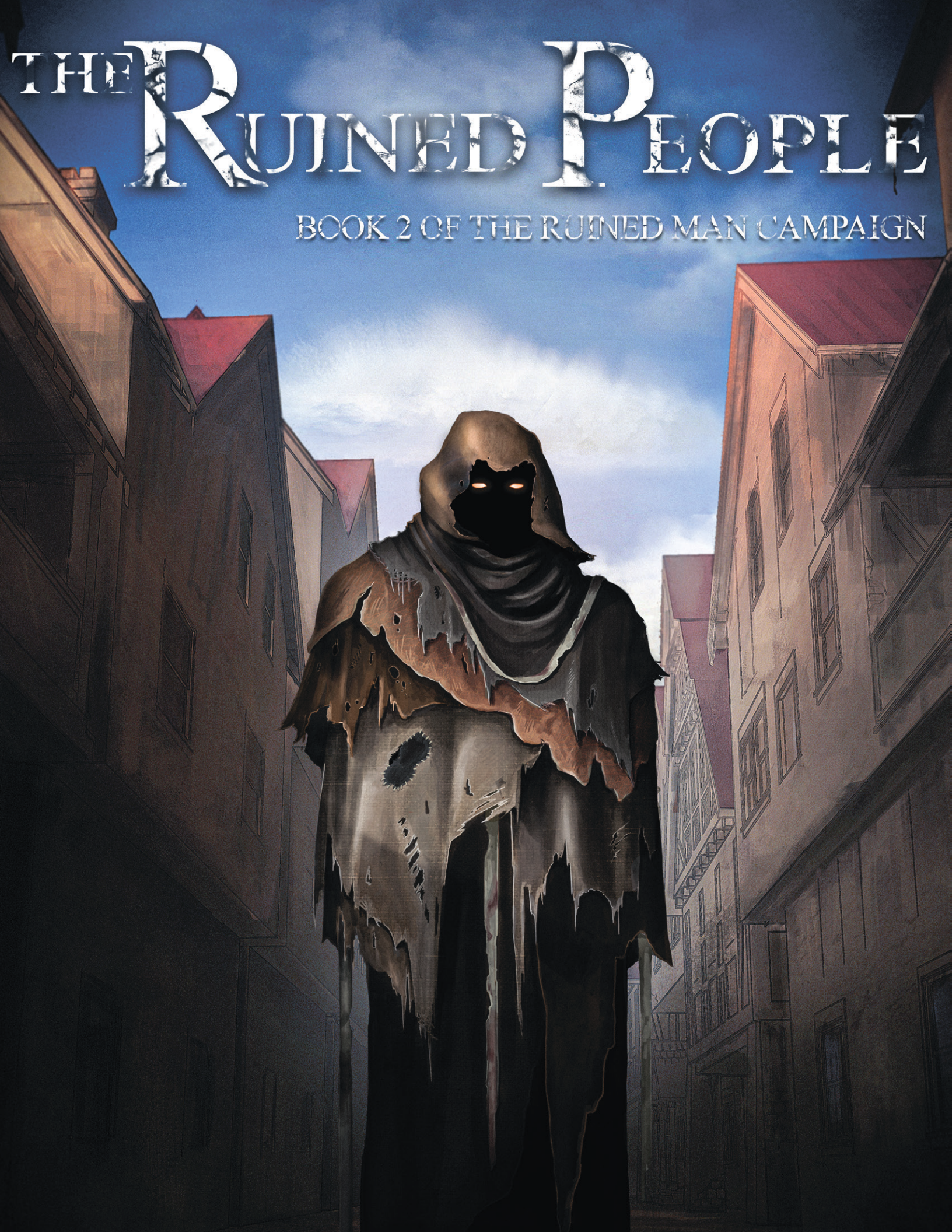


THE RUINED PEOPLE

BOOK 2 OF THE RUINED MAN CAMPAIGN



THE RUINED PEOPLE

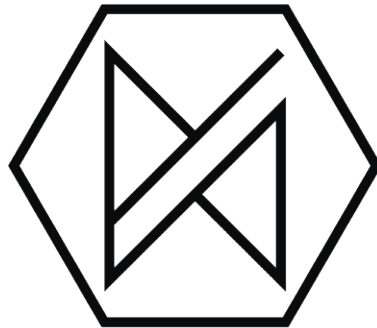
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The Return of the Inhumans?!

~Flip Visagie

As anyone who is familiar with the Department of Inland Affairs can tell you, there are only two certainties in life. The first is that one day, later rather than sooner, you will perish. The second is that the government will always do its very best to steal from you as much tax as it can. Anything else in this world is merely a possibility, but these two are inescapable realities that we must come to terms with if we are to live a mere modicum of a happy life.

We here at the Herald, and I am quite positive we were not alone, believed in a third certainty: that the Ruined Man was one of us. Not one of the Herald staff surely, and perhaps not Middelburgian or even Alfresian, but most definitely human. It would be preposterous for him to be an animal, and no Riusdyr has ever shown the mental capacity to do what the Ruined Man has done, not to mention the fact that no Riusdyr is as small as we humans are.

But what other possibility could there be? Oh, how quickly we forget. The answer may well have been staring us squarely in the face in every museum and bourgeois exhibit. In our urban life, with all the comforts and luxuries that modern engineering and the arrays have given us, we have forgotten that once we were the prey of darker, fouler creatures. Once, we were not alone in this world and it nearly ripped the world apart.

But that is a legend, a story, a page in the dusty tomes of history. Or is it? Many an explorer that ventured into the dark heart of the southern continent have returned with tall tales of the Kwendyr, but these men were only as reliable and credible as the savages who call that continent home. What if a reliable and credible witness could be found? I speak not of the Kwendyr, for the madness that would drive a man to galavant around the jungles and hinterlands of the southern continent would be definition make him incredible indeed.

No, I speak of someone right here in our very own jungle of stone and metal. Someone of good standing and morals, who would swear before the altar of the Father that they saw an Inhuman right here in Middelburg. It is hard to believe, and I myself doubted their story, but does it not make sense, from a certain point of view? Can you not see the logic we had all thought deranged and demented suddenly become straight and narrow upon this revelation.

My dear readers, I beg you to bear with me, for I truly believe that the Ruined Man is no such thing at all! I believe, as my trusted source does, that he is an Inhuman!

Yes, I know it is hard to believe and I too was doubtful of my source's mental faculties when they first mentioned this, but I have come to understand there is no other explanation that makes sense when compared to this. It may be a horrid logic, but if there is even a shred of a chance that this could save our city from this abominable creature, then I must share it with you. Between us, perhaps we can aid the good constables in tracking down this fiend if you would but read further.

Think back to the first known attack of the Ruined Man last year in Wedemand. The constables, scholars, and any man with an opinion have debated it with greater gusto than any religious argument. Alderman Samuel Witters was by all accounts a decent and honest man, for a politician that is, and while there is always someone who would kill a politician, there has never been any connection made between the Alderman and the subsequent victims. This would be a continuing trend and a reason for worry for the constabulary as the victims seemed chosen completely at random. However, more important people have been murdered by the monstrosity since the Alderman met his fate, why then would he have been chosen first?

There simply isn't any logical and coherent reason. Every constable, from the lowest to the highest, that I have spoken to has had no explanation for this. They all have come to the same conclusion: the murderer must be insane, completely devoid of rational thought and reason. I believe this to be a comfortable lie, for if the murderer is so unhinged as most purport him to be, then how could he have taken the lives of so many, in such excruciatingly detailed and methodical means and still not be caught? How could he have traversed this city, even lived amongst us, and not been outed if he was as disturbed and demented and most claim?

No, this is not some madman's fantasy. These murders were deliberate and so is the terror that is gripping the city. The question then once again returns to "why?", but that is now easily answered given my source's account. There is no logical, or illogical, reason why a sane or insane human would commit such atrocities as there is nothing to be gained from it. Killing the President, Grand Mayor, the Senators, or the League's Governing Patriarchs would put Alfresia into greater chaos after all, but that didn't happen. That could be understood, but not what did indeed happen.

Unless it was an Inhuman. An Inhuman, even in command of all its faculties, would not understand us humans and what our democratic government means to us. It would only see people of import given the respect they are due and assume that they are in command of all of us.

That is why seemingly random lesser politicians, bourgeois merchants, military officers, and League members were killed, because they looked important and to an Inhuman this would be more than enough.

As to why it was never discovered, that is even more obvious! A population of Inhumans would need to be crafty and cunning to survive two millennia without any of us being the wiser. Our Inhuman murderer would have been bred with an instinct to hide, until its bloodlust and envy for us, the greater species, overcame it and struck. And that is precisely what my source witnessed.

I will not name by source, to protect their identity should the villain attempt to hunt them down, but they saw what none other have thus far: a glimpse of the hellion's face. During the latest tragic murder, my source was wisely hidden behind a fence during the ordeal. Through the slats they saw, only for an instant, the infamous hood of the creature slip down as it butchered another of our fine countrymen. It was only for a moment before it covered its abominable face, but it was enough for my source to say it was not human.

My source is of high standing in the community and had attended the university in their youth, and so can identify an Inhuman with speed and clarity, and they are absolute in their certainty that this was a Sauddyr. The brow-horn is the hallmark of the Sauddyr and can mean nothing else.

What then, I ask you, dear readers, shall we do with this information? We have an Inhuman in our midst and I, for one, am not about to let such a travesty to mankind lay still for a second longer! I urge you to be on your guard from here on out. We no longer seek a human, one who can hide among us, but a monster from the time of myths and legends. It must be hiding somewhere we would not go. Go hunt in the dark corners of this city and bring peace to Middelburg.

But be cautious, we know this Sauddyr wants to see our end on this world and would murder any who stand in its way. Do not be fooled by its animalistic appearance; it is as cunning as any highwayman or street thief. Should you find out where the Inhuman is hiding, inform the constabulary immediately! Personal glory must come second to the commonwealth of Middelburg. We must stand united against this Inhuman threat as we did two millennia ago. Remember that B r landed on Alfresia first and created our Grand City Array himself. Let us not spoil his great works and legacy through infighting when there are still Inhumans amongst us.

We must finish what he started!

INTRODUCTION



Welcome back ladies and gentlemen to the ruined city of Middelburg, a veritable hive of criminals and victims, maniacs and the fearful. A city of walls, runes, and gold, Middelburg is where everyone used to come to make their fortune, but dark things have happened in Middelburg and everyone is afraid of what will come. Somewhere out there, another body is bleeding out on the streets. Whatever you can imagine, you will find worse here.

This is the second book chronicling the Ruined Man's saga. In the first book you traversed across nearly a third of Middelburg as you were caught up in the Ruined Man's story. This book will take you through another third of the city's districts and streets, showing you its sights and history as its grisly present unfolds around you.

As before, each chapter will concentrate on a handful of districts that will also be the focus of that chapter's mission so that you can journey through the districts as you read about them.


But of course, the star of the show is the campaign and in the last book you already met the villain of the story. But what does he want, why does he want it, and more importantly, what will he do to accomplish it? You might have a piece of the mystery and like all mysteries, there

is always another clue around the corner and it is up to you to discover them, piece them together, uncover the Ruined Man's story, and stop him. Do that and you might just save a million lives, starting with your own.

THE BOOK STRUCTURE

This book follows the structure of the first one in that it is divided into four chapters with each chapter telling a part of the story. Each chapter is split between the Middelburg section and the Mission section. The Middelburg section will focus on a few of the city's districts, providing information and lore on the district and some points of interest within them. The Mission section will, as the name suggest, focus on the game that you will be playing. This is where your story will be told.

The trouble in Middelburg is a horrific one, a gruesome one, a terrifying one. The layout of the book reflects this. The sections of the book are coloured either bone or blood. This will tell you what parts are for the GMs only and what parts are for everyone. The District sections of each chapter are coloured bone and the Mission sections are coloured blood. *Players, make sure to avoid reading the blood coloured Mission*



sections, otherwise you will spoil the story for yourself.

Other than blood and bone, there are also the rules and other meta sections of the book. This campaign book does not contain the full rules for the Runed Age (those can be found in the Runed Age corebook), but the campaign does have some unique mechanics that you should know about. The gold sections will also contain all the arrays that are used in the missions by the NPCs, so GMs and players can both use these as a reference when they are brought up in the missions.

THE RUINED MECHANICS

The Ruined Man has been stalking the dark streets of Middelburg for nigh on six months by the time Mission 5 begins and it has taken a toll on the people of the city. Friends and turning on friends and neighbours rarely greet each other. The poor are getting poorer and all the more desperate for it. All in all, the city is a more dangerous place than ever.

There are two main mechanics that are unique to this campaign that reflects this tension. The first is the Mission Social Penalty. As time goes by during the campaign, life will get tough in the city. People will get more paranoid, more fearful, more aggressive, and generally more unpleasant as the world seems to unravel around them. To simulate this, there will be a -3 penalty per mission to all Social Skill Checks.

By the time you start Mission 5, that will amount to a -12 Modifier to every Social Skill Check you have to do, and it will only get worse.

And of course, don't think we have forgotten about the Random Encounter Table. During the PCs travels through Middelburg, they will see a lot of things and encounter a lot of people. Some good, some not so good. As time passes in the campaign and the horror of the events sink into the psyche of the city, the PCs will encounter more and more terrible things on the streets of Middelburg.

Every time PCs travel from one area to another (that is a significant distance away, not just to the neighbours), the GM will roll on the Random Encounters Table to see what or who they encounter. Each mission will get an additional +4 Modifier added to the Random Encounter Roll. The higher the result will, of course, mean the more dangerous the encounter.

This book will start off with a +16 Modifier to this roll and it won't get any easier. Life in the city will get quite difficult and your moral centre will be tested. There will come times when you will have to choose the lesser evil just to survive.

CHARACTER DEATH

Middelburg is a dangerous city to live in at the best of times, and the Runed Age is quite lethal at any time. This campaign will stretch both to their limits. Don't be afraid of losing you characters. It will undoubtedly happen several times throughout the campaign. The missions are structured in a way that the core events of one mission does not affect the next. This means that you lose characters or swap out characters between missions without a break in the story.

Even if the you fail a mission, it will not prevent you for continuing on. You don't have to replay a mission that has been failed. Carrying on to the next one will not negatively affect your experience of the meta-story.

But more than anything, remember to have fun!



CHAPTER 5

*I have heard the
howls of tempests*



HOSPITAL PARK

◆ CATHEDRAL OF OUR
HEAVENLY MOTHER ◆

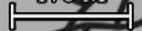
◆ THE MOTHER'S HOSPITAL

◆ AMBULANCE STATION

◆ THE ANGEL'S PYRE

BLOODBANK ◆

170 M



HOSPITAAL PARK



A district defined by one building, Hospitaal Park has catered to the Mother's Hospital ever since it was created. While the Father's Hospital in Langehoven may draw in the sick and injured from the newer, northern parts of Middelburg, Hospitaal Park's distance from the docks means there is always a large influx of patients to the Hospital, and while they are in the district, it certainly doesn't hurt the local businesses if they spend a penny or two.

The history of Hospitaal Park is punctuated by short, sharp incidents that changed the face of the district forever. The first of these was the arrival of the university in the neighbouring district. When the city grew to fill up the Grand Array, and before the school that was to grow into the university was built, the district was as plain and unassuming as a farmer's village. Part rural, part urban, wholly forgettable. It was the university in nearby Universitas that brought on the first of many transformations as Hospitaal Park suddenly became home for many a scholar that could not afford to live in the expensive Universitas.

These scholars and their academic culture brought a touch of class to the district and were responsible for urbanising the district. With so many scholars flocking to the university from

across the island, and beyond, the owners of the small, rural plots soon became property moguls, building hundreds of small houses for these wayward scholars. They quickly became rich folk and many believe the rise of the bourgeoisie may find its origins here. Even some minor families of the Merchant League trace their beginnings to these farmers turned realtors.

Then came the Mother's Hospital and the prayers of joy could be heard across the city. With so many people packed into such a small area, spending almost all their coin on where they lived and where they studied, it was inevitable that these poor conditions would give rise to death and disease. The Mother's Hospital was their saving grace.

Scant years after its construction finished, and the district renamed to Hospitaal Park, the people of the district became a clean and healthy sort, in body and in mind. And with the people rejuvenated, so too did the district's wellbeing increase. The small, rundown houses were soon replaced by proper, well built homes. With the businesses flooding into the district to support the hospital, there was enough money to clean the streets and buildings of their dirt and grimes. And with nuns and priestesses



walking these clean streets, no one dared curse or swear.

For a while Hospitaal Park was the most beautiful, ordered and respectful district in the city, or so say the pious. The more business oriented among the populace believes the district's golden age is the present, thanks in large part to the Merchant League.

After the War, when the League took over the old Military District right next to Hospitaal Park, things began changing at a rapid pace. Given nearly total free reign to do as they please, the League extended their tendrils in every which way they could. Hospitaal Park was one of their first targets.

The sick and ill by their very nature wish not to be so and will often do whatever it takes in order to achieve this. This cry of desperation is the song of fortune to the capitalist, and the Merchant League wasted no time in investing in the district, hoping to get every last coin from those coming to the hospital.

Business flourished under the control of the Merchant League, nearly every single one aimed

at supporting the hospital. Alchemists flocked to the region to peddle their potions and poultices, barbers and petty surgeons came to take care of those minor needs the holy sisters at the hospital could not, and the taverns and public houses hold more beds than bar stools for the friends and families of the sick at the hospital.

With Middelburg becoming the trading hub of the continent's eastern shore there are more and more patients for the hospital and customers for the League. It seems with every month that passes and every foreign vessel that enters Middelburgian water that the League gains more control of the district. Thus far the only thing holding them back is the might of the Progenitorist faith and the Matriarch of Alfresia which seems resolute to keep the art of healing under the faith's control and out of the hands of avaricious bourgeois Merchant League.

Only time will tell if the new profitable business of healing will transform Hospitaal Park into the medical arm of the Merchant League or if the Progenitorist faith can keep the wellbeing of the people between themselves and their gods.

DOCTORS ON THE RUN



The Runed Age is quite a lethal system with characters rarely living through a battle without any wounds. Middelburg during the reign of the Ruined Man is also a considerably more lethal place to live in than normal, especially with the escalating Random Encounters. With these two combined it means that your characters will get injured and often more dramatically than you would expect. It should not come as too much of a surprise if and when your characters start going into shock from their wounds.

This is the time when you hope there is an ambulance station nearby.

Other than the one station noted in Hospitaal Park, the locations of the others will be up to your GM, but remember that they are in areas where there are often large crowds or many poor and are not near the rich and wealthy. So expect them in districts such as Park West, Langehoven, Oldtown, Upper Harbour but not in Nieuton or the League District. Having Contacts within an ambulance crew, or religious sects such as the Sororal Orders will definitely give you the edge in knowing where the stations are. The ambulance carriages often also drive around "on patrol" to see if they can spot any folks in danger before it is too late. While your PCs would almost never know if there was an ambulance carriage on patrol, it is something that your GM can put in to save a character's life.



THE MOTHER'S HOSPITAL

The twin sister of the Father's Hospital in the north and the cornerstone around which the district has been built. There is no denying that Hospitaal Park would look considerably different, and considerably worse, without it. Even the neighbouring regions have benefited from this single structure in their midst.

Since its construction, the Mother and Father's Hospitals have been rivals in a competition to see which is the best. The Father's Hospital sits nearly in the exact centre of Middelburg and so by sheer statistics it gets more patients than the Mother's. Within spitting distance of the Father's sits Nieuton, home of the wealthy bourgeoisie who greatly and generously patronises the hospital, making the hospital quite a rich establishment.

The long standing connotation between the Heavenly Father and the land, and the Heavenly Mother and the sea (an old Eilanni tradition appropriated by the Progenitorists) have also meant that the Father's Hospital is seen as more patriotic and loyal to the nation, while the Mother's is for the foreigners and migrants. In every stereotype there is a kernel of truth and the Mother's Hospital is the closest to the docks, meaning that most foreigners and migrants do indeed visit the Mother's rather than making the journey across the city to the Father's.

That is not to say that the Mother's Hospital has nothing with which to compete, quite the contrary. While migrants and foreigners do choose the Mother's rather than the Father's Hospital, they are by far in the minority. Instead it is the university students and the Merchant League which forms the majority of the hospital's patient list.

The hospital is situated nearly exactly between Universitas and the League District and this was no small accident. At the time of its construction, the Progenitorist Matriarch saw where most of the hospital's funding would come from: the university and its students and

the military that was once situated where the League District is now. A hospital set between a very dangerous profession and a group of loud, arrogant drunks with a penchant for careless acts and experiments would never go without patients, patrons or money.

To this very day the Matriarch has still not been proven wrong. While the military may have moved north and established its own military hospital in the new Military District, the Merchant League has more than made up for their absence. There is a saying that men with power fear only one thing: losing their power. Who is more powerful than the Merchant League and what greater loss of power is there than the loss of health and life?

The Father's Hospital in the north may have the patronage of the Nietonian bourgeoisie, the Mother's has the backing of the entire Merchant League. Money must, of course, never sway a physician's heart when it comes to having to decide who gets saved and who dies. The sisters and priestesses of the hospital swear by this statement, however, that has not stopped them from opening a wing of the hospital reserved entirely for the Merchant League, or from stopping physicians leaving whatever they may be busy with to rush to the League District if and when an emergency occurs.

While the Merchant League clearly has its hooks buried deep into the Mother's Hospital, as it does with everything it touches, there has been some good to have come of this. The current abbess of the hospital is not naive or greedy. The sisters have been frugal with the money given by the Merchant League and have used as much as they could to better all the facilities, not just those for the League. This has meant that the entire hospital and its patients have benefitted from the League's bribery. The money has also given the sisters the chance to effectively partner with the university to bring in biological philosophers to teach and train the sisters in the finer details of the human body that Progenitorist dogma and tradition does not

cover.

While the League may have spent its money only in self interest, it may have done more for Middelburg that it would have liked.

CATHEDRAL OF OUR HEAVENLY MOTHER

The home of the Matriarch of the Progenitorist faith of Alfresia and the symbol of feminine power in Middelburg. Just as only men are allowed in the Father's Cathedral, only women are allowed to set foot inside the Cathedral of the Heavenly Mother. As such it has been called the second home of every woman in the city, an escape and refuge for when the world seems too much to bear.

The inner workings of the human mind is as wondrous as it is mysterious. The similarities and differences between the minds of men and those of women are equally intriguing, and nowhere is it as evident as in the form and structure of the cathedrals of the Heavenly Father and Mother. Both serve to showcase the might and power of their gods and religion and both serve as a testament of glorification and worship of the gods, but it is how this is achieved that is so fascinating.

The Father's Cathedral is the epitome of masculinity and is a show of strength and might. It is a gargantuan tower, watching over the city like a stern father, judging everyone's every move. Built as a palatial watchtower reminiscent of a military watchtower, the less charitable might call it very phallic in form. However, if the Father's Cathedral is a phallus, then the Mother's is the feminine equivalent.

The Mother's Cathedral is built as a series of concentric circles, with each ring holding its own chapels, shrines, and halls. As one progresses further into the temple, one also descends further below ground level as each ring of the temple sits lower than the last, giving the Cathedral the appearance of an amphitheatre.

At the very centre sits the Mother's Chapel, an open air chapel filled with flowers and shrubs and with an array that excludes wind and water. Some have remarked that this chapel is the most peaceful place in the whole of Middelburg.

It is not only the Cathedral's form which is feminine, but also the messages given by its priestesses to their female congregations. The sermons and homilies draw upon the characteristics of the Mother to give direction to the women of the city.

The Mother and Father together represent all of the eight Heavenly virtues and eight Hellish sins, in opposite to one another so that each one represents four of the sins and four virtues. Of the Heavenly virtues, the Mother represents Caution, Charity, Patience and Humility. Of the Hellish sins, the Mother Represents Lust, Gluttony, Sloth and Envy. While they are called virtues and sins, unlike in the Neoist and Prodigalist faiths, they are not seen as wholly good and evil. The Progenitorists speak of "natural necessity", that both virtues and sins are required to create a whole, but each should be had in moderation.

The priestesses of the Mother's Cathedral thus preaches that there is a time and a place for the Hellish sins. Where other religions preach against sin, the Progenitorist believes a human without sin has no humanity. After all, there would be no future generations without Lust, nor a drive to become better without some Envy. However, there cannot only be sin, there must also be virtue. As men are the foolhardy, dangerous and reckless species, it falls to women to take care of humanity, to be Patient, to be Charitable and Cautious, to be the Mother than humanity needs.

The virtues and sins work to temper each other. You cannot have one without the other, or your life will be unbalanced. Unfettered virtue is what the priests preach against, that which separates us from becoming automatons. Unfettered sin is what the priests preach against, that which separates us from humans and Inhumans.



AMBULANCE STATION

It is a strange life, that of an ambulance carriage driver. Whenever you are called to a scene of an emergency there is always screaming their head off at you. Sometimes it is screams of joy and relief, but mostly screams of grief and anger at the fact that you have arrived too late.

