minor lords, the Doloreaux recognize the need to maintain a standing *militia*, or a body of civilians trained in the art of soldiery and fighting in formation. The small towns of the Lyore region and Vosges are constantly at risk. All able-bodied citizenry, men and women alike, are welcome in the ranks where folks are often outclassed by foes with superior arms and armor. Naturally, it would be very rare for Militia to be someone's primary Career—more likely, the person is a Farmer or other Tradesman with Militia for backup.

Applies to: Area Knowledge (home town), Shield, Spear, Tactics

Miner

Working twelve-hour days in four-foot chambers, Miners have a tough and grueling life. Mines in Calabria are primitive, dangerous affairs—tunnels collapse, passages fill with “bad air” such as carbon monoxide, and sometimes things are unearthed that are best left buried. Miners are unlikely to lose their head in the dark and are no strangers to aching muscles and other mishaps.

Applies to: Axe, Mining Lore, Prospecting, Resolve

Vidame

Requirements: *the Gift of Local Investiture (1 point)*

Rare but still not unknown, the *Vidame* is a sort of knight who serves a prominent hierarch. Vidames are the guards of Sacred Groves (pp. 14, 27), and they follow the orders of the Mystes first and the Duke second. Unlike a “true knight”, Vidames are not permitted to mete out low justice over commoners, but they themselves are entitled to “high justice” and may only be called before the rank of Baron or higher when accused and tried for crimes. Politically, the Vidames are the arms and armor of the Mystes, permitted to exist because the Lutarists can demonstrate a need to be protected. However, this division of “church and state” makes some Barons uncomfortable.



Because of the nature of their harmony with the earth, the Hierarchs of Lutara are forbidden to engage in acts of violence save in self-defense. This pacifism makes Hierarchs unsuitable for most lordly duties as training soldiers or policing the grounds. To protect and serve the Hierarchs, the order of the Vidames was created hundreds of years ago. As "protectors of the faithful", Vidames perform many of the functions that knights perform for their lords. Many Vidames are "failed" Hierarchs (and thus have that as a Second Career). Since the calling of Lutarism attracts those interested in the supernatural, some Vidames have studied abroad and have become accomplished Wizards. Rarely, a Vidame may also have the Blessed Trait but may have proven too belligerent and warlike to join the ranks of the non-violent Hierarchs.

Applies to: Heraldry, Lutarist Lore, Law, Shield

Whaler

The giant sea-monsters known as "whales" offer valuable oils and other goods unavailable elsewhere. The practice of hunting whales is rife with danger, as the fearsome beasts weigh several tons and can smash the boats with a flick of their tails. Despite the risks, there are Doloreaux who live at the northern port of Mortemere, risking their lives on the high seas hunting these dreadful beasts. (Recently, some academics have postulated that the whales are not mindless beasts but have a rudimentary language that they use to communicate. The Whalers find this theory laughable.)

Applies to: Boating, Resolve, Spear-Throwing, Swimming

New Special Traits

The following Traits describe special powers or innate abilities found among the folk who put stock in the teachings of Lutara. Player-Characters may have these traits as per the normal rules concerning "Special Traits" — that is, the PC must have the Gift of "Extra Trait" (*Ironclaw*, p. 79).

Blessed

Some folk have the ken to speak to the spirits and ask them for favors ... and have their wishes granted. The secret ways of the Blessed Paths are in the "Blessed" chapter (p. 38).

Past Life

The Doloreaux are well aware that folk live multiple lives. It is very important that a body be buried and that the corpse be properly consecrated so that the spirit may pass on to its next office, be that another vessel or be that the spirits of the wood and earth. Sometimes, a particular soul has strong ties to its previous existence.

With permission of the Game Host, a Player may build a character with a Special Trait of "Past Life". The Past Life can be of almost *anyone*, from the great and historic to the lowly and unknown, even someone of a different Race, or gender! The Past Life Trait should be matched to a "secondary Career", as usual — a "calling" that the character's soul is destined to follow. In addition, at the Game Host's discretion, the character may call upon Know Tests to "remember" things that the previous life will have known. (If appropriate, the Host may let the character use the Past Life Die to call upon the previous life's Racial Skills, if they were different, too.)

Example: It has been revealed that Jean-Hughes is the reincarnation of the great warrior "Claidheamh," a Doloreaux Cavalier who led a dozen captains into battle more than three hundred years ago before perishing in the Rothos Mountains. Jean-Hughes finds certain paths and hills look "familiar" to him, as if he had trudged them many times before. The Game Host allows Jean-Hughes to use his "Past Life: Claidheamh" trait to make Know Tests to remember Claidheamh's old routes and passages through the mountains, where he commanded his troops centuries ago.

The disadvantage of a "Past Life" Trait is that the Character may sometimes forget who they are, and revert back to the mannerisms, and even personality, of the previous incarnation. The Character may sleep-walk at night, going through the motions of the previous life's chores. When the Character suffers a strange change in Mental State, such as becoming *Confused* or *Terrified*, the previous life may "come to the front" and "take over" the body for a time — minutes, hours, or even days.

Green and Purple Wizards (*Ironclaw*, p. 224) often take particular interest in folks who have Past Lives. The spell of "Thought-Reading" can be used to delve deep into one's soul to find the Past Life. And when in a Mesmerized state, a person's previous self can often be brought "to the front" through frequent uses of the Psychology skill.

“Religions are founded on faith, and faith is a forgiving soil that allows belief to flower without the need for scholar’s proof. The servants of Lutara are especially blessed by their deity. She does not ask them to believe without sight or deed, and regularly grants powers and minor miracles to the most devout of her servants. Whether these things are truly divine in origin, or simply the fruit of magical study, I am not qualified to judge.”

—From *Being a True Account of My Study of the Paths of Lutara, The Shame and Triumph of the House Doloreaux*, by Pyotr the Scribe

THE BLESSED

Being a Description of the Methods in which One Invokes the Power From Without, the Supreme Mystery of the Lutarists

Before there was an Order of Penitents, even before there was a city of Triskellian, there were those of the “old faith”. Exactly what the “Old Faith” is up for debate; many modern worshippers hail to Lutara the World Goddess, but for each person the traditions appear to vary. Names get muddled, rituals follow different patterns, and in general the practice of “old” religion is a very personal thing.

What is known is that there are particular folk who have unusual ken with the spirit world. By oral tradition and not just a bit of improvisation, there are methods for calling forth supernatural power that are unknown to other folk. In these modern times, they are sometimes called the “Blessed.”

The worshippers of Lutara, in the Doloreaux lands, actively cultivate the talents within the Blessed when they can. The wise Blessed understand that to call down their “miracles” is not without great responsibility. The Doloreaux especially are very secretive of their methods; they worry that the “modernist” Triskellians would document and over-analyze their methods, like has been done with general Magic among the wizards and Penitents. Asking the universe for a “favor” does not come without cost, and wide-spread, selfish use of such power could lead to dire consequences.



Game Rules for the Blessed and their Invocations

Building a Blessed Character

To invoke the powers of the Blessed, you must buy an Extra Trait: *Blessed*. This Trait applies to Blessed Lore, Augury, and Herbalism.

There are thirteen "Paths" that a Blessed may study. *Each Path is bought as a Skill; you must have at least a d4 in a Blessed Path to call upon its power.* As usual, no skill may be over Level 5 (d12) at Character Creation, unless the Character has the Gift of *Prodigy* (see *Ironclaw*, p. 81). Like Skills, a Path may have a Favored Use.

Possible Favorite Uses: While wearing appropriate clothes; during the Path's appropriate month; while alone; when calling a specific favorite Invocation.

Invoking the Blessed Paths

To call forth a Blessed power, one must pass a "Blessed Test." *Roll your Blessed Trait Die and Path Skill Dice vs. the Difficulty, as per a Damage Roll.* The Difficulty dice vary by the *Conditions of the environment and the Time the invoker takes.*

The *Ideal* conditions for invoking Blessed Magic would be:

- The Blessed is alone.
- The scene is quiet and conducive to concentration – definitely *not* the heat of battle.
- The Blessed can speak.
- The Blessed can make gestures.
- The scene is one friendly to the "old ways" – no trappings of "modernism" or "science" are present, such as: paved roads that remove one from the earth; millstones, cranes, and other contraptions; bustling, overcrowded cities.
- The Blessed has part of the appropriate tree or plant with them.
- It is the month of the year named after the Path to be invoked.

For each one of these points that can't be met, reduce the Conditions by one level. (These "bad points" are sometimes called "strikes against" the Blessed.) It may be impossible to invoke any paths at all.

Example 1: Brigit wants to invoke the Blessed Path of Ash. However, she is in the city (and in a civilization of unbelievers), it is the month of Rowan (and thus the wrong month), she is in the common room of an inn (and thus not alone, in a noisy environment), and she lacks any Ash on her person. Four bad points lower the Conditions from "Ideal" to "Worse."

Example 2: Having been ambushed while walking down a peaceful country road, Caerdwyn calls down a rain of arrows upon his foes, invoking the Path of Reeds. It's the month of Rowan (and thus the wrong month), he's not alone but surrounded by foes (and thus not alone, and their frenzied charge is not good for concentration). Caerdwyn does have his reed pipes with him, and he is in the humble countryside. He only has three bad points, so his conditions are not "Ideal" but "Poor".

The quickest a Blessed may invoke a Path is as a "Defense", which does not count as a Maneuver. The next slowest are First-Rank and Second Rank maneuvers. The Blessed may also take even longer, spending minutes or hours in full Concentration while directing their task.

Difficulty of Invocations, based on Conditions and Time

Conditions	Defense	First-Rank	Second-Rank	Full Minute	Full Hour	Seven Hours
Ideal	2d8	3d6	2d6	2d4	1d6	1d4
Good	2d10	3d8	2d8	2d6	2d4	1d6
Fair	3d10	2d10	3d8	2d8	2d6	2d4
Poor	3d12	3d10	2d10	3d8	2d8	2d6
Bad	4d12	3d12	3d10	2d10	3d8	2d8
Worse	5d12	4d12	3d12	3d10	2d10	3d8
Worst	6d12	5d12	4d12	3d12	3d10	2d10
Impossible	No Blessed Paths may be invoked if conditions are too inappropriate.					

The Blessed Then Asks For a Specific Invocation

Unlike traditional magic, where each spell has a specific outcome, the Paths of the Blessed are more flexible. When invoking the power of their Path, the Blessed asks for *one specific "Invocation"*, such as "Bind my foes in strangling vines" or "Give me a sign as to how we should next proceed."

The Blessed must ask for the Invocation *before rolling the dice*. (The Blessed definitely does *not* roll the dice, see how many hits are scored, and *then* chooses the best Invocation out of the lot!)

Each Path has different suggested Invocations that can be invoked, though the Game Host and Players are encouraged to use their imaginations. The Thirteen Paths and their suggested Invocations begin on page 43.

Invocation	Hits Needed
<i>Minor Boon.</i> Something noticeable but not too flashy happens. Those who dismiss "Tree Magic" will be able to find rationalizations around what they just observed as something "natural" or just luck.	1 or 2 hits
<i>Boon.</i> Substances change from harmful to harmless, or vice versa. The weather shifts rapidly, from rain to clear. Animals change temperament. Plants grow months in only minutes.	3 or 4 hits
<i>Major Boon.</i> Diseases are cured. Yearling trees spring up in an instant.	5 or 6 hits
<i>Utter Miracle.</i> Bodies, once crippled, are made whole. Months of plant growth appear in an instant. The unknowable is made known.	7 hits or more

A Special Case of Invocation: the Countermand

One Blessed character may attempt to thwart another Blessed's Invocation — this is called a *Countermand*. A Countermand is an attempt to keep the Invocation from even happening — it does *not* stop one that's already occurred, or "dispel" its effects. To remove a Blessed Invocation, you must use your own Invocation — it might be easier, or more difficult, depending on the Path and the circumstance.

Countermanding is a Defense. Thus it does not cost a Maneuver or an action, but it is the most difficult way to call upon the Blessed Paths. In almost all circumstances, you won't be alone, and you will be in the heat of battle — two "strikes" against you.

You must somehow be aware that the Blessed Path is being Invoked. Usually you will be able to hear someone calling upon the power... but if they choose not to speak, this could be harder. The Game Host may call for Blessed Lore Tests.

Roll your Blessed Trait Dice and your skill in the Blessed Path you are trying to Countermand. Unlike other Invocations, you *can* use just your Blessed Trait *without* any skill at all.

As usual, compare your dice vs. the Difficulty Dice as a Damage roll. For each hit you score, subtracts one hit from your opponent's hits. This may cause your target to "come up short," thus causing their Invocation to fail.

Example: His eyes flashing with his rage as his proposal for marriage is refused, MacAdahm splutters an Invocation of the Path of Alder, to call down the lightning to smite Ghlennea, for if he cannot have her, then he declares that no one else can.

MacAdahm is not alone (one bad point), and it is the month of Birch (another bad point), but he does have his alder wand in his hand and they are in the secluded countryside. Two bad points have reduced the Conditions from "Ideal" to "Fair".

MacAdahm rolls his dice of d12, d10, and d8 vs. the Difficulty of a Second-Rank Maneuver (3d8). He rolls 9, 7, and 5 vs. 4, 2, and 2. That's five hits – enough to make the sky rumble and a thunderbolt strike down from on high.

Fortunately for Ghlennea, Xevera the Postulant has been following her with stealth, having been all too aware of the treachery that brews within MacAdahm's spurned heart. Calling out from her place of concealment, Xevera attempts to Countermand the Invocation.

Xevera is also not alone and it's still the wrong month ... plus she has the problem that she possesses no alder of her own, and the sight of the clouds flashing and the sound of Ghlennea's anguished cry for help has removed the quiet. That's four strikes against Xevera – she will have to roll her dice against 3d12.

Xevera rolls her dice of 2d8 vs. 3d12; she rolls 5 and 4 vs. 11, 3, and 2. That's enough to score one hit. Subtracting one hit from MacAdahm's total reduces him to 4 – his Invocation fails! The Game Host rules that MacAdahm's lightning misses Ghlennea by only a pace.

What You Ask For, And What You Deserve

The Blessed is, in effect, asking the world to do them a favor, to "bend the rules" to perform a task for them. Devout Blessed can communicate with the animist spirits that inhabit every thing. Calling upon Invocations once too often can anger these spirits. It is known that there are "dark" spirits that seek to destroy or to enervate living things, and repeated, selfish entreaties attract such things. Game Hosts who believe a Blessed PC is "abusing" their powers too often is encouraged to make things more difficult, such as making the Conditions worse, or having dark spirits or shades make their presences known.

This isn't to say that Blessed Powers should only be used for "good." Indeed, the canon of Lutara does not acknowledge the concepts of "absolute good" or "absolute evil", and there have been unfortunate cases of Blessed folk who used their powers for personal gain. It is the frequency of the invocation that is courting trouble.





Suggestions Outcomes for Failed Invocations

- *The spirits drain the Blessed of vital energy.* This is a good “default” for failed Invocations. The Blessed suffers one Fatigue for each hit required of the Invocation they asked for. (For example, if the Blessed needed to score 4 hits and failed, then the Blessed suffers 4 Fatigue.) Since a Countermand really needs only 1 hit to have an effect, then a failed Countermand usually only costs 1 Fatigue.
- *The spirits misinterpret you.* This is a good outcome for when the Blessed is only 1 or 2 hits short of the Invocation they asked for. Perhaps the lightning strikes the wrong the target, or a defensive blessing is put on the wrong target. The Game Host is encouraged to come up with creative “misinterpretations” based on puns and double-meanings of the Blessed’s original phrasing of the Invocation.
- *Unnatural, violent things happen, to the Blessed’s dismay.* The primary reason the Hierarchs are forbidden to engage in violent acts is because doing so attracts “angry ghosts” or “evil spirits.” Blessed characters who have shed the blood of others or who have otherwise been causing acts of violence may find their failed Invocations yielding “angry” results. A rain of arrows could fall on the wrong target. The Blessed may stumble or become knotted up in the very plants they sought to control.
- *Utter disaster!* The worst of all possible outcomes, recommended only for Botches is that the unseemly spirits, enemies of all life and creation, have sought entrance into this world through the Blessed’s clumsiness and folly. Food will spoil, plants will wither, and other dire awfulness will be wrought.

Summary of the Use of Blessed Powers

Invocation	Countermand
• Can take no time at all (Defense), can be a Maneuver, or can take minutes or hours • Requires both the Blessed Trait and a Blessed Path Skill • Declare effect desired; Game Host rules on how many hits would be required • Roll dice vs. difficulty as a Damage Roll, hoping to score enough hits • If not enough hits are scored, something less desirable happens. (The “default” is suffering Fatigue equal to original goal.)	• Always a Defense • Requires only a Blessed Trait (but Blessed Path Skill helps) • Declare Invocation to be Countermanded • Roll dice vs. difficulty as a Damage Roll; subtract hits from target’s Invocation’s effectiveness • If zero hits are scored, there is no effect, and something less desirable happens. (The “default” is suffering 1 Fatigue.)



The Thirteen Paths of the Blessed

The Mystes of Lutara teach of Thirteen Paths, each named after a month of the year of the Doloreaux Calendar. What follows is a list of the Paths, and the typical Invocations that one can call upon each Path to do.

Birch

The Birch is a woody perennial with a smooth, white bark, that can be stripped off in layers. They grow quickly, showing signs as soon as the seasons change. Birch trees are often used to make canoes. The white color is associated with purity, for cleansing and for banishing evil spirits.



Hits	Possible Invocation
1 hit	Divine the presence of evil spirits.
2 hits	Calling forth of the evil spirits, who must test their own dice vs. the your current roll to remain in this place. Or, grant someone the Swimming skill, at a level equal to your Birch Skill dice.
3 hits	Put a ghost to rest. Or, remove a persistent illness from the subject. Or, walk on water, for as long as you Concentrate. You can move your Stride each Round across water as if it were ground. This Invocation lasts for the rest of this Scene or until you lose Concentration, whichever comes first.
4 hits	Put a blessing of purification on the target. The next time something tries to make the target "impure", that act fails and the blessing is gone.
5 hits	Run across water. For the rest of this Scene, you can freely move on the surface of the water as if it were level ground to you, no Concentration necessary.
7 hits	Drive all evil spirits from this place, and prevent all "black arts" such as Black Magic from happening here, for a year and a day.

Rowan

The Rowan is a shrub related to the apple tree, but it produces small red berries; these berries have a small pentagram on them where they join the stalk of the tree, so the number “five” is considered lucky for this sort of magic. Rowan wood is popular for making staves, thus giving the plant the nickname of “witch-wand”. Another nickname is “quick-beam”, as rowan is seen good for healing (or “quicken”) and good health. Invokers of a more warlike nature may burn a fire of rowan branches to summon forth spirits for aid in battle.

