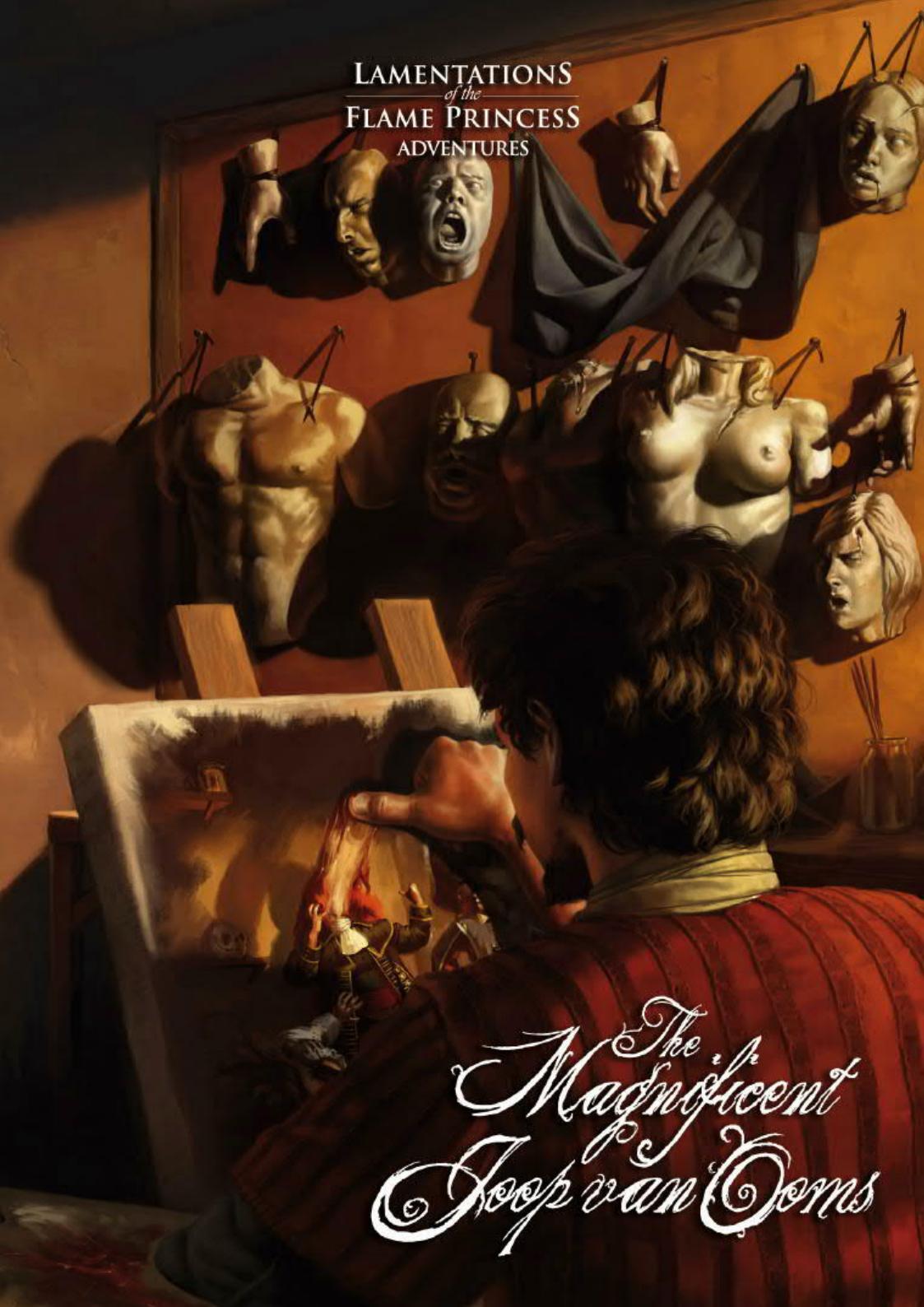


LAMENTATIONS
of the
FLAME PRINCESS
ADVENTURES

The
Magnificent
Seep van Ooms



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THE
MAGNIFICENT
JOOP VAN OOMS

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THE UNITED PROVINCES & AMSTERDAM

In 1567, sparked by religious and taxation issues, the Seventeen Provinces of the Low Countries rebelled against their Spanish rulers, beginning what history calls the Eighty Years War. In 1581, the Provinces declared independence, but the war raged on. The end result was a splitting of the Low Countries, with the northern portion becoming the independent United Provinces (more or less in present-day Holland) and the southern Spanish Netherlands remaining, for the moment, under Spanish rule.

The Provinces were already a major commercial hub before Spanish rule as they were a convenient stopping point on the European sea routes between the Baltic states, England, and Spain, and on continental Europe itself with neighboring France and major areas of the Holy Roman Empire, either by land or river. After the revolt, the United Provinces became pioneers in capitalistic practices, with Amsterdam establishing the world's first stock exchange (originally for the sole purpose of handling stock transactions of the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, aka VOC or United East India Company or Dutch East Indie Company) and central bank at the beginning of the 17th century.

Dutch ships are common on the sea lanes, particularly in areas where the Portuguese—themselves under Spanish dominion at this time—officially claimed a monopoly, such as Brazil, Africa, India, and Southeast Asia.

Socially, the United Provinces are incredibly progressive for their day. The government is set up as a republic: the United Provinces are also known as the Dutch Republic or Republic of the Seven United Netherlands during this period), although this was more theoretical than actual. Representation for each of the individual provinces was decided by traditionally powerful landholding families and major business concerns, and the Princes of Orange as a hereditary line, tended to hold unofficial executive power. This was primarily because for the almost entire first century of their existence, the Provinces were at war—first with Spain and Portugal, later with England for mercantile supremacy—and a definite leader was called for.

While all of the country's major commercial hubs are more cosmopolitan than the ruling regime would prefer, the United Provinces nevertheless again took the lead in terms of tolerance. While the official religion of the United Provinces was Calvinism (which was a major factor in the break from Catholic Spain), Catholicism was not outlawed and churches of different denominations could be found in the same city. There was also a very different attitude towards class consciousness in the Provinces than elsewhere in Europe.



As far as most outsiders were concerned, the Dutch were scandalously permissive and promiscuous, in almost most every way. This is not to say that from a 21st century perspective that the United Provinces was a tolerant society, as attitudes towards, and tolerance of, different groups varied from one year to the next, and from one region to the next, most notably between urban and rural areas. Even they were also Protestants, Lutherans in particular had a difficult time establishing churches, and Jews, while not persecuted by the state (itself an incredibly forward-thinking step), could not establish official places of worship, even when granted official sanction, because of interference from other religious authorities and popular protest. Nevertheless, by the standards of the day, the peoples of the United Provinces were remarkably tolerant of other cultures and faiths.