There is no central operating mechanism in Middelburg to use to call for an ambulance carriage, meaning if you are in dire need of one you had best hope that your life threatening emergency happened close enough to an ambulance station that someone can run quickly to the station to plead for help. Otherwise when, or if, the ambulance carriage arrives it would simply take you to the nearest temple for a funeral service. Such is life in Middelburg.

There are only a precious few ambulance stations situated around the city and they are ironically enough, for Middelburg at least, not where one would expect them to be. With the city being one of “haves” and “have-nots”, one would presume the ambulance stations to be placed near the rich and powerful, but one would be mistaken.

As with the hospitals and hospices, the ambulance stations are under control of the Progenitorist faith and staffed solely by monks. Having taken vows of poverty and celibacy, the monks have never quite been interested in the pleasures of the flesh and the splendour that riches can bring and so could never be persuaded to set up an ambulance station in wealthy areas such as Nieuton, the League District, Ooston or the Political District. As an abbot once said: “If they are wealthy enough to own a carriage, they are wealthy enough to get themselves to the hospital.”

The monks have instead set up shop in the poorer areas of the city or where masses often congregate such as on the edge of Universitas. The monks have taken on the philosophy of “the greatest good for the greatest number of people” and the greatest number of people are not the

rich and powerful. Instead the Docks District, Oldtown, Langehoven, West Lands (among others) sport their own ambulance stations.

The role of the ambulance carriage and its drivers have not changed from the hospitaller wagons used in war in ages past. Their main concern is getting the sick and injured to the hospital alive so that a physician can care for them. While not sisters of the sororal orders, the monks have received basic medical training to ensure that they can tend to the most life threatening of injuries at the scene before racing to the nearest hospital or hospice.

The monks, however, do not do this solemn duty alone. There are many a devout man in Middelburg who has had a family member saved by the ambulance monks and have taken it upon themselves to volunteer their time in service. Whether it be riding along with the monks to help them lift heavy bodies, or protect them from aggrieved friends and family, the volunteers do what they can to pay the monks back for their generosity.

Sororal sisters, fresh from the classroom and eager for the world, are often sent out along with the monks to practice what they have learnt firsthand and to test whether these young women have the resolve to work in a hospital. Some make it and become better for the experience, but many a girl has seen too much blood too early in her life and found a cloister a much more calming experience.

THE ANGEL'S PYRE

A mercy for the broken, from the broken. The Angel's Pyre is a sacred site in Middelburg seen as holy by the zealous and the poor, and piteous by the cynical and rich.

The most valuable commodity in Middelburg is not money, or human blood, or orichalcum, or even human lives. No, the most valuable thing in Middelburg is land. With a million souls crammed together

in such a small area, it's a surprise that there is still greenery left in the city. Those few parks that do still exist are constantly at threat of being turned into houses to be sold at exuberant prices.

Unfortunately, this means that there are very few areas left in Middelburg in which to bury the deceased. Other than small and paltry graveyards abutting a few temples and abbeys, the only true cemeteries are those found in Temple Park, and even there the cemeteries are full to bursting. There are more bodies buried deep beneath Temple Park than on its surface. Such is the way for most of Middelburg. Under the surface of the city there is nothing but sewers and catacombs.

It has come to a point where even the depths under Middelburg have become too costly for most of the citizens. To not be able to bury your loved ones and visit their graves is a concern and fear for many, especially the devout. The various faiths have tried to stymie the requests for burial places by shipping the deceased to other temples and cemeteries around Alfresia and even abroad, but even this can be too costly for a great many Citizens.

A solution presented itself that was as ironic as it was genius: cremation. The city of Middelburg and its inhabitants have little love of fire since the war with the mad king Markus VI. Any person with a fondness of fire is seen as little more than a degenerate and even the Uttosians with their fireworks are looked down upon for this reason. Cremation, however, is an ancient practice found in nearly all religions in Jytoh and may well be the only large scale use of fire that is socially acceptable.

This is because of Woudas the Burnt, companion to Bür on his holy quest to teach humanity the runes during the Great War, and seen as an angel, ascendant, daemon, ghost, god or hero depending on which faith you subscribe to. In nearly all the myths and legends surrounding Bür's journey across Jytoh, Woudas is his guide, showing him every human settlement, town and city where Bür could spread his runic word. This has led Woudas

to become an "angel of death" figure in many religions, responsible for ferrying the dead souls to their final resting place. In the Tanfa branch of Neoism, Woudas is titled the King of Death with an army of beetles at his command which drags the souls of the dead down to his kingdom.


Woudas' connotation with the dead is not his most obvious feature. In all depictions, he is depicted as either burnt or burning and so he is not only the embodiment of the soul's last journey, but also of fire itself. Thus cremations has always been a worshipful way of giving a soul directly to Woudas and in Fresian there is the idiom "when Woudas came to call" or "Woudas took them home" to describe a cremation. There is no stigma or loss of honour attached to cremation, only the knowledge of not having a burial mound to visit.

For the poor of Middelburg, it is many times the only option they have when it comes to funeral arrangements. Burials in the city or abroad is simply a luxury they cannot afford, but a cremation at the Angel's Pyre costs nothing, as the two dominant faiths share the burden of funding it. Every soul, whether they come with a name or not, with or without family and friends are given their proper due, a respectful last ceremony and their ashes are taken weekly far out to sea by monks to be scattered across the waves so that they may become one with the world.

It may not be a grand and pompous affair, but is a mercy and a blessing to those that rarely encounter either.

THE MIDDELBURG BLOODBANK

Human blood is proof that the gods exist, or so many a priest would have us believe. But as with all tall tales there is a kernel of truth hidden within this grandiose claim. By all historical accounts humanity was the first to use the runes and arrays and out of every animal in existence,



only human blood can power the arrays. Not even human blood created artificially through the arrays can power them; it must have come from a living person.

The answer always comes back to “why?” and from that very moment two millennia ago when humanity began using the arrays there has never been an answer. The most intelligent scholars and philosophers alive today still cannot decipher this puzzle. Why only human blood and why must it have come from a living person? No answers have come forth and that is where religion steps in to take up the mantle. There is a reason why there are so many devout followers in a world where every man, woman and child has the power of a god.

While direct energy such as sunlight is the most ubiquitous form of power for the arrays and orichalcum is the most powerful, human blood holds that special place of being both powerful and readily available. If you are in trouble and need an array working quickly, then blood is the best you have. If a lot of power is required, blood is also far cheaper than orichalcum and quicker to activate an array than direct energy; and for that reason it is stockpiled.

The best argument against a future utopia is a five-minute conversation with the average philosopher

~Aiwyn Hill, Speaker of the Gealish Council of Lords

There is only one official bloodbank in Middelburg run by the government, but it is a poorly kept secret that the Merchant League has its own and so do various consortiums of businesses and wealthy patrons. Then of course there are the illegal blood traders, hawking their wares on corners and alleyways, selling blood of which none can trace its provenance. Blood is something that everyone wants to get their hands on and they will by some means or another.

The Middelburg Bloodbank exists for only one official reason: to stockpile fresh human blood for the common good of the Grand City of Middelburg and her citizens. This, of course,

means that the blood stored here is to be chiefly used during states of emergency when a great amount of runic power is required in a short amount of time, and to be used by citizens as long as it is not for nefarious purposes. On this premise alone it sounds like the most philanthropic of ideas. However, nothing is quite so genial or simple in Middelburg.

The unofficial, but truer, reason for the bloodbank's existence is as a source of revenue for the city's government. All that blood has to come from somewhere and donations can only bring in so much. Instead the bloodbank buys its blood by the pint from any and all who would give. “Any and all” in this case would be the poor who are in desperate need of money. The bloodbank then sells the blood for a profit to any and all who would have it. And in this case “any and all” would be the wealthy.

While the Bloodbank does stay true to its word and keeps a stockpile of blood in case another emergency befalls the city, in its day to day life it is merely another extension of the system that takes from the poor and gives to the rich. When people say Middelburg is built on the blood, sweat and tears of the poor, they mean so in a very literal fashion.

FLEURDAL

◆
MALHERBE & ASSOCIATES
INSURERS

THE INFERNAL STATUE ◆

◆
MULDER & SONS
GAMBLING GALL

◆ ST. KLARA'S YOUTH PENITENTIARY

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FLEURDAL



“The arrays were meant to make all meant equal and an utopia of the world,” or so wrote the famous martyr St. Crispin. Written fifteen hundred years ago, the saint’s words echo through the ages to remain relevant to this day. The saint continued: “With the power to create as much food, water, shelter and warmth as a man could desire, all men were meant to walk as kings across this land of ours. God, in his infinite wisdom, took the world from the Inhumans and gave it to us in dominion. Yet scarcely had he departed from this world and the mighty and powerful proclaimed themselves the true kings, and us merely their servants. How had it come to this?”

When St. Crispin had finished his stirring discourse on the immorality of kings and princes, he was executed for sedition. Yet his words gained the immortality and fame he never could, spreading across the continent and sparking many a revolution. The excerpt above was even quoted during the inaugural speech of the first President of Alfresia. It was meant to show the new Republic’s dedication to equality for all men and none would ever be oppressed by kings, princes or dukes ever again.

But, as with all political promises, it was a pleasing lie to placate the masses. The rich only

became richer and the poor only became poorer. The faint light in the darkness, the growing middle class only epitomised what is wrong in the world: that wealth is merely stealing from Peter to give to Paul. Wealth, true wealth, can not be created, it can only be used. In a world where no man dies of thirst, hunger or cold, there is no true wealth to be made in providing these. True wealth can only be had by acquiring what the runes and arrays cannot make and chiefly among these is land.

The world is only so big and that means there is only so much land to be had, which makes land more valuable than orichalcum. The counts, burgraves and barons may be a thing of the past, but there is still a landowning class. A common enough idiom in Middelburg is: “The lords of the lands may have gone, but the landlords are here to stay.”

To the Fresians Middelburg is famous for its overpopulation and the mass trade that flows through its streets. To the outside world, however, Middelburg is known for one thing only: its great City Array. Called by some a wonder of the ancient world, the City Array has defined Middelburg since it was created over two millennia ago and still defines the city.

There has always been a distinction between those who live within the great array and those who live outside it. A century and a half ago this distinction was more tribal than classist and the entirety of Middelburg was contained inside the array. In those times, the array separated the city from the world, but modernisation had other ideas. Over the next fifteen decades, the city outgrew the grand array and now covers nearly twice the area size of the City Array. Now suddenly it isn't an "us versus the world" situation, but an "old versus new" situation.

Even in Oldtown, the poorest district in the city, it is seen as a privilege to live within the City Array. Across the city in Nieuton, the richest district in the city, it is a mark of status to live within the City Array. Where there is privilege and status, there is money to be made. As the city expanded and people could live inside Middelburg yet never set foot inside the City Array, the "privilege" and "status" of the land inside the grand array only made it more valuable.

After the city burned and tens of thousands lost their lives during the War of Independence, there was a time for the city to reflect and reassess its position in history and the world. The embers had barely burnt out, however, when the rush for land began. Anyone who had any money gave it up for the smallest patch of land inside the array. Fistfights broke out and women clawed each other's eyes out over the still smouldering remains of corpses in the city.

The Merchant League had other plans, however. Having already secured an entire district inside the city, they knew that over time they could buy out whatever land and businesses they needed. Instead they focussed on the destroyed districts outside the city, knowing that the better the districts did, the more profit they could make from those living there.

Fleurdal was one such district. It was the model for what the League wanted to do with the rest of the city. On the edge of the grand City Array and connected to the League District, the

Merchant League had near total control of the district and could be more liberal in their plans for it, knowing they could recoup their losses through other ventures should the worse happen.


For a while, Fleurdal was a stunning success and it brought such profits to the League that they earnestly considered becoming a landowning cartel rather than a coalition of mercantile families. However, as evident by the arrays, once a design becomes successful it spreads like a disease throughout the populace, replicating and mutating until a perfect form emerges. Fleurdal might have been the model, but less than a decade later the wealthy and powerful rebuilt many a district in its image. What was new and unique quickly became pedestrian.

Today, Fleurdal is much like any other district and few remember what it once was. It is still a test bed for the League's new business ideas and ventures, but over the years it has faded into the backdrop of the city like all the other districts.

THE INFERNAL STATUE

In many ways the city of Middelburg is still defined by the actions of the mad king Markus VI "the Incendiary". Not since the Great War with the Inhumans had the city seen such devastation as what Markus VI did to it. Even the war thirty years ago with the Duke of Zeerijk, fought with better, more lethal technology could not achieve what the mad king had.

The Incendiary knew that Middelburg was the heart and mind of Alfresia, and to defeat the revolutionaries, he had to conquer the city. Nine out of every ten soldiers and ships sent to the island went straight to Middelburg, with only harrying forces sent across the island to distract and delay any possible reinforcements. The Incendiary threw the entire military might of the Kingdom of Fresland at the lone city and would have won had it not been for the Emperor Kibrian invading Fresland's western marches to



claim ancestral imperial territory. The Incendiary and his forces left the city to deal with the Empire and Middelburg survived. When the Incendiary and Emperor Kibrian vanished in a fiery explosion, Alfresia was free.

As soon as the Fresian forces came within sight of Middelburg, the mad king ordered a full scale attack. Thanks to the thick walls, its powerful arrays and the fortitude of its defenders, Middelburg repulsed the royal forces. Never one to seriously consider the advice of his generals, the Incendiary gave his men one simple order: burn the city, and everyone inside, to the ground. It was up to his generals to make that happen.

In between constant bombardment of the City Array's walls and sending out forces to push more Alfresians towards the city, the first order of business for the royal forces was a scorched earth campaign on everything within sight of the city walls. It was a thankless, gruelling and horrific task that sent more than one soldier looking down the barrel of his own musket, but it was done and the siege of Middelburg began in earnest.

With almost twenty kilometres of walls to breach, the royal forces focussed on three specific points to get them inside: Oldtown, the Military District (where the League District stands today) and what is now known as Nieuton. In time they eventually breached at all three points and all three took a devastating toll on Middelburg, albeit in different ways.

The Nieuton invasion, the last of the three, destroyed the most buildings, burnt the greatest area of land, and got closest to reaching the Archduke's Palace. It was during this invasion that the Incendiary heard news of Kibrian's invasion and withdrew. The Oldtown invasion, the second of three, caused the most psychological damage to the city as the mad king sent his penal regiments in through there, promising them a full pardon for any crime they commit inside the city, no matter how heinous.

The first invasion, the first breach of the

walls, occurred at the southern point of the city's wall and it left the Alfresian military crippled, exactly as the Incendiary ordered. The old Military District was always the greatest target, destroy it and the city will follow. It didn't eventuate precisely as the mad king had hoped, as the Military District's own walls prevented further entry into the city, but the royal forces dealt a crippling blow to Middelburg from which it never recovered during the war.

Markus VI "the Incendiary" was the first of the royal forces to step through the breach and indeed the first human enemy to step into Middelburg uninvited. For this dubious honour and as a reminder of what he did, the mad king was immortalised in stone at the very spot he breached the wall. Standing ten feet tall, the mad king peers imperiously down at all who come close. In his right hand he holds a marble skull which is carved with arrays to ensure it is always on fire, in remembrance of all who burned at his orders.

MALHERBE & ASSOCIATES INSURERS

Insurance is the gamble you hope you never win. Indeed, some say it is the gamble you simply cannot win. In the simplest sense, insurance is paying someone a little bit today so that they will pay you a lot later if something bad happens tomorrow. Most days nothing happens and the insurer is that much richer for it, and that small fact is why the dreary and boring business of insurance has taken the interest of the Merchant League.

In form or another, insurance has been around for millennia, but making a business from it is a very new phenomenon, one the League is eager to capitalise on. The business of insurance is also new enough that most people have not even heard of it, or understand how it works, and those that do have yet to figure out all the things that they can insure.

The concept of health insurance, life insurance or even insurance for personal items is an unheard of concept.

Instead, the merchants and traders who deal with insurers like Malherbe & Associates insure the value of their stores, shops, ships and whatever goods they may be ferrying over land and sea. In the cutthroat world of trade in Middelburg, any loss of goods and products can spell the end of a store and the beginning of a lifetime of poverty for the merchant. Many a bourgeois businessman have ended up in Oldtown due to bad luck and worse rivals.

Just as wolves can smell fear, the insurers know that this fear is present within each and every merchant and trader in the city. Even the League is not immune. That is the only reason why the insurers have gotten away for what amounts to little more than extortion and blackmail. The merchants know that they need the insurers more than the insurers need them and that is why they continue to pay the exorbitant rates the insurers set for them.

That is not to say they meekly bow down to the insurers, quite the contrary in fact. The loathsome rivalry between merchants and insurers have seen nearly as many insurers murdered as merchants bankrupted. Some merchants spend as much on hiring footmen to assassinate insurers as they do on paying the insurers. In return, insurers hire footmen as protection and to recover money owed to them by merchants. Politics and business during the day, murder and war at night.

It takes a certain sort of intestinal fortitude for an insurance firm to survive more than a few years and that is why Malherbe & Associates are such an extraordinary case. Not only has the business survived for decades, but it has also done it without the wealthy Nieutronian clientele.

Set in Fleurdal, M&A is too far from the north west of Middelburg to cater to the rich merchants and traders of Nieuton and Ooston. There are more than enough insurers between Ooston and Fleurdal to deal with them. Instead,

M&A's speciality is not the trade inside the city, but the trade flowing in and out of it. Specialising in shipping, most of M&A clients are foreign traders hoping to ensure their cargo arrives safely in Middelburg and looking to get paid if it doesn't.

Traders, sailors and merchants who stay only in the city for a brief while before leaving for who-knows-where makes for dangerous clients. After all, they can simply leave the country before anybody would be found. Where would the constables look for them, then? One would think that the insurers would need insurance in such a dangerous business, but M&A have found their own solution.

Only the wealthiest of their clients receive a personal appointment to discuss their matters. The rest of their clients must queue up in the reception hall to have their few minutes with the clerks behind the counter. It's all very impersonal and removes the insurers from their clients. You can't attack someone you don't know. The owners of M&A also rarely do any business themselves as well, meaning that should anything untoward happen, they would be free and clear.

MULDER & SONS GAMBLING HALL

There is not only a difference in attitudes, sentiment and history between those that live inside the City Array and those that live outside, but also a difference in laws. This is because "the City of Middelburg" is defined by what land is inside the great City Array. What most call Middelburg is actually the Grand City of Middelburg. A distinction without difference, perhaps, but one that allows for the less scrupulous among us to exploit certain holes in certain laws.

The laws inside the City Array are far more conservative than those outside. They are meant to uphold public honour, decency and dignity, but the selective enforcement of these

A FICKLE MISTRESS

Gambling is a quick way to make a lot of money, or to lose everything you have. It's a game of risk, but with great risks come great rewards. You can bet on absolutely anything in Middelburg, but here we will show you two games that you can play and bet on with your group in real life to enhance your gameplay: poker and blackjack. For both of these, all you will need are a few d10s.

In poker everyone who's playing needs 5 d10s, and this will be your "hand" for the game. First part of the game is the opening bet where the money can do the talking. Starting on the left of the dealer, everyone gets their chance to "fold" (stop playing for the round) or bet. After the first round of betting has been done, everyone rolls their d10s. After this, there is the second and final round of betting. Anyone who remains will have the chance to reroll 1 to all 5 of their d10s to make their final hand. Whoever has the best hand takes the pot.

A dice poker hand is made of a combination of numbers, with some combinations being better than others. What you want to do is get the best combination to win. The combinations below go from best to worst:

- Five of a kind: all five d10s showing the same value
- Four of a kind: four out of five d10s having the same value
- Full house: Three d10s showing the same value, and the other two showing a same value.
- Straight: a run of five sequential numbers. (eg: 1,2,3,4,5) The best Straight is a 6,7,8,9,10)
- Three of a kind: three d10s showing the same value
- Two pairs: two pairs of d10s showing the same value
- Single pair: two d10s showing the same value

Not all types of hands are of course equal. One "Five of a kind" can beat another, by having higher values on the d10s. For example: 5d10s showing all 9s will beat 5d10 showing all 4s.

The rules of blackjack are fairly simple: you want to get as close to the number 21 without going over. Go over and you lose, get closer to 21 than the rest of the group (or the dealer) and you win. For blackjack you use d10s. Just like with the cards, when you roll a 1 you can choose whether it counts as a 1 or an 11. So if you roll a 10 and a 1, you can declare that 1 to be an 11 and you got your 21 right there.

To start a game of blackjack, everyone places their bets, and then and then all the players involved roll 2d10 to get their starting numbers. The players can then elect to stay at their current number, or to roll an additional d10 to add to their total. This goes on until everyone has decided to stay at their totals, or have gotten a number higher than 21. Then, whomever has gotten closest to 21 takes the pot. If more than one person got 21, they share the pot.

Betting is quite simple: every gambler can bet as many "points" as they have Wealth Skill Levels. Any points they win can then be freely bet away as they want. Once the gambling is done, if the gambler has lost more points than they gained then they have that many points worth of penalties to their Wealth Skill Checks until they narratively gain more money. If the gambler has gained more points than they lost, then they can spend these points as bonuses to their Wealth Skill Checks. Any points so spent are lost.

laws have led many to believe they exist only for gathering revenue. One of these “inner laws” is a complete and utter ban on gambling. It is a completely unenforceable law and you will find men betting on dice and cards in any tavern and public house, but it has stopped any large or officially sanctioned gambling dens inside the City Array.

Outside the City Array, however, you can gamble all your money away to your heart's content. In fact, a few corrupt constables in the pocket of the Merchant League may indeed point wayward gamblers to a gambling hall or den under their control. While the politicians may pontificate against gambling inside the City Array, for moral and ethical reasons, the Merchant League do so for monetary reasons. Every coin gambled away in a tavern or by the roadside is a coin that does not end up in their pockets through one of their gambling halls.

One of these gambling halls is Mulder & Sons, started by a member of a minor trade family in the League loyal to the van Rosedaal family. It began as most gambling halls do, as a public house where people came to enjoy a pint and maybe roll a few dice where the constables and moral guardians will not harangue and harass them. When the original Mulder discovered that the patrons spent more coin on gambling and not on the alcohol they purchased from him, he quickly changed his business strategy.

Spending what savings he had, Mulder bought a decrepit warehouse in Fleurdal and did very little to make it look enticing to potential customers. He didn't need to. Gambling is a service and a product that sells itself. Much like the other few sanctioned gambling halls and dens around the outer areas of Middelburg, once people found out about it, they came in droves.

What makes Mulder & Sons unique, other than its barely renovated and maintained look (what the owners defensively refer to as “rugged”), is the fact that anything can be bet on here. If it exists and there is chance involved then you can lose your money on it at M&S.

At any given time you can find a few dozen different card and dice games being played in the gambling hall, originating from all cultures in Jytoh and even some from across the oceans.

M&S have a simple rule: if they don't know the rules to a game you want to play, then your first bet is free, after you have taught the dealer the rules of course. This has, understandably, led to a host of foreigners, sailors, soldiers and traders to come in and share what rules they have learnt abroad. M&S makes sure to keep a record of each and every rule and variations on these for every game they have learnt.


They keep all of these rules in what the owners call “the ledgers” and store them in the vault in the second floor. Other than the ledgers, the vault contains all the daily earnings of the gambling hall, although no one is quite sure whether the money or the ledgers are more valuable. There have been many teams of footmen that have tried, and failed, to retrieve the ledgers on behalf of other gambling halls. Fortunately for M&S, this is where the patronage of the van Rosedaal family pays dividends. The van Rosedaal family keeps a constant eye on the gambling hall, knowing a good money earner when they see one.

Through gambling we lose the two things we treasure the most: time and fortune.

~Alderman Lodewyk De Fres

Other than dice and cards, M&S allows betting on absolutely everything. Want to wager on who will win the next grand mayoral or presidential or perhaps which League Patriarch will be the next to be murdered? M&S can help with that. From the very large and important to the small and insignificant, the dealers at the gambling hall can figure out the odds of it happening and put a price on it.

The longest running gamble they have had has been the date on which Patriarch Hugenberg will die. Set in motion four decades ago by a disgruntled dock worker made redundant by the Patriarch, the gamble has been going ever since.



When Hugenberg found out, everyone thought there would be blood in the streets. He, however, took it in good stride, putting a bet on it himself. The amount, some say, is so large that if he ever wins, he would bankrupt the whole gambling hall and the descendants of Mulder for the next few generations.

ST. KLARA'S YOUTH PENITENTIARY

Criminals come in all shapes and sizes, and more importantly: ages. Not all criminals in Middelburg are hardened killers and thieves, veterans of years working in the shadowed underbelly of the city. In fact if one were to count all the criminals in Middelburg, the youth would win by sheer numbers.

It is often said that there are no old footmen in the city and there is some truth to this. In a world as lethal as Ård (thanks to the runes), and in a city as corrupt and dangerous as Middelburg, the life of a footman is often counted in weeks, if not days. Only the wisest and most cunning make it to old age, and by then they have become handlers, sending a new generation of footmen to their deaths.