Hits	Possible Invocation
1 hit	Divine the presence of hostile enchantment. Or, divine a premonition of how tomorrow's fighting will go. You can then give counsel that will tip the balance of the next Warfare Test by one die (at the Host's discretion).
2 hits	Remove a “false enchantment” – compare the Effect Dice of any one spell on the target vs. your current roll; if you Succeed, the spell is removed. What spells can be removed is to the discretion of the Game Host. Or, remove a detrimental Invocation from the target. The Game Host may call for a contest of your Blessed Trait & Rowan Path Skill vs. whatever dice the hostile Blessed used to “curse” the target.
3 hits	Change one Wound on the target to one Fatigue. Or, create a Quarter-Stone Staff out of whatever sliver of rowan wood you have handy.
4 hits	The target gains good fortune in battle. For the next Warfare Test, give the target an extra 2d8 for both Survival and Glory Tests. Or, create a Half-Stone Staff out of whatever sliver of rowan wood you have handy.
5 hits	Create a Full-Stone Staff out of whatever sliver of rowan wood you have handy.
7 hits	The target becomes unstoppable in battle. For the next day, the target cannot be slain, and will ignore all Wounds and all pain, though they will still bleed if cut, and they still must test for Resolve (they just ignore any Reeling from pain). The day after that, the blessing ends and the target must make all appropriate Unconsciousness and Death rolls.

Ash

The Ash has a tough, elastic wood, with a close grain. Sometimes called the “World Tree” or the “Tree of Life”, there are those who believe that the world is held up by a giant Ash, its roots going penetrating to the underworld, its upper branches in the heavens above. Invoking the power of the Ash Tree is a curious business, fraught with uncertainty, and few pursue this path.

Hits	Possible Invocation
1 hit	Ask that your dreams tonight will be clear, and that they have significance to future events.
2 hits	Perform a divination of the future – ask the spirits for a sign. The more hits you score, the more overt and detailed the sign will be, but the Game Host should call for an Augury Test vs. an appropriate difficulty to read the results correctly.
4 hits	Bless the target for protection against those who would play them false. The target may roll an extra 1d6 whenever testing against something “bad”, until they Fail; then the extra d6 goes away.
5 hits	The target gains a blessing of protection. The next time some event tries to harm the target to its detriment in some way, that event fails and the blessing is gone.
7 hits	Transverse the firmament, to walk beyond this world and into the higher or the lower planes of existence. Such a journey is not undertaken without great trepidation.

Alder

The Alder is a water-loving tree. Its timber is oily and water-resistant and therefore used extensively for underwater foundations and bridges: It can be used to make three different dyes: red from its bark; green from its flowers; and brown from its twigs. Invokers of the Alder Tree will seek to wear dyed clothes and will thus be a colorful sight. The Alder is thus associated with the number "three", and also with the elements of Fire, Water, and Earth. One can invoke the power of the Alder Tree to better understand one's role in the universe, or other's roles, so this path is popular with the scholarly and the academic. (More than one Alder-Tree Elemental has been known.)

<i>Hits</i>	<i>Possible Invocation</i>
1 hit	Divine for inspiration on how best to teach a troublesome student. Or, divine what tomorrow's weather will be.
2 hits	Have tomorrow's weather shift slightly to the better, such as a few more or less inches of rain, or a slight change in temperature. Or, scry for Elemental Magic within an area, including Elementals.
3 hits	Have today's weather shift slightly to the better, such as a few more or less inches of rain, or a slight change in temperature. Or, ask for clarity of thought. Until the next sunrise or sunset, include your Blessed Trait with any Know Tests, Leadership Tests, Research Tests, and other rolls where wisdom or judgment is called for.
4 hits	Dismiss the effect of an Elemental spell, as a "Dispel Magic" or "Counterspell", using your outcome dice vs. the spell's Effect Dice. Or, summon an Elemental, if one is nearby.
5 hits	Call down the lightning to smite someone. The target suffers 3d12 Damage vs. Soak, and must be either outside or near a window. (The Conditions should be "favorable" to this, too.) Or, change tomorrow's weather dramatically, from drought to heavy rainfall.
6 hits	Change <i>today's</i> weather dramatically, from drought to heavy rainfall.
7 hits	Create or dismiss catastrophic weather, such as earthquakes, volcanoes, and tidal waves.

Willow

There are various kinds of Willow trees, each with narrow leaves and long, flexible twigs. The suppleness of the wood makes it a popular material for weaving baskets. Another water-loving tree, the willow's branches often hang down into water, and they rise and fall with the tides, giving the Willow sympathy with the lunar cycles.

This tree is also identified with weeping, sorrow, and general weakness, though some also say that it shows strength in adversity and times of weakness as well. (Indeed, willow bark is an ingredient often used by homeopaths as a mild analgesic.)

A willow's branches, if planted, will take root and grow – thus the Willow is identified with longevity, even immortality ... though the devout Blessed believe that their spirits will be reincarnated and thus delve little into such matters.



Hits	Possible Invocation
1 hit	Purify a bowl of water.
2 hits	Douse something or someone in water. Lanterns and small campfires will go out. Guns will not fire until cleaned and dried.
3 hits	Put a suffering soul to rest, such as angry ghosts who cling to this world because of regrets. Or, summon a Water Elemental, as per the spell "Call Undine" (<i>Ironclaw</i> , p. 212).
4 hits	Part the waters, creating a divide in a river no more than twenty-two paces across, so that you and yours may walk across the bottom. The parting remains for a short time, but as long as necessary. (Don't think too hard about this, it's "magic".)
5 hits	Inflict feelings of great sorrow upon someone. The target has the Passion of Sorrow (<i>Ironclaw</i> , p. 67), with a die size equal to your Blessed Trait, until the target repents some act or otherwise does something of great strength. Then the Sorrow Passion goes away. Or, relieve someone of great sorrow, such as curing the above Passion.
6 hits	Change the tides for one day, either lowering or raising them.
7 hits	Become a "paramander", one who walks beside the earth rather than as a part of it. You will become immune to physical aging, thus divorcing yourself from the cycle of rebirth. Your soul will become a target for corrupting influences and dark spirits, and as the years roll by you may find yourself becoming alienated and jaded from the rest of creation.

Hawthorn

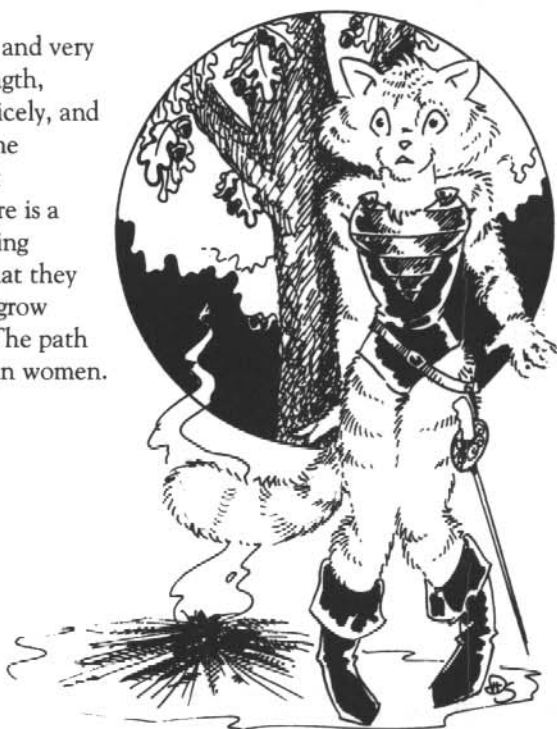
The hawthorn is a small tree with spines, fragrant flowers (white, pink, or red), and red berries. It grows all year round, into thick, thorny hedges, and many folk will make their fences out of hawthorn. It also has the dual purpose that it protects against magic. There is rumor that hawthorn burns hotter than any other wood. For many men, the hawthorn blossom has the strong scent of female sexuality.



Hits	Possible Invocation
1 hit	Protect someone against hostile magic. For this scene, the target gains a d4 of Magic Resistance Trait (<i>Ironclaw</i> , p. 65). This only works on willing targets. Or, step through a hedge of hawthorn without suffering any ill effects.
2 hits	Create a wall of spiny growth, about two hands thick and a head taller than yourself. It will last for about a Scene. It does 3d6 Damage to those who would try to force their way through it, which requires a Strength Test vs. 2d12. The hedge is soft cover vs. missiles (for an extra d8 Defense Die). If set alight, it will burn to ash within seconds. Or, cause a month's worth of hawthorn in but a minute. Or, make the target more attractive to paramours. The target gains dice equal to your Blessed Trait for use in Influence Tests involving Seduction until the next sunrise or sunset. Or, spark a fire, as per the "Create Fire" spell (<i>Ironclaw</i> , p. 208)
3 hits	Prevent a spell as it is being cast; compare your dice vs. the Effect Dice of the spell being cast. If you Succeed, the spell fails. Or, prevent a Blessed Invocation as it is called; compare your dice vs. the other Blessed's Invocation dice. If you Succeed, the Invocation fails. Or, summon a Fire Elemental, as per the spell "Summon Salamander".
4 hits	Create a "mantle of hedge-thorns" around oneself. Treat this as the Gift of Barbed Spines (<i>Ironclaw</i> , p. 83). The mantle lasts for the duration of this scene. Or, cause a year's worth of hawthorn in but a minute. Or, give the target a blessing of protection against hostile magic. The next time a hostile Spell or Invocation is directed against the target, that event fails and the blessing is gone.
5 hits	Protect someone against hostile magic. For this scene, the target gains a d10 of Magic Resistance Trait (<i>Ironclaw</i> , p. 65) This only works on willing targets.
6 hits	Create a wall of spiny growth, as above, but in a circle up to seven paces in diameter.
7 hits	Cause twenty years' growth worth of hawthorn in but a minute. Or, grant the target the Trait of Magic Resistance permanently, starting at d4. The target's hair (and fur, if any) will become bristly, and they will constantly smell of hawthorn blossoms.

Oak

A nut-bearing tree, oaks trees grow very tall and very wide, and to many they are a symbol of strength, durability and power. Oak bark tans quite nicely, and it can also be used to make a red dye. In some traditions, the Oak is the "World Tree" that supports the world, instead of the Ash. There is a popular conceit that oak trees attract lightning more than any other sort of tree, and that that they can survive the experience and continue to grow only adds to their reputation of durability. The path of the Oak tree is preferred by more men than women.



<i>Hits</i>	<i>Possible Invocation</i>
1 hit	Produce an acorn from thin air.
2 hits	Remove all signs of hunger and thirst from the target.
3 hits	Toughen oneself against hardship. Until the next sunrise or sunset, include your Blessed Trait Dice with your Soak Dice.
4 hits	Strengthen others against adversity. Until the next sunrise or sunset, the target may include your Blessed Trait Dice with their Soak Dice.
5 hits	Call down the lightning to smite someone. The target suffers 3d12 Damage, and must be either outside or near a window. (The Conditions should be "favorable" to this, too.)
6 hits	Until the next new moon, the target may make three times as many Healing Tests per day.
7 hits	Summon forth nigh-indestructibility for yourself. Until the next sunrise or sunset, you gain 3d12 Soak Dice and 3d12 Magic Resistance Dice that are effective against everything except lightning.

Holly

The Holly Tree has always been regarded as a potent life symbol, because of its year-long foliage and because it bears fruit even in winter. The wood of the Holly is a favorite for making spears. The Holly is seen as sympathetic to animals, and good for the gift of prophecy. Like the Oak, the Holly is considered masculine.

Hits	Possible Invocation
1 hit	Divine for information on animals; what's currently hiding in the area, or what's passed through in the past few hours.
2 hits	Bless any weapon that's made of holly. Such a weapon will be able to damage any "Unholy" creatures, such as the Undead, and all hits caused by the blessed weapon against them are always Overwhelming Hits. Or, calm any surly animal, no matter how hostile. Or, summon any small animal, weighing no more than a half-stone.
3 hits	Summon a group of small animals. Or, perform a divination of the future – ask the spirits for a sign. The more hits you score, the more overt and detailed the sign will be, but the Game Host should call for an Augury Test vs. an appropriate difficulty to read the results correctly.
4 hits	Summon forth a rain of holly spears. Treat this as a Homing Spell that falls upon a Group of Targets, causing 5d8 damage.
7 hits	Summon forth a holly-shafted spear with a wood-fired tip. You can choose the weight of the Spear (from Quarter-Stone to Full-Stone). All hits caused by this spear are Overwhelming Hits.

Hazel

The Hazel tree produces nuts all year round, and thus is seen as sympathetic to fertility. Its wood is unusually flexible, and a popular choice for dowsing rods. Since metals and spring waters are seen as expressions of the "fertility of the earth", it is only natural that the wood of the Hazel is good for dowsing.

Dowsing is the practice of walking a line in contemplation, often using a "dowsing rod" or some other pointer, while looking for either rare metals or for personal items that may be found nearby. A wand is not necessary, though it certainly improves the Conditions of invoking this type of Blessing. While dowsing, you walk slowly and carefully, sometimes several times over the same path, as you sense whether you are getting "warmer" or "colder"; if you have a dowsing rod, it will vibrate more strongly as you get closer.

The Hazel tree blossoms early in the year. It is also traditionally associated with knowledge and initiation.

Hits	Possible Invocation
1 hit	Ask for some sign for the correct answer to a particular moral dilemma or legal issue. The more hits you score, the more overt and detailed the sign will be, but the Game Host should call for an Augury Test vs. an appropriate difficulty to read the results correctly.
2 hits	Force a target to test their Mind & Will against your current roll. If they Fail, they will suffer from the Flaw of "Lustful" (<i>Ironclaw</i> , p. 100) for the next day or so. If they Overwhelmingly Fail, they will suffer from the flaw of "Romance" (<i>Ironclaw</i> , p. 102) against a target of your choosing.
3 hits	Dowse for a precious metal, or for a specific object described to you in detail from someone. Or, ensure that the next natural coupling of the target this month will result in fertile offspring. Or, instill serenity within the target. You can cure any bad Mental State, such as the result of a hostile Green & Purple Spell, or a State of Rage.
4 hits	Bless a target (or yourself) with some bit of wisdom to help you through your next mental tribulation. The next time something happens that would make the target angry, depressed, or would change their Mental State for poorer, they will instead remember your kind counsel. The change will fail, and the blessing will be gone.
7 hits	Cure the target of some Flaw that impairs good judgment, such as "Faltering", "Gullible", or "Wrathful." Or, install the Flaw of "Lustful" within the target, permanently.

Vine

The Vine is not really a tree, but the grape vine. Grapes are thought to symbolize resurrection, since their strength can be preserved within wine. It is worth noting that the word “spirit” applies to both alcoholic beverages (such as wine) and to ghosts and other ethereal beings. One belief is that the “altered state” of intoxication can open one up to visions. The less charitable see those who pursue this path as seeking an excuse to get drunk a lot.



Hits	Possible Invocation
1 hit	Judge the quality of the vines growing on the vine, or the wine currently fermenting.
2 hits	Force the target to test their Body vs. 2d6 or become Drunk. Most rolls suffer a -1 Penalty until the target gets a good night's sleep to sober up. Or, you yourself become drunk, as above, but you also have the Trait of Second Sight (<i>Ironclaw</i> , p. 65) equal to your Blessed Trait Dice, until you sober up. Or, cause a month's worth of fermentation to happen in a day. Or, postpone rot on a corpse until the next full moon.
3 hits	Let a character re-roll their last Death Test, as per the spell "Life's Whisper" (<i>Ironclaw</i> , p. 219). Or, cure a hangover.
4 hits	Prevent a corpse from ever decaying. Note that this may trap the soul within this world, which makes for an angry ghost. Or, cause a year's worth of fermentation to happen in a day.
5 hits	Cause an entire vineyard to experience a season's growth in only one day.
7 hits	While presiding over the corpse, you may try to summon the soul into your place on the material world. If the soul is still yet untethered, the body will be resurrected. If the soul has reincarnated, then the reincarnation will appear before you and is likely to be quite disoriented.

Ivy

Ivy is often used as decoration, or to bind and fasten things. Like the Vine, it grows all year round and is sympathetic to life and resurrection; however, the Ivy also chokes and destroys other trees, and thus is also part of death and decay. The clinging nature also connotes attachment and dependence.

Hits	Possible Invocation
1 hit	Cause an ivy to grow a season's worth in but a day. Or, heal the target of one Fatigue per hit you score.
2 hits	Bind a target with ensnaring ivy, testing your roll vs. their Speed and ensnaring the target if you Succeed. The target must test Strength vs. 2d10 to break free, or must cut themselves free by causing at least five hits of damage to the ivy with an appropriate cutting weapon (such as a knife, claws, or teeth) vs. the ivy's Soak of 2d6. Or, cause ivy to wither and die, freeing up a target bound as above. Or, heal the target of one Wound for every two hits you score. Or, divine the names of the target's loved ones and close relatives, and images of what they look like. (The more hits you score, the better your perception.)
3 hits	Find a target using a synecdoche link. The more hits you score, the better the divination – three hits would tell you with about a 20% margin of error, four hits would give you 10%, five hits would give you 5%, etc.
4 hits	Bind a Group of targets with ensnaring ivy, as above.
5 hits	Bind a single target with ensnaring ivy, as above, and also choke them; the target suffocates (<i>Ironclaw</i> , p. 188) until freed.
7 hits	Destroy a large building, as climbing ivy over-runs it, toppling stone walls and strangling those who cannot run away. This makes for a lot of angry ghosts.

Elder

The elder is a water-side tree with red or violet-black fruit and fragrant white or pink flowers that bloom at their peak in midsummer. It is also called the "pipe tree" because its pith can be easily removed to make pipes and flutes; thus, an invoker of Elder tree magic often smokes a pipe. In some places, folks kindle fires by blowing through hollowed elder branches.

The inner bark and the flowers are used by herbalists for therapeutic medicines, although doses should be measured carefully as the elder is somewhat poisonous. Elderberry wine can be quite delicious.

Hits	Possible Invocation
1 hit	Control the direction and shape of drifting smoke. Or, ignite a small fire, as per the Elemental Spell "Create Fire" (<i>Ironclaw</i> , p. 208).
2 hits	Cause a target to feel ill. That target must test their Body & Will vs. your Invocation Dice, or they will suffer a -1 Penalty on all actions until their next full sleep.
3 hits	Cure an illness in the target. Or, call forth a spirit, in the form of a cloud of smoke, from its habitation.
4 hits	Fill an area about five paces wide with choking, impenetrable smoke. None can see through it, and Smell Tests (<i>Ironclaw</i> , p. 149) will likewise be impossible. Those who do not flee the smoke will suffocate (<i>Ironclaw</i> , p. 188).
5 hits	Dismiss an evil spirit, or destroy up to a dozen Undead creatures, with much fire and brimstone.
7 hits	Cause all ghosts and spirits within a league to manifest themselves as visible smoke.

Reed

Reeds bend easily, and also break; as such, they symbolize flexibility but also fragility. Reeds are often used to make light arrows. The syrinx, or pandean, is a wind instrument made of reeds tied together, so a Blessed may take up the instrument to make Conditions more favorable to their Invocations.