The Dutch were also innovators in terms of military tactics. The “Pike and Shot” era of warfare was largely based on Dutch innovations on the battlefield, based on maximizing the effectiveness of the often-unwieldy matchlock firearm when combined with smaller sized and more maneuverable battalions comprised of pikemen, arquebusiers, and musketeers. The standardization of equipment as well as the training and drilling that these battalions required were a prime reason—along with the United Provinces’ effective defensive siege warfare—why the Dutch forces were able to fight the Spanish (the most powerful empire on Earth at the time of the Dutch revolt) to a standstill and negotiate a truce. Indeed, imitation of their methods would lead to militaries becoming more

efficient and professional throughout Europe over the course of the next century and this would take a horrible toll on armies in the field in terms of battlefield casualties.

The Magnificent Joop van Ooms assumes a present date of 1615, six years into an arranged twelve year truce with Spain. The Dutch have established very few permanent settlements overseas as of yet, but this very year have built Fort Nassau in the New World, at the location of present day Albany, New York.

AMSTERDAM

If the United Provinces in general are a world leader in terms of progressive thinking and commercial power, Amsterdam is the engine that drives this machine, being the largest city of the United Provinces, and where all of the financial and political powerbrokers are located.

Amsterdam in 1615 has a population approaching 75,000 people, and within the last five years has conducted a major expansion to its canal system and defenses. Nor will this be last expansion to either. The city competes with London not just as a center of commerce, culture, power, and influence, but for the bragging rights to be the de facto “Capital of the World”—in European eyes at least.

Where else but Amsterdam could a world-class talent and genius of a man like Joop van Ooms be born? And where else but Amsterdam would such a man live?



DOWN ON THE WHARF

AMSTERDAM ENCOUNTERS (D50)

- 1 A group of poor children swarm around looking for hand-outs. One of them is a pickpocket who will attempt to pilfer something (Sleight of Hand skill $1d10-4$, minimum 1).
- 2 A vagrant offer to sell them what is in his box for 1gp, sight unseen. Inside the box is the Hamster of The Hague, which can fit an infinite amount of matter in its mouth. If word reaches the Hamster of Amsterdam, it will not like hearing of its colleague's enslavement.
- 3 A ship is leaving soon and it needs fresh hands now. A press gang of $3d10$ toughs decides that the player characters are fresh enough.
- 4 A drunken brute of a man (Fighter level $1d8$) mistakes a player character for somebody that owes him money. A lot of money.
- 5 The Preaching Prostitute is looking to tell her customers that they are going to hell while providing her services.
- 6 Spanish spies are looking for collaborators. The player characters look capable and do not look Dutch, so would they mind helping out with a plot or three, would they?
- 7 Spanish spies are looking for collaborators. The player characters look capable and do not look Dutch, so would they mind helping out with a plot or three, would they? A-HA! These are actually Dutch spy-hunters looking for threats, and if any player character agrees to help the "Spanish," it is to the gallows with you now!
- 9 Drunken sailors looking for a fight. There are $1d10+2$ of them, each a Fighter level $1d12-6$ (minimum 0).
- 10 Drunken sailors looking for drinking partners. The player characters face a choice; party with them until dawn, or it is time to fight. There are $1d10+2$ sailors, each a Fighter level $1d12-6$ (minimum 0).
- 11 Completely sober sailors are looking for stimulating intellectual discourse. And by God, the player characters do look stimulating. The player characters must spend the day discussing philosophy and politics with these fellows in an upscale public house, or these men will make disparaging remarks about them all over town to the point where they suffer a -1 reaction roll penalty for the next week.
- 12 A fancy lad, just having completed finishing school, is looking for his father's ship.
- 13 A fisherman snagged some sort of golden trinket in his latest catch and is looking to sell it off before anybody catches on. It is worth $1d100x20sp$, but he will part with it for half its value.

- 14 A fisherman snagged some sort of golden trinket in his latest catch and is looking to sell it off before anybody catches on. It is worth $1d100x20sp$, but he will part with it for half its value. Unbeknownst to all, it houses an ancient evil.
- 15 A prominent citizen, whose career would surely end if his activities here were known, is prowling the docks looking for a good time. One of the player characters looks like a sporting and discrete gentleman...
- 17 Smugglers are not always bright or well-prepared; a cart full of just-unloaded cargo breaks, spilling the crates' contents all over the place. Guns and powder!
- 18 Smugglers are not always bright or well-prepared; a cart full of just-unloaded cargo breaks, spilling the crates' contents all over the place. A strange beast in a cage is revealed.
- 19 A man running away from someone barges into the player characters. Panicking, he gives them the documents that he is carrying and runs off. The documents reveal the names of a dozen high-placed Spanish spies. Spanish agents arrive momentarily.
- 20 A man running away from someone blunders into the player characters. Panicking, he gives them the documents that he is carrying and runs off. The documents reveal military secrets belonging to the United Provinces. Dutch agents arrive momentarily.
- 21 A Portuguese slave ship is just in from Africa and it is over quota; not as much cargo perished en route as expected. The ship's buyer did not have the warehouse space to house all of the cargo and the ship's captain is looking to find a buyer for the rest. Anyone want to buy some cheap labor in its physical prime?
- 22 "Hey! This area belongs to the VOC! Show us your permits and papers!"
- 23 Competing pamphleteers assail the player characters, selling their screeds about morality, news of the day, politics, war, philosophy, the proper way to train a dog, etc. Each pamphlet costs 1sp apiece. It will not satisfy any of them to simply buy their particular pamphlet, it is also important not to buy anyone else's.
- 25 A man dressed in black and obviously up to no good emerges from the water and climbs up a ship's anchor chair/mooring line. Do the player characters get involved? If so, what is going on? If not, what did they miss?

26 A young man introduces himself as a doctor's assistant. He is collecting vials of blood for medical experiments (he has 3d6 full vials on him already). He offers 5sp to anyone who will donate a vialful of blood.

27 A large ship is in the process of un/loading, and someone has left a cannon right there. Nobody is going to pay attention for another half hour in case anyone wants it...

28 Plague panic! The plague has struck again in London—or Lisbon, or Venice, or Stockholm, or wherever—and thorough inspections of passengers from those places are being conducted at random. And don't the player characters look like the very type to have come from there...