Discretion, they say, is the better part of valour, and the footmen of Middelburg have taken this to heart. A key part of surviving in this city is to not put oneself into dangerous situations too often. Far better to get someone else to do most of the drudgery and only do what is necessary yourself. For this reason, footmen always build up a collection of contacts to get them information, equipment, news, partners in crime and handlers. Most of the time, a footman can be judged by the network they have built up over the years.

While most of this network of contacts will be people of importance to the footmen, the majority will merely be there to be ordered around and paid off with money, favours and promises. In other words, children. There are

many orphans and street urchins living in Middelburg and quite a few of them know that the career of a footman can be the quick road to success. For a teenager, talk of risk means nothing and so they willingly help adult footmen in their criminal activity, hoping that the footmen will eventually ask them to join their crew.

Some teenage gangs, impatient at their older compatriots, decide to become footmen all on their own, taking assignments from low scale handlers and, more often than not, dying in the process of making a quick fortune.

It is no surprise then that there is an epidemic of crime amongst the youth in Middelburg and the Grand Mayor had decided to try and “rehabilitate” these misguided children.

Most crimes are handled in a fairly straightforward and immediate fashion. After the judged has made his verdict, the criminal is usually punished immediately, whether it be by a fine, lashing, whipping, the stocks, amputation or execution. The prisons of Alfresia, as with other nations, are there for the politically sensitive criminals or for those who cannot pay their fines and are imprisoned until such a time as they can.

While everyone rejoices when a criminal is whipped or executed, it always leaves a bad taste in the mouth to see a twelve year old lose a hand or a fifteen year old walk meekly to the execution platform. Because of this, the government has opened St. Klara's Penitentiary, in the hope that a firm hand can guide the youth to the right and moral path.

No longer will children suffer capital punishment, instead they will serve their time at St. Klara's where they will undergo strict religious schooling and be put to work for the greater good of the city. No one can say as yet whether the penitentiary has had a positive effect on the children released from the penitentiary, but all who come out have a healthy fear of ever going back.

MISSION 5

The Case of the Misplaced Evidence

SYNOPSIS

The first mission of this book and also the first official mission under the curfew. It should come as no surprise then that this mission will definitely up the ante. It will be the longest mission thus far and will actually be two missions in one. Since there is a curfew, the mission will of course take place at night, just to make it that much more difficult for the players. And just to top it all off, since this is the fifth mission in the campaign, the bonus to the Random Encounters Roll is now +16, and the penalty to all Social Skill Checks for the PCs are now at -12. The players are being thrown into the deep end with this book, so they better learn to swim.

This mission starts off after the successful completion of their latest mission. This can't be Mission 4 from *The Ruined City* as this mission has to take place at least six weeks later (and around 6 months after Mission 1). If the players haven't been successful in their missions lately, you can simply make their latest mission a narrative one, so it flows better into this mission. Of course, the surprise of starting a mission directly after one ends does make it all the more exciting.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE MISSION PROPER IS AS FOLLOWS:

Right after getting paid for their latest job and leaving wherever they chose to meet with their contact, an armoured carriage stops near the PCs and a group of soldiers climb out from it and "politely" ask the PCs to step inside the carriage. Waiting for them is a very irate general who also "politely" asks the PCs to cover up a crime scene for him. The general is a long time rival of Karl van Rosedaal and attempted to implicate the Patriarch in the Ruined Man murders by having his soldiers leave incriminating evidence at one of the van Rosedaal shops in Fleurdal. Unfortunately his soldiers targeted the wrong business and now the PCs must fix the soldiers' mistake. The army can't get involved anymore

as the van Rosedaal family suspects something is afoot. When the PCs clean up the crime scene and report back, the general will notice that the most important piece of evidence is missing and the PCs must go to the actual van Rosedaal business to reclaim it.

THE META-STORY IS AS FOLLOWS:

While the Ruined Man doesn't make an appearance in this mission, if the PCs are lucky they will discover something very important about his motives. There has always been the implication that the Ruined Man is not simply killing at random (well, mostly), but there has never been any concrete proof that he has a plan... until now. The clue from this mission will show a list of names, and those that are dead have all been victims of the Ruined Man. Only a few remain. The Alfresian Intelligence Service discovered this list at the last Ruined Man murder scene, left there accidentally by the Ruined Man. Now that he no longer has his list, we can only expect the more brutal, violent murders to increase as he lets off his frustration on all those around him. He was a weapon that was once (mostly) focused, now what will happen when he no longer is targeting only a specific group of people?

OVERVIEW

SCENE 1: THE BRIEF:

- ▶ Abducted by Brigade General Hendrik Steyn.
- ▶ PC's mission is to recover fake evidence planted by the General's men at the incorrect location.
- ▶ The General has a grudge against the Patriarch van Rosedaal and seeks to humiliate him.
- ▶ The PCs only have this night to complete the mission.

SCENE 2: THE LEGWORK:

- ▶ Curfew is in effect.
- ▶ One main area of

interest: Malherbe & Associates.

- Two floors consisting of offices and storerooms.

SCENE 3: THE MISSION:

- Evidence to be retrieved is found all over the building.
- Three NPCs unconscious in building that wakes up during mission.
- Constables are patrolling outside.

SCENE 4: THE COMPLICATION:

- Most crucial piece of evidence is missing.
- Have been taken to Mulder & Sons gambling hall by van Rosedaal footmen.
- PCs are to retrieve it post-haste.
- This evidence is The Clue.

SCENE 5: THE DEBRIEF:

- Takes place in the carriage from Scene 1.
- As long as they brought back the last, missing piece of evidence they will receive a full reward.
- General will even offer to take them home.

SCENE 1: THE BRIEF

This scene takes place at night after the PCs have successfully completed their latest job. The location itself is not important as the PCs will be driven to the district of Fleurdal where the mission takes place. What is important is that the PCs understand that the constables are out patrolling the streets due to the curfew. The constables will be on foot, on horse, and will even patrol in carriages. They will never be alone and will interrogate anyone they see on the streets.

The mission will begin once the PCs have been picked up by the general and his men. The introductory narration is set so that the PCs are trapped in an alleyway between the group of soldiers and the constables. The alleyway is between two three-story buildings with little to

grab onto during the climb up. If the PCs feel like running, gently remind them of the fact that both the soldiers and the constables will be able to get a shot, or two, off before the PCs have climbed to the roofs of the buildings. If the PCs still intend to escape, have the soldiers fire a warning shot above the PCs heads and tell them that every constable within a kilometre will have heard that shot and will come to investigate.

In case the PCs feel like fighting their way out, there are five soldiers accompanying the general on one side of the PCs and three constables on the other side of them. However, make it clear that the soldiers are not here for a fight, they are just here to get the PCs and bring them to the General.

NARRATE OR PARAPHRASE THE FOLLOWING AS APPROPRIATE:

“Thank the gods for small mercies,” you think to yourself as you leave the building. The handler was on time, the assignment was simple enough, you still have all your limbs, and now you even have enough coin to last you quite some time.

Not everything is that simple these days, as the quiet streets around you can attest. The curfew has been in place for over a month and it has done nothing but raise tensions in the city. It certainly hasn’t stopped the Ruined Man killings, and it hasn’t stopped folks like you stalking the night. The only thing it has achieved is a record number of people thrown in gaol, the courts overrun with petty cases, the constables overworked and short of temper, and the people of Middelburg fearful and distrustful of their neighbours.

You ruminate on the injustices of a martial bureaucracy as you quickly duck down a narrow alleyway to avoid being spotted by oncoming constables. Unfortunately for you, by the time you are halfway through, you see an armoured carriage stop on the far side of the alleyway and several soldiers climb down. The light from a lantern shines sharply in your eyes and you are uncertain of just how many muskets you see

levelled at you. The lantern's light has also drawn the attention of the constables and three of them appear behind you at the mouth of the alley, pistols in hand. With no other exits and sheer walls on either side of you, it seems you're caught between a rock and a hard place.

A voice from the soldiers' side of the alley calls out: "Either you come with us and make some money tonight, or you go with Middelburg's finest behind you and take your chances in gaol. Your choice."

A choice that is no choice at all. You walk into the light and find yourself surrounded by angry looking soldiers and a carriage's open door. The soldier with the lantern motions you inside and shuts the door behind you.

As the carriage starts moving you find yourself face to face with Brigade General Hendrik Steyn, commander of the 17th Infantry Brigade. You recognise him from the newspapers where he has been a vocal proponent of instituting martial law in Middelburg.

He looks angry, frustrated, but more than anything, tired. He looks you over and says quietly: "By all rights I should have you turned over to the constables for violating the curfew, but I will not. Instead I am going to pay you handsomely for doing a little favour for me tonight."

He pauses dramatically, before continuing: "My soldiers have made a right cock up of an intelligence operation and I need you to clean it up. The army is not allowed to come under scrutiny from this operation, not at times such as this, so I cannot send these fools back to clean up their own mess. We will provide the address for you, all you need to do is go there and remove the evidence my men planted. Do this for me and you will be rewarded; refuse and you can join the other criminals in gaol."

He sits back in his seat, awaiting any questions you might have, as well as your eventual agreement.

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY BRIGADE GENERAL HENDRIK STEYN:

- » Information freely provided:
 - » The location where the PCs must clean up the crime scene is an insurance office called "Malherbe & Associates", owned by the Heisenstein family.
 - » The intelligence operation that the general's soldiers "cocked up" was to plant evidence pertaining to the Ruined Man murders.
 - Anything the PCs find relating to the Ruined Man must be recovered and brought back.
 - » The carriage will deliver the PCs to the statue of King Markus VII 'the Incendiary' in Fleurdal and will await their return there.
 - The reason for stopping so far away from the insurance office is because the general does not want the army seen involved in this affair.
 - » The general and his men will not aid the PCs should the constabulary apprehend them during the course of this mission. It is vital that they not be seen involved in this affair.
 - » The general has not brought any money to haggle with and will not pay one penny unless all the evidence is recovered.
 - The general does however mention that he is willing to pay the equivalent of a +30 bonus to Wealth Skill to each PC should they complete the mission successfully.
- » Information that will require a Social Skill Check (additional to the -12 global penalty):
 - » A +10 Social Skill Check will uncover that the soldiers were supposed to plant the evidence in a gambling

hall called “Mulder & Sons”, owned by the van Rosedaal family.

- » A -0 Social Skill Check will uncover that General Steyn has a personal grudge against Patriarch Karl van Rosedaal and that is the reason for the operation.
 - A -10 Social Skill Check will uncover that General Steyn and Patriarch van Rosedaal are longtime rivals and that van Rosedaal married the woman Steyn was in love with.
- » A +5 Social Skill Check will uncover that the evidence for the operation was given to the general by contacts he has in the AIS. As far as he knows, the evidence is legitimate.
- » A +5 Intuition Skill Check will give the PCs the impression that the general is still undecided about whether he will actually pay them after the mission or just hand them over to the constables.

Once all the questions have been asked or answered or if the PCs are taking too long, the general will take out his pocket watch and say: “Enough lollygagging, we do not have much time. My best estimate is that you have seven hours until sunrise, see that you have accomplished this assignment by then. We will be waiting here for you. Remember, no one must know what has transpired here tonight.”

With that, the carriage will slow to a halt and the door will be opened from outside. The soldier with the lantern will motion the PCs outside before closing the door again and climbing onto the carriage. None of the soldiers will answer any questions or engage in conversation other than to wish the PCs good luck.

If this scene has carried on for a long time, it may well be a good idea to go over the key points of information with the players so they don't forget something vital that their PCs would have remembered.

SCENE 2: THE LEGWORK


There is one main area of interest in this mission so this scene may be over relatively quickly as the PCs will presumably start cleaning up once they reach Malherbe & Associates. If the PCs uncovered the location of the original target for the soldiers' operation (Mulder & Sons) then they can indeed have a look around the gambling hall, although there would be nothing for them to see there... yet.

The PCs can always throw a spanner in the general's plans by double crossing him and going to the van Rosedaals and telling them the whole story. If they plan on doing this before Scene 4 then their only recourse is to go to the van Rosedaal compound in the League district as the gambling hall in Fleurdal will be closed at the moment. Should they choose to double cross the general after the complication has revealed itself, then they can go either to the gambling hall or to the family compound. In either case, proceed to Scene 5.

During this and further Scenes, remember that this mission takes place at night during a curfew. Should the PCs run into any trouble during a Random Encounters Roll, the constabulary will be quick to respond. Once any sort of loud conflict (other than combat) happens, roll a d100 during any character's (PC or NPC) actions, if the result is 5 or less then the PCs will hear 1 x the number of PCs constables approach. Should combat happen, then 1 x PC numbers constables will arrive after any characters actions on a roll of 10 or less. Should any unsuppressed firearm be fired, then 2 x PC numbers constables will arrive after any character's actions on a roll of 20 or less.

MALHERBE & ASSOCIATES INSURERS

While Malherbe may be long dead, his office of insurers continues his great work of fleecing others for money. The establishment has garnered such a reputation that in recent decades



the Heisenstein trade family purchased the enterprise to increase their not inconsiderable wealth.

It's location speaks volumes about its clientele. Being far from Nieuton, M&A deals very little with the worries of the aristocrats and bourgeoisie, but their close proximity to the docks have meant that they have become experts in assuring the contents and vessels of the various traders and merchants that grace Middelburg with their goods. No one wants their ships lost at sea or their goods spoilt, stolen, or damaged on arrival. M&A will offer to refund the merchants or traders the costs of whatever is lost or damaged, for a hefty fee upfront of course.

M&A Insurers is a two story building. The bottom floor is the "public face" of the business and is where the insurers meet with their customers and clients on a daily basis and so is given over to a variety of meeting rooms. The top floor is where the personal offices of the insurers are located as well as more luxurious and intimate meeting rooms for their wealthier clients.

GROUND FLOOR

The further one moves into the building, the wealthier one must be. In the front of the ground floor is the Reception Hall and this is the only area of the building that most of M&A's customers will ever see. It is here, lit by natural light through the grand floor to ceiling windows of the front wall, that the poorer clients queue before the counters to purchase their assurance contracts and pray that it isn't needed.

Immediately behind the counters is the Archives. Here all assurance contracts and the particulars of each customer is stored. It is located just behind the Reception Hall so that it is nearest the busiest section of building.

In the back two spars of the building are the Meeting Rooms where the moderately wealthy clients are entertained and where they can expect some modicum of privacy. These Meeting Rooms look out over the Rear Courtyard where the staff

can sit and rest during their meagre breaks, and clients can enjoy some sunlight. On the opposite side of the Courtyard from M&A's is a small tavern that has done quite well ferrying food and drink out to the waiting clients.

FIRST FLOOR

Above the Reception Hall sits the Malherbe Suite, the old office of Malherbe himself. This large space is occupied by the current owners of M&A: Adam Malherbe, the grandson of the original Malherbe, and Wilbert Louw, his business partner. Other than their spacious desks, the suite is filled with enough books along the walls to furnish a small library and a personal lavatory. This space serves as the meeting room of their most influential and wealthy clients.

In front of the Malherbe Suite is the Secretary's Office. While the two business partners act as the face of the business and wine and dine its best clients, they leave the running of the establishment to Andrea Theron, their secretary. All the important administrative and financial documents are located here and it comes as no surprise that clients are not allowed in this office.

In the spurs of the building are the offices of the associate insurers. Middlemen between M&A and the clients, these men and women meet with the clients in the meeting rooms below as well as travelling to stores, shops, businesses, and vessels to inspect and audit the goods that M&A insures. They are the workhorses of the establishment and their tiny offices are filled with paperwork needed to do their jobs.

MULDER & SONS GAMBLING HALL

As the name implies, Mulder & Sons is a hall meant for gambling. It is a very simple structure and definitely not the most sophisticated of gambling dens, but it is very successful. If it weren't, the van Rosedaal family would not have purchased it.

The hall is divided into two floors, although the second floor covers less than half of the area of the hall and looks out over the main hall. Here the wealthiest and luckiest of gamblers come to play cards with each other, gambling away more money in one hand of cards than all those in the hall below can win in the entire night.

The vault for all the money kept on site is also situated on the second floor, but it is emptied daily and with the curfew in effect, that was before sunset so it will not contain any money. It is, however, a useful opportunity for the PCs to know how difficult the lock is to pick, should they ever want to come back a different day and break in. The penalty to pick the lock is -45 to a Burglary Skill Check.

In the main hall, below the second floor sits the bar where the staff ply the patrons with as much cheap alcohol as possible so that they are not in the right state of mind to gamble. The rest of the hall is open and contains a variety of tables catering to nearly every sort of dice and card game known in Middelburg.

The only truly separate room in the hall is the lavatories in the rear of the hall. There are no windows or exits to the outside in the lavatories as the proprietors of the gambling hall don't want anyone to leave without first losing all their money.

Before the complication in Scene 4, there won't be any NPCs in the gambling hall. All lights will be off, and the doors and windows will be locked.

NPCs

The terms of the curfew state that no person should be found on the streets between dusk and dawn except on bona fide business, with "bona fide" code for governmental business. Almost every business and store in Middelburg closes well before dusk, to give their staff the time to make it home. Even inns and taverns keep their doors closed as the constables often target areas where crowds may gather.

As such, Malherbe & Associates Insurers should be deserted, but unfortunately for the PCs, it isn't. Three enterprising workers, eager to get in their masters' good books have decided to stay at the office and work through the night. They were awake and working when the soldiers stealthily broke into the business, but the soldiers knew what they were doing and suffocated the workers into unconsciousness with the use of arrays. The soldiers went about their business and turned out the lights when they left, aiming to give the workers the impression that they merely fell asleep at work.

The soldiers never told the general this and so the PCs are not forewarned about their presence.

The first worker is in the Archives, the second is in the last of the meeting rooms of the right hand spur of the building, and the third is in the first office on the left hand spur of the first floor.

As the workers are fast asleep when the PCs enter, it will take a successful Perception Skill Check on their part versus the PCs' Stealth Skill Check in order for them to wake up. If the PCs are in the same room as the workers, the penalty to the Perception Skill Checks is -20, if in an adjoining room, hall, or above/below the workers, the penalty is -25, otherwise the penalty is -30. If the PCs are not trying to be stealthy, are careless, or knock over items and furniture, use your intuition as to whether it would realistically wake the workers.

The owners of the tavern across the Rear Courtyard live in the tavern and as such can be alerted to any goings on in the insurer's office building. However, for them to take notice it will require either a window being broken, an unsuppressed gunshot or explosion, or a human scream. The lights in their apartment above the tavern will be on, and the PCs will be able to see that through the windows of M&A.

The behaviour of the NPCs are detailed in Scene 3.

SCENE 3: THE MISSION

The PCs have a fairly straightforward mission: collect everything in the building relating to the Ruined Man. There will be no twists or complications in this scene; the only problems the PCs may have are with the three unconscious insurance workers.

The Clue in this mission will be revealed in Scene 4. All the evidence the PCs will collect will be information they already know from their experiences in the campaign, from the newspapers and from the general zeitgeist of Middelburg.

THE RUINED MAN EVIDENCE

- The majority of the evidence will be found in the Malherbe Suite, the Secretary's Office and the Archives.
- The nature and detail of most of the evidence is unimportant and can be glossed over. These are things like articles of clothing or possessions of the Ruined Man's victims. Only the evidence directly relating to events in the campaign will be detailed.
- If the PCs looked at the contents of the Senator's Briefcase in Mission 2, they will find copies of some of the notes and articles of that briefcase in the Archives.
- Whatever means and methods the PCs used to Distract the Golden Talons in Mission 4 will be detailed in a report found on the desk in the Secretary's Office.
- A copy of Alderman Witters' (the first Ruined Man victim) journal can be found in an office upstairs in one of the spurs of the building. An entry logging the alderman's appointment in the West Lands an hour before his death has been underlined in red.
- A piece of dirty, worn, brownish fabric (measuring roughly 15 by 40 centimetres) that has spots of dried

blood on it can be found on one of the reclining chairs in the Malherbe Suite.

- A list of all the runes that have been drawn in blood at the Ruined Man murder scenes can be found in the drawer of Wilbert Louw in the the Malherbe Suite.
- For every half hour a PC decides to investigate a room for the evidence, that PC gains a +20 bonus for their Investigation Skill Check to uncover the evidence.
- Add an additional +10 bonus per half hour to each PC's Investigation Skill Check for every other PC in the same room that is also investigating.
- Should all PCs fail their Investigation Skill Check in a specific room, they can try again but then it takes a further hour to gain each +20 bonus.

NPC BEHAVIOUR

INSURANCE WORKERS:

- The first worker is in the Archives, the second in the last of the meeting rooms of the right hand spur of the building, and the third is in the first office on the left hand spur of the first floor.
- As they wake, they will be confused and disoriented.
- They will attempt to return to work and will turn on the light in whatever room they are.
- If the PCs are not in the same room, it will take another successful Perception Skill Check on the worker's part to determine someone is in the building that shouldn't be there and will investigate where the noise came from.
- Penalties to this Perception Skill Check are half that of the prior checks.
- If the workers find the PCs, and the PCs are not dressed or acting in a threatening manner, then the worker will tell the PCs

to leave or they will call for the constables.

- At the first sign of conflict, the workers will attempt to run out of the building to look for the constables, screaming for help as they go.

TAVERN OWNERS:

- It will take a great deal of noise to attract the attention of the tavern owners.
- Once they are alerted, the husband will attempt to enter the building to see what is going on (if there is apparent nefarious activities in the building) or will knock on the back doors (if everything seems natural from the outside).
- The wife will keep an eye on the husband from their window overlooking the Rear Courtyard. If the husband enters the building, or if he is harmed or killed while outside, the wife will leave the tavern to call for the constables.
- If there is a conflict between the husband and the PCs, the husband will inform the PCs that his wife has called for the constables.

CONSTABLES:

- Since the curfew, the constables are patrolling every district in Middelburg and that includes Fleurdal.
- Use your discretion concerning how often the constables will patrol the street that M&A is on. At minimum, there will be at least one patrol of two constables (on foot or horse) each hour.
- If any of the building's lights are on, you can do a GM Intrusion to have the constables knock on the front door to enquire if everything is alright inside.
- Any deception by the PCs will have to be an Opposing Skill Check: Deceive versus Intuition.
- If the constables figure out the PCs are burglars they will attempt to arrest them.
- If no PC answers the door, you can do another GM Intrusion for the constables

to find an unlocked door or window and enter the building.

- If combat happens, the constables will flee once they believe they will die and will seek reinforcements.
- Reinforcements will be 2 x PC numbers and will arrive within 15 minutes.

OTHER NPCs:


- Because of the curfew, the other buildings surrounding M&A Insurers are uninhabited this night.
- While the sound of any unsuppressed gunshot or explosion will travel kilometres, the constables will be aware of them before any citizen is able to report it. So for the purposes of this mission, the only NPCs to worry about are the insurance workers, the tavern owners, and the constables.

SCENE 4: THE COMPLICATION

As long as the PCs distracted the Golden Talons the Once the PCs have finished collecting all the evidence they found and return to the general's carriage, they will find the general and his five soldiers waiting with the promised money. If any of the prominently named evidence listed in Scene 3 are missing, the general will refuse payment until they have found it. A +0 Social Skill Check will convince the general to part with a quarter of the promised money if the PCs have recovered at least half of the prominently named evidence listed in Scene 3.

When the PCs have recovered all the prominently named evidence listed in Scene 3, the general will thoroughly examine the evidence again to make sure all of the planted evidence has been recovered. The complication to this mission is that there is a single piece of evidence missing and it is the most important piece of evidence.

This is through no fault of the PCs as it has been stolen. As soon as the general begins



looking through the evidence, there will be a knock on the carriage door and a soldier would lean in to quietly converse with the general. The soldier looks as though he has run quite far and fast in a very short time, because that is exactly what happened. A +0 Perception Skill Check will allow the PCs to overhear their conversation.

The soldier will tell the general that he saw a suspicious looking man exit M&A Insurers shortly before the PCs entered it for the last time and this man went off towards the gambling hall. As the general then looks through the collected evidence and realises the most important piece of evidence is missing, he will rightly assume this suspicious looking man had taken it.

The general will then order the PCs to go to the gambling hall and obtain the evidence by all means necessary. He will also refuse any further payment until it is done. A -20 Social Skill Check will convince the general to part with half of the promised money as compensation for the work the PCs have done thus far. If the PCs refuse, the general will threaten to have them arrested. If they continue to refuse, the soldiers will attempt to arrest the PCs.

All the general will say about the evidence is that it is a list of the victims of the Ruined Man. A +0 Social Skill Check will have the general will say that the AIS believes that this list was written by the Ruined Man himself.

MULDER & SONS GAMBLING HALL

Once the PCs have heard about the missing list, there will now be activity in the gambling hall. The suspicious looking man the soldier saw running from the insurer's office was a footman sent by the van Rosedaal family. The family had heard from their contacts that the general was planning something nefarious and had sent men out onto streets to keep an eye out.

The footman that stole the list and his team mates that were sent out by the family have regrouped at the gambling hall to consolidate

their findings. The Ruined Man's list has clearly risen to the top of their findings and they will be in the midst of discussing the ramifications of such a treasure when the PCs approach the gambling hall.