Hits	Possible Invocation
1 hit	Create a slight breeze, enough to ruffle the grass and make candle flames falter.
2 hits	Cause the music played from a reed instrument to instill a "panic" within listeners. The targets must test their Mind & Will against your own roll; those who lose are either thrilled with Fear (as per a Fear Test, <i>Ironclaw</i> , p. 134) or overcome with Rage (as per the Green & Purple Spell "Rage", <i>Ironclaw</i> , p. 225), at the Game Host's discretion. Or, bless any arrow that's made of a reed. Such a missile will be able to damage any "Unholy" creatures, such as the Undead, and all hits caused by the blessed weapon against them are always Overwhelming Hits.
3 hits	Weaken an inanimate object, so that when you strike it, it breaks like a reed. This works well on walls, doors, locks, etc. It has no effect on animals or people.
4 hits	Summon forth a rain of reed arrows. Treat this as a Homing Spell that falls upon a Group of Targets, causing 6d4 damage.
5 hits	Cause your unfortunate target to be bent backwards. Treat this as an attack that causes 2d12 damage and bypasses all Armor, going directly off Soak.
7 hits	Summon forth a howling wind over the landscape, the sound of which chills all to the very bone. All within three leagues suffer a Fear Test (<i>Ironclaw</i> , p. 134) vs. d12.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Blessed

Is “Blessed” a Career? Can I choose it as my starting Career?

No, the Special Trait of “Blessed” is *not* a Career, although it does apply to useful skills. You cannot choose “Blessed” as your starting Career. Recommended Careers for Blessed characters include “Ascetic” (*Ironclaw*, p. 49), “Hierarch”, “Midwife”, and even “Witch-Hunter” (*Ironclaw*, p. 63).

To begin play as a Blessed, you must buy the Gift of “Extra Trait” (*Ironclaw*, p. 79). Remember, though, that at Character Creation you can allocate your Trait Dice however you want—for example, you could drop your starting d12 into Blessed, if you want.

Can I learn both Blessed powers and other powers, such as Atavism or Magic?

Yes. Blessed powers mix well with Atavism, and some Paths complement the scholarly pursuits of Wizardly Magic. The only disadvantage is that the Character will have to divide their Experience to study multiple disciplines.

Who can study Blessed Paths?

The Lutarists of Doloreaux keep the study of the Blessed Paths to themselves. The Hierarchs only teach the secrets to their own, and only to those who they feel won’t misuse the power for selfish reasons. Calling the spirits for favors, after all, is not something to be taken lightly.

Unfortunately for the Hierarchs, there is no way for them to control *who* is Blessed and who is not. It’s almost always a “born talent.” Even without schooling, a Blessed Character can “experiment” on their own to learn the Paths.

It is very, very rare for someone to just “become Blessed”. Game Hosts are discouraged from letting a Player simply buy a Blessed Trait through Experience—the Character should have some spiritual moment or epiphany at the moment of their calling. This moment can be a rich role-playing opportunity.

How do Magic Spells and Blessed Invocations interact?

Wizardly Magic is the “power from within”—the Wizard calls upon their own internal energies to manifest supernatural power. Blessed Invocations are the “power from without”—the Blessed asks the spirits inherent in this living earth to grant a favor beyond the providence of normal understanding. While these two disciplines are similar in that they “go against natural law”, the ways they are used and the powers they draw upon are as different as night and day.

The two powers can contest one another, but usually with mixed results. The Game Host, as usual, is the final arbiter of what affects what. Here are some general rules:

- Counter-Magic Spells, such as “Counter-Spell” or “Dispel Magic”, have *no* effect upon Invocations, including ones of “duration” such as blessings.
- The only Blessed Path that affects all Magic Spells is the Path of Hawthorn. The Path of Alder affects only Elementalism spells.
- The Thaumaturge Spell “Protection from Rain” (*Ironclaw*, p. 235) will completely shield a target from any Blessed-Invoked “rain”.
- The Special Trait of “Magic Resistance” (*Ironclaw*, p. 65) has no effect for or against Invocations. In fact, some of the most powerful Blessed characters have high Magic Resistance!

- The White Magic spells of “Cure” (*Ironclaw*, p. 218, 220, 222) can remove the effects of Invocations from targets – compare the Cure Effect Dice to the Blessed’s Invocation Dice. The spell “Scry Spirit” (p. 219, 307) will reveal any blessings or curses made by Invocations, since spirits will be causing the effects.

Can a Character be a “Blessed” from a “Past Life”?

Since someone with such a strong spiritual tie is likely to retain those ties in the next lifetime, it is logical that a Blessed would have lived one or more lives before. However, you can’t buy a “Past Life” Trait (see page 37) that *applies* to Blessed Invocation rolls. Past Lives are for previous Careers, and sometimes Races. Simply buy a Blessed Trait with the “reason” being that your Character is reincarnated. If you want, buy another Extra Trait for your Past Life, as well.

The rules say a Blessed is supposed to avoid living a “violent life” – what does that mean? As a Game Host, what should I be doing to keep track of “violent acts” and how should I implement this in my game?

A “violent life” is one where one frequently takes up arms against others, where one strikes at people with the intent to cause physical harm, where one calls upon the Blessed Paths to attack others in dire ways. There’s no precise, empirical rule as to “what’s violent” – some cases will be obvious (for example, bludgeoning someone upside the head with a mace would be “violent”), others will not (for example, grappling someone to keep them from running off.)

As a Game Host, you should look at the Blessed powers in terms of “you reap what you sow.” If a Player Character continually calls down the lightning to smite people, then they’re going to be followed by “violent spirits.” If an Invocation fails by only one hit ... well, those spirits are determined to call down the lightning to smite *someone*, and they may not be too choosy about who the target is. Also, “bad luck” is usually the result of being followed around by malevolent spirits — and a violent Blessed attracts these spirits like a magnet. A violent Blessed PC’s Botches should be more severe and “bloody.” For example: a Botched Survival Test may result in the PC twisting their ankle; a Botched To-Hit Roll will almost definitely result in either self-injury or the injury of a team-mate; a Botched Hide Test could have the PC falling out of a tree.

The only sure-fire way to get rid of “angry spirits” is to live a peaceful life. If the PC refrains from using violence, the balance will shift back to “friendly spirits.” The Game Host is encouraged to play these effects up for role-playing opportunity.

Sample Blessed Characters

What follows are two examples of Characters who have the Blessed Trait. You can study these as examples of how to build a starting Player-Character with these powers, or they could serve as Non-Player-Characters in a campaign.

Letya of the Creeping Ivy

Raised on one of the numerous small farms found in Doloreaux lands, Letya had resigned herself to the life of her mother and grand-mothers, tilling the same soil year after year.... Then one morning, she awoke to find that creeping ivy had grown through her bedroom window and all around the sill, in just one night. Letya took this as a sign to leave her farm and join the ranks of the Hierarchs. Some doubt this claim, citing that her bad habits of tagging along and asking lots of questions are probably what gave her that appellation. Letya is an avid student and is always willing to help those in need, so she and others expect her to go far in her chosen calling.



Body d6, Speed d4, Mind d10, Will d8

Boar d4

Weapons: Tusks

Habitat: Forest

Sense Tests: Smell

Hierarch d8

Blessed d12

Skills (with Favorite Use)

d8	d12	Augury
	d12 d6	Blessed Lore (plants)
	d12 d6	Blessed Path: Birch (banishing spirits)
	d12 d6	Blessed Path: Elder (curing illness)
	d12 d12	Blessed Path: Ivy (ensnaring targets)
	d10	First Aid (on boars)
d8	d12	Herbalism
d8		Lutara Lore
	d4	Medicine (natural herbs)
d8		Psychology
d4		Resolve
	d8	Staff (with her favorite staff)
d4		Tracking

Gifts: Extra Trait (d4, 3 points); Hospitality (2 points); Luck (3 points); Tusks (1 point)

Flaws: Curious (-3 points); Gregarious (-1 point); Pacifism (Self-Defense Only; -3 points); Soft-Hearted (-3 points)

Armor: Reinforced Leather (d8, d4 & Soak d8)

Weapons: Half-Stone Staff (d8, d4 & Strength d6)

Equipment: Bracelet of Dried Ivy; Flute of Elder Wood; Roll of Birch Bark

Ferghus the Witch-Hunter

Some folks are born with a gift – a gift to ken that which is beyond most folks, to command a miraculous power, that they then use to set things right, to bring compassion and solace into an otherwise harsh world. Then there is Ferghus. The life of a peaceful holy-man was never to be his fate.

Short of temper and sharp of tongue, it is probably a good thing that Ferghus did not seek entry into the order of the Lutarist Hierarchs. Instead, he found his calling as an unlikely kind of mercenary: the witch-hunter. Fortunately, his innate understanding of the Blessed Path of Hawthorn has given him a serious edge when it comes to fighting rogue sorcerers.

A lifetime devoted to violence has made Ferghus a bit nervous about the dark spirits that follow him around, so he's careful to avoid walking under ladders and he always throws spilled salt over his shoulder, since he doesn't want to add any more "bad luck" than he already has.



Body d12, Speed d10, Mind d4, Will d4

Wolf d6

Weapons: Claws, Teeth

Habitat: Plains

Sense Tests: Listen, Smell

Witch-Hunter d8

Blessed d8

Skills (with Favorite Use)

	d8		Augury
		d12	Axe (with his favorite axe)
	d8		Blessed Lore
	d8	d12, d6	Blessed Path: Hawthorn (preventing spell-casting)
		d4	Dodge (vs. magic)
		d4	First Aid (on wolves)
		d4	Haggling (on bounties)
	d8		Herbalism
d6			Hiking
	d8	d4	Magic Lore (Black Magic)
	d8		Observation
	d8	d12	Resolve (vs. magic)
		d4	Shield (when standing his ground)
	d8	d4	Sixth Sense (vs. magic)
d6			Tactics
		d4	Thrown Axe (against those who have made him angry)
d6			Tracking

Gifts: Claws (1 point); Extra Trait (d4, 3 points); Howl (1 point); Prodigy (Blessed Path: Hawthorn, 7 points); Teeth (1 point)

Flaws: Coarse (-2 points); Gluttony (-1 point); Overconfident (-3 points); Superstitious (-1 point); Wrathful (-3 points)

Armor: Reinforced Leather (d8, d4 & Soak d12)

Shield: Shield (extra d10 with Defense Rolls)

Weapons: Half-Stone Axe (d10, d4 & Strength d12); two Hatchets

Equipment: Hawthorn Thorn embedded in glass (worn as a ring)

HEROES, VILLAINS, AND SUNDRY OTHERS

Being a List of Notable People in the Doloreaux Lands

What follows are write-ups of some of the personalities to be found, from the humble to the great. The Game Host is encouraged to change these as necessary, adding new Skills and changing abilities as they feel necessary.

For the Game Host Eyes Only...

In her write-up on page 60, it is mentioned that the Duchess Calendre was visited by a priestess when she was very young. But what she did not know was that this priestess was actually from a coven that worshipped the darker, "angrier" disciplines of the Old Faith. The priestess saved a lock of Calendre's hair, and now she and hers are sometimes able to use their magics through this synecdoche-link to shape the nature of the Duchess' dreams.

Calendre has been occasionally subjected to dreams wherein she is given advice on the best way to advance socially. She does not regard these dreams as sendings or external messages, but rather she believes them to be her own ideas. These dreams continue to this day, and are starting to become more and more ambitious. As a result, Calendre feels that she is destined to grow still more in temporal and religious power. She believes she will advance to the circle of the High Mystes, perhaps even to the role of Sacred Mother. More distant goals include the conquest of Epinian and Triskellian, and the establishment of a true Doloreaux empire that extends to the north and south coasts of Calabria. Calendre tolerates her husband's excesses and generally ignores him, having married him and borne him two sons (Tybault II and Didier) and a daughter (Mavise) out of convenience.

For the past thirty years, Selene DeLume (see page 62) has lived a simple life in the Great Garden in Bruges and has not set foot outside the garden since her eyes went completely blind a dozen years ago. Her daily ritual is a simple one of prayer and of granting advice and insight to others in the clergy. Selene has started to hear disturbing reports about Calendre, and worries that her selection may not have been divinely inspired.

Selene's concerns are justified. When the previous Great Mother died six years ago, Selene descended into the catacombs under her keep to seek guidance from Lutara and the spirits of the dead. However, the blind old sow did not realize that she was not alone in the crypt. A foul sprite and servant of dark gods, a Koblynau, (see page 81) awaited her. When Selene began her night of prayer, the creature caused her to fall asleep and planted the name "Calendre" in her mind...

Selene is very weak and will likely not live to see her hundredth birthday. When she dies, the Lutarist clergy will be very much in the hands of Calendre.... How this will shift the balance is up to individual Game Hosts.



Mercer the Fat

A retired regular soldier, the owner of the Goat's Head tavern in Auriville



A fat old boar with mangy brown fur, Mercer tends a bar in Auriville and is a veteran of the Chevernaise Pass, having served as a sergeant-at-arms. During the fighting, he saved the life of a minor noble and was granted a generous pension. He used this money to purchase a tavern in Auriville, *The Goat's Head*.

Over the years, the inn has fallen into disrepair and has developed a notorious and deserved reputation as a haven for mercenaries. Mercer doesn't care who drinks at his bar or sleeps in his rooms, provided they pay on time. If the players can befriend him, he will enjoy telling them stories about the fearsome Chevernaise warriors. They will also find him a good source of information about the local mercenary groups.

Body d8, Speed d10, Mind d8, Will d6

Boar d10 Weapons: Claws, Teeth Habitat: Plains Sense Tests: Listen, Smell

Merchant d10

Soldier d8

Skills (with Favorite Use)

	d10		Administration
		d10	Area Knowledge: Auriville (warrior hangouts)
	d10		Bribery
		d10	Carousing (among warriors)
	d10		Ciphering
		d8	Hiking
	d10		Literacy
		d10	Mace (with my favorite mace)
d10		d8	Resolve
		d8	Shield
		d8	Spear
		d6	Streetwise (about bar-goers)
d10			Tracking

- Gifts: Tusks
Flaws: Corpulent (-3); Failing Health
Armor: Reinforced Leather (d8, d4 & Soak d8)
Weapons: Half-Stone Mace (kept under the bar; d10, d4 & d8)



Duke Tybault d'Doloreaux

The High Lord of the Noble House



The Duke is a middle-aged boar, but still hearty and hale after years of campaigning. He presents a front as an active and strong-minded ruler, and will maintain this front if any players meet him. However, he is ruled by pride and lust. He is easily swayed by a promise of romance or the suggestion that a given action might make him look foolish.

Tybault is unaware of his wife's true position. He dislikes her and sees her as a nagging annoyance, and he spends most of his nights entertaining a series of young mistresses of every race. His affairs are an "open secret" in the court, but Tybault has enough discretion to not be too open about his liaisons. He has fathered many children over the years: three legitimate heirs and many unacknowledged bastards.

Body d10, Speed d8, Mind d6, Will d8

Boar d10

Weapons: Tusks

Habitat: Forest

Sense Tests: Smell

Cavalier d12

Skills (with Favorite Use)

	d6	Administration (governor's duties)
	d8	Etiquette (impressing women)
	d10	Bribery (to keep mouths shut)
d12	d6	Heraldry Lore (Doloreaux)
	d10	Literacy (love poetry)
	d12, d8	Mace (with favorite mace)
	d10	Seduction (with promises of riches)
d10	d10	Resolve (when leading troops to battle)
d10	d8	Tracking (game)
	d12	d8 Riding (with his favorite destrier)
	d12	Shield
	d12	d8 Sword (with favorite sword)

Gifts: Nobility (Duke), Strong, Tusks, Wealth

Flaws: Lustful, Proud

A armor: Proved Plate Mail (2d12, d6 & Soak d10)

Weapons: Full-Stone Mace (2d10, d4 & Strength d10); Quarter-Stone Sword



Duchess Calendre d'Doloreaux

Wife of Duke Tybault and High Priestess of Lutarism



Calendre is some twenty years younger than her husband the Duke. Physically, Calendre has a prominent snout and large tusks, with flaming red fur. She dresses in elaborate gowns, bedecked with precious stones and sewn with gold and silver threads. She is a willful and intelligent woman, but not especially gifted supernaturally by The Lady.

In fact, Calendre has yet to receive a vision from Lutara at the bi-annual ceremonies. Instead, she pretends to channel the goddess and gives directions that make sense in her own mind. If the clergy were to find this out it would create a great schism in the faith. Calendre knows this and is quick to discredit and to punish any dissenters.

Calendre was born into the nobility, and she received training as a priestess as soon as she was of an appropriate age. As a young acolyte, she was apprenticed to an eccentric old priestess who had a smattering of magical talent.

Body d8, Speed d8, Mind d12, Will d12

Boar d10

Weapons: Tusks

Habitat: Forest

Sense Tests: Smell

Dilettante d10

Hierarch d8

Blessed d6

Skills (with Favorite Use)

			d10	Administration (Doloreaux)
	d8	d6	d8	Augury (interpreting dreams)
		d6	d10	Blessed Lore (and dreams)
		d6	d12	Blessed Path: Ash (for clear dreams)
		d6	d6	Blessed Path: Birch (banishing spirits)
		d6	d4	Blessed Path: Hawthorn (for sparking fires)
		d6	d8	Blessed Path: Hazel (asking for signs)
d10				Etiquette
d10				Fencing
d10				Heraldry Lore
	d8	d6		Herbalism
			d8	Law (Doloreaux)
d10				Literacy
	d8		d12, d8	Lutara Lore (High Mystes secrets)
	d8		d8	Psychology (detecting lies)
d10				Resolve
		d6		Sixth Sense
d10				Tracking

Gifts: Nobility (Duchess); Tusks; Wealth

Flaws: Corpulent (-1); Envious; Overconfident

Armor: None (Soak d8)

Weapons: Dagger (d8 & Strength d8)



Sir Simon Cattermeaux

Governor of Mortemere



Simon is a contemplative boar in his late thirties. His pelt is almost black, and he is taller and slimmer than most men. He often seems troubled, and can be found gazing out at the ice floes in the northern ocean.

Simon is the governor of the “free” town of Mortemere on the extreme north coast of Calabria. He is technically here only to “advise” the rulers, a minor house of Shrews known as the Avinge. As they no longer have any real noble families left, he is essentially in charge. Simon was sent here fifteen years ago after he courted and bedded the wife of another lord. His exile to Mortemere was intended as a dire punishment, but the brash young knight was transformed by the town and its humble inhabitants. He now dreads his occasional visits back to the Doloreaux court, preferring the simple life he has found in this distant outpost of civilization.

Body d8, Speed d8, Mind d10, Will d10

Boar d6

Weapons: Tusks

Habitat: Forest

Sense Tests: Smell

Dilettante d8

		Skills (with Favorite Use)	
	d6	Administration (governor's duties)	
d8	d8	Etiquette (making excuses to leave early)	
d8		Fencing	
d8		Heraldry Lore	
d8		Literacy	
	d8	Observation (Listening)	
	d4	Ocean Lore (whales)	
d6	d10	Resolve (when standing his ground)	
d6		Tracking	

Gifts: Nobility (Baron); Tusks; Wealth

Flaws: Curious; Morose

Armor: Chain Mail (d12 & Soak d8)

Shield: Shield (include d10 with all Defense Rolls)

Weapons: Half-Stone Sword (d12, d4 & Strength d8)

Selene DeLume

Great Mother Of Lutarism, Public Leader of the Old Faith



Selene is an old, frail sow. Her pelt is grizzled and grayish-white, and her eyes are dead, covered completely by milky cataracts. She was once very tall, but is now stooped and bent.