29 A man approaches the player characters as if he is an old friend, shaking hands, slapping backs, etc. He has actually stolen something that he shouldn't have and is attempting to plant it. His Sleight of Hand skill is 1d12-6, minimum 1.

30 Customs officials with armed guards are making spot checks for contraband. The player characters are not carrying anything illegal, are they?

31 A battered and bloody ship's captain has been assaulted by "extortionate criminals" and needs assistance getting his property back. Surely the player characters would help for a bagful of silver?

33 A man deep in debt needs to sell his ship now. Half price, good deal, yes?

34 A nervous merchant confides that underlings have *gasp* smuggled something on his ship, and now he is fearful of being caught and prosecuted. Surely some rough looking customers like the player characters ("no offense") would be more of a mind to buy and take responsibility for such an item? (It turns out to be a real Egyptian mummy!).

35 Warehouse fire! And it is too close! The warehouse is already spewing smoke everywhere... and opium was stored there. Lots and lots of opium.

36 Older prostitutes, with their children in tow, loudly proposition the player characters. "You don't want to send us to the poor house, do you? Think of my kids!" (and this scene is being observed...)

37 Recruiters looking for people to join their exploration expedition to the New World/Indonesia/India/Brazil to raid native treasures. Want to come? You get a full share!

38 In the distance, the player characters see an old enemy of theirs, one they know that they killed, but it is just a momentary glimpse and the enemy quickly melts into the crowd...

39 The player characters spy a body in an alley. Although grievously wounded and covered in blood, the victim is not quite dead yet, and if anyone tries to help he will snap back to lucidity and remembering his circumstance scream bloody murder before passing away... which will attract attention.

41 Weapons inspectors! Local authorities are concerned with violence in the shipping districts and so are confiscating arms and armor from those that do not have license for them.

42 A man wants the player characters to sign a petition to clean up the filth in the harbor. At the same time, a group of jugglers approaches wanting money for their entertainment skills. The petition is actually a sign-up sheet to sign on as a VOC soldier overseas, and the jugglers are a distraction to get them to not read the document before they sign!

43 A ship has just come into port and it has had a rough time; only a few of its crew survived the journey. They need help unloading the ship by dusk (or dawn if it is already dark) or else the ship incurs extra fees. Would the player characters help in exchange for some random crate from the ship? If they do, at the end of the job—which takes right up to the deadline—they get a crate that ends up containing goods worth 1d12x50sp.

44 A ship has just come into port and it has had a rough time; only a few of its crew survived the journey. They need help unloading the ship by dusk (or dawn if it's already dark) or else the ship incurs extra fees. Would the player characters help in exchange for some random crate from the ship? If they do, at the end of the job—which takes right up to the deadline—they get a crate that ends up containing goods worth 1d12x5sp—the rest of the contents are all broken.

45 A performing monkey on a leash does some tricks and its owner wants money for the performance. He will threaten to kill the monkey if there is no money forthcoming. He will do it, too—he has extra monkeys at home.

46 Two very short men, one with a long beard, and one tall skinny man, approach the party and attempt to recruit them on their quest to destroy some hidden evil in the mountains of Norway.

47 A merchant carrying various elixirs in a case attempts to sell these "miracle" cures to anyone and everyone. They cost 5sp apiece, and there is a 1% chance that one actually cures diseases or heals 1d6hp of damage.

49 "Hey you lot! Not from around here, eh? Then you want to buy some genuine Dutch wooden shoes, which I coincidentally can provide! What size are your feet? Ahhh, healthy, ain't ya? Try these ones..." There is a 25% chance that the shoes have termites, and a 25% chance that they are an extraordinary set of shoes.

50 The player characters stumble onto an impromptu Beer and Cheese street festival, where they will be invited to partake in as much as they want. If they do, they will lose 1d6x10sp as they spend some money on useless trinkets and wake up the next morning in some strange place with a killer hangover, and if they do not, some friendly drunks are going to make sure that they take a swim in the harbor before they go about their business.

THE BLACK MARKETS

Amsterdam is one of the most important trading cities in the world at this point, if not the greatest. An incredible amount of cargo and merchandise passes in and out of its harbor and warehouses, a good deal of which is smuggled. This is a good place for player characters to buy and sell contraband.

When selling loot on the black market, the price paid will be lower than what the sellers would receive through legitimate channels (even after taxes!), but there are a good many items that are sold that would raise too many questions if sold openly. An attempt to sell loot requires a 2d6 roll, Charisma modifiers applying (use the Charisma modifier of the character whose player takes the lead here, not necessarily the modifier of the character who the players want to modify the roll):

SELLING ON THE BLACK MARKET (2D6)

- 1 The buyers are offended, and demand the item as compensation and payment equal to 25% of the item's value. Refusal results in the seller being attacked. (3d4 Fighters of 1d10-5 level each)
- 2 The buyers are offended, and demand the item as compensation. Refusal results in the seller being attacked. (3d4 Fighters of 1d10-5 level each)
- 3 The buyers pay 30% of full value, but puts out the word of what was sold and who sold it. The player characters have a 100% chance of meeting those wishing to eliminate them for possessing the item(s).
- 4 The buyers pay 30% of full value, but puts out the word of what was sold and who sold it. The player characters have a 75% chance of meeting those wishing to eliminate them for possessing the item(s).
- 5 The buyers pay 50% of full value, but puts out the word of what was sold and who sold it. The player characters have a 50% chance of meeting those wishing to eliminate them for possessing the item(s).
- 6 The buyers offer to pay 60% of full value, but puts out the word of what was sold and who sold it. The player characters have a 25% chance of meeting those wishing to eliminate them for possessing the item(s).
- 7 The buyers pay 70% of full value.

- 8 The buyers pay 75% of full value.
- 9 The buyers pay 80% of full value.
- 10 The buyers pay 65% of full value and send word if anyone asks after the item(s) later.
- 11 The buyers pay 70% of full value and send word if anyone asks after the item(s) later.
- 12 The buyers pay 75% of full value and send word if anyone asks after the item(s) later.
- 13 The buyers pay 80% of full value and send word if anyone asks after the item(s) later.
- 14 The buyers pay 85% of full value and send word if anyone asks after the item(s) later.
- 15 The buyers pay 85% of full value and send word if anyone asks after the item(s) later.