When the PCs arrive, they will see that there is a light on inside the gambling hall, but a dim one. The NPCs are all gathered on the second floor of the gambling hall and have only brought a small lantern with them. If the PCs investigate the outside of the gambling hall they will find the side door next to the bar is unlocked.

NPCs

- There are 1.5x PC numbers of footmen gathered on the second floor.
- They will be in quiet conversation about the Ruined Man's list when the PCs arrive.
- If the PC's intend a stealthy approach, then once the PCs enter the gambling hall, it requires a successful -10 Perception Skill Check on the footmen's side versus a Stealth Skill Check on the PCs side for them to discover the PCs.
- The footmen know that the van Rosedaal family will pay them a king's ransom for the list and so it will take a -20 Social Skill Check to even discuss selling or giving it to the PCs.
- The footmen have also worked together long enough not to fall to infighting.
- The footmen are open to the idea of working together with the PCs to doublecross the general and take word of the military's involvement to the van Rosedaal.
 - » A successful Social Skill check will have the footmen part with a quarter of their earnings, equal to +10 bonus to Wealth Skill Checks for the PCs' help.
 - » If the PCs want to doublecross the general, go straight to Scene 5, the Debrief.
- The footmen will first

warn the PCs to leave the area, if the PCs refuse or initiate combat, the footmen will attack until they believe they are going to die or the list will fall into the PCs' hands, then they will attempt to escape.

- Once combat happens, then 1.5 x PC numbers constables will arrive after any characters actions on a roll of 5 or less. Should any unsuppressed firearm be fired, the constables will arrive after any characters actions on a roll of 10 or less.

THE CLUE

The clue to this mission is the list itself. It is exactly as the general said it was: a list of the Ruined Man's victims. However, that is not all it is. It is a worn and torn piece of paper that has definitely seen better days, however it is immediately apparent that it is a printed piece of paper. It seems to be a list of staff at a certain institution. The top of the page has been torn off so the name of said institution is unfortunately not visible anymore.

The clue here is that there is a connection between the Ruined Man's victims. It is that they were all part of the same organisation at some time or another. Not all the Ruined Man's victims are listed here, those vagrants, homeless and prostitutes clearly are not, but every victim of note is listed here; from the Alderman that was the first victim to the Admiral from Mission 4. If the players don't immediately pick up on this, you can remind them of this fact.

What can also be seen is that there are not many still alive. Every dead victim has been crossed out in what looks to be blood. Of the twenty something names listed, only three remain uncrossed.

Perhaps the most chilling aspect of this list is not the names, the worn appearance of the page or even the blood spatters, but the writing on it. In ugly, child-like writing there are several phrases written on the page: "these bad men", "never again", "they looked inside me", "every last

one", "ugly, dead thing", and "quiet, quiet, quiet." Several arrays have also been drawn in part but never finished and it looks like there are runes drawn on the page, however they are not familiar to any of the PCs. Emphasis the child-like nature of the writing and drawings; this was not done by the most literate of men.

SCENE 5: THE DEBRIEF

IF THE PCs DOUBLE CROSSED THE GENERAL BY GOING TO THE VAN ROSEDAAL FAMILY

If the PCs decide to go to the van Rosedaal family immediately after receiving the mission from the general, they will have to go to the family compound in the League district as the gambling hall will be deserted. They will be allowed into the compound and guided to the servant quarters where they will meet with the handler Johan van Strauss.

He will tell them that the van Rosedaal family will pay the PCs the equivalent of a +35 bonus to Wealth Skill to each PC should they retrieve the evidence for him. A -0 Social Skill Check will convince van Strauss to increase that bonus to +40.

Once they arrive at M&A Insurers, everything will be as in Scene 2 and 3, except that when they get to the Malherbe Suite, they will find one of the soldiers there who came to check up on them. He will be holding the Ruined Man's list and demand to know why they only got there after him. A successful Deception vs Intuition Skill Check is required to persuade him not to run for help.

If the PCs decide to doublecross the general after the complication, then Scene 4 will play out the same way, other than the footmen will have to tell the PCs to take one of the footmen to the general so that the PCs and the footman can retrieve the rest of the evidence. In return, the PCs will be allowed to view the Ruined Man's list.

FOR THOSE PCs THAT WERE ARRESTED:

They will be taken to the constabulary or provosts gaols, stripped down naked, and thrown into the cells where they will in all likelihood be forgotten. The constables have more than enough proof of the criminality of the PCs and the PCs should know the brigade general will disavow any knowledge of them. At the very least, they will be in gaol for the remainder of the campaign.

IF ALL THE PCs DIED BEFORE SCENE 4

Once the last PC died, tell the players how the general's carriage suddenly bursts into fire. As the general desperately escapes from the burning wreck, he finds that all the soldiers have been brutally, and literally, torn apart. Moaning and screaming from their dying corpses fill the air and a large, misshapen and rag covered figure looms over the general and hoarsely whisper "You have what is mine." The general will start to disavow any knowledge of whatever the monster wants and begin to beg for his life, but the monster will simply take each of his arms in a hand and pull, ripping the general in half.

IF ALL THE PCs DIED DURING SCENE 4 IN THE GAMBLING DEN

Once the last PC died, tell the players how a bright, orange light suddenly flares to life in the gambling den and then suddenly the Ruined Man is charging at any surviving footmen, holding each up and hoarsely whispering "You have what is mine" before killing them. Once every footman is dead or dying, the Ruined Man will find the list wherever it may be and disappear in another flash or orange light.

IF ALL THE PCs DIED DURING SCENE 4 ON THE STREETS

Once the last PC died simply tell the players how a raggedly covered, bandaged hand reaches down to take the list from where it may be, hold it up to a brown, ragged covered chest and a whisper echoing over the corpses "It is mine. It is mine. It is mine."

IF THE PCs SUCCEEDED IN DELIVERING THE LIST TO GENERAL STEYN

Inside the carriage, the general will gladly reward the PCs for the return of the list with the promised money equivalent to a +30 bonus to Wealth Skill to each PC (minus whatever he may have given to them in Scene 4). A -0 Social Skill Check will convince the general to increase this to a +35 bonus to Wealth Skill to each PC.

The general will also graciously offer to take the PCs to whichever location they wish to go, to avoid the constables. A +10 Intuition Skill Check will tell the PCs the general is only doing this in order to know where the PCs live or which areas they frequent.

Otherwise the general will thank them for a task well done and bid his farewells before the carriage leaves for the Military District.

AFTERMATH

There are quite a few loose threads in this mission, the PCs being one of them. If they handed in the Ruined Man's list to the general, then they are the witnesses to his crimes. While the money paid to them would go a ways to keep them silent, this was a serious crime for a senior military officer and the PCs could ruin his life should they choose to. A good next mission for the PCs would be for the general to send a few morally questionable men to make sure the PCs never reveal the truth.

Another way to deal with the general is by giving those PCs who have military ambitions the foot in the door they need. The PCs and the general now share a grave secret and so there is a level of trust there. A brigade general putting in a good word for new recruits can be the difference between starting off as a Private or as Lieutenant. In either case, the PCs can now count on the General as a Contact, at the lowest Influence level.

Conversely, if the PCs succeeded at double crossing the General

(other than having to evade his wrath) they will now have a Contact in Johan van Strauss, a very prominent handler in the van Rosedaal family and one that can give them as many lucrative missions as they could want.

The PCs may now also have seen, and perhaps explored, the vault in the gambling hall. While it was empty during this mission, the PCs can always try to burgle the gambling hall in another mission.

The curfew will stay in effect for four more weeks so the same rules regarding the response of the constables to any conflict will stay in effect during any mission you start before Mission 6.

NON-PLAYABLE CHARACTERS

CONSTABLES

Athletics	40	Intuition	30
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	50
Burglary	40	Logic	30
Constitution	40	Luck	30
Deceive	30	Might	40
Diplomacy	30	Perception	40
Drive	50	Shoot	50
Fight	40	Stealth	30
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	30
Intimidate	50	Will	40

RUNIC ARRAYS

- Middelburg Standard Defensive array on Cuirass, Helm and Quilted Jacket.
- Constable's Friend Offensive array on Pistol rounds and Billy Club.

EQUIPMENT

- Bronze Cuirass and Open Faced Helm (Strong Armour) covering Torso and Head Hit Locations.
- Quilted Jacket (Soft Armour) covering Torso, Arms and Legs Hit Locations.
- Bronze Billy Club (Medium melee weapon).
- Steel and Wood Pistol with lead rounds (Medium ranged weapon).

CIVILIANS

Athletics	35	Intuition	35
Broad-Craft	35	Investigate	35
Burglary	35	Logic	35
Constitution	35	Luck	35
Deceive	35	Might	35
Diplomacy	35	Perception	35
Drive	35	Shoot	35
Fight	35	Stealth	35
Fine-Craft	35	Wealth	35
Intimidate	35	Will	35

RUNIC ARRAYS

- In their day to day business, not everyone will be wearing defensive and offensive arrays.
- For Defensive arrays: roll a d100, if below 50 then the person is wearing the Middelburg Standard on their Arms, Legs and Torso Hit Locations.
- For Offensive arrays: if they are carrying weapons, roll a d100, if below 50 choose any offensive array from the Array Section at the back of the book. .

EQUIPMENT

- Miscellaneous articles.
- For weapons: roll a d100, if below 25 then the person is armed with a sword and pistol.

BRIGADE GENERAL HENDRIK STEYN

Athletics	30	Intuition	30
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	55
Burglary	30	Logic	50
Constitution	40	Luck	30
Deceive	40	Might	50
Diplomacy	40	Perception	30
Drive	40	Shoot	45
Fight	35	Stealth	30
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	60
Intimidate	60	Will	50

RUNIC ARRAYS

- Middelburg Standard Defensive arrays on all Hit Locations.
- Manstopper Offensive array on Pistol/Musket rounds.
- Quicksilver Mettle Offensive array on Steel Sword and Steel Dagger.

EQUIPMENT

- Steel Cuirass (Strong Armour) covering Torso Hit Location.
- Quilted Jacket (Soft Armour) covering Torso, Arms and Legs Hit Locations.
- Steel Dagger (Light Melee Weapon) and Bronze Arming Sword (Medium Melee Weapon).
- Steel and Wood Pistols (Near ranged weapons).

THE GENERAL'S SOLDIERS

Athletics	50	Intuition	30
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	35
Burglary	30	Logic	30
Constitution	40	Luck	30
Deceive	30	Might	50
Diplomacy	30	Perception	40
Drive	40	Shoot	45
Fight	55	Stealth	30
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	35
Intimidate	40	Will	50

RUNIC ARRAYS

- Middelburg Standard Defensive arrays on all Hit Locations.
- Manstopper Offensive array on Pistol/Musket rounds.
- Quicksilver Mettle Offensive array on Steel Sword and Steel Dagger.

EQUIPMENT

- Steel Cuirass and Open Faced Helm (Strong Armour) covering Torso and Head Hit Locations.
- Quilted Jacket (Soft Armour) covering Torso, Arms and Legs Hit Locations.
- Variety of Steel Swords (Medium Melee Weapon) and Steel Daggers (Light Melee Weapon) dependent on rank and division.
- Steel and Wood Pistols (Near Ranged Weapons) and Muskets (Medium ranged weapons).

VAN ROSEDAAL FOOTMEN

Athletics	60	Intuition	30
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	30
Burglary	50	Logic	30
Constitution	30	Luck	40
Deceive	45	Might	40
Diplomacy	30	Perception	40
Drive	40	Shoot	40
Fight	45	Stealth	60
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	30
Intimidate	50	Will	30

RUNIC ARRAYS

- Any of Middelburg Standard, Imperial Zephyr, Flame Ward and Steel Dragon Defensive arrays on all Hit Locations.
- Any Offensive array on ranged and melee weapons, with priority being given to quickness and efficiency.
 - » E.g.: Manstopper, Terminator, Sculptor
- Any Utility array on tools, equipment and metal spheres.
 - » E.g.: Ice Bomb, Smoke Bomb, Sound Bomb

EQUIPMENT

- Standard Clothing that covers all Hit Locations.
- Half of the Footmen will have Steel Cuirass (Strong Armour) covering Torso Hit Location.
- Variety of weapons, both melee and ranged.
 - » Ranging from swords, daggers, knives, billy clubs, maces for melee weapons and pistols, muskets for ranged weapons
- Burglary tools and other useful items for criminality.
- Steel spheres for holding Bomb arrays.

quiet

CERTIFICATE OF STAFF REQUISITION
OF
MILITARY AND CIVILIAN PERSONS

HATE YOU ALL
THANK YOU

NAMES

these bad men

NAMES

please

~~Fr. N. K. M. Badenhorst~~

Miss. M. d. Toit

~~Mr. A. S. Witters~~

~~Mr. E. v. Vollenhoven~~

~~Dr. F. W. Cilliers~~

~~Sr. A. O. Breytenbach~~

~~Miss. B. Louw~~

~~Mr. T. S. Theunissen~~

~~Mr. D. H. v. d. Linde~~

~~Mr. J. B. M. Hertzog~~

~~Mr. C. R. Swart~~

Asst. Prof. E. v. Richtofen

~~Mrs. T. Swanepoel~~

~~Mr. J. C. Smuts~~

~~Mr. S. A. Pienaar~~

~~Mr. W. Visser~~

~~Master. T. d. Kok~~

~~Mrs. E. Kotze~~

~~Mr. G. I. W. Grobbelaar.~~

~~Sr. F. Engelbrecht~~

~~Mr. L. E. Schuster~~

~~Mr. I. S. v. Vauren~~

~~Cpt. W. G. Antenburg~~

~~Lt. I. H. N. Mulder~~

quiet quiet quiet quiet

LAST ONE

QUIET

TO BE RETRIEVED UNDER THE UTMOST SECRECY AND URGENCY

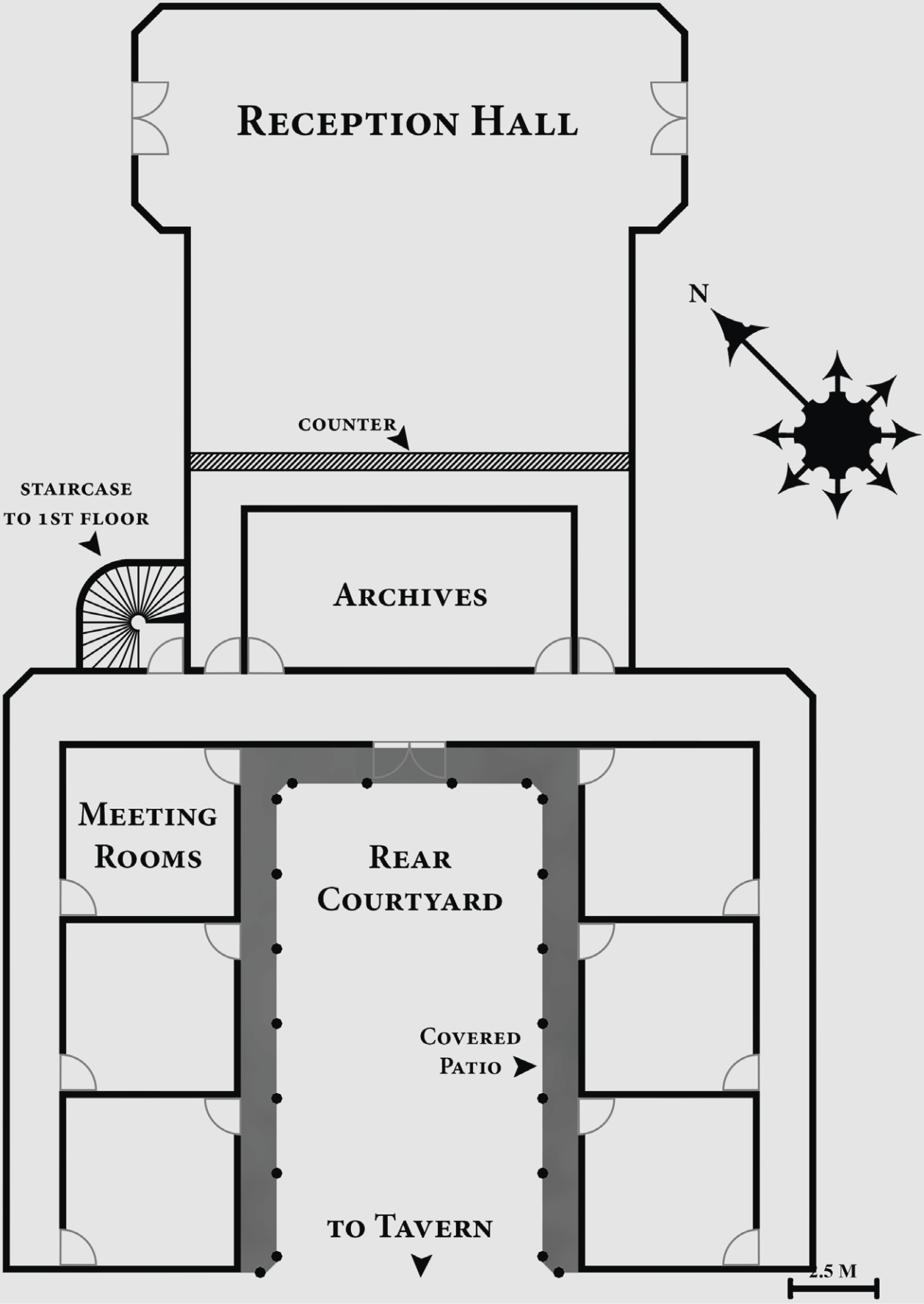
UNDER AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

OF

THE CONFEDERATE STATES

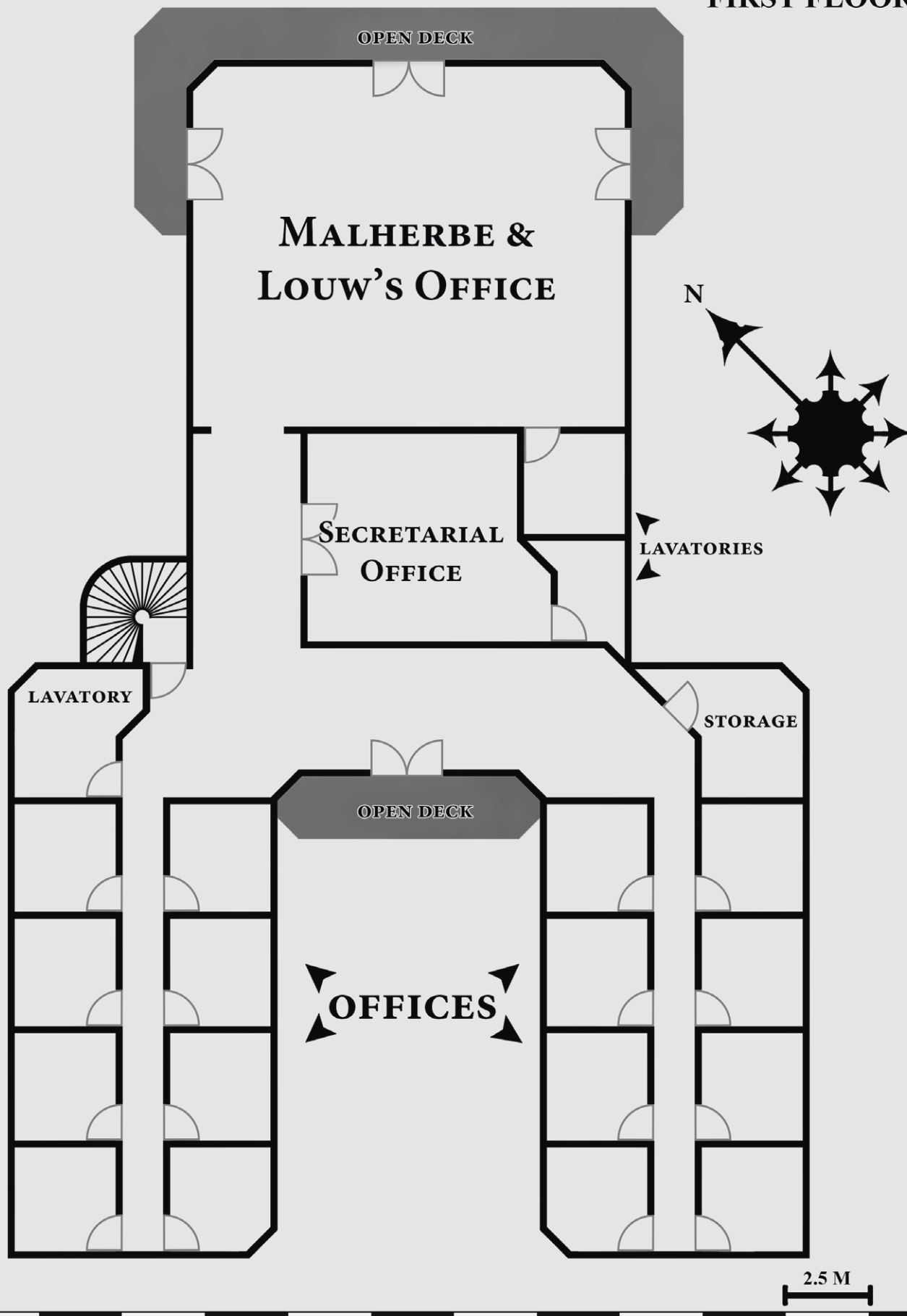
ugly DEAD thing

MALHERBE & ASSOCIATES INSURERS
GROUND FLOOR



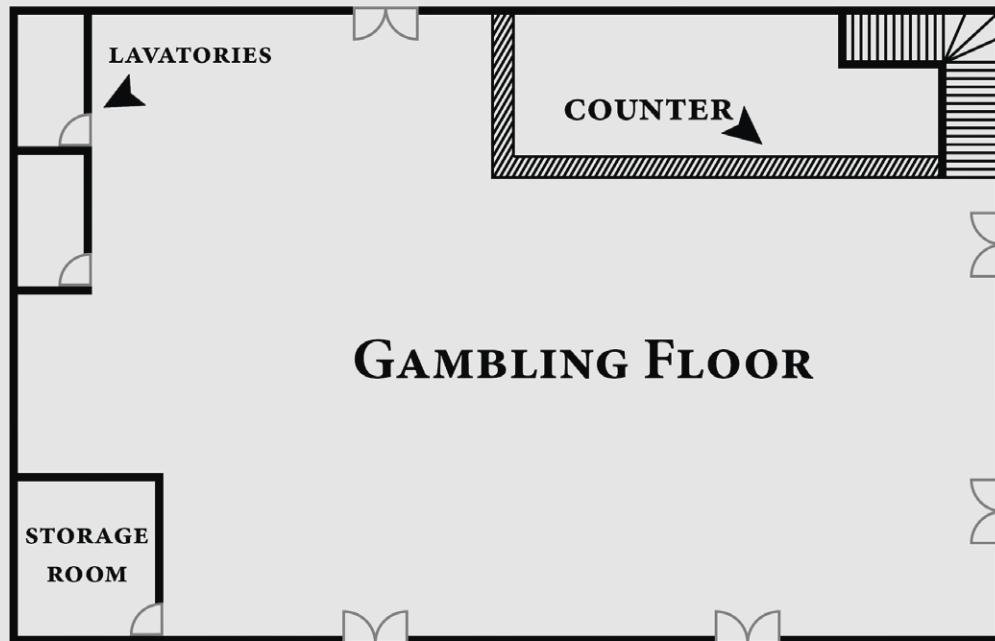
MALHERBE & ASSOCIATES INSURERS

FIRST FLOOR



MULDER & SONS GAMBLING HALL

GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



CHAPTER 6

*I know my end
comes soon*



WEST
LANDS

CROSSROADS

PARK WEST

500 M
THE GRAND CITY OF
MIDDELBURG

CROSSROADS



CROSSROADS



A legacy of the past and a herald of the future. Like its name, the Crossroads district has ever been at the crossroads of history and politics. It is the most sparsely populated district in the city and yet more people come through it than any other. It is the most open of any district and yet on any given day it will feel more crowded than Oldtown.

The Crossroads gained its importance from its location. There are, broadly speaking, only four ways in and out of Middelburg and they follow the compass paths. South through the docks or north along the Tenne river; east along the coast road or west through the Crossroads. Situated along one of the cardinal routes of the city meant that there will always have been trouble and excitement brewing in the district.

Until only very recently, the Crossroads was the greenest, cleanest district in Middelburg, filled with farms and tracks very little of everything else. Modernity has caught up with the district, however, but unlike other districts which resist progress, the Crossroads have embraced it. It is most likely the fact that with all the (previously) undeveloped areas in the district, there was more than enough space for anyone's version of progress to take shape.

The very first piece of progress in the

district, and one that is still with us today, was the crossroads itself. Not only did it connect the central city to the great western route, but it also joined the docks and harbour with the start of the main northern road that runs alongside the Tenne river. It was the first great construction of infrastructure taken by the city and it would be the model for all subsequent plans.