Selene was born to a peasant family in the mining village 96 summers ago. She always had the ability to see spirits and hear voices no one else could, and so came to the attention of the local clergy. She began her training as a priestess at the age of seven, and was a full priestess by the time she was fourteen. At the age of 30, she became the advisor and court seer to the late Duke Brutere, grandfather of Tybault. Near the end of his life, Brutere raised an army meant to capture the Chevernaise Pass. Selene consulted the stars and sought guidance from Lutara. Both sources indicated a great defeat was eminent. She advised against the move, but the strong-willed Brutere went ahead with the invasion with disastrous results. This marked the last time in recent history that the Lutarists were unable to sway the Duke. The Duke died soon after, and his son was much more tractable. Soon after the installation of the new Duke, the old High Priestess died. Selene was next in line.

Body d6, Speed d4, Mind d10, Will d12

Boar d4

Weapons: Tusks

Habitat: Forest

Sense Tests: Smell

Hierarch d12

Blessed d12, d8

Second Sight d10

Skills (with Favorite Use)

d12	d12, d8	d10	Augury
	d12, d8	d12	Blessed Lore (High Mystes secrets)
	d12, d8	d12	Blessed Path: Alder (for teaching)
	d12, d8	d8	Blessed Path: Ash (for divination)
	d12, d8	d8	Blessed Path: Birch (banishing ghosts)
	d12, d8	d10	Blessed Path: Hazel (for wisdom)
	d12, d8	d6	Blessed Path: Oak (for calling down lightning)
	d12, d8	d8	Blessed Path: Reed (for blessing arrows)
	d12, d8	d10	Blessed Path: Rowan (for wartime blessings)
d12	d12, d8		Herbalism
d12		d12, d8	Lutara Lore (High Mystes secrets)
d12			Psychology
d4			Resolve
		d10	Sixth Sense
d4			Tracking

Gifts: Good Reputation among the Doloreaux (Common, Extreme); Hospitality; Local Investiture: High Mystes; Tusks

Flaws: Blind; Frail; Failing Health; Weak

Armor: None (Soak d4)

Weapons: None (Strength d4)

Chloe Javert

Inn-keeper and Bisclavret Spy



A fit wolf woman in her mid-thirties, Chloe is tall with a brownish pelt. She generally dresses in light, colorful clothing and is a notorious flirt with her patrons. She manages and own *The Oak & Rowan Inn*, a popular common house and inn in the outer city of Bruges. The bar is a regular meeting place for adventurers of all kinds.

Chloe has a secret. She is not a simple innkeeper, but rather a Bisclavret spy. She was sent to Bruges eight years ago to keep an eye on the political situation. Once a month, a courier arrives to her inn, under the guise of a traveler, and she gives him her written report. Of late, she has been charged with discovering more about the nature and power of the High Mystes. She has considered a midnight foray into Selene DeLume's keep. However, Chloe has come to enjoy living in Bruges and would rather not get endanger her position with active intelligence gathering of this kind. She may hire adventurers, assuming they have the appropriate credentials and there is little or no chance of herself being implicated. (In other words, whoever she hires will have to be expendable.).

Body d8, Speed d10, Mind d8, Will d6

Wolf d4

Weapons: Claws, Teeth

Habitat: Plains

Sense Tests: Listen, Smell

Merchant d6

Spy d12

Skills (with Favorite Use)

d6		Administration
	d12	Area Knowledge: Bruges (where scofflaws hang out)
d6	d10	Bribery (Doloreaux officials)
	d10	Carousing (convincing the other party to buy the drinks)
	d12	Cartography
d6		Ciphering
	d12	Disguise
	d12	d12 Fast-Talk ("But I'm an innocent barkeep!")
d4		Hiking
	d6	Literacy
	d12	Streetwise
d4		Tactics
d4		Tracking

Gifts: Claws; Guild Membership (Journeyman of Innkeeper's Guild); Howl; Teeth

Flaws: Scofflaw

Armor: Light Leather (d6 & Soak d8)

Weapons: Quarter-Stone Sword (d12 & Strength d8), Dagger



MARTYR OF THE CATACOMBS

*Being an Adventure That Reveals a Secret Malignance
Thought Buried Safely Away and Out of Mind*

"Martyr of the Catacombs" is designed for 2 to 5 players. Most groups should be able to finish the adventure in one or two play sessions.

The adventure takes place in Bruges, seat of Doloreaux power. It will take the players on a tour of the city, will introduce them to some of its most prominent citizens, and will present them with opportunity for glory, gold, and adventure. It starts with a murder mystery and ends with a grand confrontation. While this adventure is written specifically for Doloreaux adventurers, or freelance adventurers working for them, it can certainly be adjusted to involve players from other houses or independent characters.

Introduction

There are secret places in the bones of Calabria. There are hidden basements and sewers where thieves skulk and lizards breed. There are wild black caves where pale, eyeless creatures pad their way through absolute and unending night. Under the stone flags of the city streets, underground paths run for miles – through abandoned sewers, cellars, and stranger places. Above, ten thousand pairs of feet may tread every square inch of road every hour. Below, only the rare bold and foolhardy soul will venture.

Bruges, the seat of power for House Doloreaux, hides many such secret places. The city is famous for its extensive catacombs, some of which have not been explored in living memory. The catacombs were constructed for an unknown purpose in an earlier age and link deep underground to natural caverns in the Rothos Mountains. In turn, these cave systems run northward for uncounted leagues. No explorer has ever penetrated far into their inky fastness, but peasant legends tell of wanderers entering the tunnels in Bruges and emerging weeks later in the Chevernaise Pass. No one takes these legends seriously... but there are other stories as well.

The credulous will whisper to each other of monsters and ghosts haunting the tunnels below the city. They tell stories of children snatched from cellars and basements – taken without a trace, without explanation, never to be seen again. They frighten each other with tales about ghostly figures condemned to forever walk the lightless paths. Some even talk of monsters from the time of the Autarchs, horrible magical creatures who wait in grim caverns for the return of the Wizard-Kings. These stories are not true ... but the truth about the Catacombs of Bruges may be even stranger.

What Has Gone On Before

For some time, Doctor Hubert Plith the fox has been studying the secrets of the past, intent on discovering the hidden paths of power that the Autarchs must surely have used. He has become an accomplished Wizard, to the point of even finding a volume from the very rare *Seven Virtues of Kyndranigar*. Dr. Plith later gave up on the hermetic discipline of Wizardry, feeling that it must be "too recent" of a system to be the same methods of the Wizard-Kings of yore.

Dr. Plith sought to study the Blessed Paths. Being an outsider and without inborn talent, the ways of Invocation seemed beyond him. He was not discouraged, however. He felt he only required the right "teacher". And there were many barrows and catacombs to be found. Surely if one were willing to suffer the risks of Black Magic, he reasoned, one could find a soul attached to a corpse who could tell him otherwise.

To this end, Dr. Plith found a copy of *The Book of Black Magic* by Frater Pephredo and studied the spells. Then under the guise of a medical doctor, he has moved into Bruges, offering treatment to the non-Doloreaux folk. At the same time, he made the acquaintance of Hilliam Luce, a scoundrel and grave-robber. For many years, Plith paid Luce and his cohorts to excavate certain tombs and bring him the bodies. Luce believed it was for medical research – indeed, he had other clients of similar interest.

After hobnobbing with the royalty of Bruges, Dr. Plith found his greatest discovery – Lord Pascaline, a Doloreaux lord with a sizeable fortune and an interest in occult matters. Pascaline had an interest in Septagus, the mythic figure from the past who supposedly commanded supernatural power. The doctor ingratiated himself with the lord, and eventually he moved in as "staff physician". This gave Plith a place to stay and access to the library at all hours. A few months later, Dr. Plith recommended the services of Hilliam Luce to the lord, mentioning that Luce would work for half as much as a regular manservant. Lord Pascaline agreed to hire Luce and install him at the manor, unaware that Dr. Plith was paying the rest of Luce's salary out of his own pocket.

Plith eventually came to the conclusion that the forbidden island in the river contained the "lost" tomb of Septagus, and within would be the secret he was looking for...

Lord Pascaline may have been a bit on in years, but as of late he had become wary that Dr. Plith's true intentions of study may be more than just academic. Pascaline cautioned his friend to dismiss any ideas of traveling to the Barrows, but the doctor was insistent that there was much to be learned.

One night, as Plith was coming for his weekly visit, he heard Pascaline discussing the matter with Hilliam Luce. The doctor also heard that Luce, having become accustomed to living at the manor, having become tired of poking around in damp catacombs, and now having reservations about disturbing the most feared figure in Doloreaux history, was all too willing to follow the lord's orders to bring the matter before the Duke and the clergy. Luce agreed to carry a letter from the lord to the capital in the morning.

After Luce left, Lord Pascaline placed paper and pen on his writing desk and set to work drafting the letter. Dr. Plith entered the room using a duplicate key he had prepared for this purpose. He prepared a knife that he had "borrowed" from Luce, using the Black Magic spell *Instrument of Vengeance* to put the spell of *Tapping the Soul* on the blade. Using a skeleton-key that he had prepared for the purpose, he stealthily entered Lord Pascaline's room and stabbed him in the back, activating the spell and drawing the life-force out of the poor man. As he waited for Pascaline to perish from his mortal wound, Plith then used the spell from the Virtue of Culture to steal Pascaline's skill, "Lutarist Lore (Favored Use: materials pertaining to Septagus)". After he heard the sound of Pascaline's death gurgle, he ripped up the note, left the room, and locked the door. He then set up an uproar and summoned Gavroche, Pascaline's valet, so that the two of them could "discover" the body together. When they did, Plith called for the night watch.

When our adventure begins, the reward is being issued for Luce's arrest. Hilliam Luce, realizing he has been made the fall-guy, is now in hiding at Maxim Bauer's shop. Doctor Plith is making arrangements to rendezvous with some of Luce's former associates and to sail out to the Barrows.



Hooks

In order to “hook” your Player Characters into this plot, there has to be something that would involve the players in the upcoming events. Get to know your player’s Characters, and their motivations. Here are some suggested hooks:

- Do any of your PCs have Investiture or Duties to uphold the law? They will immediately be aware of the bounty on Hilliam Luce.
- Is one or more of your players nobility of some standing? They may be personal friends of Pascaline and may have known him personally. Also, it is not unknown for nobles to give one another “hospitality” – perhaps the player would want to show up for a meal and lodging at no charge, only to find his prospect has been murdered.
- Are any of your PCs of a criminal bent? They may know of Hilliam Luce by reputation, maybe even they’ve worked with him before. Anyone who knows Luce would know that he prefers stealth to violence, that if he were a spy — which is likely to be true — he’d be more likely to sneak off into the night than to murder someone in cold blood.
- Academic PCs, such as Scholars and Archeologists, might know that Pascaline has collected some information on the prehistory of the Doloreaux.
- If the players enjoy the patronage of the inn-keeper Chbe Javert (see page 63), she may ask them to look into the matter. After all, anything that increases the normal Doloreaux antipathy towards outsiders is bad for her business. She will offer the players an additional five aureals on top of the official reward.

The Killer

In the twisting streets of Outer Bruges, rumors are flying like the dead leaves. In the taverns, at the marketplace, and even in the shrines, everyone is talking about one thing — Lord Evard Pascaline de Doloreaux has been robbed and assassinated, killed after prayers in his private shrine, late last night! Word on the street is that a member of his household staff, a feline named Hilliam Luce, was paid by some foreign power to kill his master. Luce has since fled, which is proof of his guilt.

The next day after the murder, handbills have been printed up, reading:

Wanted for judgment! Hilliam Luce, murderer of the revered and aged Lord Pascaline. He is a thin feline, dark-furred, short, with a taciturn disposition. Caution must be taken, as he carries a brace of pistols at all times. Citizens are urged to grant him no quarter. Those who capture him, alive or dead, will be rewarded richly by His Highness the Duke, to the sum of twenty aureals.

Questions the Players may ask about the Murder

The Player Characters may engage in Gossip Tests (*Ironclaw*, p. 137) to ask around about the Lord. Here are some typical answers they would get from the local lay-folk of Bruges. You, as the Game Host, are encouraged to make up personalities and faces to go with these quotes, depending on where your PCs prefer to hang out (bars, parties, alleyways, market-places, etc.)

Who was this Lord Pascaline?

Pascaline was in some ways a reformer. He chose to live in the Outer City, and was renowned for his generosity to the poor of the city. A famous story tells how he once donated twenty denarii to a beggar who came to his door seeking nothing more than a meal. Pascaline was an elderly bachelor and has left no heirs. His death has aroused great public outcry and brought the natural Doloreaux suspicion of outsiders to the forefront.

Pascaline was also a famous scholar. In his youth he would spend days at a time in the catacombs, copying ancient runes. Of late he has been content to research in books and the follow up on the study of others.

The Outer City has been closed to outgoing traffic, and extra watchmen patrol the walls. Likewise, the Inner City has been sealed. Otherwise, business continues as usual...except for the occasional party of armed citizens combing the streets.

Even if the players have no previous official status, be sure to tell them that freelance adventurers can present themselves to a magistrate and asked to be deputized. If the party looks reputable, or at least competent, they are given papers that grant them the equivalent of the low justice advantage. However, this special status applies *only* to catching Luce and any possible confederates. They will lose their right to low justice as soon as a suspect is tried and found guilty.

Clues and Leads

If the players have any kind of official status they will be told the following information. If they insist on investigating independently, some of the information might be made available as rumors.

The first person to find the body was Pascaline's personal physician, Dr. Hubert Plith. He tried to restore the old boar to life, but Pascaline was just too far gone. Plith immediately summoned the watch. He claims to have seen Luce fleeing the house with bag. Later, it was discovered that several small but valuable trinkets had been stolen from the manor. (Those with training in Medicine who can Succeed in a test vs. 2d4 will determine that the wound to Pascaline, while grave, was not fatal. Poisoning may have been involved, possibly magic – but what kind of magic kills while leaving no mark?)

Nobles or investigators working directly for a noble will know that Pascaline had long been out of favor with the Duke and Duchess. The Duchess has been known to refer to him as a "fool and gutter-muck toady." They will also know that Pascaline was never particularly reverent when it came to observing the rituals and holy days.

Members of the clergy will also talk about Pascaline's lack of religious fervor. They will also be told not to trust Dr. Plith – he is an "intellectual" and a non-believer.

Assuming the players have decided to take on the job of tracking down Luce, there are a number of different options available to them. The most obvious ones are listed below. The time taken in the investigation is quite important. If the players have not found Luce four hours after beginning their investigation in earnest, he will be cornered by the city-watch. At this point, the host should proceed immediately to the section entitled "Where is Luce?"

Searching Pascaline's Manor

If the players choose to search the murder scene or question the Pascaline's servants, they will find the manor in an uproar. Mourning locals surround the garden walls, and inside are his four servants and about 20 officials of one sort or another are looking around.

The building gate itself is guarded by two Doloreaux watchmen, with about three more surrounding the premises. They will refuse admittance to anyone who isn't "acting in the state's best interests." They will probably shoo unsavory types away, such as those with the Flaw of "Scofflaw". PCs who are Nobility or have some sort of Investiture should be able to gain entrance. The guards can be bribed for 12 denarii (see "Bribe Test", *Ironclaw*, p. 132) — they would let the PCs in, but they will remind the PCs that there are servants and such who would be sure to see if they try to steal anything.

Sneaking in to the house is next to impossible during the day, with the crowd of onlookers and the guards (see "Sneak Test", *Ironclaw*, p. 149, suggested difficulty 3d12). At night, it will be

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somewhat easier (suggested difficulty of 2d10). Players are encouraged to come up with clever ways to investigate, such as distracting the guard, using magic or other powers, etc.

The manor house is three stories tall, and made of stone. It is surrounded by a small walled garden.

Last, but not least, there is a duo of independent investigators. They are Kierns, a feline bounty-hunter, and an ape highwayman named Roncalli. Roncalli is currently in disguise as a manservant to Kierns. The trio will leave soon after the players arrive. Game hosts should use their presence to stress that there are others looking for Luce, and the clock is ticking....

Gavroche has been pressed into service as the major-domo, or "head servant", since Hilliam Luce has disappeared. He is a middle-aged boar, with his posture stooped and his hands gnarled from a lifetime of physical labor such as rebuilding walls, re-shingling roofs, and the like. Dealing with people is not something he enjoys.

Questions the PCs may ask of Gavroche

Who was Lord Pascaline?

"One could not ask for a better master. He was generous and kind to those in need. At least once a year, he would take in a beggar or some other indigent, and have his clothes mended and his purse filled. It is a shame the Lord has no heirs to carry on his family name."

Who is Hilliam Luce?

"He uses big words, which seemed unlikely for a fellow who dresses like one lowly-born. He and the Doctor were friends, I guess, since they would have long conversations about using those long, academic words. He didn't mix much with us folks."

When did you discover the body of Lord Pascaline?

"Last night, the good Doctor Plith came to call on me in my quarters. He told me that it was past time for him to administer the master's medicine. I told him I wasn't so keen to disturb the master's rest, but he said it was important. When we got to the master's room, it was locked up tight, which I thought was unusual. The doctor insisted that we get inside, and after a moment I agreed, confused about what was going on. With a few efforts, I managed to bust down the door, and what I saw would haunt me to the end of my days — to see my lord and master slumped over his writing desk. The look on his face ... why, I can't clearly recall it except that it was horrible."

Did you find any letters or anything he was writing?

"I'm afraid I don't know any reading or writing, so I wouldn't know."

Why would Luce kill Lord Pascaline?

"I don't rightly know. I don't ask much about the master's affairs, and being a man without letters or education, most of these things are not of my ken."

What do you know about Doctor Plith?

"He's been here for more than a year ... I think he moved in two summers ago. I can't really remember. He was a likable sort, I suppose, and since he's a doctor he'd surely know if the master was murdered."

Questions the PCs may ask of Doctor Plith

On the first and second day after the murder, Doctor Plith can be found in the manor house. He will be packing up his things. On the third day, he can be found at his Apothecary shop (p. 71). On the fourth day, he will have gone to the river to travel to the Barrows Island.





Who are you and what do you do?

"My name is Doctor Hubert Plith. I am — excuse me, I *was* the personal physician to the late Lord Pascaline. I was also his friend. We shared mutual interests in history and science."

When did you discover the body?

"Last night, I had knocked on Lord Pascaline's door to request admittance to the room, to administer the Lord's nightly tincture of medicine. When there was no response, I attempted to summon Mr. Luce, but he was nowhere to be found. Puzzled, I sent for Gavroche, and we forced the door open to the Lord's chambers, to discover him slumped over his writing desk, his life gone from him, and the dagger that caused his surcease was protruding from the Lord's spine."

Did you find any letters or anything he was writing?