If there is a particular item that the player characters want to buy (even magical!), the Referee must decide what the fair price is before proceeding, then roll 2d6, Charisma modifiers applying (use the Charisma modifier of the character whose player takes the lead here, not necessarily the modifier of the character who the players want to modify the roll):

BUYING ON THE BLACK MARKET (2D6)

- 1 The item is not available at any price, but the sellers want 50% of its value for their effort anyway. Refusal to pay means getting roughed up by the seller's goons. (3d4 Fighters of 1d10-5 level each)
- 2 The item is not available at any price, but the sellers want 25% of its value for their effort anyway. Refusal to pay means getting roughed up by the seller's goons. (3d4 Fighters of 1d10-5 level each).
- 3 The item is not available at any price, but the sellers want 10% of its value for their effort anyway. Refusal to pay means getting roughed up by the seller's goons. (3d4 Fighters of 1d10-5 level each).
- 4 The sellers are charging 10 times the item's normal value.
- 5 The sellers are charging 5 times the item's normal value.
- 6 The sellers are charging 3 times the item's normal value.
- 7 The sellers are charging 2 times the item's normal value.
- 8 The sellers are charging 1.5 times the item's normal value.
- 9 The sellers are charging 90% of the item's normal value.
- 10 The sellers are charging 80% of the item's normal value.
- 11 The sellers are charging 75% of the item's normal value.
- 12 The sellers are charging 66% of the item's normal value.
- 13 The sellers are charging 50% of the item's normal value.
- 14 The sellers are charging 33% of the item's normal value.
- 15 The sellers are charging 25% of the item's normal value.

JOOP VAN OOMS

Joop van Ooms is polymath, working in Amsterdam as an inventor, architect, engineer, painter, poet, and sculptor. He was in his younger days also known for his athletic feats and martial prowess, but was injured in battle with the Spanish and now is merely average physically. His work has made him one of the richest men in Amsterdam, although he spends most of his wealth on improving the city.

He is a celebrity in his native Amsterdam, promoting himself as, and being acknowledged as, a new generation "Renaissance Man," recalling the intellectual achievements and artistry of the Italian greats. Ooms (and his last name is always referred to, by himself and others, as "Ooms" and not "van Ooms") publicly calls himself "the new age Da Vinci," and tends to make disparaging remarks towards other famous intellectual contemporaries—Galileo and Kepler, most notably—for their lack of artistic talent and other creative celebrities—Shakespeare, Jonson, Vega, Rubens, Caravaggio, and so on—for their lack of scientific acumen.

More controversially, he is an extreme advocate of peace and tolerance. He openly states that Catholics and Evangelicals (Protestants) have no reason to quarrel, that Jews should be full members of society, that the Christian world should pursue peace with the Ottomans and that Muslims are no less God's children, and that the natives of Africa, the Americas, India, and China (most notable examples) should be seen as masters of their own lands, and explorers and merchants as only guests when visiting their lands. He credits his experiences as a soldier and sailor for informing these attitudes.

Most controversially, while not a vocal proponent of such, he has been caught in scandalous same-sex pairings, although has defended such acts as "practicing the methods of the knowledgeable ancient Greeks and thus gaining insight into the life and times of Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates."

His flaunting of social mores has earned him many enemies, and most of his attitudes would have had him burned at the stake for heresy, beheaded for treason, or otherwise "officially" murdered. However, his affected personality as an eccentric artist earns him some leeway, as does his more-than-generous contributions to both the local religious authorities and civic projects, in terms of both money and work. He tends to spend his money on civic projects that his fiercest critics support, which results in the lessening of the ferocity of the criticism towards

as well as providing support for a most eclectic array of projects. This has not gone unnoticed; pamphleteers and priests and politicians now often rail against Ooms, not because he has done anything to offend them, but because they wish him to spend money on their pet causes. He sees through most of these attempts.

Joop is, of course, a most gregarious person, yet does not seem to have any trouble finding time to both attend many social functions and to concentrate on his work. And he produces a lot of work. Many suspect that he secretly employs a small army of skilled professionals that does the work he merely signs his name to; how else could he be so prolific?

But all of this is the public face of Joop van Ooms. His secret—which he hardly keeps secret, it is just that everyone he tells privately treats it as a great secret—is that as a consequence of his studies and experiments, he has broken through to the Void Beyond the World and has seen both the glories and the feculence of creation. Where others react in horror or take a nihilistic attitude after being confronted by the Pointlessness of All Things, Ooms instead sees that all of the stuff regarded as so important by his fellow man just... isn't. Religion, nationality, sexuality, identity, none of it matters, so why so much pain? Yet he knows that nothing can protect him should he fully disclose his knowledge; the Church, the State, and seekers of esoteric and forbidden knowledge will descend upon him and devour him (figuratively or literally, depending on who it is that reaches him first...) if he were to tell all that he knows.

And so he lives, and works, spreading the ideas that he thinks he can get away with, and working subtly to undermine and destroy those who think differently. Mankind will be free!

Joop van Ooms: Magic-User level 6 (no spellbook and no prepared spells, however). Cha 18, Int 18.

THE MAGNIFICENT JOOP VAN COMS



GILLES DE RAIS

Rais was a slave purchased by the Portuguese from sub-Saharan Africa some years back, but never took to the slave mentality. His masters beat, tortured, and mutilated him (he has no tongue and has been castrated, among his numerous other scars), but even this did not break his spirit. The slave eventually killed one of his handlers during an escape attempt, and for this he was to be publicly executed. But Ooms purchased the slave, with payment consisting of promises of a custom portrait and the designing of a new villa outside Lisbon, plus bribes for the local magistrates so that he could even buy a condemned and murderous slave in the first place. (Rais' former masters are all dead now from mysterious causes.) Joop then freed him on the spot. And offered him a job.

Rais is a giant of a man, massively built and as strong as a bull—this is the reason why his former masters gave him so many chances. This though, is not why Ooms employs him. Gilles de Rais' job is to hurt anyone that threatens the artwork of Joop van Ooms or the artist himself. In that order. For this Ooms pays him extravagantly.

Rais is a man in his 60s who has wanted nothing but peace his entire life, yet it has been denied to him time and time again, both in his native Ndongo and in Europe. Ooms knows that Rais will only act if it is necessary, but if he needs to, his bitter past will ensure that the actions he takes are swift and brutally final. Ooms gave the name of Rais to the former slave as something of a bad-taste joke, since he is quite capable of slaughtering those much younger than him as if they were helpless children. Besides, Rais is illiterate and so can never reveal his true name, and he had to be called something. And if both the name and Rais' demeanor intimidates people, so much the better.