Next came the machine that has transformed every part of the world that it has touched: the locomotive train. When it arrived on Alfresia a couple of centuries ago, it caused more stir than the Emperor that accompanied it. The machine would change how people thought of travelling. Ferrying the masses at hitherto unknown speeds to far flung destinations was thought to belong only in the realms of fantasy. Now it had become a reality.

Since the train arrived in Middelburg until the present day, it has had its home at the crossroads. The Middelburg Central Train Station stands exactly where the first locomotive house once stood. While the train mechanics may tinker with the machines in Langehoven, it is here in the Crossroads where people board to take them to all parts of Alfresia.

The train gave people a



reason to flock to the Crossroads rather than just through it and wherever people go, they will spend money. Businesses and shopkeepers flocked to the Crossroads but barely any remained for long. The great open expanses meant shops and stores were isolated and couldn't grow on the business of others. The only stores that survived were the small forums and arcades; those small villages of stores separate from others but united between themselves.

What flourished instead were the larger establishments that took up a great deal of land and could act as an anchor for smaller stores to clump around. For all the people that live in the district, the landmark near where they live plays a large part in their social identity. Whether they are a "Station boy" or "Track girl" often matter more than what your culture or creed is.

The gangs of the Crossroads are far more territorial than elsewhere in the city and rarely do gangs quarrel and fight over land. Those at the gardens stay near the gardens and those at the station stay near the station. These great

landmarks have defined these gangs as much as it has the district, and they are very protective of it. The silver lining to this territoriality is that the gangs are all known to the constabulary and many work with the police to clear up incidents in their territory, barring if it has anything to do with them.

Perhaps the greatest of these landmarks, greater even than the train station are the two gardens: the botanical and zoological gardens. While there are a few parks spread out across the city, the gardens give the urban city dwellers a taste of what the wilderness is. Plants and animals from across the world can be found here, and some say that if you stand at the exact centre of each garden that the sounds, smells and sights of the city disappear, giving the sensation of truly being in the wilderness.

The Crossroads is a district of both travel and destination, of past and present, of wilderness and civilisation, of escape and escapism, of openness and of crowdedness. It's a confusing and awkward mess and that's why the people of Middelburg love it.

BLOOD ON THE STREETS



A smart footman never goes out on a job unprepared. A smarter footman, however, knows that you can never be prepared for every eventuality. There will come a time, like it or not, where you will come face to face with an obstacle or situation for which you did not bring along to correct, and precharged, array. You will have to design one from scratch, most likely in a tense and time-sensitive moment.

When such a situation arises, and it will eventually, you will need blood. Raw energy is too slow and orichalcum is too expensive. You can always open a vein right then and there to get the blood needed, but you'll suffer a Wound for that. Or you could have opened a vein before the mission and are carrying the blood in a runically controlled vial/pouch for just such an occasion.

However, you can always just buy it. The official Middelburg bloodbank do offer good rates, but they keep a record of every buyer, so that might be a last resort. However, for every other seller, you will first need to know them. Whether it is a back alley dealer or a private consortium seller, you first need to find them before you can buy from them. This is where a good network of Contacts will come in handy, as your Contacts can either help you find a seller, or better yet they can even be your blood dealer.



CONSTABULARY

The Crossroads Constabulary is unique in Middelburg in that, barring the Constabulary Headquarters of course, it is the largest in the city and evolved a particular method of solving crime: swiftly and with style. You see, the Crossroads Constabulary are the horselords of the Middelburg constables and are more often seen on horse than on foot.

The large open areas of the Crossroads of yesteryear gave the constabulary the opportunity to expand much more than would ordinarily be possible. With all this real estate and little to do on it, the Crossroads Constabulary used it as a storage space for those things that were seldom used. Among these were horses and carriages, and quickly the great storage space became a paddock and ad hoc stable. Other constabularies across the city decided to capitalise on this idea and stored their horses and carriages here as well.

For an earnest while, it seemed that the Crossroads Constabulary would turn into a horse farm, simply tending to other constabularies' horses while they did the actual work. That is until, a certain captain of the constabulary had a cunning plan. Captain Alfonse, an immigrant from Valkryk was a practical man at heart. Born the son of an undertaker, he was never much one to keep things that were not of use, and to him, these horses and carriages were doing nothing but costing him money.

So he put them to use. The Crossroads is sparsely populated and with long, winding streets that make even the fittest men desperate for breath upon reaching the end. More than once, a criminal has gotten away simply because the constables could not travel quickly across the district to the scene of the crime. So Captain Alfonse gave his men the dozens of horses and sent them back to the streets. If he had to take care of the horses, they may as well pay for their stay.

And so the Crossroads Constabulary came to be known by their mounted constables. There are many constabularies which can only dream

of having mounted divisions, but with land at a premium in the city and the government unwilling to pay for paddock when they can have rent and taxes, the dream will only stay a dream. In the Crossroads, however, the constables have gone one further again.

Taking their inspiration from Captain Alfonse, now long since passed, the constables have put their carriages to use beyond ferrying important visitors and prisoners to and fro. Their armoured carriages have been likened to those used by the military. Clad in metal from the roof to the wheels, with ports for pistols and muskets on every side, the armoured carriages even sport a small cannon on its roof.

If you want them to obey you, you must first learn how to command them.

~Prince Nikolas Michelakos

These armoured carriages are so heavy that they require a specially designed array to lessen the effect of gravity on the carriages, and yet they still need to be pulled by six horses each. These horses are themselves armoured and their horns covered in long, bronze spikes, making the entire ensemble of carriage and horses a living, breathing weapon to be used against all who would stand in its way. Thankfully the armoured carriages have only had to be used a handful of times in the twenty years that they have existed, but each time the bloodbath was a gruesome sight to behold.

With the constabulary's focus on speed, it should come as no surprise that the constables have made an arrangement with the train operators to allow special access for the constables in return for extra patrols at the station and on the trains. With this arrangement, the Crossroads constables, and their horses, can quickly travel across the city, and beyond, to where a good cavalry charge is needed by other constabularies.

MIDDELBURG CENTRAL TRAIN STATION

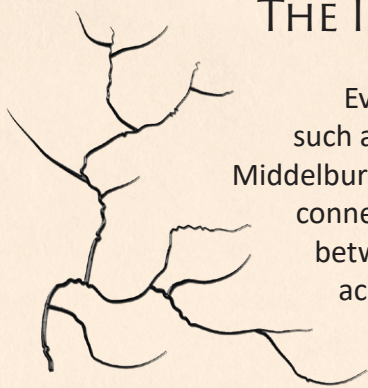
The invention of the train engine only a couple of centuries ago was more than just a new toy for old boys to play with, more than just a new way to cart goods across large distances, more than a means to connect people faster and more efficient than before. It was the beginning of a new age. It was a new way to look at the world. It was the future.

And it all started with the simplest of contraptions: using an array to push a wheel. It was so simple that to this day, scholars marvel at the mere fact that we humans could have overlooked such an elementary way of using the arrays. By all right, we should have had trains two millennia ago rather than two centuries. Alas the human mind works in mysterious ways, and every scholar is grateful for the train engine, no matter how long it took to arrive.

The train engine is a very simple machine and both the steam engines of old or the new electric train engines and tramcars work on the same principle. Inside the engine compartment, on either wall, sits a golden toothed gear (because gold does not corrode) that is connected to a wheel that will push the engine along. Next to this gear would be a series of arrays, each pointing at where the teeth of the gear will rotate along its axis, and this array simply says Push-Gold. That is all there is to it. The arrays push the gears, the gears rotate and so rotate the wheels of the engine and the engine moves forward.

In steam engines, the Push-Gold arrays would be powered by receiving energy sent from arrays in the boiler. The arrays in the boiler, sitting inside a vast tank of boiling water, would take that energy and send it to the arrays pushing the gears. The modern electric engines, however, use the new battery arrays that have been developed, created and charged by the power relay stations to simply send the energy to the Push-Gold arrays at a pull of a lever.


THE IRON VEINS



Every road in Alfresia leads to Middelburg. It's an inevitability with such a small island and such an ancient city. But just as all roads lead to Middelburg, so does the grand city touch every town and hamlet. Dirt tracks connect hamlets to villages; cobbled roads connect villages to towns; and between all the larger towns and cities lies the railroad network, spanning across the island like great iron veins with its beating heart resting in Middelburg.

They say that with all the trains and carriages on the island, it is possible to reach even the most far flung village and hamlet from Middelburg within four days, and the last stop along the rail network within one day. This means that you can travel from Middelburg all the way down to Windburg, all the way to Strandfontein in the east, up to Rosedaal and then back to Middelburg all within four days.

What this means for your game is that you can easily incorporate other parts of Alfresia into your adventures and campaigns without the distances involved interrupting the flow of your game. You can incorporate the rail network and the trains themselves into your adventures in order to get your players used to the concept of travelling in and out of the city. As the city becomes more dangerous, the players could use this as an opportunity to get a safehouse outside the city.



The early train engines only had one powered driving wheel on each side of the engine, with unpowered leading and trailing wheels for balance and support. These old fashioned metal beasts can still sometimes be found in the rural areas and hinterlands of the continent, most often pulling trains cars between small and unimportant villages and towns. The few remaining first generation train engines are often called Owls because of their wizened appearance and the two large driving wheels that look like the eyes of an owl.

The modern train engines, both steam and electric, can have up to six or even eight driving wheels on each side of the engine, each one being driven by its own set of arrays and each side's wheels connected to one another to spread that driving force equally between them all. The new engines are powerful enough to even pull a fully laden warship out of the water, a task the navy requires from the city's transport minister more than he would like.

The most important job for any train is of course carrying passengers, and the modern train is exceedingly apt at it. The largest train engines can pull an astonishing eight cars with more than a hundred passengers and make the journey from Middelburg to Windburg on the southern tip of the island in little more than a day. The new electric tramcars, while not as powerful as the train engines, are far quicker and can zip around the great City Array in less than an hour.

The Middelburg Central Train Station is where all of this come together. While the tramcars run on their own accord around the city, they all do make a stop at the Station so that people coming into Middelburg by train can hop onto a tramcar and be at their destination in no time. The Station also houses three train lines, one for each northern, western and eastern route, as well as turntables to move the train engines around. With all of these it is possible to travel from Rosedaal in the north of the island to Windburg in the south in only a few days, and even have a chance to look around Middelburg in between.

While the train engine itself is a marvel and a testament to the wonder of humanity, it is also the technology it spawned which have made man triumph over the elements. The same wheel mechanism found in train engines can be found in ship paddle engines and were also the first attempt to create airships. While the latter didn't eventuate as expected, the engine mechanism has found other purposes, such as in construction that looks ready to pave the way for a more industrious future.

PRINSLOO RACING CIRCUIT

They say there is nothing quite like a day at the races, especially during the grand tournaments. The pomp, the ceremony, the fashion, and of course who can forget all the betting. Horse racing truly is a culture on its own, one where people join it upon entering the circuit and leave it to resume their normal lives. It is a culture of excitement, of enticement and of an afternoon's disengagement from a harsh reality.

The circuit is a holdover from the old Rimien circus that found its way to Alfresia via the Empire. In the olden days during the golden age of Rimie, the circus was one of the preeminent entertainment venues, used for all sorts of horse racing, chariot racing, festival performances and even executions. As the Dayitic Empire of Man grew and absorbed Rimie, it appropriated this cultural event and spread it across the empire. By the time of the Heavenly Empire of Man, the circus, now named the circuit, had found its way to Alfresia.

The Alfresians have always had a love hate relationship with the circuits, wherever in Alfresia they were constructed. One the one hand, everyone enjoyed the spectacle of racing and none could argue against the use of the circuits for festivals, both secular and religious. The circuits, it must be said, have always brought joy to everyone who visited.

The problem, however for the morally upright, has been the gambling and corruption that has always been associated with the races. Whenever there is a competition, men will bet on who will win, and the horse races are no exception. The Prinsloo Racing Circuit have never made a secret of the fact that they make most of their earnings through the losses of gamblers. Both Prodigalist and Progenitorist priests often preach against the vice of gambling and the addiction it can become, yet the Prinsloo Racing Circuit can seat 25,000 and is rarely not sold out.

While gambling may be a, mostly, victimless crime, corruption is a cancer at the heart of any institution and one that is nigh impossible to stamp out. Just as you will find gambling wherever you find competition, you will also find corruption there, as many will simply pay to have their best horse win rather than have a fair contest. Every year another patron of a racer is outed as having bribed, blackmailed or extorted someone to put the odds in their favour, and while they may be ostracised from the community, the corruption never seems to end.

While there are issues that plague the circuits, one can only marvel at the power their entertainment has over the masses. The Prinsloo Racing Circuit alone boasts a half dozen tourneys where teams of horse riders race for a position in the final leg of each tournament. The tourney year ends with the Grand Fresian Equestrian League Championship, where the best riders from the four Fresian nations see which nation reigns supreme. The Championship had an aura of its own that infects the city so that the final race always sees a week of celebrations in the city.

But not only horses are raced at Prinsloo. Chariots, while quite a niche sport in this day and age, can still draw the crowds, and hounds are a common sight on the tracks in between horse tournaments, but perhaps the most fascinating races are the sailing races. With clever use of arrays, the track on the Circuit can be flooded so that small vessels can have their

own day in the spotlight. It is quite the treat, many say, to be able to surround a ship race with seating on all sides.

The title of strangest race must go to the Annual Locomotive Challenge. One per year, railroad tracks are laid down in the Circuit and any train engine can challenge the reigning champion. It is a contest sponsored both by the University and the Merchant League in order to foster greater technological development, but many see it as simply another type of excitement. Whatever the case may be, the Flying Gitic has been undefeated for five years now and its winning streak looks to continue.

MIDDELBURG ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS

The palace of the Baron of Middelburg and the wilderness in the heart of the city. The Middelburg Zoological Gardens is the last gift the old Archduke and the nobility gave the people of Alfresia and contains the last living noble on the island. All agree that it is a place of curiosity and wonder, and a supreme joy to visit.

When the late Archduke made his landmark and momentous decision to dismantle the nobility and aristocracy in favour of a senate under his sole command, he made a lot of enemies. He knew that he had to get the peasants and bourgeoisie on his side in order to stave off a potential civil war with the nobles. One of his master plans was to appropriate all the various exotic animals held by the old nobility in their zoological gardens and put them together in one grand garden that anyone could visit.

His plan worked and the people loved him for it. The peasants were never allowed into the nobles' private zoological gardens and for them to see all these majestic beasts from every continent was as majestic and miraculous as if Bür himself had descended from the heavens. They were on his side and the nobility knew now they could not win. It was because of



LIVING LARGE

RIUSDYR			
SKILL	LEVEL	SKILL	LEVEL
Athletics	20-60	Intuition	15-50
Broad-Craft	10-30	Investigate	10-50
Burglary	10-40	Logic	10-30
Constitution	100-200	Luck	50-80
Deceive	10-30	Might	100-200
Diplomacy	10-40	Perception	40-110
Drive	00-20	Shoot	15-60
Fight	20-80	Stealth	00-15
Fine-Craft	00-10	Wealth	10-50
Intimidate	80-200	Will	15-60
SPECIALISATIONS:			
FIGHT: SMASH = 60 - 150			
NATURAL ARMOUR: 10 AMOUR TO ALL HIT LOCATIONS			

There are two sapient species currently living in the world and you don't always just have to play as one of these. Sure, being a human makes things easier, but sometimes you just want to be large and in charge, and let those inhibitions go. For those times, you can always play as an Ogre.

The Ogres, or RiUSDyr if you are feeling formal are true thinking, sapient and (technically speaking) reasoning creatures and so you can play as them just as you can a human. The skill box here shows the Skill Levels at which Ogres start the game and their own max Skill Caps. Ogres even start a Skill Specialisation, which if taken along with all its other Skill Levels makes the Ogres nearly unstoppable in terms of physical capabilities.

However, they are still Ogres, which makes them about as smart as a 4 year old, unable to properly speak and can't understand the runes. They are also 3-4 metres tall on average and you can't hide them, so in a city like Middelburg, you can't quite be stealthy as an Ogre. But if you are going into the countryside, you could do much worse than playing a game as an Ogre.

acts like these that the Archduke is so fondly remembered.

The crown jewel of the zoological garden is the Baron of Middelburg and his family. The late Archduke had a sly, humorous streak and could not help himself when he saw that he had the upper hand against the now deposed nobility. To make his point clear that he was the sole ruler of Alfresia and that the old aristocracy simply had to make peace with it, he restored one noble title: the Baron of Middelburg; although the old aristocracy would never get near it.

In the mountainous hinterlands in the west of the island lies the last great ogre reservation in Alfresia. Here the Inhuman beasts had been gathered to keep them safe and to keep humans safe from them. The Archduke sent men to gather to him one family unit of ogres to bring to the zoological gardens. The soldiers brought back a matriarch and her family, and the Archduke promptly named the eldest male in the group the new Baron of Middelburg.

The ogres themselves, and their descendents today, understand little of the politics of the land. They are matriarchal species and thus male rule is utterly alien to them, and philosophers have theorised they are only as intelligent as a four year old human, thus little concerns them beyond primal urges and instinct. The people of Middelburg, however, have grown to love their noble family and the ogres are the grandest exhibit in the gardens.

The ogres are so well loved that the last grand mayor that attempted to remove them from the gardens and finally destroy the last noble title on the island found himself without a head before that night was over.

The gargantuan ogres are not the sole attraction in the gardens, however, and the managers of the garden are always on the lookout for the most extravagant and exotic animals they can find. The better the animal, the more people will come and the more profit



they will make. At the zoological gardens you can find camels from west across the ridgebacks to elephants from Uttosia; multicoloured birds from the southern island archipelagos to the strange looking primates from the southern continent.

Animals rarely last long in captivity and thus nearly every decade one can see a whole different zoological garden. While it is born out of the tragedy of dying animals, this continual change of animals makes for a continued interest in the gardens, without which it would most likely not survive.

URADEL BOTANICAL GARDENS

The brother in all respects to the zoological garden. Where the zoological garden houses magnificent and exotic animals, the botanical garden houses magnificent and exotic plants. Where the zoological garden represents the wild and untameable wilderness, the botanical garden represents civilisation's gentle and caressing touch to that wilderness. Where the zoological garden represents the late Archduke's triumph over the nobility, the botanical garden represents his gracious hand extending in friendship.

The old Archduke may have been a domineering and stubborn leader, but he was also a shrewd politician. With the creation of the Middelburg Zoological Gardens, he had won his battle of politics with the old aristocracy by getting the masses on his side, but he knew the previous nobility could be a lethal thorn in his side for the rest of his life if he wasn't careful.

To this end he extended an olive branch to the old aristocracy, to those dukes, graves and barons that he deprived of their ancient and hereditary titles. He wanted to show that they were still valued by Alfresia and still valuable to the island. They may have lost their titles but their wealth and influence remained. If they would join with the Archduke, become part of

his new, more democratic nation, they could still guide and determine its future.

To show the depths of his sincerity, the Archduke ordered the construction of the Uradel Botanical Gardens. Uradel is the Dayitic word for "ancient nobility" and the name itself was only the beginning. The entire botanical gardens were designed to glorify and remember the old nobility and all they had done for Alfresia. It was the Archduke's way to show that all of Middelburg would see and remember who and what they were.


What is a garden other than the wilderness tamed by civilisation's hand?

~Senator Walter Du Preez

Each part of the botanical gardens is dedicated to one of the old noble titles and the greater the title was, the larger a section of the garden is dedicated to it. From the four great dukes of the Islands to each individual baron and freiherr, every noble family's coat of arms is displayed along with its own arrangement of plants and flowers as specified by the family and their descendants. Those descendants are still allowed to give input and influence what their own little plot in the garden should look like. It is often a mark of pride among the descendants of the old aristocracy to have a magnificent familial garden.

At its broadest, the garden is divided into four, to symbolise the four old duchies of Alfresia: Windburg in the south, Rosedaal in the North, Zeemuur in the east and of course Middelburg in the west. Each of these four areas have statues raised to honour their family and title's historic or legendary founders and each have the grandest gardens. The only family that can still lay claim to a founder of their old noble title is the van Winburg family and the Patriarch, the so called Third Duke, ensures that all know the greatness of his family's past.

Contrary to popular belief, the van Rosedaal family of the Merchant League has no relation to old Duchy of Rosedaal or the noble van Rosedaal



family now extinct. They simply share a common last name and are from the same city, although that hasn't stopped them from taking advantage of this confusion and using it to their advantage.

Within the four greater divisions of the gardens, each area is further and further divided into smaller sections, first for each margrave, landgrave and burgrave and then onto the barons and freiherrs with their small niches and alcoves. Each of these divisions are set as to the allegiances of the old nobility and while it does a fantastic job at showing future generations to layout of the politics of the aristocracy, it is still a sore point of contention for those descendants of the nobility who are constantly reminded that their ancestors bowed to their fellow countrymen.

It is a shame that such a place of peace and tranquillity must be marred with the politics of the rich and powerful, but it is exactly for that purpose that the gardens were created and there is little chance such politics will ever be divorced from it.

PARK WEST

◆ RAINBOW POINT

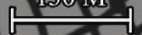
◆ TEMPLE OF THE COSMOS

PRELLER SQUARE ◆

◆ CASABLANCA THEATRE

◆ *LES SECRETS DE GENEVIÈVE*

130 M



PARK WEST



The four “corners” of Middelburg’s City Array provide a fascinating insight into the soul of the city. They each represent the divide between the rich (on the eastern side of the Tenne River) and the poor (on the western side), and they each represent a significant part of what makes Middelburg work: Wealth from Nieuton, Labour from Oldtown, Trade from the Docks and Art from Park West, all centred around Governance from the Political District.

In fact, each corner serves to aid and suppress its opposing corner by working with its two neighbouring corners. The labour from Oldtown is used at the Docks to aid in the trade of the city, yet the money from this trade goes into the pockets of Nieuton or the theatres and brothers of Park West. The artists from Park West perform for the patronage of the wealthy in Nieuton, yet they will never be allowed in such society, rather they come from the poor in Oldtown or the travellers left behind in the Docks.

The struggle between the poor and the wealthy, between the upper and lower classes, between those who employ and those who are employed in the philosophy of the four “corners” of Middelburg’s City Array just as they are in the real lives of the citizens in this great metropolis.

This section will look only at one of these “corners”, one that is itself yet another microcosm of this grand struggle of humanity. In Park West this struggle of classes, wealth, influence and power is not only played out daily in its streets, but also on stages in its theatres and in the songs of poets in its squares. Park West in the district of art and as wise men often say: “art imitates life”. The actors and poets of Park West capture all the joy, the anguish, the passion and the fervour in the city and put it on display for all to see.

Unfortunately, not all are happy to see it. There has always been a social stain on Park West and the bohemian lifestyles of many in the district have done little to help in this regard. The district often foments dissidence and disobedience and while many a great poem stirred the hearts of Middelburg’s defenders during the War of Independence, the rich and powerful have little need of the constant unrest sparked in this district. The constables are a regular, if unwelcome sight, in these parts.

Park West gained its identity from a single event that has influenced the district ever since. Four centuries ago the Delkan Holy Wars officially came to an end and it left a devastated land and people in its wake. Over the

century that war raged between Neoists and Progenitors, many Delkans fled the area, traveling the Cael lands in the north east or to the Shield Maidens and Imperial Lands in the south east. When the Holy Wars finally came to an end, many Delkans returned home. Many, however, did not.

These became known as the Delkan Travellers. Over time and many generations they lost nearly all traces of the Delkan heritage as they interbred with the local populations of whichever land they happened to be travelling through, and they took in any outcast and vagabond that needed a warm belly and a tent over his head. Even their culture changed, so that century after the Delkan Holy Wars ended, they were not even Delkan in spirit, let alone blood. Yet they were always known as the Delkan Travellers.

It must be said that they may be the most reviled people in all of Jytoh. In the five centuries they have existed, they have been forcibly and legally ejected from every nation one of their "collectives" wandered into. To be a Traveller is to be seen as a thief, a pickpocket, a swindler, a womaniser, a liar, a heretic, a confidence man, a swindler and many more besides. Unfortunately for the Travellers, there is a truth to the stereotype. Where the Travellers go, thefts and petty crimes follow in their wake.

It was around three centuries ago when a collective of these Travellers were ejected from the continental Fresian lands and, with nowhere else to go, came to Alfresia. When news hit the people of Alfresia that Travellers had come to the island, there was uproar among the nobles. No duke, grave, or baron wanted these sorts of people near their towns and villages, yet here they were with nowhere else to go. So the nobles decided to put it in the most fortified and well protected place on the island: Middelburg.

But not inside the city, of course, that would be madness. No, a small village was erected by the Travellers just outside the edge of the City Array, back when that was the boundary of the entire city.

The collective was never expelled from the island, yet they disappeared all the same. They were subsumed into the Alfresian culture, yet their own unique cultural traits are still found in Park West. This is because ever since they started their small village, all those of "alternative" lifestyles, all the artists and poets, all the actors eventually found their way here where they would be accepted.

And so it remains to this day. The Travellers may have gone, but their spirit of alternativity, of anti-authoritarianism, of petty theft and fraud, and of stories and songs still remain in the bohemians who occupy the district today.