"No, which I find curious. Whatever he was writing was either destroyed or taken by his murderer, which I presume to be Luce, the last man to find him alive."

Why would Luce kill Lord Pascaline?

"I suspect that the Lord found something out about Mr. Luce, something he'd rather not have known. I also suspect it must be something very serious if Luce would go to such great extremes to cover it up. I do know that Mr. Luce is a polyglot and is very well-traveled. It would not be unreasonable to assume that he is a spy for some foreign house."

(If asked what a "polyglot" is, Dr. Plith will condescendingly explain that it's someone who speaks several languages. This would be a role-playing point for you as Host to show what Plith thinks of "uneducated" folks.)

I think you killed Lord Pascaline and have framed Luce. What do you say to that?

"I would say that you are mistaken, that your conclusions are baseless and that they offend me personally. Lord Pascaline was my patron and my good friend for many years. I will thank you not to make such wild accusations, and since you are a stranger to this place, I will forgive this insult, this one time."

Other Points of Interest in the Manor

The household staff is present as well. There are two maids, Patrice and Vivian, and a cook, Talman. All are boars; the maids are in their twenties, Talman is middle-aged. All live in the manor, the maids on the first floor, and the men in the basement. The overworked maids are seeing to the needs of the officials, while Talman lurks in the basement, sampling his former masters' wine. All expect to be terminated soon and are far more worried about future employment than the actual murder. If the PCs interrogate them, you as Game Host are encouraged to role-play the maids' disinterested chatter and Talman's drunkenness.

The maids say that Luce was a foreigner. They say that Pascaline was a firm but kindly master, and of late he seemed to be very worried. They have no idea why he was worried, and they will not speculate. Talman will repeat, somewhat drunkenly, that he didn't see Luce come or go that night, but that he wouldn't be surprised at all if Luce did the foul deed.

If any of the staff are questioned about Plith, they will react oddly. Patrice and Vivian will refuse to say anything about him, other than that he is a wise man. Talman will openly express their dislike for him, calling him arrogant and unpleasant.

Investigating Pascaline's Room

Modern police methods of "leave everything where it is until the police arrive" are unknown in Calabria. If this is the two days, Pascaline's body is lying in state on his bed, watched over by



Mayhew, a boar Vidame in service of Jacqueline DePours. Mayhew will try to stop anyone from examining the corpse in detail, and will also try to stop anyone from using magic or Blessed powers to contact Pascaline's spirit. He is armed with a half-stone sword, shield, and Plate Mail, but he will call the watch if he thinks he's out-numbered. The knife has been removed from the body and is wrapped in cloth. Mayhew will permit the PCs to examine the knife— his job is to protect the body. If Wizard PCs don't want to disturb Mayhew, they would best be served to cast any spells without making gestures or speaking aloud, which will cost them 2 extra Magic Points per casting. (*Ironclaw*, p. 201).

On the third and later days, Pascaline's body will have been moved for the funeral. The knife will be in the hands of the City Watch.

Use of Magic to search the room will have mixed results. Elementalist "Scry" spells won't turn up any Elemental magic. "Scry Spirit" will reveal that Black Magic was used. The Thaumaturgy "Scry Magic" spells will reveal that magic was used, but you may ask for a Know Test (*Ironclaw*, p. 143) of 2d8 vs. Magic Lore for the caster to recognize Black Magic for what it is. A "Locate" spell on the knife will point the PCs towards the east, towards Maxim Bauer's place— this knife did belong to Luce, so it does have a Synecdoche link to him.

Attempts to use Magic or Invocations to call forth Pascaline's spirit will fail— it no longer resides here, having been drained away by Plith's foul spell. In fact, attempts to call upon his soul are more likely to invite "angry spirits" to show themselves.

Optional Complications

As Game Host, you should "pace" the adventure based on what your Players prefer to do. Some will want to race through the adventure, eager to capture Luce or at least engage in violent "combat encounters". Other groups may prefer to meet with NPCs and the like.

- Two minor nobles who claim to be friends of Pascaline arrive in the city. One is a fat and grizzled boar knight in late middle age, and the other an elderly sow baroness. Both claim that Pascaline promised them a portion of his small holdings. They each have a solicitor with them. They know nothing about the murder, but simply argue back and forth about who was closer to the deceased. While they do so, their lawyers sigh and roll their eyes knowingly at each other.
- Dame Jacqueline DePours is one of the Mystes, the highest order of Hierarchs. She controls a powerful estate outside the city. With Mayhew's assistance, she plans on seizing Pascaline's estate on the grounds that it must be "purified" because of the evil spirits that are present. (The lingering effects of Plith's spell-casting will lend strong credence to her cause.) One she and hers have been in the house for two weeks, she will "grease some palms" and apply pressure to certain folks to make sure the deed to the estate passes to her hands.
- One of the players spots a feline darting down an alleyway. If they don't immediately give chase, some passersby will run after him shouting for blood. If the players or crowd manage to capture the cat, he does match Luce's description somewhat. But he is not Luce, simply a merchant taking a short-cut home. PCs who are quick with force may find they've injured an innocent man. Or perhaps a lynch mob develops from mob hysteria— the PCs might intervene before an innocent man is dragged off and killed.
- On the second day or later, the PCs run into a squad of a half-dozen Doloreaux militia-men coming around a corner. A portly Doloreaux militia captain has put out the call to arms among his unit, and they are out searching every nook and cranny for Luce. The captain has the right to dispense low justice, and is being very free with his rank. If any of the players are cats, or obviously not natives to the city, they may be held and searched. If the players are Doloreaux citizens he might try to press them into service with his group. If the players refuse, he won't press the issue.

- Someone shouts that Luce has been spotted, just a few streets away! Apparently he was seen entering the back door of a known bawdy house. The rumor is false and is just an excuse to get people into the house, where they will be plied with drinks and entertainment, then billed later.
- While searching a likely looking alley, the players come face to face with Kierns and Roncalli. (see “Searching Pascaline’s Manor”) The confrontation will be tense, with the two boasting that they will be the ones to bring Luce to justice. A fight will attract the attention of the militia captain mentioned in the above encounter. The three bounty hunters will refuse to share information or work with the players.

Plith’s Apothecary Shop

Plith operates a medicine shop in town, in a two-story wooden house that backs on to the walls of the Inner City. The ground floor is taken up with his apothecary practice, and his rooms are on the second floor, although he has moved out and Jenevieve Tanneux has moved in. The house has a basement, but this will not be immediately obvious as the door is hidden behind a wall-hanging.

Plith’s shop is waited on by a thin cat woman named Jenevieve Tanneux. Plith will only be in attendance on the third day after the start of the adventure, to pack up his things to be ready for the trip. The same goes for Plith’s friends, Roncalli and Kierns — they are out and about, preparing for the upcoming trip. They will return to the shop at frequent intervals to drop items off, such as wax-sealed powder-horns and thigh-high boots — the type of things folks take on a water trip.

Questions the Players may ask Jenevieve

Jenevieve has a haunted look in her eyes and a pallid complexion. While she may appear fatalistic, her staunch belief in predestination and lack of “free will” has removed all fear and uncertainty from her life. She will glibly answer any questions made of her without concern. As Game Host, when you feel it will add some drama to the situation, have Kierns and Roncalli interrupt the conversation with Jenevieve by arriving, scowling at the PCs, and then chasing them off with implied threats, shows of bravado, or simply boasting of how they will be the ones who find Luce. (Their arrival should look suspect to some Player-Characters — why would some “random” bounty-hunters be good friends with Plith?)



Who are you and what do you do?

“You can call me Jenevieve. I run the shop when the doctor is away. I’ve been working here for the past three years.”

Where is Doctor Plith?

If Doctor Plith is there: “He’s here. Would you like me to send for him?” (Jenevieve will get Dr. Plith for the PCs to talk to even if Plith asked her not to, or told her to watch out for them or send them away. Jenevieve dislikes arguing with people.)

If Doctor Plith isn’t there: “I’m afraid the doctor’s not here at the moment. You’ll have to make do with my services until he returns. No, I don’t know when to expect him.”

Do you know Hilliam Luce?

“Yes, I do. He and the doctor have been acquaintances for many years. I’ve talked with him often. He has been many places and seen many interesting things. I am sorry to hear of this reward upon his head — now I’ll probably never see him again.”



Do you think Hilliam Luce or Doctor Plith killed Lord Pascaline?

"In the grand scheme of things, anything is possible. One moment a man might be placid and smiling, and in the next he is full of wrath and violence. What separates the sane from the mad?"

Do you know where we can find Luce?

"He is not here, if that is what you wanted to know. Don't bother offering me bribes or threatening me with harm — I don't know where he is."

Who were some of Luce's friends?

"A man like Luce is suspicious of all. He has told me that has what's kept him alive all this time. I've always felt that each person has a certain amount of time on this earth, and when the roll is called up yonder, you must go. It's probably why Luce isn't fond of either me or Max."

Who is Max?

"Maxim Bauer is an herbalist. He collects rare ingredients for the doctor and myself to prepare in our tinctures and poultices. His shop is outside the city walls, on the east side. If you decide to visit him, be sure to mention my name."

Who are Kierns and Roncalli?

"Who can say? I believe they style themselves bounty-hunters, so that is who they are, I believe. I do not know what Doctor Plith calls them, and I've never asked."

(If Kierns and Roncalli hear Jenevieve say this, they will get very cross indeed. They will either insist that the PCs leave, or they themselves will leave.)

I need medical treatment. Can you help me?

Jenevieve has training as a d4 Physician. If the PC follows her advice and buys the appropriate cure for 1 denar, include her d4 on their next Healing Test (*Ironclaw*, p. 185).

We demand to search the premises. I have Investiture, Nobility, or something else that I can convince you gives me the authority to do so. Will you comply?

If the players have at least low justice, Jenevieve will shrug and allow them to search the house. She will not take them into the basement unless specifically instructed to. Use the Search Test rules from *Ironclaw*, p. 148. If the PCs take too long (such as an hour), either Kierns or Roncalli will make an appearance and show them the door.

Searching the Premises

If a map is needed, use the "Two-Storey House" map from the *Ironclaw* book, page 287. Searching the first floor will find nothing unusual beyond shelves of medicinal herbs, a fireplace, and a pantry. The second floor is taken up by Jenevieve's bedroom. A small bookshelf holds a few books on the art of healing. The passage to the basement is underneath the first-floor stairwell, hidden by a carpet hanging on the wall. A Search Test vs. 2d6 will find this concealed door; Jenevieve also knows about the door and, if asked directly, will tell anyone who asks where it is.

The basement is one large room dominated by a primitive operating table, with straps to hold someone in place. If asked, Jenevieve will tell the players that Plith performs dentistry, bleeding, and boil lancing on the side.

A Search Test vs. 2d8 will reveal that there is a secret panel in the pedestal — inside is a book with no spine, bound in string. (Jenevieve does not know about this panel.) A roll of Traps Skill vs. 2d8 will reveal that the book is trapped. If someone reaches in without disarming it, a small nail will fall down and puncture their hand — roll their Speed vs. 2d12 or suffer 1 Wound. In



addition, the nail is trapped with *Instrument of Vengeance* and *Tapping the Soul* (see *Ironclaw*, p. 310) — the wounded party suffers the spell's effect. Since this spell feeds energy directly into Dr. Plith, he will be very aware of when the trap is successful.

The book is actually two manuscripts tied together in one volume: *The Book of Black Magic* and *On the Virtue of Culture*. See page 79 for more details.

Searching the City

The PCs can try to comb the city for clues to Luce's current whereabouts. Bruges is not as big as Triskellian, but it's still a sizeable place filled with colorful folks. As Game Host, this is an opportunity for you to play to your party's strengths— give them opportunities to show off their skills and abilities. Your Players are probably an imaginative lot, and they should come up with many ways to search for Luce. Here are some ideas you can use to involve them, but feel free to improvise other encounters and methods.

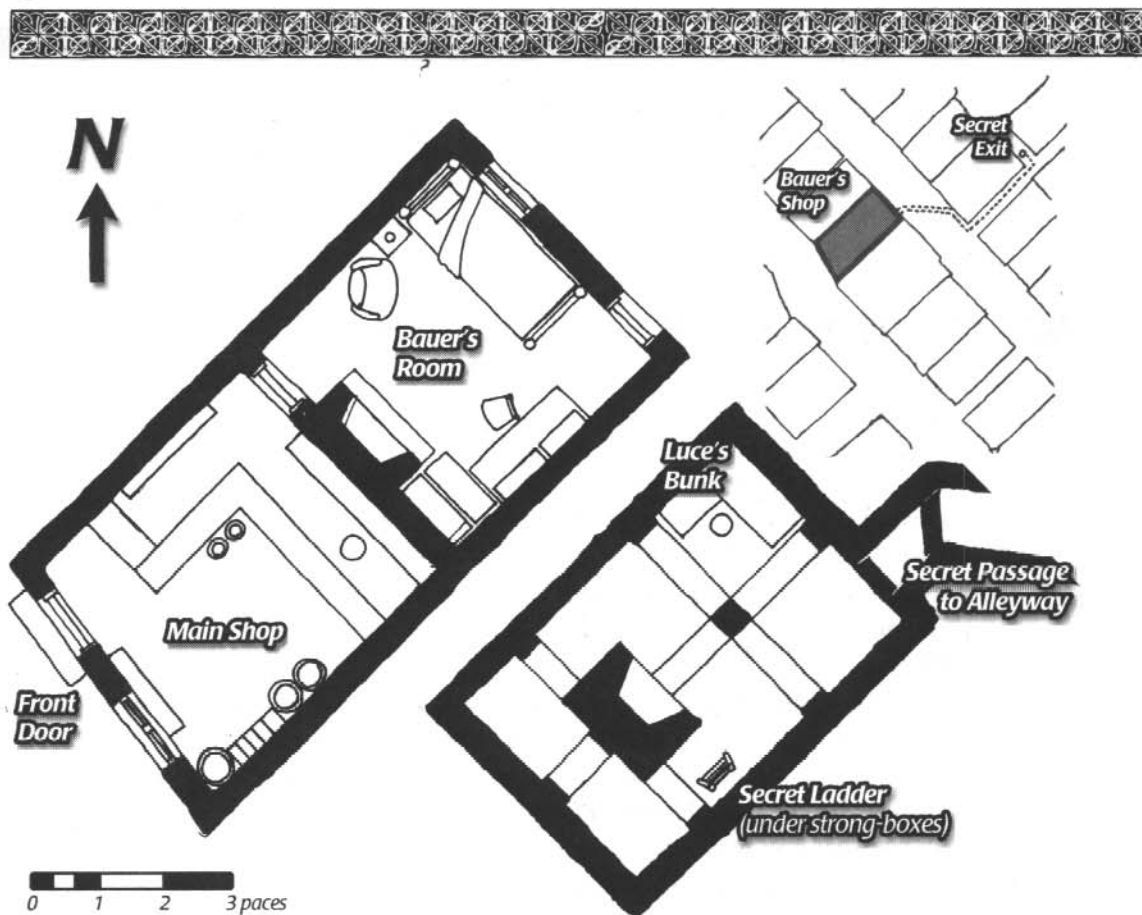
- While cruising the various bars around town, use of Carousing with a Gossip Test (*Ironclaw*, p. 137) will confirm that Hilliam Luce has been seen more than once in the company of Maxim Bauer.
- During a back-alley game of dice, a Gossip Test made using Gambling will reveal that Hilliam Luce has used items from Plith's Apothecary shop as collateral more than once.
- While hanging out with other scofflaws and ne'er-do-wells, a Streetwise Gossip Test may reveal that Maxim Bauer hires folks for odd jobs, and that his connection is "some fancy-pants cat what lives in the inner city."
- Those with Second Sight or who call upon Augury for some guidance may be rewarded. Perhaps a patch of mold on their breakfast bread looks like a boar's head with only one eye. Or maybe a cluster of leaves in the street looks like the sign above Maxim Bauer's door. As Game Host, you should only use omens like this for appropriately "mystical" characters, and they should be hard to interpret, with difficulty of 2d12 or more. (Of course, a Blessed may be able to Invoke an Augury— see page 40.)
- The Thaumaturgy spell of "Locate", if cast upon Luce's knife, will reveal his whereabouts with about a 20% margin of error— I.E., a few blocks. It's then a matter of "casing" around where the spell points and looking for a likely place.

Maxim Bauer's Herbalism Shop

Players who have followed some of the above leads may be directed to Maxim Bauer's herbalism shop. The place looks old and dingy, marked only by a rickety sign with a carved symbol of the mandrake root, which looks unusually humanoid.

The shop keeps very minimal hours, only open in the late morning to early afternoon. Inside are dusty shelves and moldy jars with scribbled labels. Characters with Herbalism or Keen Noses will find the selection here very old and largely useless.

That's because the shop is largely a front. Maxim Bauer is actually one of the most hated folk in all of Dolorcaux lands — he is a Resurrectionist, one who digs up dead bodies for medical experimentation. He and Hilliam Luce are old comrades-in-arms, having provided cadavers for Doctor Plith and others. However, the Doloreaux have great respect for the dead, believing that the spirit cannot pass on until the remains have completely decomposed. If Maxim Bauer's activities were discovered, he would be guilty of one of the greatest Lutanist sins. The fact that he's been at this activity a few years speaks of the quality of his craft and his discretion.



Luce has gone to Maxim's place to lay low. He certainly doesn't want to leave town while such a large reward is on his head. He figures that Dr. Plith has framed him, but he's not sure exactly why.

Gaining Entry to Bauer's Shop

If the players arrive when Maxim's shop is open, he'll be courteous but taciturn, and he will sell items from his paltry selection at cheap to average prices. If folks ask for advice on which items to buy, he'll mostly shrug and ask them what they want to buy.

Players who are obviously after Luce, such as town watchmen and bounty-hunters, will not learn much. Direct questions about Luce will be met with flat-out, monosyllabic denial. Bauer will then heave himself up from his chair and slowly shuffle around the shop, trying to sell them broken trinkets. Bribes won't work either. He knows that if he admits to dealing with Luce, he is just as likely to be executed as the murderer. Violence will not work either — if the players try such base methods, refer to *Violence against Bauer and Luce*, p. 75.

If the players arrive when Maxim's shop is closed, they'll discover the doors barred from the inside. Maxim isn't taking any chances — he and Luce are staying indoors and hidden until this all blows over. It will be obvious that the place is inhabited, as the chimney will be smoking from the fire. The players can try to force entry through the windows or doors, using Lock-picking Skill or other methods.

If his shop and home is invaded, Maxim and his crew will attempt to repel the PCs with force, without summoning the watch.

Violence against Bauer and Luce

Depending on the nature of your party, they may try to surround the building and ambush the folks inside ... or they may simply storm the front door and attack. As Game Host, you should estimate the "combat ability" of your Player Characters and stack the opposition accordingly:

- If your PCs are a bit weak, then set the encounter up to have Luce, Maxim, and Max's two cousins, who are Boar Minions each armed with a Pistol and a Quarter-Stone Spear. They will only use the guns if the PCs make a louder noise first, such as using their own guns or magic.
- If your PCs are fairly combative, then set the encounter up to have Luce, Maxim, and one of Maxim's cousins for each of the PCs. Only two should be armed with guns, however.
- If your PCs are unusually strong combatants, then set the encounter up as above, plus have a "visiting mercenary." Good choices would include Hendrick (*Ironclaw*, p. 18), Mansur (*ibid.*, p. 19), or Recondite (*Rinaldi*, p. 55).