Those that have partied with Ooms know that Rais can more than handle his liquor and keeps everyone involved safe. His dancing, a combination of his traditional tribal dances and contemporary European styles, makes many women very disappointed that he has suffered certain specific injuries.

Rais is always impeccably dressed, keeping up with modern fashions to a degree that confounds even Ooms.

Gilles de Rais: Fighter level 9, Con 15, Str 17.

HENRY VIII

Henry VIII (real name Geert Bogaers) serves as personal secretary, assistant, professional and social manager and all around lackey to Ooms and Rais.

He acts in a most effeminate manner at all times, but this is because he thinks it makes him seem more French and therefore appealing to sophisticated ladies. That he is often quite swift to comfort the ladies that are disappointed by Rais' disfigurements is what led Ooms to call him Henry VIII, for what else could you call such a ladykiller?

Ooms often treats Henry cruelly (in terms of pranks and inconveniences, never physical abuse), but only if there are witnesses. No point without an audience, correct? Henry is often very frustrated by this, but he puts up with it because at the end of the day, he gets paid well and Ooms always gets him laid, so what is a little egg on the face (literally) every once in a while?

However, to boost his self-esteem, he treats everyone not of the Ooms household with disdain, as if he is high-born and they are nothing more than excrement walked in from the street, and he tolerates no backtalk. He will block access to Ooms if not accorded the respect that he thinks he deserves, and Ooms will always act offended if someone attempts to meet him without going through Henry first. There was a famous incident at a state gathering where Henry told the Prince of Orange to go to hell for some imagined slight, and Ooms later refused to see the Prince until all apologies had been made to Henry.

They live dangerously.

Henry VIII: o level human.

THE STUDIO

Joop's home is a small tower in the center of Amsterdam, and is a public example of his architectural skills. The following notes about the house just note unusual items; everyday things are not mentioned.

Note that Joop does not keep cash or valuables (besides his art) on premises, as he keeps most of his assets in the Bank of Amsterdam and authorizes payments through that institution. He also has a lot of wealth tied up in the Amsterdam Stock Exchange. If he needs cash quickly, he can always paint it.

Note there is no kitchen nor dining area in the house. Joop believes that both attract vermin, and so he has food delivered every day at regular intervals, paying for it whether anyone is home or not. Any leftovers are thrown into the nearest canal as waste and the empty trays are left outside the front door to be picked up at the time of the next delivery.

LOWER CELLAR

The submarine (see page 15) is kept here (A). The doors opening into the canals are always kept locked.

UPPER CELLAR

Nothing is currently kept in this oddly shaped area (B) other than several kegs of beer and a wine rack. The door to the outside is always kept firmly bolted and locked.

GROUND FLOOR

The Sitting Room (C) is where Henry VIII spends most of his time when not out on errands or accompanying Rais and Ooms somewhere. This is also where Ooms will initially entertain first time guests to find out if they are interesting company or not.

The Guest Room (D), fitted with one large bed, is for any guests not staying the night in either Joop's or Henry's bed.

The Gallery of Minor Works (E) is just a small exhibition of things which Joop considers to be just "practice" pieces, though any one of them would amaze the layperson. The exhibits include cityscapes, portraits of women, small sculptures, that sort of thing. Anyone can tell that Joop is good from just these examples, and art experts will recognize that he is very talented.

The Empty Library (F) is a grand room full of empty bookshelves. Ooms does not allow books to stay in his house, and he wants people to realize just how brilliant he is rather than how brilliant his book collection is. "I read them, they're memorized, they're gone!"

FIRST FLOOR

Joop's bedroom (G) is almost bare except for the wardrobe full of clothes. He never sleeps here.

Gilles' room (H) is fairly spartan. While he keeps up with the latest look around others in order to fit in, at rest he is more comfortable not bothering with pretenses.

Henry VIII's room (I) is kept absolutely spotless and ready to receive the ladies. He keeps his clothes and a small stash of books here.

SECOND FLOOR

This floor is two stories tall. It is filled with trees and all sorts of plants that cannot possibly grow indoors as there is very little direct sunlight. Visitors will discover that there is often moisture reminiscent of recent rainfall on the plants and on the floor.

THIRD FLOOR

This is Joop's Museum, where he places his serious unsold paintings. Notable are:

- (J) A mostly finished painting which shows Joop himself swinging by the neck from the gallows while meteors rain down on Amsterdam, causing apocalyptic levels of destruction. A corner of the painting is unfinished, but as Ooms will point out, "If I ever die, the painting will be as finished as it ever could be. I wonder what will happen then?"
- (K) A nighttime landscape painting of Amsterdam, with the planets in conjunction. Ooms will tell anyone viewing the painting that, "The dikes almost failed that night, let me tell you!"
- (L) A scene depicting the sinking of a large ship in the harbor. "The captain had cheated me in a deal, so when this happened you could imagine how ironic it was," with this Ooms winks.

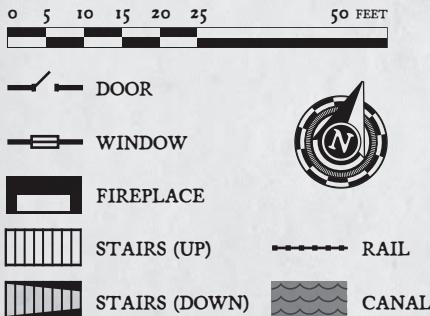
FOURTH FLOOR

All of Joop's real work is done in the Workshop. This includes his sculpting (M), painting (N), writing (O) and most of his eating and sleeping as well (P). Tools of the trade are everywhere, including a pottery wheel and many jars of raw materials from which he makes his own pigments. There is always a half-finished painting or pieces of sculpture here.

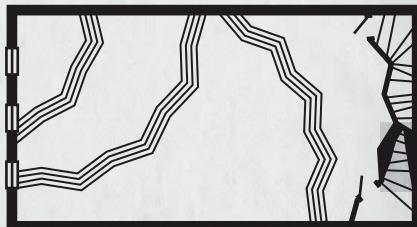
ROOF

The helicopter (see page 14) is kept here, covered in heavy cloth.