LES SECRETS DE GENEVIÈVE

Fashion for the people of Jytoh is a slow process. With no instantaneous means of communication across the world, it can take months if not years for a new fashion trend to make its way from one side of the continent to the other. When travelling abroad, it is quite possible to literally see last year's fashion around you touted as new and vogue.

As a centre of trade, Middelburg receives new fashions from across the world in a hodgepodge custom, some arriving the week after being introduced in their native country while others can take decades to filter through nations and cultures before arriving in Alfresia. Once they arrive, they blend with all the hundreds of fashions in the city to create something truly unique to Middelburg.

They say the more wealthy you become, the more you pay attention to the trends of fashion and with more and more people attempting to climb the social ladder of influence and wealth, fashion is becoming more and more important as the years roll by.

A new trend in fashion appeared in Nacitania little over a decade ago and it took less than a month to arrive in Middelburg and set up



shop. It is a trend that specialises in a very small and specific niche and yet the lone store in Middelburg that sells this brand of fashion had never wanted for customers. In fact, it does not even need to advertise its presence or goods; word of mouth brings in more customers than it could hope for.

Les Secrets De Geneviève is Nacitanian for Geneviève's Secrets and this store specialises in fine fabrics of the feminine persuasion. You will never hear it said any way else in polite company for the same reason that Geneviève's is not located in Nieuton despite the wealthy being most of its clientele: it is far too risqué. In impolite company they put it more plainly: Geneviève's sells expensive and fashionable ladies' undergarments.

The opulent and fashionable ladies in Middelburg demand opulent and fashionable delicacies and that is precisely what Geneviève's aim to supply. As such it is one of the few stores in Park West which do not actively cater to the people of its own district. The bohemians and artists in Park West often are simply not wealthy enough to afford what Geneviève's sells, but unfortunately for Geneviève's it is stuck in this district.

The reason for this is that while the opulent and fashionable ladies in Middelburg demand opulent and fashionable delicacies, they do not want to be seen buying these opulent and fashionable delicacies. Sexual exhibitionism is still, after all, a moral and societal sin and no good lady wants to be known as that sort of lady. So while they want what Geneviève's sells, they do not actually want Geneviève's itself.

It is perhaps a sad case of irony that Geneviève's is located in the one district that accepts it, the one district that is the least sexually repressed and the most liberal and yet Geneviève's do not embrace these people and their attitudes simply because they are too poor for the store. The store is like an island of capitalism in a sea of anti-authoritarianism, the beacon of order in the darkness of chaos.

And yet, the people of Park West paradoxically do not resent Geneviève's at all. They see it as a mark of pride that a store from their bohemian district has become so successful. There is also that hopeful undercurrent among the people here that should they make it in the city then one day they too can afford to enter Geneviève's with their heads held high. They may hate the bourgeoisie capitalists, but envy is as responsible for this hate as anger is.

CASABLANCA THEATRE

There is nothing like a performance at the theatre. Whether it is a comedy or tragedy, romance or war, with or without music, a cast of dozens or just one, as soon as the curtain starts to rise, there is a magic in the air that can transport you across time and space to a place of imagination. It is excitement, it is fascination, it is escapism. In the grim reality of Middelburg, a few hours escapism can be worth more than a person's weight in orichalcum.

There are more than enough theatres in Middelburg to cater to everyone's tastes and they come in all shapes and sizes. There are the opulent opera houses in Nieuton, the formulaic and politically correct theatres in the Political District and its surroundings, the jester's houses in the Docks and Oldtown and even a classical open air theatre along the coast road in the style of the Tolians.

The Casablanca is not the largest, nor grandest, not oldest, nor most respected, nor vaunted theatre in Middelburg. While it enjoys its fair share of satires, it is not the most well known satirical theatre. It is not even the theatre that has seen the most constable activity. When seen on paper, there is nothing about the Casablanca that makes it stand out from the rest. By all rights, it should be a middling theatre with average drawing meagre crowds.

And yet, it is the most popular theatre in the District and it all comes down to one reason: no

play or show may be performed twice in the Casablanca. Each performance must be unique and as much as the crowds might shout for a second night of a show, the owners of the Casablanca would never allow it. It would go against the spirit of the theatre.

This spirit comes from the ancient Tolian theatres that the Delkan Travellers appropriated on their journeys across the continent. With no fixed home or land, there was always another hill to walk up, another stream to cross and another horizon to see. With every journey came new stories to tell until the old stories simply faded away. Some believe this to be the cause for the Travellers losing their Delkan roots and refusing to put new roots down, until they reached Middelburg of course.

With this rule against repetitive performances, it takes a lot of creativity and ingenuity to put forth a show each night. Seven new shows a week, every week and yet the owners of the Casablanca rarely need to go out of their way to find playwrights. This is because many a playwright and producer uses the Casablanca as a testbed for their novel

ideas. There is very little risk in putting up a performance here that will be forgotten within a week should it do terribly. Yet if it does well, then the playwrights can take it to more prestigious theatres across the city.

Many of Middelburg's greatest playwrights produced their first performance in the Casablanca and most of these came from Park West itself, homegrown boy having made it in the big city. Some were privileged enough to have their performances even taken off shore. Unfortunately, very few have returned. The allure of money is far more powerful than the nostalgia of a bohemian lifestyle.

RAINBOW POINT

"The last free city in the world", or so the locals claim. Rainbow Point, otherwise known as the People's Free Democratic Republic of the Rainbow, is a block of communal tenements in Park West and a self-proclaimed sovereign state. Its motto is "Freedom, Liberty, Autonomy" and that suspicious repetition should give any visitor




A FACE IN THE CROWD

In an age before forensic science, finding criminals is a hard job. If you aren't caught in the act, seen by witnesses, betrayed by comrades or have a too-obvious motive, you will get away scot free of most crimes. This is why being a footman has become such a lucrative career. But being a footman is just playing the odds; you know that you most likely won't be caught on your assignments, but eventually the odds add up and then the constables are out looking for you.

It is hard to get caught, but once the constables know you committed a crime (or at least believe you did), it is easier to climb a ladder to the heavens than to go about your business as normal. Wanted sketches will be posted wherever the constables can find room and your description and nature of the crime will be passed from one constable to the next, until the whole city's police force has heard of you.

At times like these, and especially when the constables are literally chasing you, the best thing to do is to just wait it out. Eventually the constables will find someone else to chase and given enough time you can find most wanted sketches and tear them down. So the best thing for you to do is to head to the "anti-establishment" areas such as Park West and Oldtown and start getting friendly with the locals. They won't sell out one of their own and they will do what they can to hide you.



to this neck of the woods more than enough reason to be cautious.

Rainbow Point is a commune in a very traditional sense. It is a group of connected, tenement buildings, built by the bohemians, facing inwards toward a set of courtyards. Inside this conglomeration of buildings, Middelburgian laws cease to exist and only the rules set forth by the People's Committee of Rainbow Point hold sway. Even the constabulary have given up attempting to enforce the city's laws here. As long as the bohemians keep their business inside the tenements, the constables care little for what transpires inside.

The laws of the People's Democratic Republic of Rainbow Point as set forth by the People's Committee consist of three very simple rules: there is no authority, there are no possessions, and there is no currency.

Inside the Rainbow Point commune, there is government or leaders, no overseers or any real sense of authority. Everyone is equal and that is the only way it will ever be. No one is allowed to be "above" any other, no hierarchy is allowed. Even the smallest child has a vote in whatever the commune decides to do. The closest they come to any traditional form of leadership is the People's Committee, a council of eight people that guides the voting process of the commune and rotates on a fortnightly schedule. No person is allowed on the Committee twice in one year.

As every decision has to be made by a vote cast by each member of the commune, very few decisions are actually made within this fortnight period and many a vote has taken months to complete. However, the people here say the process protects them from the tyranny of oppression and they would simply have it no other way.

There are no possessions inside Rainbow Point. Of course there are many objects, many items, many "things" inside Rainbow Point, there just aren't any possessions. Along with no authority, no resident of Rainbow Point is allowed to own anything. It is the commune

which owns everything inside it and thus what belongs to one person belongs to everyone. Communal ownership does make things a bit tricky, as clothing and a bed is often taken and misplaced quicker than you can blink. There has been more than one scuffle that has broken out about ownership, but the commune is very strict about this: any claim of ownership means exile.

No authority, no possessions, no currency. While no one inside the commune would have need of currency between themselves as there are no possessions, currency itself is forbidden inside the commune. No resident is allowed to bring any inside and neither can any visitor or guest. The commune operates on a strict barter system with the outside world. They believe money is a tool used by authority to enslave and subdue the masses. Looking at the Merchant League, one may be willing to forgive this zealous outlook on life.

It should be of no surprise that this classless, stateless, currency-less, bohemian commune is looked down upon as degenerate by the outside world. But there is a genuine concern for the moral fibre, what little there is, of Middelburg. When the commune was created shortly after the War of Independence, many tried to prevent its construction when they heard its name. There is only one religion which takes the colours of the rainbow and it is as reviled in eastern Jytoh as anything can be.

Completeness. The religion that sprung up like a weed a thousand years ago and refuses to die. It too preaches communalism, it too speaks of the virtues of a classless, stateless, possessionless society where all are equal and none is held above another. The similarities between the religion of the west and the commune here in the east are unmistakeable, yet the commune denies any connection, although their loathing of authority might well mean this denial is a spiteful lie.

Should Completeness gain a proper foothold in Alfresia, Middelburg would be changed forever. There is no denying that. The

government, the religions, the economy, the very people would be unrecognisable and this is what many fear. However, every attempt to relocate the commune's people has been met with violent revolt and the authority fears that the entirety of Park West might rise up against them should they push too hard.

TEMPLE OF THE COSMOS

Organised religion is, of course, a tool for the rich and powerful to oppress the masses. There can be no other reason for its existence. That is why the good, honest folk of Park West created their own temple for the spiritually inclined among its people. It is a temple dedicated to the cosmos, to all living things so that those who are not religious, but are spiritual have a place to meditate, contemplate and ruminate.

There are no priests or priestesses at this temple. There is no hierarchy like those imposed by the patriarchal and matriarchal religions of the land. Here people are free to do as they like, interpret their spirituality as they like and teach others as they like. Here all are equal in the eyes of the gods, if they exist and if you choose to believe in them of course. There are only the Caretakers who clean and maintain the temple and "guide" the "practitioners" in their spiritual journey.

As a temple to the cosmos and everything in it, all peoples of all faiths and creeds are welcome inside, unlike the conformist beliefs of the organised religions who divide and split people apart based on such intrinsic concepts such as ideas. While people of other faiths are allowed to worship here, they must leave their conformist books and scriptures and thinking behind. The temple of the cosmos is a sanctuary of freedom, where everyone must come to their own conclusions.

Or at least, that is what people are told. This populist and placating rhetoric is quite popular with the bohemians of Park West as their anti-authoritarian culture includes organised religion


alongside politics as something to oppose. Just as they see the politicians and military as infringing upon their physical freedoms, they feel that organised religion infringes upon their spiritual, mental and social freedom. They are the square pegs in the round holes of civilised society.

Being able to be of any faith, or any combination of faiths at once, is a liberating experience, although there is more than enough criticism of this temple to go around. The chief of which is that this temple is merely the home of the spiritually lazy. Religion, by its very definition, requires duty, sacrifice and effort. Spirituality without dogma requires no thought or effort other than what one puts into it. With the public and historic opinion of the people of Park West, this is seen as next to nothing and only as yet another symptom of the moral decay and degeneracy of the district.

Another key aspect of religion is having a teacher. Whether this be a priest, a shaman or a seer, a religious community has an expert in their midst to teach them right from wrong and the context behind the dogma in scripture. The Caretakers of the temple of the cosmos are nothing like this. They are also merely devotees of temple, giving their own opinion on the spirituality of others. With the temple's encouragement of individuality in spirituality, this opinion may matter very little.

There is, however, one organised religion which seems to be in favour of the temple, at least in principle. The Fellowship of Runism has always been called the religion for atheists as it does not believe in any god. It also favours the individual intellectual pursuit of its adherents. One can clearly see the similarities with the temple of the cosmos. However, the key difference is that Runism encourages intellectually first and individuality second, while the temple of the cosmos encourages only the latter.

There has been a lot of movement in adherents between the two faiths, with Runists who grow weary of the intellectual elitism coming to the temple of the cosmos, while the



bohemians who crave at least some structure in their lives leaving for the Fellowship.

PRELLER SQUARE

An artist is nothing without an audience. A song has no music if there's no one to hear it. A poem has no words if there's no one to read. A jester is not funny if there's no one to laugh at him. For some, finding an audience is simple. Actors have the theatre, singers and bards have the stage and any tavern and public house that would have them, and even priests and preachers have the pulpit.

For others, finding an audience can often be a more difficult endeavour than creating their art. The poet and the author must hope a publisher enjoys their work enough to sell it to the world. The painter and the sculptor must hope a patron enjoys their work enough to commission more pieces. The jester must hope his reputation spreads so that the masses come see his foolery and throw a few coins in his direction.

With more artists per square kilometre than anywhere else in the grand city, the people of Park West understand the plight of the poor artist. When the current Alderman of the district was sworn into office nearly three decades ago, his first order of business was to clear every square in the district of its stalls, hawkers and layabouts. No sooner had his words rung out then there were riots on the streets. The people thought he had sold them out to the bourgeoisie and the politicians.

They were quite wrong and it didn't take very long for the riots to turn into celebrations. The Alderman had ordered the squares of the district cleared in order to give any fledgling artist the greatest stage they could desire: the stage of the world. Any artist who wished it could perform on the squares of the district without need for approval or appointment, and any person no matter their class or station could be the artist's audience and give the artist whatever they deemed he was worthy.

The idea was unheard of in Middelburg. Of course there had always been street performers in the city, peddling and begging on street corners for any coin they could, but this had always been frowned upon by polite society and the constables always arrived sooner or later to shoo these performers away. But to have an Alderman, a politician of good standing, to sanction such public performances caused quite the scandal. It was seen as an endorsement by the city of public degeneracy.

The bohemians of Park West, however, loved the Alderman for his plans, even though it took a few years for them to become accustomed to it. Few artists performed in the squares in the early years, too cautious of what could happen when an unbridled crowd disliked their art, but soon both artist and audience came around to this new style of performing and these days the public squares of Park West are as crowded as a bazaar every day of the week.

Preller Square is the largest public square in Park West and has gained itself the reputation of being the premier stage of the streets. Only the bravest or most foolish of artists come here to perform because, on a good day, the more than three thousand souls can squeeze themselves into the square. However, those that do make it here are heroes of the people who can get more money here in a night than in other squares in a month.

Preller Square has become such a vaunted arena that the Alderman had five wooden stages built around the sides of the square, so five artists can perform at once. It should come as no surprise then that the Preller Square is often called the noisiest place in Middelburg. Some say the noise can be heard clear across the Tenne River. The bohemians care little. For them, such noise is merely an expression of celebration, and life itself is meant to be one long celebration.

WEST LANDS

◆ *THE HERALD DOVECOTE*

◆ *TIMELY CLOCKMAKERS*

◆ *KOBUS' CHEESMAKERS*

◆ CONVENT OF
ST. MILDRED

120 M



WEST LANDS



Not every district in Middelburg is on one of the City Array's loci; not all districts sit on major crossroads; not every district is a well traversed thoroughfare between influential districts; not all have well known landmarks worth visiting; and not every district has a long and rich history filled with heroes, villains and martyrs that bring a sense of community and belonging to the people of that district. In short, not every district is important.

The West Lands is one of those. If it's completely uncreative name was not evidence enough, a quick trip through the district would show that very little thought went into the creation of the district. In fact, no thought at all went into the creation of the district on the part of the city's government. One day they saw a patch of developed land between already existing districts in need of governance and declared it a district in order to provide it an Alderman.

Before it became an official district of the city, the West Lands were precisely what its name states: the lands to the west of the city. Through its unmemorable history, you can see a clear example of the progress of civilisation. Two millennia ago when the City Array was created, the West Lands were unspoilt wooded wilderness. As the centuries advanced, the

woods were demolished to make way for verdant farmland. As the farms and the city prospered, a small rural village sprung up on the boundary of the City Array, where passing folks could buy their produce.

And then, ever so slowly that not a soul noticed, more and more houses sprung up as families grew and people moved into the area. The small village became a town, dirt roads became cobbled streets and neighbourhoods were formed. Soon enough, the farms were pushed further and further west and more land was given over to houses, and before long the people of West Land's neighbours were the people of Royal Willow, Runedal and the Crossroads.

And so it came to pass that West Lands only became an official district with an Alderman. Some of the elderly in the West Lands can still remember when there was even some moral ambiguity about whether the West Lands was part of Middelburg or not, and this was during a time when other districts have had Aldermen for a century or two. The West Lands was simply an oversight on the part of the city's government and this trait of being forgettable seems, ironically enough, to be the West Lands



most prominent trait.

A key reason for this is that there are no grand landmarks or historic and lavish sights to see. There are no scandals behind every corner and no murders and mysteries waiting to be solved. The West Lands just simply exists. People live there, people make a living there, and time resolutely marches forth. It is the consummate “residential district”.

However, while the West Lands may be forgetful, utterly ordinary and quite quaint, there is one thing to be said in its favour. The West Lands is a quiet district; a very quiet district. It is often nicknamed the Silent Lands, both for the fact that nothing of import ever occurs there but also because it is such a calm and quiet area. With no great landmarks and business to battle over, no wealth or lack thereof to steal and burgle and no politicians or military officers to threaten and assassinate, there is simply not that much crime and ruckus in the district.

A quiet city is a peaceful city. A peaceful city is a blessed city.

~Sister Louise Oosthuizen

A nice, quiet district is how its residents like it, but it is also how a certain other type of character likes it as well. Surprisingly enough, the West Lands is one of the most densely populated areas in the city when it comes to the footmen. With their work taking them across the city at all hours of day and night to burgle, mug, assault, kidnap and murder whomever their employer wishes, a lot of footmen seek a bit of quiet that they can retreat to at the end of a day, especially if they have families. Work may pay well, on occasion, but money is nothing if you get killed in your own home because you chose to live in a dangerous area.

CONVENT OF ST. MILDRED

“To protect the innocence of women from the malice of men,” were the words of the

Progenitorist Matriarch fifteen centuries ago when she ordered the construction of the Convent of St. Mildred. The convent was supposed to be tucked away in the woodlands to the west of the city, close enough to be within a day’s ride of food and resources yet far enough away so as to not be a temptation for the wicked soul of man.

Unfortunately for the late Matriarch, St. Mildred’s is now surrounded by the city, swallowed up by its inexorable march across the land. Seclusion now comes from high walls and dutiful sisters, rather than seclusion and privacy.

St. Mildred is often called the last martyr of the Inhuman times and while that title may be disputed, her heroic acts in the face of Inhuman cruelty are not. Two centuries into the Great Purge, St. Mildred found herself on a Caelish vessel heading to the eastern continent. As a sister of the local Order of the White Rose, St. Mildred was intent on spreading the word of the gods to the soldiers, hunters and colonists of these new lands as they struggled in their centuries long war with the remnant populations of Inhumans.

In her first decade on the strange, new continent St. Mildred saw no trace of any of the legendary Froskdyr she had heard so much about. In fact, none had seen any Inhuman in decades, although there were always rumours about a surviving population always over the next hill. Rather than fighting the Inhumans, she saw many battles between the various groups of humans on the new continent, especially between her fair skinned Caels and the swarthy horselords who had named the continent Uttosia.

With no Inhumans to battle, the humans had turned on each other as they always do. As an emissary of the Heavenly Mother, St. Mildred tried her best to calm the tensions between the various factions, but to no avail. She knew that only an external threat could once again unite humanity, so off she went in search of the Inhumans.



A HORSE OF COURSE

HORSE			
SKILL	LEVEL	SKILL	LEVEL
Athletics	135	Investigate	50
Constitution	70	Perception	70
Fight	35	Might	90
Intuition	20	Stealth	10
Intimidate	45	Will	10

They say that a gentleman without a horse is as useful as a prostitute without a lamppost. Be that as it may, for you proles running around Middelburg committing crimes, a horse can become a requirement for your very survival. It takes a tram or train at full steam to outpace a horse at gallop and even then they are fixed to their tracks. If you can get to a horse you

can be across the city before the constables even arrive at your crime scene.

A horse has a quite reduced skill set than what a human or ogre has and this is because a horse can think but it can't reason and so all those skills involved with reason and rationality has been removed. Also note that the Skill Levels here are fixed; horses don't get experience. And of course lastly: you don't control your horse, your GM does. Your horse is an NPC that you direct through your Drive Skill and your GM controls. A poor Drive Skill Check can mean that your horse does something you didn't expect.

How then can speed away from an enemy on horseback? Simple, roll a Drive Skill Check and add the result by which you passed or failed as a bonus or penalty to your horse's Athletics Skill Check.

St. Mildred was a quick study and soon became the best tracker the Caelish forces had, finding evidence of Inhuman villages and movements that no other Cael could. She was the cause of many an Inhuman death, for which she wept, but it accomplished what she set out to do: it united the warring human factions. Until one fateful day.

Ranging far ahead of the Caellish forces, she was lured into an ambush by a group of Froskdyr who had heard of the Mother of Death who could smell Froskdyr blood from across the horizon. When the human forces caught up, they found her high in the air, strung by her arms between two trees over a river. When the men cut her down, they found her throat and mouth packed with soil. For an aquatic species, this was the worst death for a Froskdyr, choked by dry soil and strung far above the water. The Froskdyr had killed their Mother of Death, but it was not long before they joined her, and the human factions began warring amongst themselves again.

The tale of St. Mildred is about the futility to end war and it was in this spirit that the convent in Middelburg was created, to keep women out

of this eternal blood shedding that men so love. The convent is the one peaceful oasis in a world at war, or so the abbesses say.

While the city has surrounded the convent, it remains a cloistered space where none but the sisters are allowed. By Progenitorist dogma, men are not even allowed to look upon the convent, although that is quite impossible in Middelburg today. The small amount of trade that the convent does is done through a small nook in one of the sidewalls of the convent and only done with lay sisters of other Progenitorist orders.

The convent of St. Mildred is completely cut off from the world, but that is how the sisters like it. There has never been a crime committed, a hand raised in anger, or even a curse spoken allowed in all the time the convent has existed. There is no anger, no malice, no sin here. It is the closest to the gods that humanity will ever have, and like the abode of the gods, none who enter ever return to speak of it.



TIMELY CLOCKMAKERS

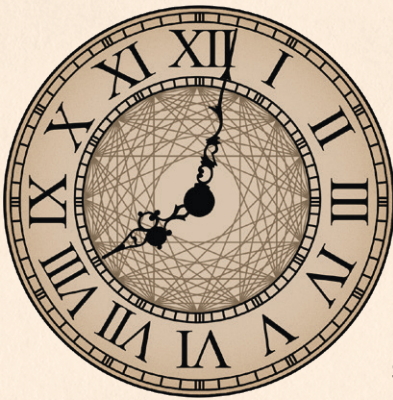
Other than its love for puns, Timely Clockmakers show an important aspect of the West Lands, namely that of its small family owned businesses. With the district being completely out of the way of anything important, there has never been a great deal of economical investment done in the district by either the government or Merchant League. In fact, the closest that the stores and workshops of the West Lands come to the Merchant League is through irregular contact with one of its minor guilds.

Like many of its fellow stores, Timely Clockmakers is a small family affair that is nearly completely dependent on the store for its survival. Also, like most craftsmen and artists, the clockmaker family rely mostly on commissions and patrons for what money comes their way. It's a life of feasts and famines, ups and down, times when the family does not know where their next meal will come from and

others where they don't know where to store all the food. This is quite typical for Middelburg's working class, and while these small store owners are near the top of that class, they are still affected by the winds that affect the whole class.

Timely Clockmakers is owned and operated by the Tye family. Their name is a pun on the Alfresian word for "time" and perhaps it was fate that they became clockmakers, or perhaps they were clockmakers first and then got their name because of this. Not even the Tye family is sure which came first. All they know is that they are clockmakers and have been for generations and that is more than enough for them.

Just as their store is typical of those of the lower classes in Middelburg, so are they. All were born and bred in Middelburg and have been since since they can remember. Not a soul among them have ever been more than a stone's throw outside Middelburg and none quite care to do so. They are Middelburgians and that is simply the way it is. Even if they had the desire to travel and enjoy a holiday, their financial situation would




THE TIME OF DAY

There is a lot to say about time: that it is money, that it waits for no man, that there is never enough of it at the end of the day, and that it steals what is most precious to us. It is clear that time is important, and for criminals and footmen it is doubly so. You need to know when to meet your handler, you often need to find out the schedules of any guards and constables you might face, and indeed if your target is a person you will need to know their schedules as well. Keeping an eye on the clock is half a footman's job.

The issue is that while timekeeping devices do exist, they are an uncommon sight. Like all luxuries are, pocket watches and personal clocks are symbols of wealth and status and thus the poor simply do not have them. Clock towers are fairly rare around the city and are only found at great intersections, open squares and other such places and other such areas where large crowds often are. You won't find them on every corner of every street.