Bauer will attempt to flee to the back room, which he will then lock. If the Players manage to defeat the thugs and batter down the door will find Bauer mostly concealed behind a wooden keg, with his Three-Quarter Stone musket braced and ready. He will immediately fire at the first person that comes through the door, and then attempt to flee into the back alley. If the players pursue him still, he surrenders right away and offers no other resistance — after all, the PCs are probably only after Luce.

Questions the Players may ask Hilliam Luce

If he is cornered, and the PCs look reasonable, then Hilliam Luce will surrender. He will hope to explain his innocence.



Who are you and what do you do?

"I am Hilliam Luce, son of Tyler Luce. I have worn many hats — gambler, trader, mariner, procurer, but never have I been a murderer."

Who murdered Lord Pascaline, and why?

"I do not know, but I suspect it was Doctor Plith. You see, the night before the Lord was murdered, he and I had a private conversation. The Lord, he was sorely troubled. Apparently, the good Doctor had discovered something about this city that frightened even Pascaline. The Lord told me he was to compose a letter that I would take to the Duke himself, the next day."

Where were you at the time of the murder?

"I was here. Maxim Bauer will attest to that. I had come here to gather my remaining possessions, such as my brace of pistols, because once I was to have delivered the letter, I would never return to this town again. Lord Pascaline was going to incriminate Dr. Plith, and with the end of his career, so too would my services here be finished."

What services did you provide?

"If you have seen this far, then you must know the truth. Maxim Bauer and I are resurrectionists — we spade the ground and turn up the mysteries of the past. The risks are great, but the rewards can be even greater. Alas, this vein has been completely tapped — it is time for Mr. Luce to move on."

What do you think was so dangerous that Lord Pascaline would write to the Duke about?

"As to this matter, I only have conjecture. Doctor Plith and Lord Pascaline had shared interests in history and science. Have you ever met the intelligentsia? With their faces buried in dusty books,



their brains filled with syllogisms and slogans ... they are all a bit mad. For many years, I have humored the affectations of the academics to my own advantage. They provide coin, I provide the materials they need.

"My last errand for them was the riskiest of them all. Employing my craft, I managed to cross the river to the Barrows isle. I, Hiliam Luce, did trespass on the most forbidden ground in all of Bruges!

"Guided by the Doctor's instructions, and using my own wits to avoid the patrols of vidames whose duty it is to safeguard the island against folks such as myself, I eventually found what I sought—a stone tablet with a sigil on it. I was asked to make a copy of the sigil, by holding a sheet of paper over the sign and rubbing charcoal on it. I made not one, but *two* copies. I gave the first to the Doctor. I have the second copy on my person."

Luce will show the sigil to the players. "I confess I do not ken its meaning, but surely there must have been two other men who did: Lord Pascaline, and Doctor Plith. If I had known that the Doctor would have double-crossed me, I would never have risked my life in this way."

As Game Host, you may ask Players for Know Tests: Augury, Doloreaux Lore, and Blessed Lore vs. 2d6. Those who make their rolls will recognize this as a mark of Septagus. (See page9.) There is only one conclusion — that Septagus' tomb is to be found on Barrow Island.

The Fourth Day, and Doctor Plith's Trip to Barrow Island

With Luce out of the way, Doctor Plith is planning a trip to Barrow Island. On the fourth day after the start of the adventure, he will take his party of Jenevieve, Roncalli, and Kierns to Barrow Island under the cover of the pre-dawn fog. Plith plans to overcome the guards using his magic and his weaponry.

Kierns and Jenevieve will stay behind to watch the boats. However, Jenevieve is plagued by visions of the future. The night before, she had a dream that everyone who visits Barrow Island will die within seven days. She will then become even more fatalistic than usual. After landing on the island, the boats Plith and company arrived in will sink, with no explanation. Kierns will become angry and will blame Jenevieve with sabotage. If the PCs "go after" Doctor Plith and arrive on the morning of the fourth day, they will find Kierns and Jenevieve on the shore. Kierns will be shaking and pointing his gun at the cat, who will be shrugging and wryly bemused at the helplessness of the situation.

Doctor Plith knows he's not strong enough to move the slab that covers Septagus' tomb ... so he will first descend into one of the other barrows and use *Control Undead* to summon forth the Koblynau (see page 81). If the Players track him down, he will order them to attack the Player Characters while he defends himself.

From a combat perspective, you need to judge the strength of your Player-Characters. The suggested method is to send a wave of three or four Koblynau at them, and then to have another three arrive on the scene if it looks like the PCs are having an easy time of it. It should become apparent to the Players that there's an "endless" number of these things, and that finding Plith would be their first priority.

If you feel the PCs have moved with all haste that they could have, then you may choose to have them meet Plith shortly before he has entered the tomb. The doctor, being Proud, is the type of villain who might deliver a dramatic speech before his triumph.

Questions the PCs may ask Doctor Plith at Septagus' Tomb

What are you doing here?

"I am on the verge of the greatest discovery of our age—the secret to true power. You may bow down to me now, by your own free will, or you may bow down to me later, under different circumstances. It matters little."

What is in that tomb that you're after?

"The key to all my designs! The lost sorcerer, Septagus, himself! With but a word and a gesture, he will be my puppet on a string."

Are you a Necromancer?

"My insight goes beyond that of normal folk. I have seen the greatest understanding possible—I know what is beyond death!"

We can't let you enter that tomb. Will you surrender?

"What you see today is the final step of my lifetime of study. Today I ascend beyond mortal ken, and your orders have no meaning to me now."

Of course, your PCs may decide not to go to the island at all. In that case, assume that Dr. Plith's efforts to enter Septagus' tomb are successful.

What Will Happen to Plith's Plans?

Plith expects to enter the tomb, to find Septagus' remains, and to use the spell *Vessel of Unlife* to bring him back to life, then *Control Undead* to make him a slave. That's *not* what will happen, though.

Septagus' own spear has been used to pin his remains to the floor. All magical attempts to raise the body will fail unless the spear itself is removed. Plith will grasp the spear in both hands and, his face a mask of straining effort, he will pull it from the floor. This will prove his undoing—the spear will explode from the body, flying through the roof of the chamber (and sending up a very impressive spray of rubble in the process), only to land exactly seven leagues north of Barrow Island. This act will fling Plith's body several stories into the air, then he will land on the ground and will suffer 10d12 damage, almost definitely killing him. (Of course, someone else might try to remove the spear, only to suffer the same fate.)

Removing the spear will allow the corpse of Septagus to be freed from the prison imposed upon him by the High Mystes of centuries ago. The first round, his skeleton will rise from the floor. The second round, he will howl in rage at being imprisoned for all those years—everyone on the Island must pass a Fear Test (*Ironclaw*, p. 134); those who can see Septagus must test vs. 3d12, those within ear-shot must test vs. 3d8.

Denouement

So, how did the adventure go? What did your players do, what sort of rewards do they expect to reap, what sort of comeuppance do they deserve? Here are some suggestions.

Doctor Plith was Captured

If the Players managed to stop Plith from leaving the city, he can be brought to justice. Luce, if he's still alive, will not want to testify in court ... but he can be forced to do so. Jenevieve Tanneux will freely admit to having seen Dr. Plith engage in resurrectionist activities—in fact, her visions have shown her that the task of exposing Plith is one she was *meant* to do.



Doctor Plith was Thwarted, but Escaped

If all of Plith's Koblynau are destroyed, he will lack any appropriate tools to open the tomb. The exact number of the Koblynau isn't specified – basically, there should be as many as you deem to be difficult for the PCs to deal with, but not impossible. Also, if Dr. Plith finds himself attacked in full force, he will flee the island, possibly even divesting himself of all his gear and swimming to shore, if he has to. It would be many months before he would try another expedition to the island. With his contacts in high places and his supernatural abilities, Doctor Plith will find a way to exact a dire revenge upon the PCs, but he is willing to take his time in doing so.

Septagus was Freed!

The outcome of having Septagus free should be unlikely – Doctor Plith has to out-run a bunch of powerful Player-Characters, and he possibly has to fight all of them either in the city or on Barrow Island. This outcome should only happen if, in your opinion as Game Host, the Player-Characters “dropped the ball” and didn't pursue Plith aggressively enough, or if their combat encounters went especially poorly.

What happens if Septagus is freed is up to you, as the Game Host. Septagus, with his Koblynau undead minions and his incredible supernatural power, makes for a “good old fashioned super-villain”.

The actual “game terms” of Septagus are up to you. In the tradition of many “fantasy sagas,” Septagus could collect several minions, each more powerful than the last, to solidify his world domination.

One path might be that Septagus would travel from Sacred Grove to Sacred Grove, destroying each one. With each one destroyed, he creates a new minion devoted to the Blessed Path that the grove was guarding; each minion would have the statistics for the Supernaut (*Ironclaw*, p. 288), plus a Blessed Trait of d12 and Skill in One Blessed Path of 2d12. This outcome is best suited for campaigns that involve a lot of combat and action on a grim scale.

Another path might be that Septagus retires to an out-of-the-way location, seeking to appear to key folks within their dreams, trying to persuade them to go to war with one another. This outcome is best suited for campaigns where political intrigue and quiet mysticism are the order of the day.

The Inheritors of Pascaline's Estate

The resolution of who gets the heir-less Lord Pascaline's house could be an issue in and of itself. Numerous pretenders, such as “bastard children” and “good friends who were promised the house” will appear in force. Lady Jacqueline of the Mystes has plans of her own – her goal is to declare the house “impure”, and to have lengthy ceremonies where each and every room is “purged” with elaborated Lutarist ceremonies. These rituals will buy her time while she instructs her vidame, Mayhew, to “grease the right palms” and have the paper-work made up so that her estate can absorb the house. In other words, Lady Jacqueline hopes to occupy the house long enough so that no one really notices when it becomes hers in name as well.

Jenevieve Tanneux

The strange cat is guided by where the omens take her – she has an uncanny knack of finding those who dabble in the strange and the portentous. She may “tag along” with the Player Characters, since by their nature PCs get into lots of trouble. She can also be used as a plot device, showing up “out of the blue” to tell one of the PCs of a vision she has had of some errand that they must perform. (This kind of device works well once; after that, it's no longer “strange”.)

Doctor Plith's Books of Magic

If Plith's books are acquired by the Player Characters, one or more PCs may want to learn to learn the new spell lists. The Black Magic List is described in *Ironclaw*, p. 305. Kyndranigar's Virtue of Culture Spell List is described in this book, on page 89. The Player who wants to learn a new list should write "Extra Trait" in their Self-Improvement List, and then they should begin spending Experience towards buying that new Trait. (As per *Ironclaw*, p. 251, it takes 15 Experience to learn a new Trait.)

As Game Host, you may want to limit the progress of "book-learned" spells by requiring Literacy Skill Rolls. Have the Player roll their Literacy Dice – whatever the Score is, that's the maximum number of Experience they can spend on learning the Trait, that play session. Naturally, illiterate characters cannot learn spells from books.

The two books are:

- *The Book of Black Magic* by Frater Pephredo. Any character with Literacy skill may study this book, putting their Experience Points into buying the Necromancer Career, which applies to Literacy, Meditation, and Black Magic Lore. It also permits one to cast the Black Magic Apprentice List (*Ironclaw*, p. 306), and it is a Wizard Trait, so it adds to one's Magic Points.
- *On the Virtue of Culture*, by Kyndranigar the Shadow-Mage. Any character with Literacy skill may study this book, putting their Experience Points into buying the "Virtue of Culture" Trait, which applies to Literacy, Meditation, and Kyndranigar Lore. It also permits one to cast the Virtue of Culture list (see page 89 in this book), and it is a Wizard Trait, so it adds to one's Magic Points.

The Spear of Septagus

If Septagus is freed, one way of stopping him might be to use his own spear. The Spear of Septagus has the following powers:

- It can be wielded using Spear skill, as a Three-Quarter Stone Spear. It has a hollow metal shaft and a shiny steel head, with seven barbs.
- It can strike at any creature, even ones that are immaterial, such as ghosts or Air Elementals.
- When rolling Damage against a target, when any Damage Die shows a 7, the target suffers one extra Wound, above and beyond any other wounds that would be caused. Likewise, when any of the target's Soak or Armor Dice shows a 7, subtract one Wound that would be caused.
- Any supernatural being, such as an elemental, undead, or Septagus himself, that is struck with an Overwhelming Success on the To-Hit Roll, has become *impaled* upon the spear. It will remain impaled until the spear is removed by some other force. Supernatural beings so impaled cannot use any supernatural powers, and they cannot be magically compelled, activated, coerced, or otherwise manipulated until the spear is removed.



Dramatis Personae

What follows is a list of the relevant gaming information for the prominent NPCs in this adventure. Each write-up includes a brief description of the character, their rules and statistics, and their personal "list" of priorities, ranked in order of importance.

As Game Host, when you are playing the role of an NPC, check the NPC's List to see what their priorities are, to better help you decide how the character would behave.

Doctor Hubert Plith

A short fox, and slim. His fur has the standard colorings. Plith generally wears very plain, but very well tailored clothes. His skill as a healer is well-known among the nobles of House Rinaldi and Doloreaux.

Plith hails from Triskellian, where he was the court physic to a minor house. He left that position about 2 years ago for no apparent reason and set up house-keeping in Bruges. His choice of cities is rather curious, as most Doloreaux nobles rely on the healing services of the Lutarist clergy. Plith came here for a reason of his own, however.



Body d6, Speed d8, Mind d12, Will d12

Red Fox d4 Weapons: Claws, Teeth Habitat: Forest Sense Tests: Listen, Smell

Career: Apothecary d12

Necromancer d8

Kyndranigar's Virtue of Culture d8

				Skills (with Favorite Use)	
d4		d8		d12	Black Magic Lore (among the Autarchs)
					Climbing
				d8	Etiquette (among Doloreaux)
				d10	Fast-Talk (impressing the uneducated)
	d12			d10	Haggling (over medicinal goods)
			d8		Kyndranigar Lore
	d12	d8	d8	d8	Literacy (when reading old documents)
	d12				Medicine
		d8	d8	d8	Meditation (when at home)
	d12				Poisons
				d8	Research (Doloreaux history)
d4				d12	Sixth Sense (when in graveyards)
d4				d8	Stealth (in graveyards)
				d10	Streetwise (among grave-robbers)
d4					Tracking



Gifts: Claws; Good Reputation (among upper-class commoners, Rare, Strong); Guild Membership: Physician's Guild of Triskellian (Apprentice); Keen Ears; Luck; Teeth; Wealth

Flaws: Bad Reputation (Necromancer and Resurrectionist, Rare, Extreme); Curious; Proud

Armor: Chain Mail under his clothes (d12 & Soak d8)

Weapons: Scalpel (as Knife, d8 & Strength d8, imbued with *Instrument of Vengeance* and *Tapping the Soul* from *Ironclaw* pp. 309, 310); Quarter-Stone Gun (2d10)

Spell Lists: Black Magic: Apprentice, Journeyman, and Master
Kyndranigar's Virtue of Culture

Spell Casting Skills:

The Black Bargain
(2d12; Adept)

Black Magic Journeyman's
Privilege (Adept)

Black Magic Master's Privilege
(Adept)

Control Undead (Adept)

Create Undead (Adept)

Death's Whisper (Adept)

Instrument of Vengeance
(Adept)

Scry Spirit (Adept)

Speak with the Dead (Adept)

Steal Strength (Adept)

Tapping the Soul (Adept)

Wrack (Adept)

Doctor Plith's List:

1. Gain ultimate power by divining the secrets of the past.
2. Survive.
3. Maintain his dignity and pride.

Koblynau

Hideous, pale, and hairless, these monsters are lean and gaunt creatures with chalky-skin, through which their veins and arteries may clearly be seen. They are the undead guardians of Septagus' tomb. Originally under the will of their imprisoned creator, Doctor Plith will use the Black Magic Spell *Control Undead* to bring them under his sway.

Body d12 & d8, Speed d4, Mind none, Will d4

Koblynau d10 *Weapons:* Claws, Teeth *Habitat:* Barrows *Sense Tests:* Spot, Listen, Smell

Skills (with Favorite Use)

d10	d10	Brawling (with Teeth)
d10	d10	Resolve (versus small stabbing things, like spears, arrows, and bolts – the typical things that fly through unfeeling zombie flesh)
d10	d10	Stealth (in Barrows)

Gifts: Claws; Teeth; Undead (doesn't eat, breathe, or sleep)

Flaws: Ill-Favored; Unholy

Armor: None (Soak d12 & d8)

Weapons: Natural Claws and Teeth (d6 & Strength d12, d8)

Special Powers: Since the Koblynau have no Mind Trait, they automatically resist any spell or magic that allows Mind to resist. They can use their Koblynau Trait of d10 to Spot White Magic or Black Magic.

Koblynau's List:

1. Obey the master without question.
2. Smite the living.

Maxim Bauer

When people talk about “bad customers”, they usually refer to people like Maxim Bauer. Square of shoulder, with a muzzle that’s crooked from being broken once and then re-set improperly, Max looks like the last person one would expect to be a humble herbalist shop-keeper. That’s because he’s not – he’s a career criminal. After getting tired of numerous scrapes and fights, he eventually settled into the career of grave-robber, which is how he made the acquaintance of Hilliam Luce. Maxim found he liked the work – the risks are great, but the hours are short and he rarely has to deal with people directly. After this adventure, he will probably move on to a new career.



Body d12, Speed d6, Mind d8, Will d8

Boar d10 Weapons: Tusks

Habitat: Forest

Sense Tests: Smell

Merchant d4

Resurrectionist d10

Skills (with Favorite Use)

d4			Administration
		d10	Area Knowledge: Bruges (graveyards)
d4	d10	d10	Bribery (Doloreaux officials)
d4			Ciphering
		d6	Guns (with my favorite gun)
		d10	Herbalism (the kind you find in graveyards)
d4		d10	Literacy (burial records)
d10			Resolve
	d10	d10	Stealth (at night)
	d10	d10	Streetwise (in Bruges)
d10			Tracking
	d10		Traps

Gifts: Night Vision; Tusks

Flaws: Bad Reputation (As Resurrectionist, Rare, Extreme); Greedy; Ill-Favored; One Eye; Scofflaw; Stubborn

Armor: Reinforced Leather (d8, d4 & Soak d8)

Weapons: Shovel (use Speed only for To-Hit Rolls, d8 & Strength d12); Knives (d8 & Strength d12); Half-Stone Gun (2d10, d6)

Maxim Bauer’s List:

1. Survive.
2. Avoid getting caught.
3. Make money.



Hilliam Luce

Hilliam is a short feline of average build, with a blue-black pelt and green eyes. Normally, he dresses in rather fine clothes and a feathered hat. He has traded these fine clothes for a drab cloak, but his well made boots and trousers may give him away.