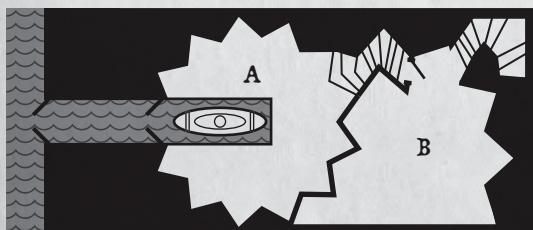
THE STUDIO OF JOOP VAN COMS



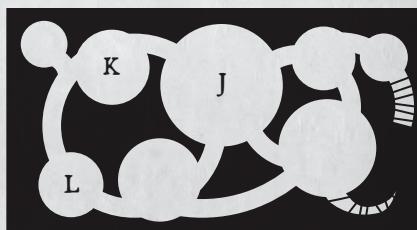
SECOND FLOOR



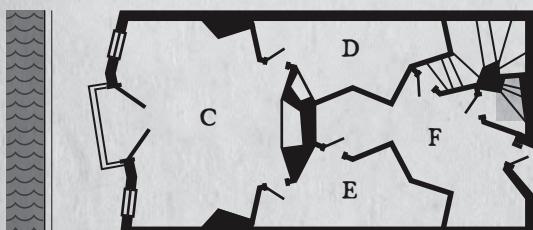
UPPER & LOWER CELLAR



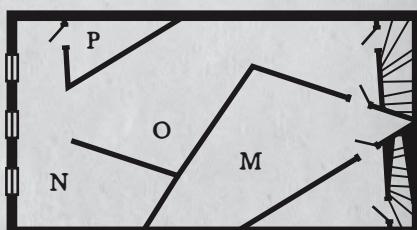
THIRD FLOOR



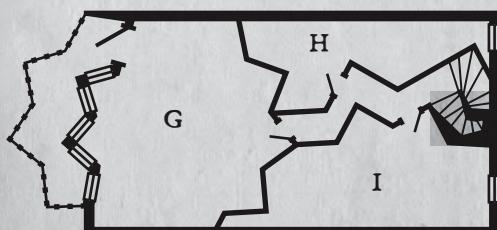
GROUND FLOOR



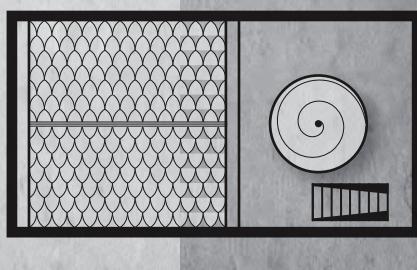
FOURTH FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



ROOF



THE ART

Joop van Ooms is a world-class artist and creative genius in many fields, limited as popular gossip has it, only by what he cares to pursue.

ARCHITECTURE

Ooms is in great demand to design or remodel government buildings, churches, private residences, fortifications, and other structures. His style is to make a structure ordinary on the outside, extraordinary on the inside. Ooms does this, to the dismay of the rich merchant classes that wish to make ostentatious showings of their wealth, to force his clients to invite more people into their homes or their offices in order to show off the fact that they have paid for an Ooms design. Trademarks of Joop van Ooms' designs include:

- Star-shaped rooms (with any number of points, but eight).
- Six, seven, and nine, but never eight-sided, rooms.
- Asymmetrical rooms.
- Rooms with sloping ceilings and/or floors.
- Rooms with multiple raised and/or lowered sections of ceilings or floors.
- Walls, ceilings, and floors with patterns of holes in them, some holes big enough to stick fingers in.
- Tiled murals on walls, ceilings, and/or floors in abstract patterns which remind different people of different things.
- Rounded, cornerless rooms.
- Doors set in walls that lead nowhere.
- Strange acoustics which allow conversations in certain places to be clearly heard in specific other places elsewhere within the structure of the building.

As mentioned, he often undertakes design work pro bono to discourage his enemies. For those he reserves his most recognizable designs, allowing the owners of each structure to display its magnificence to all who pass by. But Ooms understands the subtle power of shapes, and some of these have terrible effects:

- Doorways which cause every eighth person passing through them to lose a random item most
- Gates which infect every eight millionth person passing through them with a deadly plague.
- Rooms in which anyone sleeping in them will quietly die the 888th time that they sleep there.
- Rooms in which every eighth person sleeping there will suddenly die eight days later.
- Rooms in which people will become seriously ill after every eighth meal that they eat there.
- Rooms which will sicken all within them if there are exactly eight people gathered there.
- Rooms which will cause one-eighth of all wealth stored there for at least eight hours to vanish.
- Rooms which will cause every eighth statue or other representation of a living being stored or displayed in them to come to life when no one is watching.

He reserves these designs for those who really annoy him.

Ooms normally charges 1gp for each 10 feet cubed of the structure he is to design, payable entirely in advance. No refunds. Clients pay for style and bragging rights, not for actually liking the end result.

DRAMATIZATION

Ooms writes plays, albeit very strange and tightly directed ones. His "scripts" contain no words of dialogue, merely choreography (although he includes extensive explanation about what each individual movement, down to finger positioning, means), accompanied by the occasional great yelps inspired by opera singers (each play's instructions though, firmly forbids trained singers from attempting these). There are always exactly a dozen actors, each clad in identical, formless garb, involved in a production, but always only ever seven or nine, and never any other number, and never, ever eight, in the live performance area, designated by metallic gold paint spilled in some geometric pattern, at any one time. The "inactive" performers always remain visible to the audience, but stand outside of the live performance area.

As Ooms writes plays only for the most noble of humanist reasons, viewing one of Ooms' plays has beneficial effects — for the purely human. Each play has a different pro-human effect on the viewer (or the viewer's belongings), such as:

- Draining a level of any demi-human present.
- Removing any and all curses or conditions caused by extra-dimensional beings.
- Dismissing the prepared spells of any Magic-User present.
- Rendering blank any magical scrolls being carried by anyone in the audience.
- Granting immunity to any ill effects suffered from the viewing or reading of *The King in Yellow*, or similar anti-human entertainment media.
- Causing the complete and utter destruction of the next undead being to touch the viewer.
- Disenchanting any and all magical items within sight of the performers. Any part of the magical item has to be visible to the performers for this to take effect, so the grip of a magical sword will be visible, whereas a ring worn under gauntlets or kept in a belt pouch will not be.
- Giving immunity to the next Charm, or otherwise hostile psychic attack or supernaturally triggered insanity, suffered.
- The curing of all diseases.
- Curing baldness with rapid hair growth (this includes intentionally shaved areas).
- The erasure of all tattoos.
- Dismissing the prepared spells of any Cleric present.
- Rendering blank any Clerical scrolls being carried by anyone in the audience. This includes any religious text, such as the Bible, the Koran, etc.
- Complete immunity from sexually transmitted diseases until the next dawn.
- All carried ammunition is rendered useless, bowstrings break, powder becomes inert, etc.