What's a footman to do then? Well you can always save up and buy a pocket watch (starting cost is a -30 penalty to a Wealth Skill Check), steal one, borrow one, or learn which inns and public houses have clocks inside them. It pays well to look at all the taverns and drinking holes around the area you are working in, as some of which will have a clock that you can use to keep track of where your job is and where it is going.



prevent them. Unlike the wealthy, the Tye family and those like them must work for a living and being self employed means that they are tied to their store.

As with most working class, the Tye family are a devout folk, going to temple every Bursday to worship and praise, and reading scriptures most nights. The rich and powerful already have every luxury they can imagine and every need fulfilled and thus they pay lip service to matters of faith and whatever joys there are to find in the afterlife. What need has one of heaven when you are already experiencing it. The working class on the other hand live a hard life often marked by disappointment and loss. For them, the mercy of the gods and the hope of eternal paradise can be all that holds them through the tough periods in their lives.

One would perhaps think, were one uncharitable, that all this would grind the working class folk into mean, petty people who care only for themselves. Looking at places like Oldtown, one could be forgiven for thinking like that, but Oldtown is where hope goes to die. For the rest of the working class, the vast majority are good and honest folk. They care for their family, their friends and their neighbours and want only the best. The footmen who live in the West Lands are the anomaly, morally speaking, rather than the norm.

All this, their history, their faith, their morals and their environment have made the Tye family into hard workers who take pride into the clocks they create. Good, solid, and long lasting, you won't find second best at Timely Clockmakers. Whichever of the Tye family crafts a specific clock engraves his name and the date on the back of each clock and none would dare put their name on a clock they are not proud of. It would be the height of shame should one of their clocks not be up to scratch, as their name is on that clock forever.

You won't find the grandest of filigreed and jewelled clocks here, but the Tye family can proudly say that any clock bought here will always be on time and would never be faulty.

KOBUS' CHEESEMAKERS

Even in an age dominated by the runes and arrays, there is still a need to preserve food. The best arrays still require time and energy and the quality of the effects they produce is completely determined by the skill of whomever designs that specific array. On any scale larger than an individual family, preserving food through "natural" methods is much easier, time effective and reliable.

The preservation of food does not just have to do with keeping the food edible for any sustained amount of time. It also has a lot to do with the taste of the food. Milk itself may be a tasty beverage, but few can deny the splendour that is a well aged round of cheese. Unlike numerous other preserved foodstuffs, cheese has nearly become an industry on its own, with great care put into how exactly to create it in order to bring about a taste and texture its creator finds most pleasing.

Every nation and culture in Jytoh has its own variety of cheese and these all differ in their taste, texture, strength, hardness, age, fattiness, which animal it comes from and what other ingredients are added into the mix. One can often tell where someone is from based solely on what type of cheese they prefer. As much as ale and wine, the love of a specific cheese can stir the passions of men, and while no war has been fought over cheese, many a tavern brawl has broken out about which cheese is supreme.

Alfresian cheese comes in three distinct varieties: the semi-hard and hard cheeses that are the sweethearts of every farmer and working man, the creamy and delicate cheeses that the city folk adore, and the spiced cheeses with their exotic ingredients that are the hallmarks of upper class dining. It should come as no surprise then that the most abundant type of cheese in the nation is the hard and semi-hard cheeses while the spiced cheeses are few and far between.

While there are many

cheesemakers in Middelburg and beyond, and many more farms that make their own cheese, there is not a single cheese selling store on the island. It is simply not the Fresian way. While Ossenzee and Halleï have succumbed to outside influence and allowed cheese stores on their soil, Wesfresland and Alfresia still do it the old way. There is a ritual to the Fresian way of buying and selling cheese and come hell or high water, no one can stop it.

Every fourth day of the week, Strahleday, at noon when the sun is at its apex, the cheese markets open. In every town square on the island and in every open square, market and bazaar in Middelburg, the farmers and cheesemakers come with their wagons, their wheelbarrows and their carriages packed with cheese. These they put out on long stretches of cloth on the ground, on tables, on their own wagons, wherever they find space and then the buyers stream in. There are no contracts, no tenders, no fixed prices at the cheese markets, all prices are negotiated at shouting distance and sealed with a firm handshake and a trip to the scales to weigh the newly bought and sold cheese.

So it has always been and Kobus is an old hand at making and selling cheese. Born on a farm near Swannepoel in the far south of Alfresia, Kobus has always had a knack for making cheese. After spending a decade of his adulthood in Windburg mastering his trade, he and his young family left all they had known and moved to Middelburg. It was a culture shock that they weren't expecting, but it did not take long to adjust to the hustle and bustle of metropolitan life.

That was a long time ago and old Kobus has become a Middelburgundian as the rest of them. He has had his own cheese making workshop for some decades now and over his long life has cultivated a wealth of contacts among the farms that neighbour Middelburg. Milk is the lifeblood for a cheesemaker and to make sure it lasts, Kobus had his youngest son sent off to the Runist Monastery for schooling. With arrays keeping his milk fresh and cold, Kobus can produce the best


cheese in the city all year round without delay. He might be a humble man, but his cheese has found its way onto the platters of the Patriarchs themselves.

THE HERALD DOVECOTE

A relic of the past that refuses to let go of this world. The authorities are always amazed when they pass one of the handful of dovecotes still remaining in the city, wondering what purpose they can still serve that none have come by to uproot them. But without an immediate answer, they pass on their way, forgetting this quaint old structure as quickly as they found it, not knowing that the answer they seek may lead to a nefarious network of criminals and ne'er-do-wells.

Dovecotes were once upon a time the sole domain of the nobility and were grand structures, larger than many peasants' own homes, built to house pigeons for the aristocrats' dinner tables. This of course all changed over a century and a half ago when the old Archduke disbanded the aristocracy. With dovecotes now available to any who wanted it, they were quickly, and ironically, torn down by the scores. The pigeons had always been a plague on the peasants' farms but the peasants were unable to do anything about it. Now they would have their revenge.

The few dovecotes that survived the peasants' pillaging were those in the towns and cities and still very much controlled by the nobility-turned-bourgeoisie, however these wealthy elite had to be careful of their pigeons now for fear of the peasants. As such the dovecotes became smaller as time passed and rather than being kept for food, the pigeons were solely kept for the reason that had always come second: as messengers. Decadence and delight had always taken priority over utility for the nobility and while pigeons have been used as messengers since time immemorial, they were only now becoming something akin to a national service.



This renaissance in aerial post had come too late, unfortunately. A century later, and only fifty odd years ago today, messenger pigeons were quickly becoming obsolete. With the speed of trains and ships increasing every year, it was only a matter of time before it simply became more practical to send a crateful of messages by train or ship at once rather than one by one by pigeon. The messages could also be far longer if transported by ship and train and even parcels could also be sent. There just wasn't any pressing need for carrier pigeons in these modern times. A thousand years ago, perhaps, but not today.

And today the carrier pigeons and their dovecotes are little more than relics. With the discovery of the Lightning rune and thus workable airships and electrical trains, it is quicker than ever to get word to someone half the world away. Not to mention new discoveries in runic technology where you can record sound and runically send it to another location. The world has moved beyond dovecotes and their pigeons.

Anonymity is a priceless treasure.
~Anonymous footman

And yet they remain and the reason for this is quite simple: it is because they are obsolete. There are more pigeons than people in Middelburg and who can honestly spot a scrap of paper on one pigeon's leg among a flock of them flying overhead? Pigeon post is secure post, it is anonymous post, it is hidden post, and who among all the galant and upstanding citizens of Middelburg would have need of such a thing?

The footmen that work in the shadows, of course. It is they who keep the dovecotes and their pigeons alive and they are nearly the only sort of people who use pigeon post in this modern time. Every footman of note has a dovecote he frequents and an alias to go by and he knows the aliases and dovecotes of his contacts in the underground. Every so often, the footman would check his dovecote, rifle through the amassed messages until he spotted the one

with his alias and then attempt to decipher the code. Any constable that would look at all the letters would only see messages to grandma and offers for delivery services and the like.

With technology increasing at its rapid pace, the footmen don't know for how much longer they can keep the dovecotes alive without drawing attention to themselves, but they know they will try for as long as possible.

MISSION 6

The Case of the Shaken Mason

SYNOPSIS

This mission takes place five weeks after the last one, and it has been one week since the curfew was lifted. Now that the curfew has lifted, it means the PCs can once again enjoy their night-time escapades and walk freely in the moonlight... well, as freely as one can when the Random Encounter Rolls get more difficult with each passing mission.

This is a quintessential action mission, from start to finish, and the twist to this mission is that there isn't any time for legwork. The PCs are thrown straight into the mission and have to hold on for dear life, often literally, to avoid defeat, death, and dismemberment. At its heart, this is one long chase mission, as every good story should have. The PCs know their Point A, they know their Point B, now they just have to make sure they get there in one piece.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE MISSION PROPER IS AS FOLLOWS:

The PCs are rounded up in public spaces by the constables and thrown in gaol. From there they are taken to the captain's office where it is explained it was all a ruse. The constables, in fact, need the PCs' help to escort a witness to a crime to a safehouse. The constables believe the criminals will attack again so they are sending out fake carriages with fake witnesses to throw the criminals off the scent. When the PCs set off with the real witness, the criminals find them and attack. The PCs will have to fend off wave after wave of attacks in order to get the witness safely to the safehouse.

THE META-STORY IS AS FOLLOWS:

The witness, Mr. Smuts, and his construction workers that were killed stumbled upon something they really shouldn't have. They didn't know it, but the Ruined Man and those Seekers that have sworn loyalty to him are quite fond of the sewers under Middelburg and they'd rather no one else came to poke their noses where they don't belong.

The Ruined Man himself has no part in this mission, in front or behind the scenes. Rather, the Seekers were the ones who found out about Mr. Smuts and took the initiative to protect their Prophet. As such, this mission serves to tie several related ideas together: the connection between the Ruined Man and the Seekers; and the connection between them all and the sewers of Middelburg.

OVERVIEW

SCENE 1: THE BRIEF:

- › PCs are abducted by the constabulary, but it is a ruse to hire them surreptitiously.
- › PC's mission is to escort Mr. Smuts, a witness of a serious crime, to safehouse.
- › PCs are given equipment and disguises by constabulary.
- › Mission begins immediately.

SCENE 2: THE LEGWORK:

- › Three areas:
 - » Constabulary where PCs start, but little interaction.
 - » Driving route to safehouse where mission takes place.
 - » Safehouse at Geneviève's, a store in Park West
- › Legwork and Mission done simultaneously.

SCENE 3: THE MISSION:

- › Three waves of attackers that will ambush carriage.
- › Clue gained during this scene:
 - » Attackers will scream specific phrases when attacking and will wear distinctive markings.

SCENE 4: THE DEBRIEF:

- › Takes place at Cross Roads Constabulary from Scene 1.
- › Both Mr. Smuts and Genevieve must survive.

- Reward is reduced for each piece of disguise and equipment the PCs don't return.

SCENE 1: THE BRIEF

This scene takes place inside the office of the Captain of the Crossroads Constabulary, but the only time in this campaign the constables don't actually want to arrest the PCs; they need the PCs' help. The PCs won't know this, however, until just before the question and answers section of this scene. The constables will come for the PCs in a public space in broad daylight and make it look like they are being arrested. This is the key point of this scene, to make the PCs feel like it's all over.

As written in the narration, the constables come for the PCs, individually or together, in a tavern. However, if you have an idea to make it more personal to the PCs' experiences, you can change the location to make it feel more natural.

NARRATE OR PARAPHRASE THE FOLLOWING AS APPROPRIATE:

It was inevitable, especially in your line of work, especially in this city, especially after what has been happening the past few months. It was simply inevitable. The curfew may have been lifted last week, but the constables are still as tense and agitated as if the Ruined Man may be right around the next corner.

It was inevitable and yet you still can't believe it. They came for you in broad daylight while you were having your lunch. The tavern had been crowded with folks who didn't want to get involved, and so what could you do? Turn the tavern into an abattoir? No. The constables had you outnumbered, and you wouldn't have made it ten steps.

It was a long ride back to the constabulary, made longer by the fact they never said a word, not how they found you, not why they found you. Nothing. And so you sit in the open aired cells of the local goal, seeing faces you recognise,

faces you don't, and faces you hope don't recognise you.

They make you sweat for hours before calling you in. They always do that. Luckily this time they called you in at all. You stand together in a decent, if old, office looking at a decent, if old, constable. Behind the constable you can see the sun slowly setting through an unshuttered window. The constable introduces himself as Captain Casper de Wet and begins to apologise for the treatment you suffered.


"My sincerest apologies for what has happened today. It was not what I wanted but as the wise men say 'needs must when the demon drives'. I want to put your minds at ease before we proceed. You are not under arrest nor will any charges be filed against you. At least not today. Your apparent arrest by my constables today was but a performance to those that have been watching us lately.

"The reason why we brought you in today, and in such a clandestine manner, is because we require your services. We know that you are a... hired... hand of sorts... and that is precisely what we need. We have an individual of some importance here that we need transported to a safehouse. Unfortunately, we believe that a nefarious third party will attempt to assassinate our guest. That is why we apprehended you. We need you to transport our guest to the safehouse while my constables serve as a distraction.

"If you have any questions, now is the time to ask. We need to have you out on the road before the sun sets below the horizon."

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY CAPTAIN CASPER DE WET:

- Information freely provided:
 - » The constables' "guest" is a man named Gijs Smuts.
 - » Mr. Smuts is a witness to the assault and murder of several masons, plumbers, and builders under his employ.
 - » Captain de Wet believes that the



assailants will come for Mr. Smuts to tie up their loose ends.

- » In order to distract the possible assailants, there will be four carriages sent out from the constabulary at the crossroads, one in each direction. Three will be crewed by constables and have a constable inside acting as Mr. Smuts.
- » The PCs will take the fourth carriage down to Park West where the safehouse is located.
- » The PCs will be provided with the address of the safe house and constable uniforms so they look the part.
- » The safehouse is a tailors called Geneviève's and the PCs are to stop at the rear of the building at the tailor's workshop.
- » Which route the PCs take to the safehouse is entirely up to them, as long as they exit the crossroads to the south-west.
- » No one must follow them to the safehouse or there is no point in putting Mr. Smuts there.
- » Once Mr. Smuts is secure in the safehouse and there is no immediate threat, the PCs can take their leave. The tailor will send a message to the constabulary to send guards.
- » Captain de Wet is willing to offer half the payment now (equivalent to a +10 bonus to Wealth Skill to each PC).
- » Information that will require a Social Skill Check (additional to the -12 global penalty):
 - » +10 Social Skill Check will uncover that the assailants that murdered and beat Mr. Smuts employees were wearing van Windburg guard uniforms.
 - » +0 Social Skill Check will uncover that a representative of the van Windburg family has "enquired" about this case since Mr. Smuts has

been at the constabulary.

Once all the questions have been asked or answered or if the PCs are taking too long, the captain will say: "The time for talking is over. The time for action has begun. If you follow the constable behind you, she will take you to the armoury where you can get your uniforms, and then to the stables. May the Heavenly Father protect you tonight, I fear you may need his guidance."

And with that, the constable mentioned will show the PCs out and lead them to the armoury, wait for them to change, and will then take them to the stables..

If this scene has carried on for a long time, it may well be a good idea to go over the key points of information with the players so they don't forget something vital that their PCs would have remembered.

SCENE 2: THE LEGWORK

In a sense, there is no legwork to be done in this scene as the PCs have everything they need: the carriage, the witness, the address to the safehouse. There is nowhere to explore and no research or scouting to be done, although if the PCs do feel like thinking outside the box, they can take the carriage and Mr. Smuts on a roadtrip through Middelburg, inadvisable though that might be.

Instead, this section will focus on three main areas (the constabulary, the journey, the safehouse) while leaving all NPC actions and reactions to Scene 3.

THE CROSSROADS CONSTABULARY

There is no map provided for the Crossroads Constabulary as the PCs will not be allowed to explore it. They will be escorted from their gaol cells to the captain's office and then straight

to the armoury and then the stables. The PCs are highly encouraged not to start trouble here as it will not go well for them. They can leave if they choose not to do the mission so there is no need for an armed escape.

The constabulary is constructed of drab, grey bricks both outside and in with all the doors and bars made of solid bronze. Middelburg takes its policing quite seriously and some say the constabularies are better protected than the military buildings.

The armoury will be empty of any personnel when the PCs arrived (so that no one can see them change into their disguises) and they will be handed the uniform and weapons of a standard Middelburg constable: leather boots and gloves, a striped plait breaches in the colours of Middelburg, a grey quilted jacket, a bronze cuirass and open faced helm, a bronzed wooden billy club, and a pistol. All clothing and armour have the Middelburg Standard defensive arrays on them, and the billy club and pistol rounds are inscribed with the Constable's Friend offensive arrays.

The PCs own clothing, armour, weapons and personal effects will be placed in bags and put in the carriage that they will be taking to the safehouse. If you want to add some resentment to the constabulary and authorities, then you can use a GM intrusion to say that the constables took some of their possessions.

The stables is the largest area of the constabulary by sheer surface area as it houses enough horses for sixteen carriages as well as eighty mounts for patrolling constables. It also houses six special armoured carriages requiring six horses each that are used during riots.

The carriages used for this mission will be two horse carriages made of wood and steel and are covered in arrays that protect it from fire (the burning kind, not the firearm kind). The carriages are stoutly built and the wood (and steel supports) count as Strong Armour for anyone inside it (as well as providing cover). The only windows on the carriage are two small

windows on each side door of the carriage.

Because of the regular maintenance done on the carriages, it is not feasible to put Middelburg Standard arrays onto the carriages.

The only NPCs in the stables and stableyard when the PCs arrive will be those constables that are taking part in the captain's plan as well as Mr. Smuts. Neither the constables in the stables and stableyard nor Mr. Smuts have been told who the PCs are. At the moment, they only think that the PCs are constables from other districts.


THE JOURNEY

The journey between the constabulary and the safehouse isn't very far as the crow flies, however by road it can be a series of twists and turns depending on how the PCs decide to get to the safehouse, and between the assailants the captain spoke of and the random encounters the PCs will have, the PCs will enough trouble to make the short journey seem as long as a voyage across the world.

The encounters for the Journey will be handled differently than in the rest of the campaign. As far as the world is concerned the PCs are honest and upright constables, enforcing the law of Middelburg. While criminals and other ne'er-do-wells have no issue attacking constables, government forces generally do not attack each other on the streets.

As such, if you are rolling for random encounters during the journey, ignore any result that involves the constabulary, military, or Merchant League forces and treat these as a result of 1-49. In saying that, if the PCs' journey is going a little too smoothly, you can instead treat a result involving the constabulary, military, or Merchant League as the nearest result not involving any of these.

Because the mission will be nothing but encounters and attacks, if you do want to roll for Random Encounters, you can make these a GM Intrusion. If the players accept the intrusion, then roll as normal.



On a narrative side, this journey is an excellent way to show the PCs how life has changed in Middelburg over the past seven months since the Ruined Man murders began.

The mission starts after sunset, so there will be very few people out on the streets. Even though the curfew has ended, people are still quite nervous about being out after dark so while the streets will not be deserted, the fact that so few people are out and about will be remarkable.

The people that are out will be much more obviously armed than normal and will glare and scowl at the PCs as they move past, believing the PCs to be constables. After the events of the curfew, the constabulary's approval has gone markedly down.

The streets themselves seem to be filthier than what they would have been a year ago and some street lamps will be out or broken. The repair and cleaning workers rarely work at night these days, fearing for their lives.

THE SAFEHOUSE

The intended safehouse for Mr. Smuts and the PCs is one of the most secret safehouses the constabulary have, and it shows the severity of this mission and the desperation of having to use the PCs. It is the well named Les Secrets De Geneviève or more simply Geneviève's Secrets. It specialises in fine fabrics of the feminine persuasion, or to put it more plainly: ladies' undergarments. One would imagine a business like this to be in Ooston or Neiton, however it is far too risqué for the good people of Middelburg and have so been relegated to Park West. However, most women in Nieuton prefer Geneviève's to their local tailors as they say Geneviève knows what women want.

Geneviève's was chosen as a safehouse for the constabulary's most important guests as it is a business solely for women and what good, upstanding citizen of the male sex would ever be seen in a store selling ladies' undergarments. Geneviève's also cater to a more refined palate and so the poor are also seldom seen in the store.

As such there are only a certain type of person who would enter Geneviève's and that does not include ruffians or kidnappers.

Geneviève's is a store divided into three areas. In the front of the building is the Store proper, where the ladies' undergarments are on display for the customers to simply pick whichever takes their fancy, purchase it, and be on their merry way. Behind this, through an open door is the Tailory, where ladies can get measured and fitted. This area also includes the fitting rooms where Geneviève's assistants can help the clients with their clothing. The final area is the Workshop where all the clothing is designed and made and where all the fabrics are delivered and stored.

There is a small second story where Geneviève lives and which is off limits to her assistants and to any customers. The apartment is accessible through a staircase in the Workshop and is the real safehouse.

SCENE 3: THE MISSION

It is clearly quite obvious that the assailants that killed Mr. Smuts employees will attack the PCs' carriage on the way to the safehouse, so this Scene can be seen to be one long chase sequence.

There will be some structure to how the assailants attack the carriage so that the scene doesn't become a confusing mess of carriages, limbs, and horses all muddled together.

The assailants will attack a maximum of three times, however depending on how the PCs handle the attacks, one may be more than enough. Before the attacks begin, between each attack, and after all three attacks if there is time, there can also be a Random Encounters Roll if the PCs are doing too well of a job, so it will be a busy evening for the PCs.

There is always a chance that the carriage can be damaged or the horses killed. The assailants will attempt to kill the PCs and Mr. Smuts first but that doesn't mean they won't try

to kill the horses or destroy a wheel as well. If the PCs are close enough to the Crossroads Constabulary when the carriage becomes inoperable, they can go back for another one. However, if they are a fair distance, Mr. Smut will advise that they carry on to the Safehouse on foot.

STAGE 1

Once the PCs and Mr Smuts are settled in and on the carriage, the carriages will all move out of the stableyard in unison towards the crossroads where the district takes its name from. From here each carriage will take one of the four roads leaving the crossroads with the PCs' carriage heading southwest.

Once the PCs are out of the sight of the other three carriages, it is time for a Random Encounters Roll. Bear in mind the instructions in Scene 2 for the Random Encounters Rolls during the Journey. It is quite possible the PCs might simply decide to flee from any Encounter since they are on a carriage. Whether the NPCs in the Encounter chase them depends on what is encountered although generally speaking, unless the NPCs have a murderous intent, they won't.

Once the PCs are out of sight of the Encounter's NPCs, the first wave of assailants will attack the carriage. This wave will ease them into the scene and so will only contain the same amount of assailants as there are PCs on top of the wagon (not inside), with a minimum of two assailants taking part. These assailants will be on horseback and will appear a fair distance behind the carriage as if they have caught up to it from much further back. The assailants will immediately be hostile and will only stop their attack once they have confirmed the death of Mr. Smuts. They will never retreat nor surrender. If they get close enough to the carriage, they will attempt to leap onto it from their horses in order to get inside.

STAGE 2

Stage 2 and 3 may not be needed as the assailants from Stage 1 may have chased the PCs close

enough to Geneviève's that there simply isn't enough road left to put another stage or encounter. If that is the case, then simply skip these sections. Otherwise, continue on as below.

Once the PCs are out of the sight of the last assailant (dead or alive), it is time for another Random Encounters Roll. Once the PCs are out of sight of that Encounter's NPCs, the second wave of assailants will attack the carriage.

These assailants will be on foot, however their attack is a surprise one: they will attack from the sky. The assailant will wait in hiding on the rooftops and as the carriage pass, they will jump onto the carriage. A successful Perception Skill Check on behalf of the PC that is driving the carriage versus a +20 Stealth Skill Check from the assailants will allow the driver to attempt to evade their jumps through a Drive Skill Check versus the assailants +10 Athletics Skill Check.


Since these assailants will be hiding on rooftops, if the PCs get anywhere near a park or other open space, you will have to wait until they get in between buildings again.

The assailants numbers are one and half times the number of PCs on the carriage (not inside) rounded up, with a minimum of two assailants taking part. As before, the assailants will immediately be hostile and will only stop their attack once they have confirmed the death of Mr. Smuts. They will never retreat nor surrender.

STAGE 3

Once the PCs are out of the sight of the last assailant (dead or alive), it is time for a last Random Encounters Roll. Once the PCs are out of sight of that Encounter's NPCs, the third and final wave of assailants will attack the carriage.

This is the most dangerous and lethal of the stages for it contains both a trap and the largest number of assailants. When the carriage has gone down a straight section of road, have a flaming carriage roll out from a side street to block their path at the next side road or



intersection. Following this flaming carriage will be the assailants numbering twice that of the number of PCs on the carriage (not inside), with a minimum of four taking part. These assailants will be armed with muskets and will simply pepper the carriage with as many rounds as they can, taking cover behind any building, outcrop, or even the flaming carriage.