Hilliam is an up and coming young solicitor, but beyond a well-defined code of morality and duty, he is no different from many others. Normally, he would have lived his life quietly enough, advising nobles and rich merchants on legal matters. However, his recent experiences have forced into a new role - that of fugitive. He does not enjoy this life...if, somehow, the players were able to spirit him away from Bruges, he would not join them for a life of adventure. Instead he would travel straight to the courts of Triskellian and throw himself on their mercy.

Body d6, Speed d8, Mind d10, Will d8

Cat d4 Weapons: Claws, Teeth Habitat: Forest Sense Tests: Smell

Solicitor d10

Resurrectionist d8

Skills (with Favorite Use)

d4				Acrobatics
	d10	d8	d12	Bribery (strictly on a cash basis, up front)
d4				Climbing
	d10		d4	Etiquette (for flattery)
	d10		d6	Law Lore (Doloreaux)
	d10		d10	Literacy (Doloreaux manuscripts)
			d10	Research (Doloreaux history)
			d12	Resolve (when running away)
d4		d8	d12	Stealth (at night)
		d8	d12	Streetwise (recruiting folks)
			d8	Sword (with my Favorite Knife)
		d8	d8	Traps (in graveyards)

Gifts: Claws; Guild Membership: Solicitors Guild of Triskellian (Journeyman); Luck; Night Vision; Teeth

Flaws: Bad Reputation (As Resurrectionist, Rare, Extreme); Greedy; Scofflaw

Aarmor: Reinforced Leather (d8, d4 & Soak d8)

Weapons: Two Half-Stone Guns (2d10, d6). *Note:* his Favorite knife has been stolen by Doctor Plith and planted at the crime scene (see page 65).

Hilliam Luce's List:

1. Survive.
2. Evade capture.
3. Make money.





Jenevieve Tanneux

Jenevieve is a very slender feline, almost painfully so. She has a dark brown pelt and a wiry frame. When working in Plith's apothecary shop, she dresses in drab cloth. When out on "assignment," she wears leather armor and a dark blue cloak.

She has been in Plith's employ for about three years now. She was living on the streets of Triskellian, making a living as a beggar and petty thief. When she saw Doctor Plith on the street, her ability to read the omens made it clear to her that she should follow this man, because "great things" would follow in his wake. With some quick fast-talking and a demonstration of her skills, the Doctor hired her to watch his shop.

Jenevieve is a peculiar sort—she does not believe in "free will", but rather that everything is pre-destined to happen for a reason. Her behavior seems random to other folks, but to herself she feels she is "reading the signs" and doing what she is supposed to do. She can be frustrating to talk to, as she only "tells folks what they need to know."

Body d8, Speed d12, Mind d8, Will d6

Cat d10

Weapons: Claws, Teeth

Habitat: Plains

Sense Tests: Listen

Apothecary d4

Special Trait: Second Sight d8

Skills (with Favorite Use)

d10			Acrobatics
	d8	d12	Augury (omens of death)
d10			Climbing
		d10	Cloak (with my favorite cloak)
	d4		Haggling
	d4	d4	Literacy (medical books)
	d4	d4	Medicine (on cats)
	d4	d4	Poisons (determining cause of death)
		d12	Resolve (versus magic)
	d8	d8	Sixth Sense (at night)
d10			Stealth
		d12	Sword (when fighting with two knives)
		d8	Thrown Knives (from surprise)

Gifts: Ambidextrous; Claws; Keen Eyes; Night Vision; Sure-Footed; Teeth

Flaws: Eerie; Frail; Morose

Armor: Leather (d8 & Soak d6)

Shield: Cloak (include d6 with Defense Rolls)

Weapons: Knives (d8 & Strength d8)

Jenevieve Tanneux's List:

1. Take the easiest way out of any situation.
2. Follow where the omens take her.
3. Survive.

Roncalli

A monkey who dresses in slightly gaudy, though stylish fashions. He is fond of feathered hats and ruffled silk shirts. He tend to take charge of situations...or at least tries to. If any of his companions are dead set against one of his plans, he will shrug and go along with their idea, no matter how suicidal it seems.

Body d8, Speed d12, Mind d6, Will d8

Monkey d6 *Weapons:* None *Habitat:* Forest *Sense Tests:* Spot

Highwayman d10

Skills (with Favorite Use)

d6		d6	Acrobatics (when showing off)
d6			Climbing
d6			Contortionist
	d10		Etiquette
	d10	d10	Fencing (with Favorite Sword)
	d10		Gun
		d6	Leadership (when leading rogues)
	d10	d10	Riding (when Escaping)
d6			Wrestling

Gifts: Multidexterous; Prehensile Feet; Prehensile Tail

Flaws: Honorable; Scofflaw; Showoff

Armor: Reinforced Leather (d8, d4 & Soak d8)

Weapons: Quarter-Stone Foil (Parry Defense is 2d12 & d10; Damage is d10 & Strength d8);
Two Quarter-Stone Guns (2d10)

Roncalli' List:

1. Survive.
2. Make money.
3. Show everyone what a masterful rogue you are.

Kierns

A dark-furred cat, he dresses almost invariably in black cloaks, which tend to make him look a little sinister. Kierns and Roncalli often run into minor conflicts on the direction the group should take. Kierns is an avowed sniper in combat. While others are in the thick of things, Kierns will generally retire to some safe spot in the distance and pick off opponents with his crossbow. If the players ever meet Kierns socially, they will find him to be an incredible egomaniac. He will listen intently to whatever they say, then blink and say something like "Are we talking about me now?"

Body d8, Speed d10, Mind d8, Will d6

Cat d4 *Weapons:* Claws, Teeth *Habitat:* Forest *Sense Tests:* Listen

Burglar d12

Skills (with Favorite Use)

d4			Acrobatics
		d10	Brawling (with Claws)
d4	d12		Climbing
		d12, d8	Crossbow (with my Favorite Crossbow)
d4	d12		Stealth
	d12		Streetwise
			Traps

Gifts: Claws; Night Vision; Strength +1; Teeth

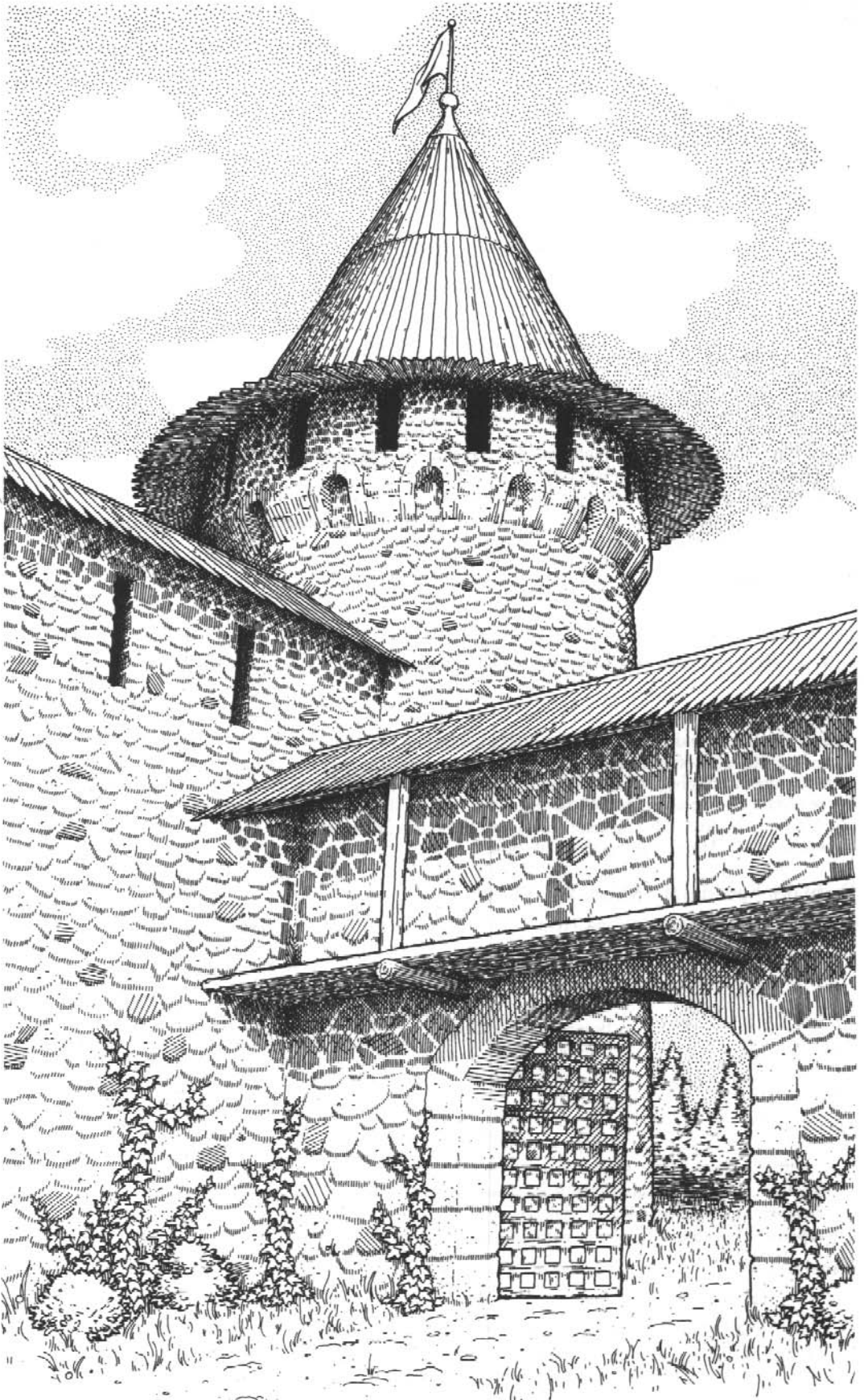
Flaws: Garrulous; Lazy; Proud; Scofflaw

Armor: Chain Mail (d12 & Soak d8)

Weapons: Full-Stone Crossbow with Cranquelin (3d8, d4)

Kierns' List:

1. Survive.
2. Make the most amount of money while doing the least work.
3. Talk about yourself and what interests you.



APPENDIX 1: FURTHER ADVENTURES

*Being the Seeds of Additional Escapades,
to be Embellished at the Discretion of the Game Host*

What follows are some ideas for brief adventures involving the Doloreaux lands and peoples. It's up to you, as the Game Host, to find ways to "flesh out" these encounters for your group of Players.

Ghosts of Broken Tusk Ridge

The mine at Broken Tusk Ridge has been effectively shut down in recent days by a series of fatal and near fatal accidents. The miners refuse to return to work, saying that the mine is haunted. The owners of the mine offer a reward of 10 aureals to anyone who can prove that the mine is safe, or failing that, deal with whatever malevolent force is afflicting the miners. Alternately, the players might be ordered to investigate the matter by the noble who owns the land.

The miners are correct about the haunting, to some degree. While following a seam, they broke into a series of tiny caves inhabited by weird insects and the like. They continued on, unaware that they had opened up a den of *Koblynau*, evil humanoid creatures created as magical soldiers long ago. These foul creatures have spread out into the mine and claimed it as their own. The players will have to kill them to ensure the mine is safe. This adventure is likely to be combat heavy, but clever players might be able to lure the *Koblynau* into a trap, or seal them into a chamber. The spiteful little goblins are unable to tunnel through stone, and would be trapped once again.

In addition to the reward offered by the mine owners, the host might wish to allow the players to find a few minor items of treasure in the *Koblynau* cave.

A Multitude Bound in Darkness

Wherever scofflaws gather to boast of their narrow escapes from the law, many tall tales and unlikely yarns are spun. A traveler may hear stories of daring leaps from 1000 foot parapets, or tunnels dug through a mile of stone with spoons. However, even in the society of the most outrageous liars and hardened felons, one will never hear tell of an escape from *Sousolnoir*. It is a place spoken of in fearful whispers, an old copper mine where spies and foreign criminals are left to rot. That of many of its inmates are criminals simply by virtue of being foreign is no secret.

The master of the prison is one Baron Malvoisin, a proud and sadistic minor noble. Although advanced in years, his gnarled body and soul contain a strength akin to that of an aged oak. Malvoisin once made a modest fortune from the single mine that was his possession. For thirty years he drove slaves to bring up more and more of the semi-precious copper. And then, fifteen years ago, there was nothing left to mine. In a fit of rage, Malvoisin sealed off his mine and cut the rations of his slaves, refusing to let them eat until more metal was produced. None was forthcoming, and the mine became their tomb. In time, the cruel Baron discovered a use for his empty mine ... that of a dungeon. The Duke pays him an annual stipend to take care of those felons that are too important to execute, or too dangerous to make into martyrs. These people simply disappear into the black pit that is the old mine at *Sousolnoir*.

Sousolnoir is located in the low and rolling foot-hills of the *Rothos*, about two leagues south-west of *Bruges*. There is little to herald its proximity. One minute, a traveler is cresting a pleasant, green hill, the next, he is descending into a barren ravine. In this ravine is the well-guarded mine head, some rotting equipment, and a stone manor house, where Malvoisin spends his days brooding.



There are several ways for the players to end up in Sousolnoir, and several adventures involving this unpleasant place suggest themselves. First, and most obvious, they can be arrested for a crime that warrants a life-time of imprisonment. Commoners are rarely found guilty of such crimes, but a disgraced noble may well find himself on the way to Sousolnoir. Second, they might be hired on as guards, or even as spies to make sure the prisoners don't revolt. Last, they might be led to attempt the unthinkable; breaking someone very important out of this dismal pit.

Currently, the pit of Sousolnoir is home to a fairly prominent young Avoirdupois, Sir Andalusia. He was captured during a border raid. According to the official Doloreaux story, he was killed in the raid. However, the Avoirdupois are fairly sure that he is being held as a future bargaining chip. They are right, of course. Sir Andalusia is trying to organize the prisoners into a mass break by overpowering the guards who make the weekly drop of food, water, and firewood to the mine. Such attempts have been tried before, and invariably failed. If the players end up as prisoners, Andalusia will try to recruit them into his cause. He offers a reward of 30 acres of his own land to whoever escapes with him to the Avoirdupois holdings.

If the players are guards, they will of course be responsible for putting down this uprising. In course of this fight, Malvoisin's cruel nature will become apparent as he seals the guards in with the prisoners to avoid a prison break! This should convince them to side with Andalusia.

Lastly, the players might be hired by the Avoirdupois to free Andalusia from the outside. There are several ways to do this...posing as guards, tunneling into the lower levels of the prison, or even fighting through the guards. If they succeed, Andalusia will reward them with land as above.

No maps are needed of Sousolnoir. It is a terrible, lightless place. Not even Malvoisin knows how many prisoners are there, but it may be as high as 200. Wise inmates stick to the upper levels, where one or two small fires are maintained, and where sunlight filters down through grated vents. Below this, there is no light at all, and few prisoners would waste wood on a torch. These levels are inhabited by pitiful mad men and women of every species. They live off the natural moisture that collects in the bottom levels, and the strange mushrooms and pale insects that inhabit some of the old chambers.

The top level of the mine is much better lit, and serves as home to some 20 Doloreaux guards. Once a week, 6 of them will descend to the second level and drop a few sacks of roots, a cord of wood, and fill a copper tub with brackish water. The inmates must survive on this...no attempt is made to distribute the goods. They are simply dumped. The strong take what they want, and the weak get weaker. In recent days Andalusia has been able to set up a basic rationing system.

Poachers on the Granvert

For years, Doloreaux farmers along the Granvert have been crossing the river under cover of darkness to cut a few good logs of hardwood. While the Bisclavret on the other side discourage this activity, they tend to turn a blind eye to it if the Doloreaux leave behind a bushel of roots, or take no more than they need. At most, a Doloreaux peasant who is caught will be given a day in the stocks and sent home. The poaching expeditions are very much an open secret in the area.

Of late the situation has polarized. Some Bisclavret foresters were found dead on the banks of the river, riddled with Doloreaux arrows. Soon after, a young Doloreaux farmer caught cutting Bisclavret wood was shot dead by a huntsman in revenge. A small border war might well erupt if the situation is not resolved. Local landowners on both sides have armed their peasants, and some are drilling for battle in plain sight.

This situation has been engineered by a pair of enterprising merchants from the Armorers' Guild in Triskellian. They hope to generate a conflict, and make money by selling bows and spears to both sides. Players can discover this by talking to both sides involved in the dispute. Alternatively, one of the thugs hired to kill the foresters might drop some hints around the players. If the players are able to defuse the confrontation, and prove the merchants arranged the killings, they will be given the merchant's inventory as reward. This might well win them a few enemies in the guild.

"A wizard learns not just from his own experience but also from others."

— Kyndranigar the Shadow-Mage, in regards to Culture



APPENDIX 2: THE CULTURE SPELL LIST

Describing the Esoteric Magic List, "The Culture of Kyndranigar"

The legends say that after Kyndranigar the Shadow-Mage created the School of Thaumaturgy, he was still disappointed that his many students failed to embrace his ideal of what the "ultimate wizard" should be. To this end, he wrote seven spell lists, often called the *Seven Virtues of Kyndranigar*, and that he taught these spells to those pupils that he felt had the most promise.

Whereas the practice of Thaumaturgy is relatively common, with numerous practitioners to be found, only a select few have learned even one Virtue. Kyndranigar forbade having any of techniques of casting the Virtue spells written down ... but that failed to stop a few brave souls. Books on the Seven Virtues are very rare, and when found they command a heavy price.

After finding the book *On the Virtue of Culture*, any character with Literacy may study the book to learn its secrets. To cast these seven spells, one must buy the "Virtue of Culture" Trait, which applies to Literacy, Meditation, and Kyndranigar Lore. It is a Wizard Trait, so it adds to one's Magic Points. Once the character has at least a d4 in "The Virtue of Culture" (or simply "Culture"), they may cast these following spells. (Refer to the Magic chapter in *Ironclaw*, p. 193, for rules on casting spells.)

The Interdiction of Culture

Cost: 1 Difficulty: 1d8 Type: Defense Effect: Cancel any one Culture spell as it is cast.

You can cancel any one spell from this Virtue of Culture List, as it is cast. No opposed roll is needed — the spell is *instantly* cancelled. Can be used as a Defense upon any target that you can see.

Works on all seven spells in this list, including another person's casting of *The Interdiction of Culture*. Naturally, someone else may cast Interdiction of Culture against *your* Interdiction. Two rival wizards can "burn" Magic Points at each other to counter each other's Interdictions, until one of them yields or runs out of Magic to spend.

The Endowment of Letters

Cost: 2 Difficulty: 2d6 Type: Regular Effect: Target gains Literacy equal to your Culture Trait.

You can give someone else the power to read. For the duration of this scene, the target gains Literacy Dice equal to your Culture Trait Dice. For example, if you have a Culture Trait of d6, the target may now roll d6 on all Tests that involve Literacy. Note that this spell does not grant the Skill of Literacy, just an additional die to roll. This spell has no effect on yourself.

Retrospection

Cost: 3 Difficulty: 3d8 Type: Regular Effect: Target re-rolls a Know Test.