Ooms directs every performance of his plays himself and oversees every rehearsal. For if they are not performed correctly down to the smallest twitch, each play will have a somewhat less desirable effect upon its audience. In the past, Ooms has had to hush up or invent scapegoats for mass strokes, rioting, all sorts of degenerate behavior, the simultaneous deaths of all a play's performers, concentrated lightning storms, spontaneous combustion (of the audience, the cats, and/or the theatre), the appearance of impossible monstrosities, and more, resulting from incompetent performances of his plays.

Ooms charges 200gp and requires ten weeks' lead time (plus expenses) to stage a production at a location of the client's choosing, but this also includes a surprise public performance, at a place and time of Ooms' choosing, of the same play. Ooms always chooses the play to be performed.

ENGINEERING

Ooms is a student of Da Vinci's works and strives to complete all of the things that Da Vinci designed, but never built... as well as a few other things.

THE GOLDEN GUN

Ooms' alchemical processes have revealed a way to turn a gun into a super-weapon—if the barrel is made of gold. The barrel must be made of at least 5000sp worth of gold in order to work as one of these super-weapons.

Ooms has one such gun in his studio. It is worth 10000sp and has a rifled barrel.

The gun ignores all armor and does 1d100 damage, but each shot discharged destroys 1d00% of the barrel's value. Gold cannot stand the stress of a gunshot being

discharged, and the chemical reaction of the exploding gunpowder reacts with the alchemical reagents needed to make the gun, corrupting the essential matter involved.

THE HELICOPTER

On the roof of Ooms' home is his helicopter. Assembled from lightweight materials that he had imported from Asia, the entire thing weighs merely fifty pounds even though its rotor blades extend to a twenty feet diameter.

In flight the helicopter's maximum speed is equal to the pilot's Strength score \times 100' per turn if flying in a straight line or other steady pattern.

Whenever any maneuver (turning, descending, landing, ascending, etc.) is attempted, the pilot's player must roll 7 or more on 2d6. This roll will be modified by either the pilot's Strength, Constitution, or Charisma modifier, randomly determined each time that the roll needs to be made. Sometimes it works by sheer force, sometimes the pilot's endurance matters, and sometimes the thing works by sheer force of will. If the roll fails, the helicopter drops 1d10 \times 10' and the pilot's player must roll again to stabilize the aircraft. Control rolls are made at a penalty of -1 for every level of encumbrance that the character has.

Operation of the helicopter requires both hands and both feet. If a character needs to use a limb for something else while in flight, a control roll must be made immediately, with a -1 penalty for every limb engaged in the operation of the aircraft.

After ten checks (successful or not), the pilot receives a +1 bonus to all checks in the future, although rolling a natural 2 always fails.

The helicopter provides no protection against attacks. If the rotor blades are used as a weapon (and maneuvering in a position to do so requires a control roll), they do 1d20 points of damage on a successful hit. The rotors are likely to break; the pilot must make a saving throw versus Breath Weapon to prevent this with a -1 penalty to the roll for every point of damage inflicted by the rotor blades. If the rotor blades stay intact, the pilot must still make a control roll immediately.

If the helicopter crashes, it has an x in 10 chance of being destroyed, with x being the distance of the fall in tens of feet.

Ooms never flies the thing, considering it too dangerous for actual use at this point. He intends to design better sooner or later, but he keeps it here as both a prototype to improve upon and as temptation for theft. What army would not want an air force? Of course, were any army to steal and attempt to take it to war, it will only end in falling. Lots of falling.

THE SUBMARINE

In the basement, which has a hatch that opens onto the canals of Amsterdam, Joop keeps his latest technological marvel: a submarine. While not the first of its kind—English designs are known to a few, although it will be several years before they are made public—it is by far the most advanced.

The basic form of the sub is a wooden frame carefully lined with treated leather. In comparison with the English designs, it is huge and fits about ten people. Even a cursory examination will reveal that while the design allows for it to be towed by a larger boat, it has oars for maneuvering. However, it appears to be totally blind as there is no apparent way for anyone inside the submersible to see out.

Hidden panels (requires a Search roll; the inner leather lining of the sub hides the hidden features) reveal much more, however. A hatch in the floor allows individuals to slip in and out while the craft is submerged without flooding the compartment. Each rower station has a panel in the floor below which are pedals attached to small flippers that allow the craft to be propelled and maneuvered without oars (5' movement rate per pedaller). Hidden panels at the pilot's station open to reveal crude controls that open valves to allow water to flood several large bladders along the submersible's underside, while nozzles allow bellows to be used to push the water back out, allowing the subaquatic craft to submerge or ascend. Through the front area of the submarine's frame has been affixed a spyglass, which is the only means to see out of the vehicle. It is not a practical voyaging craft quite yet.

PAINTING: PORTRAITS

Joop van Ooms is a master with oils on canvas. His paintings are so lifelike that they almost seem as if what they depict is going to jump off the canvas. While Joop's artistic talents are not themselves supernatural, the result of a finished work is.

He never paints what he sees in front of him; what he paints is what will be at the exact moment that the painting is finished. He does not feel that he is creating this situation—although he totally is—so he does not feel responsible for the end result. He just “follows his muse.” Because of this effect, he never shows anyone a painting until it is finished, and then it always has a rather significant surprise for the viewer. For a pretty lady or dashing fellow, he might paint a valuable piece of jewelry on them, which will suddenly appear. He might paint them in more extravagant clothing than they were wearing, which again will appear. A homely subject can be painted a better looking appearance, one that the subject's real face will transform into. He even granted a portrait to a friend of his who was unable to have children with his wife. He arranged them just so upon their first viewing of the painting, and in their portrait he painted a newborn baby, and they have been raising her ever since.

While Ooms is often kind to the subjects that he paints, he can be malicious as well. Valuables can be left out, clothes can be made shabby (or made to disappear), physical deformities can be introduced (even limbs removed), and there was a famous case where Ooms faced official inquiry on why he sat and painted “The Death of Councilor Hoekstra” after the Councilor's collapse, instead of summoning help.

(Incidentally, Ooms first discovered his abilities when a wizard commissioned a portrait from him. The mage bragged about overcoming some supernatural beast he described in great detail—to make the story of his besting it all the more impressive—so Joop thought it would be fun to depict this creature right behind the wizard in the painting. When it appeared, the creature slaughtered the wizard, and showed Ooms the true nature of creation, he thought it was even more fun than he anticipated!)