You can assist the powers of memory. The target of this spell may re-roll any one Know Test that they had to make during this Scene. If the new Know Test Outcome is better, then use that one

instead; otherwise, the spell has no effect. At the Game Host's discretion, this spell may allow re-rolls on other Tests where memory is involved.

A Piece of One's Mind

Cost: 4 Difficulty: 4d10 Type: Regular Effect: Lend a skill of yours to someone else.

You cast this spell on yourself, in an attempt to lend one of your Skills to someone else. You may only lend Skills with this spell, not Gifts or Traits.

Roll the spell's Effect Dice of 4d10 vs. your own Skill Dice, *but do not include Career Dice or other kinds of Dice – just the Skill*. If you score a Tie or better, the spell takes effect.

While the spell is in effect, the target has your Skill Dice – they include them with all appropriate Skill rolls. They may also call upon your own Favored Use bonus. (If they already had the Skill that you're lending to them, they include *both* their own Dice *and* yours .. and they can call upon *both* Favored Uses, re-rolling one "1" for each, with the possibility of re-rolling two "1's" if both Favored Uses apply.)

However, there is a disadvantage. While the spell is in effect, you no longer have use of your Skill Dice – you have "lent" them to the target.

The spell lasts until one of the following circumstances:

- You "call upon" the use of your Skill Dice – no gestures or words necessary. You instantly regain your own Skill Dice, to use them immediately. No resistance roll is permitted, and there are no distance limitations – as soon as you want to, just include the dice in your roll, and the spell has ended.
- The target *Botches* or *Overwhelmingly Fails* on a roll in which they had used your Skill Dice.
- The spell is Interdicted by the spell *The Interdiction of Culture*, cast upon either you or your target.
- The spell is dispelled with *Dispel Magic* or the like, overcoming the spell's 4d10 Difficulty Dice, cast upon either you or your target.

When the spell ends for any reason, you instantly regain the use of your Skill Dice, and you can use them *immediately*. Likewise, the target immediately loses the use of your Skill Dice.

Autodidact

Cost: 5 Difficulty: 5d6 Type: Regular Effect: Include Culture Trait with all Know Tests and Research Tests until you Fail.

You can call upon a higher order of thought that allows you to associate disparate concepts and to remember more details at once. For the duration of this spell, you may include your Culture Trait with all rolls to pass Know Tests and Research Tests, until you *Fail* or *Botch* one of those rolls. Then the spell ends. The effect of this spell will also be removed if it is Interdicted or dispelled successfully.

Geas

Cost: 6 Difficulty: 6d12 Type: Regular Effect: Target must roll Mind & Will vs. your Culture and target's own Skill Dice or be beholden to some task.

You can charge someone with performing some task, using their own hubris against them – for the better they are, the more difficult their roll to resist will be!

For this spell to work, your target must hear you demand of them some task, such as, "You must defeat three people in honorable single combat!", or "You must stitch a garment that is worthy of the Duke himself!", or "You must walk from one side of Calabria to the other!" The task should be only one sentence, and not too complex, and it should have a measurable, definable outcome. (For example, "kill everyone you meet" is *not* acceptable.) If the task is too hard or too inappropriate, then the target resists automatically and the Magic Points are wasted. As in all cases, the Game Host's judgment is final.

The target resists the spell using their *Mind Trait* and *Will Trait* Dice.

The target's opposed difficulty roll is the combination of *Your Culture Trait* and the target's *Skill Dice* and other *Career Trait Dice* that apply to the Skill appropriate to the task. For example, if you charge someone with fighting three people, it could be the target's *Sword Skill* and *Cavalier Trait Dice*. (But not *Speed Trait Dice* – this is a *Culture* spell, and it involves learning and knowledge, not inherent qualities.) Yes, this means that the better a target is at something, the harder it is for them to resist this spell.

While the *Geas* spell is in effect, the target suffers the following penalties:

- The target may not claim the *Favored Use* advantage from the Skill involved in the *Geas*.
- Any time the target *Ties* on a roll that uses the Skill involved in the *Geas*, treat that as if the target *Botched* the roll instead.

The target will be aware of a “yearning” to complete the *Geas*' task, but they are otherwise free to ignore the duty and get on with their lives ... if they're willing to abide the effects mentioned above.

The *Geas* will end if one of the following circumstances occurs:

- The target accomplishes the task of the *Geas*. (This can be some sort of literal interpretation or other such “lawyering” – an excellent opportunity for role-playing!)
- The *Geas* is Interdicted by the spell *The Interdiction of Culture*.
- The *Geas* is dispelled by *Dispel Magic* or a similar spell, testing its Effect Dice vs. the *Geas*' Difficulty Dice of 6d12.

The Office of Another

Cost: 7 Difficulty: 7d12 Type: Regular Effect: Target must test their Skill vs. 7d12, or you steal their Skill.

By means of this spell, you are attempting to “steal” a Skill from someone else. You may only steal Skills with this spell, not Gifts or Traits.

Compare your spell's Effect Dice of 7d12 vs. your target's Skill Dice, but do not include their *Career Dice* or other kinds of Dice – just the Skill. If you score a *Success* or better, the spell takes effect.

While the spell is in effect, you have the target's Skill Dice – you include them with all appropriate Skill rolls. You may also call upon the target's own *Favored Use* bonus. (If you already had the Skill that you swiped from them, you include both their own Dice and yours .. and you can call upon both *Favored Uses*, re-rolling one “1” for each, with the possibility of re-rolling two “1's” if both *Favored Uses* apply.)

Also, your target has lost the use of their original Skill Dice. You've “stolen” them! If they want to make rolls involving the Skill, they'll have to call upon Trait Dice that apply, just as if they were unskilled in the first place. The target is likely to be angry!

The spell lasts until one of the following circumstances:

- You *Botch* or *Overwhelmingly Fail* on a roll in which you used the Skill Dice that you swiped.
- The target attempts some feat where their skill dice would've helped them ... they roll their “default” dice ... and they *Overwhelmingly Succeed* or their opposition *Botches*. For this circumstance to end the spell however, this feat must be something of “consequence”. For example, to get their *Sword* skill back, the target can't just swing at some log – it's got to be something “difficult.” As a guideline for the Game Host, the target must beat a 2d10 roll or better, or the target must survive some dire task.
- The spell is Interdicted by the spell *The Interdiction of Culture*, cast upon either you or your target.
- The spell is dispelled with *Dispel Magic* or the like, overcoming the spell's 7d12 Difficulty Dice, cast upon either you or your target.

When the spell ends for any reason, the target instantly regain the use of their Skill Dice, and you immediately lose the use of their Skill Dice.



APPENDIX 3: NATURAL MEDICINE

*In Which the Ingredients and Methods are Described by
a Learned Person and Skilled Practitioner*

I, Agnella of the Order of Hellioste the Witness, write these words. This scroll is part of the record of one of the beloved elderly badger women in this village. Goodwife Brocke. She has treated the varied residents here for sixty years after her apprenticeship to the previous goodwife. Now her legacy has been passed to her own eldest daughter.

At the request of the village headman, whose son is joining our order at the year's end, I record here an interview of this woman. The experience of this goody is too remarkable to disappear without any attempt at recording for posterity. All that follows is her words on the treatment of beasts as best my hand could follow her quick thoughts.



Common Sage



Comfrey

"See that bush outside the door?" I replied that yes, I did see it. "That bush saved the life of Della twenty years ago. She was the prettiest baby bunny you could ever want to see. She caught the rabbit plague that ran through here back then. Half the rabbits 'round died from that. I could do nothing for them, except make them comfortable.

"Della though, she was a sweet thing. Always came here to play with my young ones. One day she sat on the doorstep, ears drooping. I asked her how she felt. 'Mama Brocke,' she said, 'my tummy hurts real bad. Can I sit here for a minute, please?' I had thought the sickness had taken all it would and thus passed on, but Della had the first symptoms: stomach pain, red eyes, and bad sniffles. 'Sure, honey, you can sit here. Lean against me, sweetie.'



Boneset

"I just sat and held her, thinking she would be gone soon, but she spoke up. 'Ma'am Brocke, can I please have some cayenne tea? That always makes me feel better.' Now Della is the only rabbit I've ever known who liked my cayenne tea. Most those folks couldn't even swallow the stuff. It's a favorite for wolves and badgers, though. I fixed her a cup and I sent her back home. Let me tell you, that was a long, dark night.



Juniper



Hemlock



Penny Royal



Flaxseed



Bloodroot



Ginseng Root



Magnolia



Cubeb



Yellowdock

"Next day, though, Della comes back over. Lo and behold, no symptoms. She had found the first treatment of rabbit plague. It was too late for so many, but we haven't lost more than one or two in the latest run of plague. Let this be a lesson: always listen to young ones when they say that they want something when they're sick. Their instincts'll serve them true, they haven't learned to suppress them yet. More than one remedy comes from the children. The children are a healers best help-- let them know what you need from the woods or fields and sure enough, some pup or kid will arrive back with a fresh cut bundle of herbs. Hoping for a piece of my famous ginger candy too no doubt.

"Some herbs though, children can't find. Only woman like myself can find those. Like moonberry, the best remedy for fevers you could ask for when treating horses and wolverines. Don't even think about giving it to wolves though unless you really want a patient going through the foaming fits on your hands. Healing is all in the memory, knowing what to give, when, and to whom. Like my poultice for magic burns, clean the wound with weak salt water, apply a mix of crushed, fresh comfrey, berries, and royal. That's good for almost anybody. But you gotta add different things for it to be more effective, like sage for bears and horses, flaxseed for boars, for the simians, or replace comfrey with parsley for the foxes.

"Other times a wonderful treatment for one species can kill another. Drinking a tea of hemlock works great for stomach aches for everybody but the simians. It'll flat kill them in half an hour if you give them enough.

People have to be very careful of other species sensitivities. If you are going to treat somebody, and you are not a trained healer, then ask your patient before you give them anything. They'll probably know most of what'll hurt them. If they are not conscious, then you got a problem, you better believe it. Usually though you are pretty safe applying the six basic poultice herbs to all species suffering from regular cuts scrapes or burns. Always wash the wound with weak salt water, then mix crushed ginseng, stem of, bayberry bark, dock, vervain, and blue cohosh with wheat germ oil and apply under a cotton bandage. Any combination of these herbs will help but all of them together guarantee a quick, clean healing.

"For internal disorders there are some safe general treatments. Slippery elm is good for sore mouth and throat, and breathing the essence of chewed peppermint leaves softens coughing fits. Headache problems respond well to magnolia, red sage, or wild cherry teas, except in the cats who it does nothing for.

For the felines, use wood betony tea, or paste of cubeb berries. When my children would go visit their uncle at the next village over for a few days of apple picking, this is what I would pack for them. They would go climbing, running and eating apples with all the other children till they were plain wore out. Even back then my kids were real good, always helping the other children. All of them were, but especially my eldest daughter Rosa. She always assisted me in my visits to the neighbor folks. She's the one who got from me all I could teach her about the real healing: how to set a broken bone. That's a scary job when it has to be done. The little breaks are easy to splint. The full

breaks you better start treating with a tea of mandrake and calamous root and applying a poultice of boneset, or its apt to go bad on you.

"Or helping with a difficult birthing. Everybody does it so differently, people really have to trust you to know what you're doing if you ain't their type of folks. Bloodroot will ease contractions in everybody but the horses when you are trying to deliver a strangling infant. Gotta stop those muscles from killing the little fellow. But again not it's good for everybody. Bloodroot will cause severe bleeding in the women of horses after the birth is done. If she's small you'll lose her quick. And cat mothers who want you to treat their kittens' colic.

They trust you to not accidentally make their kits go blind. That's always the hardest part, people trusting you. They come here saying 'Ma'am Brocke can you please come see my daddy. Momma says it's his stomach again'. And you go to help if you can. But nothing hurts more, nothing, than somebody's kin coming to get you and when you arrive there's not a thing you can do to help them. Then you just comfort the living and care for the dying, so you don't have to walk out of their as the bringer of death but instead as a friend."

One of the basic difficulties facing the historian who strives for accuracy is the reckoning of seasons, years, and eras. The methods of measuring time differ from people to people ... and the astute antiquarian must be aware that these methods also reveal something about the people themselves.

— from Jean de Lean's *Reconciliation of Calendars*,
printed by Dunwasser Press

APPENDIX 4: CALENDARS

Since the Blessed Ways (see page 38) are highly dependent upon the calendar, presented here are the two systems of reckoning the days used by the peoples of Calabria: the *Doloreaux calendar* (common in central and northern Calabria, where the Hierarchs and the Old Faith commands much influence) and the *S'allumer calendar* (used by Triskellian court and banks, and thus popular within the southern lands).

The Doloreaux Calendar

The Doloreaux Calendar divides the year into 13 "lunations", plus one extra day known as the "Secret of the Unhewn Stone"—also known as "a year and a day". Each lunation is precisely 28 days. Whether and when a "leap day" or "long year" is added varies from place to place, which creates another source of confusion.

The Doloreaux calendar has seven days, named *Dé Domhnaigh*, *Dé Luan*, *Dé Mairt*, *Dé Céadaoin*, *Déardaoin*, *Dé Haoine*, and *Dé Sathairn*.

This calendar is for the lay-folk in monitoring their daily affairs and holidays, as the Church of S'allumer exerts its weakest influence in these lands, and most folk continue with their own form of worship as they have done for centuries before.

The S'allumer Calendar

The Church of S'allumer begins numbering the years upon their reckoning of the Miracle of Helloise, starting at the year 1. Prior to that event, all dates were recorded as the year and the day of the current Don's reign.

The S'allumer calendar divides the year up into 12 months, each one of varying days. The entire year is 365 days. The first day of every month, known as the *kalens*, is the standard marker for the period of interest on a loan or lease.

It has come to the attention of navigators and astronomers that the 365-day calendar is not "perfect"; the "true" year is closer to 365 218/900 days. To fix this, the S'allumer calendar has a "leap year", a 366 day year, where the month of Snow is 29 days instead of 28. The rules for a leap year are:

- Every year divisible by 4 is usually a "leap year."
- If the year is divisible by 100, then it is not a leap year.
- If, when the year is divided by 900, it leaves a remainder of 200 or 600, then the year is a leap year.

The S'allumer week is also divided into seven days, named *Lundi*, *Mardi*, *Mercredi*, *Jeudi*, *Vendredi*, *Samedi*, and *Dimache*. The last day, *Dimache*, is a day of rest and worship; shops are closed and it is forbidden by Triskellian law to exchange money within the city limits.

Use of Calendars among Different Peoples

The Rinaldi and the people of Triskellian use the S'allumer calendar in all of their official records and business transactions. The Church of S'allumer in particular has designated numerous days of special prayers and ceremonies of varying complexity.

Doloreaux legal documents will either make reference to the S'allumer calendar, using the year, month, and day, or they will use the "old-fashioned" method of listing the number of days and years in the current Lord and Lady's reign. The lay-folk and peasantry of Doloreaux lands usually don't worry too much about which calendar is to be used—when it's tax day, the Excisemen will come. Of course, the Hierarchs and those who are Blessed maintain a keen interest in the days of the calendar. The Vidames, who preside over the bureaucratic affairs of the Hierarchs' households, often use *both* systems of dating on their written correspondence and legal documents.

The Bisclavret have adopted the S'allumer system of dating, at the very beginning of their written records. Avoirdupois texts before King Etienne's conversion used the former custom of recording the year and number of days since the beginning of the current reign; after the conversion to S'allumer, the Church's system of reckoning is used.

The Calendars, and the Conversions between Them

Conversion of Doloreaux Calendar to S'allumer Calendar

Birch 1-28	28 days	Night 24 – Yule 20
Rowan 1-28	28 days	Yule 21 – Snow 17
Ash 1-28	28 days	Snow 18 – Sap 17
Alder 1-28	28 days	Sap 18 – Grass 14
Willow 1-28	28 days	Grass 15 – Flower 12
Hawthorn 1-28	28 days	Flower 13 – Strawberry 9
Oak 1-28	28 days	Strawberry 10 – Thunder 7
Holly 1-28	28 days	Thunder 8 – Green 4
Hazel 1-28	28 days	Green 5 – Harvest 1
Vine 1-28	28 days	Harvest 2-29
Ivy 1-28	28 days	Harvest 30 – Hunter's 27
Reed 1-28	28 days	Hunter's 28 – Frost 24
Elder 1-28	28 days	Frost 25 – Night 22
Secret of the Unhewn Stone	1 day	Night 23

Conversion of S'allumer Calendar to Doloreaux Calendar

Yule 1-31	31 days	Birch 6 – Rowan 8
Snow 1-28	28 days	Rowan 9 – Ash 8
Sap 1-31	31 days	Ash 9- Alder 11
Grass 1-30	30 days	Alder 12 – Willow 13
Flower 1-31	31 days	Willow 14 – Hawthorn 16
Strawberry 1-30	30 days	Hawthorn 17 – Oak 18
Thunder 1-31	31 days	Oak 19 – Holly 21
Green 1-31	31 days	Holly 23 – Hazel 24
Harvest 1-30	30 days	Hazel 25 – Vine 26
Hunter's 1-31	31 days	Vine 27 – Reed 1
Frost 1-30	30 days	Reed 2 – Elder 3
Night 1-31	31 days	Elder 4 – Birch 5 (including Unhewn Stone)

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AMONG ALL THE PEOPLE OF CALABRIA, THE DOLOREAUX ARE THE ONES WHO CLING MOST FIRMLY TO THE LORE OF THEIR BEGINNINGS. WHILE MUCH OF IT CAN BE SEEN AS FANTASTICAL, THE FIRST RULE LEARNED BY SCHOLARS IS THAT THE FANTASTIC OFTEN FLOWERS FROM SOME SMALL SEED OF TRUTH. IT IS OUR TASK TO PRUNE AWAY THE HOARY GROWTH OF INVENTION TO LAY BARE THE ROOTS.

—from *Lutara's Path: The Shame And Triumph Of The House Doloreaux* by *Pyotr the Scribe*

To outsiders, they appear brutish and stubborn, thinking of nothing but their own interests. To themselves, however, they feel a kinship with the ways of their world and a pity for everyone else who does not share their understanding. The boars of Doloreaux stand defiant against all Noble Houses of Calabria, content to bide their time and gain ground by inches... but ambition stews in the heart of every soldier, and some daring plot cannot be too far off.

This supplement for *IRONCLAW Gaming System* describes House Doloreaux, from their arrival on Calabria to their slow and measured rise to power. Included within are details on Doloreaux lands, from the idyllic peace of Vosges to the bloody battlefields of Lyore, from the nearly-forgotten port of Mortemere to the towering majesty of the capital city of Bruges. This book features new people to meet, new careers to learn, and the ultimate Doloreaux secret of the Blessed Paths, the supernatural power inherent in all living things.

For the truly brave, there is also an adventure where a secret from the past results in betrayal and bloodshed.... Can the obstinate Doloreaux be persuaded to put aside their pride to recognize the danger?

You will need a copy of IRONCLAW: Anthropomorphic Fantasy Role-Play to use this book.



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