Ooms paintings are something of a fad right now in elite circles throughout Europe, but the degree of interest in any particular piece is unpredictable. Any particular painting sells for 4d10x4d10x1d4sp.

PAINTING: FRESCO

Whatever, and whoever, he paints on wet plaster disappears from the real world, becoming trapped in the fresco. Ooms has only attempted this in several extravagant merchant houses and government buildings, in the process “snatching” pets, violent vagrants, and annoying children away and into his scenery.

Since the local churches are Calvinist and thus do not contain devotional imagery, he has been sending messages to Roman Catholic archdioceses in French and German lands seeking permissions to express his religious devotion—in a manner that offends neither Catholic nor Evangelical sensibilities—by being allowed to decorate any newly built church with his talents. He wants to see what happens when he paints Jesus, God, and other Biblical figures on the walls. He would never do so in his own house—tacky, or in some public place where the art might be defaced or destroyed... if these entities do become trapped like mortals do, Ooms figures that their wrath after being freed will be too much for him to handle.

POETRY

Ooms is a prolific poet, perhaps not world-class, but his crowd-pleasing tendencies give him a popular following nonetheless, and also serve to make him a target of less popular, but more skilled poets.

Ooms does have the ability to move time with enclosed rhyme quatrains (four line poems with an ABBA rhyming scheme). Whenever he recites one of these, the time-shift contained in the quatrain happens, assuming that the subject is within earshot of the recitation.

This can move a person or thing forward or backwards in time, and it moves them back in their timeline. So if someone is moved thirty minutes back in time, they end up where they were thirty minutes ago, retaining full memories from the moment from when they were shifted in time, but it really is thirty minutes ago. The things that the time shifted person did—or will do—in those thirty minutes are not undone though. Nothing changes, but where that person is.

This is how Ooms gets so much work done without ever seeming tired; he timeshifts and works through the night, every night, several times, and then sleeps as well. Each time he wants to shift backwards in time, Ooms declaims the following quatrain: “After another long day I yawn/ Yet there is always more to be done/So accomplish I will more a ton/So again I see this previous dawn.” Effective if not impressive.

It must be noted that Ooms rarely timeshifts living beings into the future. For himself, he knows that someday the world will end, be it from the exploding sun or an encroachment of alien beings, but he does not know when. It could be any minute now! Ooms does not want to see it any sooner than he has to. As for others, he does not know what lies in their future, but were he to send anyone forward in time, it likely that they would be pretty mad at him once he caught up to where they were sent, so he does not do this.

The quatrain must be specific in naming the subject and the time-shift effect, so must really be made up on the spot in order to succeed. However, Ooms does have another one that he often uses a few minutes into a meeting when one or more private guests bores him: “Oh dear Lord you (all) are such a bore/Such intellectual vacuousness fills me with nausea/Yet carrying this conversation alone shall give me a hernia/So take ten minutes to gather your thoughts and try once more.” Offenders will find themselves where they were ten minutes previously.

SCULPTURE

While able to sculpt with some skill, Ooms does not much bother. The magic only happens under the most macabre of circumstances. He must sculpt a hollow statue of a specific person or other being (and he likes to get plaster castings made of certain body parts), which he accomplishes by sculpting smaller pieces and then fitting them together. When that being dies, he must insert a portion of their remains into the hollows of the statue and then complete it. When this is done, it captures that being’s essence and Ooms can communicate with this essence, asking one yes/no question of it per day.

Ooms’ sculptures, when they are available, sell for 1d20x50osp.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Every detail of Joop van Ooms' life and work can be turned into adventure hooks; that is the very point of *The Magnificent Joop van Ooms*. In all likelihood, the following examples are far less interesting than you as the GM can come up with:

The player characters are Ooms and similarly gifted artistic colleagues, living in a world of ignorance and cause-and-effect that would surely drag them down if they only knew...

- The player characters enter Amsterdam with some fanfare, perhaps after completing some quest which receives public attention. Joop wants to meet these new celebrities. Will they be interesting and persuade him to become a patron, or will they be ordinary and bore him so that he desires their removal from his brainspace?
- While on a distant coast or beach, the party finds a message in a bottle. All that is written on it is an Amsterdam address. It turns out to be Joop's, and he is thrilled that it has been found! He will offer to paint a portrait of the intrepid finders of his note and give it to them for free!
- Joop van Ooms is in a panic! He has heard rumors that someone has discovered the script of one of his early plays and that is going to be performed. It is not one of his mature, "good for all mankind" pieces! The party, being professional troublemakers, is contacted by Joop who offers generous rewards for a mission. They must find out who is doing this and put a stop to it! Who knows what will happen if the play is performed? Or if it is performed wrong?
- Robbers in the countryside have been using flying machines to commit their banditry. Who has armed these foul brigands, and why? The trail leads to Amsterdam...
- They have had enough! After one particular debauched party involving the perhaps-a-little-too-young sons and daughters of several influential merchants, Ooms has been seized and is headed to the gallows. Gilles recruits "independent contractors" to stage a daring rescue, because if Ooms dies, the current portrait that he is painting will technically be finished...
- Ooms is a fancy-pants rich artist whose work is worth tons and his house is right there! How much trouble could a robbery be?
- Entire ships are going missing from the harbor overnight at the same time that giant murals of those same ships are appearing on walls around the city. Investigation can lead only one place, but Ooms, if his secret is discovered, will claim that his latest batch of pigments has been stolen. Is the power in Ooms himself, and if so does he have a grudge, and if so, what do all these ships have in common and why is Ooms involved? Or is the magic in the pigments, and if so, who is doing this?
- "I'd like someone to find a certain something in the wreckage of the *Mary Rose*. I can get you there..."
- Ooms coughs while reciting a quatrain and sends himself centuries back in time. His only hope to return is to send a series of messages to the future... the first of which of course is discovered by the player characters. Do they follow the trail? Can they?
- Someone has remodeled an Ooms-designed building. It now has eight rooms in all and all hell is now breaking loose in that house. Ooms will not be cooperative even if contacted about the house; he thought the owner to be a real prat, doubly so now for screwing with Ooms' creation.
- Ooms really overdoes it one night and while piss-drunk paints surreal landscapes and unnatural events. The world has gone crazy... who can find the source of this oddity and convince him to fix it?
- Ooms goofed, and the latest building that he designed has created a pattern within the city that has opened portals that should not be opened. He is painting them closed, but how long can he stay awake to do so? Someone else is going to have to survey the buildings, decide which one is the best candidate for demolition, and then blow the damn thing up—over the violent protests of whoever owns it.



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