As before, the assailants will immediately be hostile and will only stop their attack once they have confirmed the death of Mr. Smuts. They will never retreat nor surrender.

THE SAFEHOUSE

Should the PCs have forgotten the captain's instructions and led the assailants to the Safehouse, Mr. Smuts will kindly point out before the carriage actually arrives at Geneviève's that this course of action is perhaps not the smartest. If the PCs ignore him and continue to Geneviève's with the assailants in tow then Mr. Smuts will have no option but to run in to protect himself.

Madame Geneviève will also be highly upset that the Safehouse is no longer safe nor secret and will express this dissatisfaction most angrily and vociferously. She is, however, a practical woman and keeps a weapon or two handy, one of which she will give to Mr. Smuts. Madame Geneviève and Mr. Smuts will retreat to the second story and keep themselves safe there while the PCs deal with the assailants.

Should the PCs arrive safely, securely, and secretly, they will be met by Madame Geneviève at the backdoor to the Workshop. She will take Mr. Smuts upstairs and invite the PCs in for a cup of rich Vallion coffee after their long day. Once the PCs feel ready to go, Madame Geneviève will bid them goodbye and escort them back out through the Workshop's backdoor.

If the PCs decline the invitation, Mr. Smuts will ask them to come in to make sure the building is safe (with no offence given to Madame Geneviève of course).

THE CONSTABULARY

As with any other conflict in any other mission, the constabulary are never far behind whatever ruckus the PCs are causing. In this mission, however, the constables are spread thin in this area of Middelburg due to this operation the PCs are helping with.

The assailants, through whatever contacts they have, have placed themselves along the PCs routes where they know the constables will take the longest to arrive. As such, during the Journey, whenever a loud conflict happens, roll a d100 after each action. If the result is a 1 then two constables will show up either through happenstance or because someone alerted them to what was going on. If any player rolls a 1 during the mission, then that will count as well.

The PCs can ask these constables to accompany them on the Journey with a successful +10 Social Skill Check. If the constables do accompany the PCs, then the constables count as if they were PCs on top of the carriage when determining how many assailants are attacking the carriage during each Stage.

THE CLUE

The Clue will come in two parts and from two different sources: Mr. Smuts and the assailants.

The first part of the clue is that it is the Starchild followers of the Ruined Man that attacked Mr. Smuts employees, and the second is the motive for their attack: Mr. Smut and his workers were tasked to renovate a section of the Middelburg sewer section on the east side of the Tenne river, near Temple Park.

INFORMATION GAINED FROM THE ASSAILANTS:

- ▶ The assailants are dressed rather shabbily and their weapons are of poor quality.
- ▶ There are no emblems or marks of the van Windburg family or the Golden Talons anywhere on the clothing or bodies of the

assailants.

- Instead there are many 8 pointed stars in the style of the Starchild Cult on the assailants.
- » Stitched or painted on their clothings; carved into their weapons; and tattooed, branded, and carved onto their skin.
- During the attacks the assailants will make several references to protecting their Prophet, such as:
 - » “We must protect our Prophet!”
 - » “The infidels seek to destroy our Prophet!”
 - » “We must hide our Prophet!”
 - » “Kill them all before they find him!”
 - » “These heretics defile our Prophet’s name!”
 - » “The Prophet’s home is sacrosanct!”

INFORMATION GAINED FROM MR. SMUTS:

- The assailants who killed Mr. Smuts’ workers were dressed in van Windburg guard uniforms, but he could make out several Starchild 8 pointed stars among their clothing and on their skin.
- Mr. Smuts remembers that one of the assailants said “We must not let these infidels defile our Prophet’s domain” during the killings.
- Mr. Smuts and his workers were contracted by the Middelburg government to renovate some sewer lines east of the Tenne River near Temple Park in preparation for constructing subterranean railway tracks.

The information from Mr. Smuts can be gained during any stage of the mission. They can speak to him before setting off on the Journey to see if he perhaps has any information that could prove useful or speak to him after delivering him to the Safehouse to gain some closure. It is of course also possible for any PC inside the carriage to speak with Mr. Smuts along the Journey. As Mr. Smuts is quite nervous about the whole ordeal, he will be more than happy to chat

with anyone inside the carriage. If this happens, allow the conversation to carry on until Mr. Smuts has provided all information he can before commencing with the next Random Encounter Roll or Stage.

The key piece of the clue, the part that you must absolutely get across to the players, is that the attack involved the sewers east of the Tenne River, near Temple Park. Even if you subtly give this information, you can expect the players to remember the last time they were near the sewers in Temple Park and what happened there.


SCENE 4: THE DEBRIEF

IF ALL THE PCS DIED BEFORE SCENE 4

Once the last PC died, tell the players how one of the assailants starts hacking at Mr. Smuts’ neck until it finally falls from his body. The blood covered assailant then picks up Mr. Smuts’ severed and bloodied head and walks away. The scene fades to blackness, lit only by a small candle. A figure covered in rags sits just outside the candle’s light and watches the assailant walk into the candlelight. The assailant drops Mr. Smuts’ head in front of the ragged figure and kneels down, saying: “The last witness is dead, master.” The ragged figure replies: “The last of the first.”

IF THE PCS SURVIVED, BUT EITHER MR. SMUTS OR MADAME GENEVIÈVE DIED

If either NPC died and the PCs returned to the Crossroads Constabulary, they will be taken into custody. If Mr. Smuts died, the constables will come to arrest them on the charge of his murder as the captain will see it as their fault. If Madame Geneviève died, it will require some quick talking and a Social Skill Check to prevent them being arrested. If they don’t fight back (or escape) and are arrested, they will be taken to the gaols, stripped down naked, and thrown into the cells where they will in all likelihood be forgotten.



At the very least, they will be in gaol for the remainder of the campaign.

IF MR. SMUTS IS DELIVERED TO THE SAFEHOUSE ALIVE

As long as he is not suffering from a life threatening injury, and the PCs can honestly say they did their best to protect Mr. Smuts, then Captain de Wet will reward the PCs with the full amount that they were promised. Should Mr. Smuts have been delivered to the safehouse but has a life threatening injury, the PCs will only receive half payment, if they haven't already received it in Scene 1.

As the PCs arrive at the constabulary, they will be directed towards the stables if they still have the carriage or directly to the armoury if not. After the stablehands have settled the horses and put away the carriage, the PCs will be led again to the armoury where they will be relieved of their constabulary uniform.

For each piece of constable's clothing, armour, or weapon a PC is missing, that PC will receive -5 to the Wealth Skill bonus they gain as reward for the mission. This does mean that the PCs may go into debt to constabulary.

After they have changed, the PCs will be led to Captain de Wet's office where the mission started. The captain will want to hear all about the mission in excruciating details and will have a secretary present to take notes. After which, he will reward the PCs based on what has transpired and bid them a good evening.

Of course, it is always possible that the PCs will simply take the carriage and their new uniforms and run away before the constables can get to the safehouse. After all, who wouldn't want a nice new carriage, and authentic constable disguises?

AFTERMATH

There are two avenues that can be explored after this mission: the constabulary and the Starchild Cult.

Depending on how the mission goes, the players can either end up in the good graces of the constabulary due to their excellent work, or they can end up as hunted fugitives because of how poorly they did. If the mission really did go to hell in a handbasket and the PCs were smart enough not to go back to the Crossroads Constabulary, then a good next mission would be for the constables to come looking for them. Otherwise, if it all went to plan, the constables can always use an extra pair of hands not bound by the law to do what they can't. With the captain as a Contact, the players might see a good few bounties coming their way.

The players can always choose to be sneaky and keep their constable uniforms. There are a multitude of things that they can get away with while pretending to be constables. Of course, if they are ever found out there is so much more that can go wrong. If they decide to play constable, have someone come up to them in a very public space asking for help and see how long they can keep the performance going.

The other avenue the PCs can explore is the Starchild Cult, and it is quite possible one of the PCs is a Seeker. Remember though that it is only a splinter group of the Starchild Cult that has gotten into bed with the Ruined Man. The rest of the Cult is unaware, hopefully, of what these rogue Seekers are up to. That does not mean, of course, that the PCs can't turn the Cult's house upside down looking for answers.

NON-PLAYABLE CHARACTERS

CONSTABLES

Athletics	40	Intuition	30
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	50
Burglary	40	Logic	30
Constitution	40	Luck	30
Deceive	30	Might	40
Diplomacy	30	Perception	40
Drive	50	Shoot	50
Fight	40	Stealth	30
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	30
Intimidate	50	Will	40

RUNIC ARRAYS

- Middelburg Standard Defensive array on Cuirass, Helm and Quilted Jacket.
- Constable's Friend Offensive array on Pistol rounds and Billy Club.

EQUIPMENT

- Bronze Cuirass and Open Faced Helm (Strong Armour) covering Torso and Head Hit Locations.
- Quilted Jacket (Soft Armour) covering Torso, Arms and Legs Hit Locations.
- Bronze Billy Club (Medium melee weapon).
- Steel and Wood Pistol with lead rounds (Medium Near ranged weapon).

CIVILIANS

Athletics	35	Intuition	35
Broad-Craft	35	Investigate	35
Burglary	35	Logic	35
Constitution	35	Luck	35
Deceive	35	Might	35
Diplomacy	35	Perception	35
Drive	35	Shoot	35
Fight	35	Stealth	35
Fine-Craft	35	Wealth	35
Intimidate	35	Will	35

RUNIC ARRAYS

- In their day to day business, not everyone will be wearing defensive and offensive arrays.
- For Defensive arrays: roll a d100, if below 50 then the person is wearing the Middelburg Standard on their Arms, Legs and Torso Hit Locations.
- For Offensive arrays: if they are carrying weapons, roll a d100, if below 50 choose any offensive array from the Array Section at the back of the book. .

EQUIPMENT

- Miscellaneous articles.
- For weapons: roll a d100, if below 25 then the person is armed with a sword and pistol.

CAPTAIN CASPER DE WET

EXALTED NPC

Athletics	40	Intuition	30
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	50
Burglary	40	Logic	40
Constitution	40	Luck	35
Deceive	30	Might	30
Diplomacy	35	Perception	40
Drive	45	Shoot	50
Fight	40	Stealth	30
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	40
Intimidate	60	Will	40

RUNIC ARRAYS

- Middelburg Standard Defensive array on Cuirass, Helm and Quilted Jacket.
- Constable's Friend Offensive array on Pistol rounds and Billy Club.

EQUIPMENT

- Bronze Cuirass and Open Faced Helm (Strong Armour) covering Torso and Head Hit Locations.
- Quilted Jacket (Soft Armour) covering Torso, Arms and Legs Hit Locations.
- Bronze Billy Club (Medium melee weapon).
- Steel and Wood Pistol with lead rounds (Medium Near ranged weapon).

MR. GIJS SMUTS

EXALTED NPC

Athletics	30	Intuition	30
Broad-Craft	50	Investigate	30
Burglary	30	Logic	30
Constitution	40	Luck	40
Deceive	30	Might	30
Diplomacy	40	Perception	40
Drive	30	Shoot	40
Fight	30	Stealth	30
Fine-Craft	40	Wealth	50
Intimidate	35	Will	30

SPECIALISATIONS

- Broad-Craft Specialisation:
 - » Plumbing - Skill Level 70
 - » Masonry - Skill Level 80
- Wealth Specialisation:
 - » Construction business - Skill Level 65

RUNIC ARRAYS

- Middelburg Standard Defensive array on Torso, Arms and Legs Hit Locations.
- Sculptor Offensive array on Pistol rounds.
- Splinter and Peace of Mind Offensive arrays on dagger.

EQUIPMENT

- Simple clothing on Torso, Arms and Legs Hit Locations (No Armour).
- Steel and Wood Pistol with Lead rounds (Medium Near ranged weapon).
- Steel dagger (Light melee weapon).

MADAME GENEVIÈVE

EXALTED NPC

Athletics	30	Intuition	40
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	30
Burglary	30	Logic	30
Constitution	30	Luck	40
Deceive	50	Might	30
Diplomacy	40	Perception	50
Drive	30	Shoot	40
Fight	30	Stealth	40
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	50
Intimidate	30	Will	30

SPECIALISATIONS

- Fine-Craft Specialisation:
 - » Tailoring - Skill Level 75
- Wealth Specialisation:
 - » Geneviève's - Skill Level 70

RUNIC ARRAYS

- Middelburg Standard Defensive array on all Hit Locations.
- Manstopper Offensive array on Pistol rounds.
- Hatchling Offensive array on Musket rounds.

EQUIPMENT

- Simple clothing on all Hit Locations (No Armour).
- Steel and Wood Pistol with Lead rounds (Medium Near ranged weapon).
- Steel and Wood Musket with Lead rounds (Medium Far ranged weapon).

ASSAILANTS OF THE STARCHILD

Athletics	60	Intuition	30
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	30
Burglary	50	Logic	30
Constitution	30	Luck	40
Deceive	45	Might	40
Diplomacy	30	Perception	40
Drive	40	Shoot	40
Fight	45	Stealth	60
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	30
Intimidate	50	Will	30

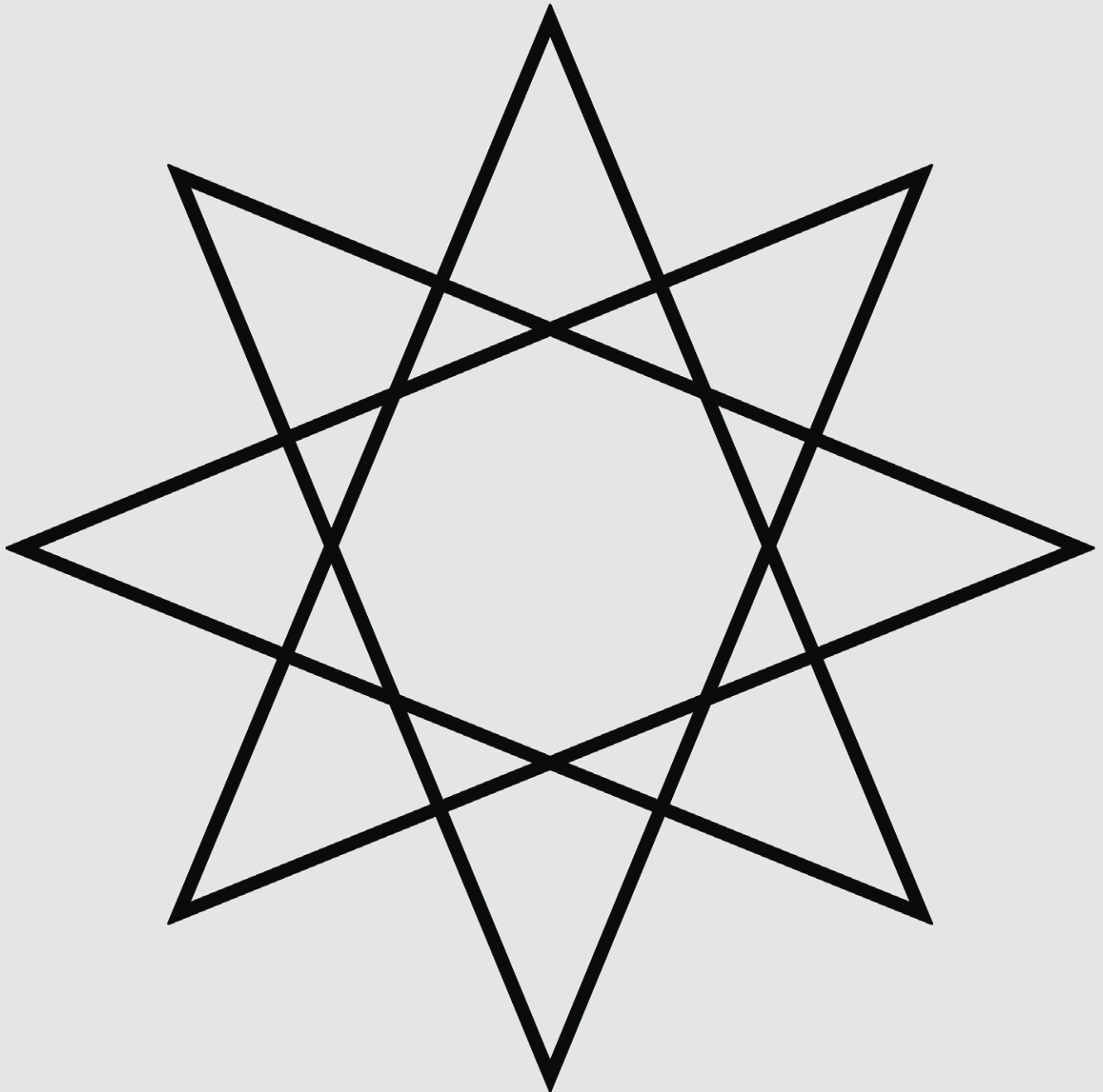
RUNIC ARRAYS

- The Prophet's Blood Defensive array on all Hit Locations.
- Manstopper Offensive array on Pistol rounds.
- Walking Bomb Offensive array on Musket rounds.
- Blood Drinker Offensive array on Melee weapons.

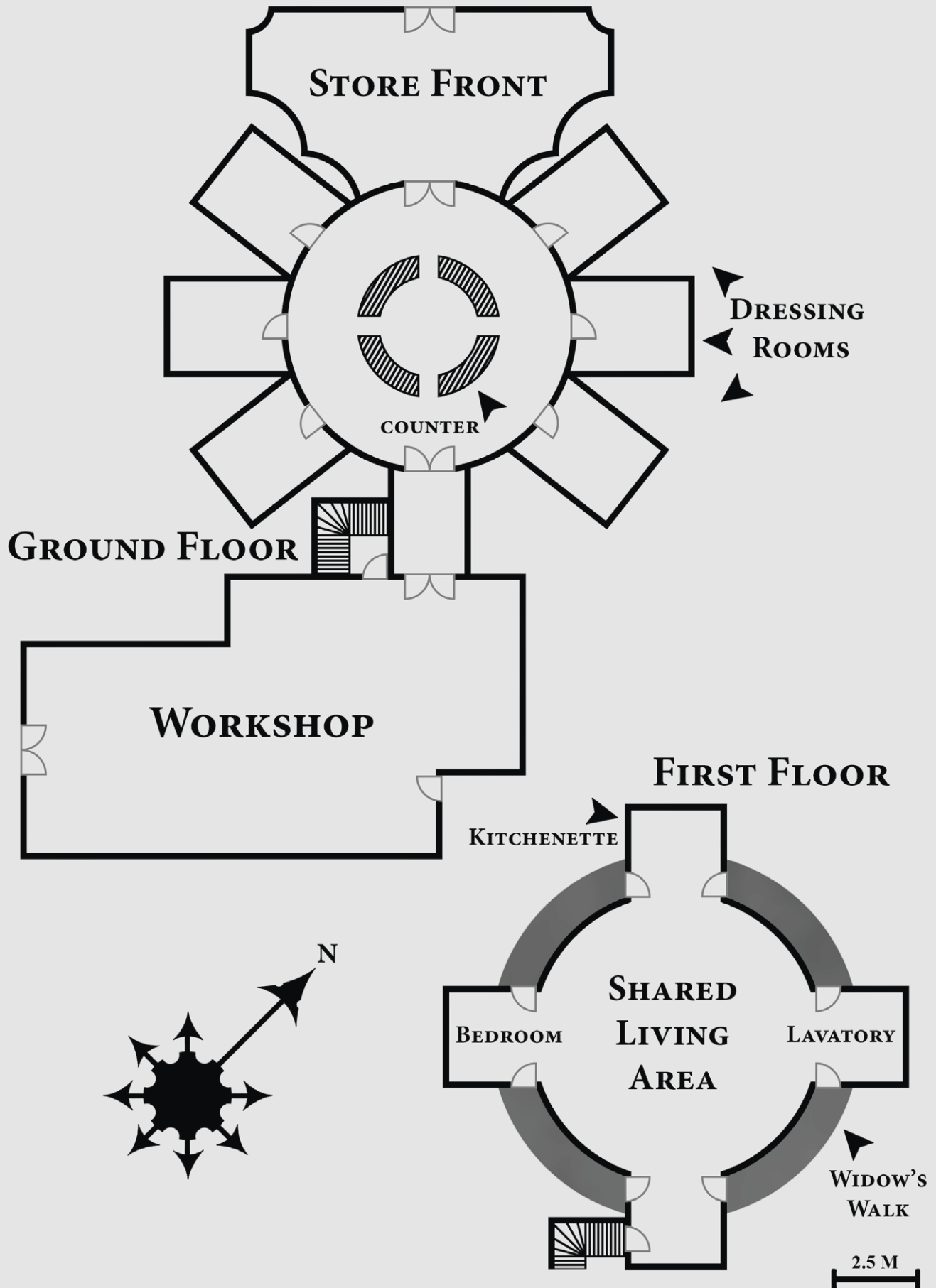
EQUIPMENT

- Simple clothing that covers all Hit Locations (No Armour)
- Variety of Steel one handed Melee Weapons.
 - » Ranging from swords to daggers to maces to axes.
- Steel and Wood Pistols and Muskets with lead rounds (Medium Near ranged weapon).

THE STARCHILD STAR



LES SECRETS DE GENEVIÈVE

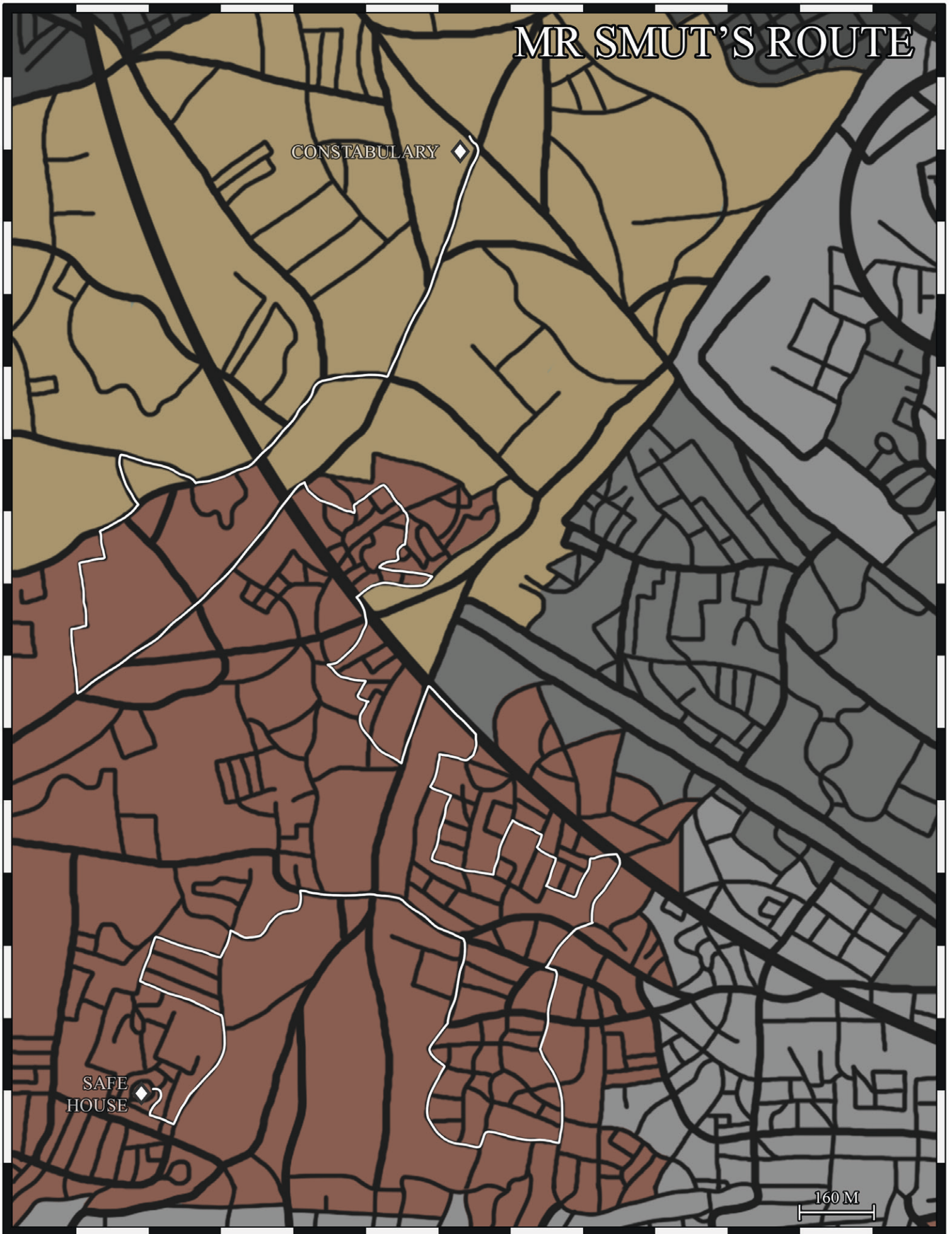


MR SMUT'S ROUTE

CONSTABULARY

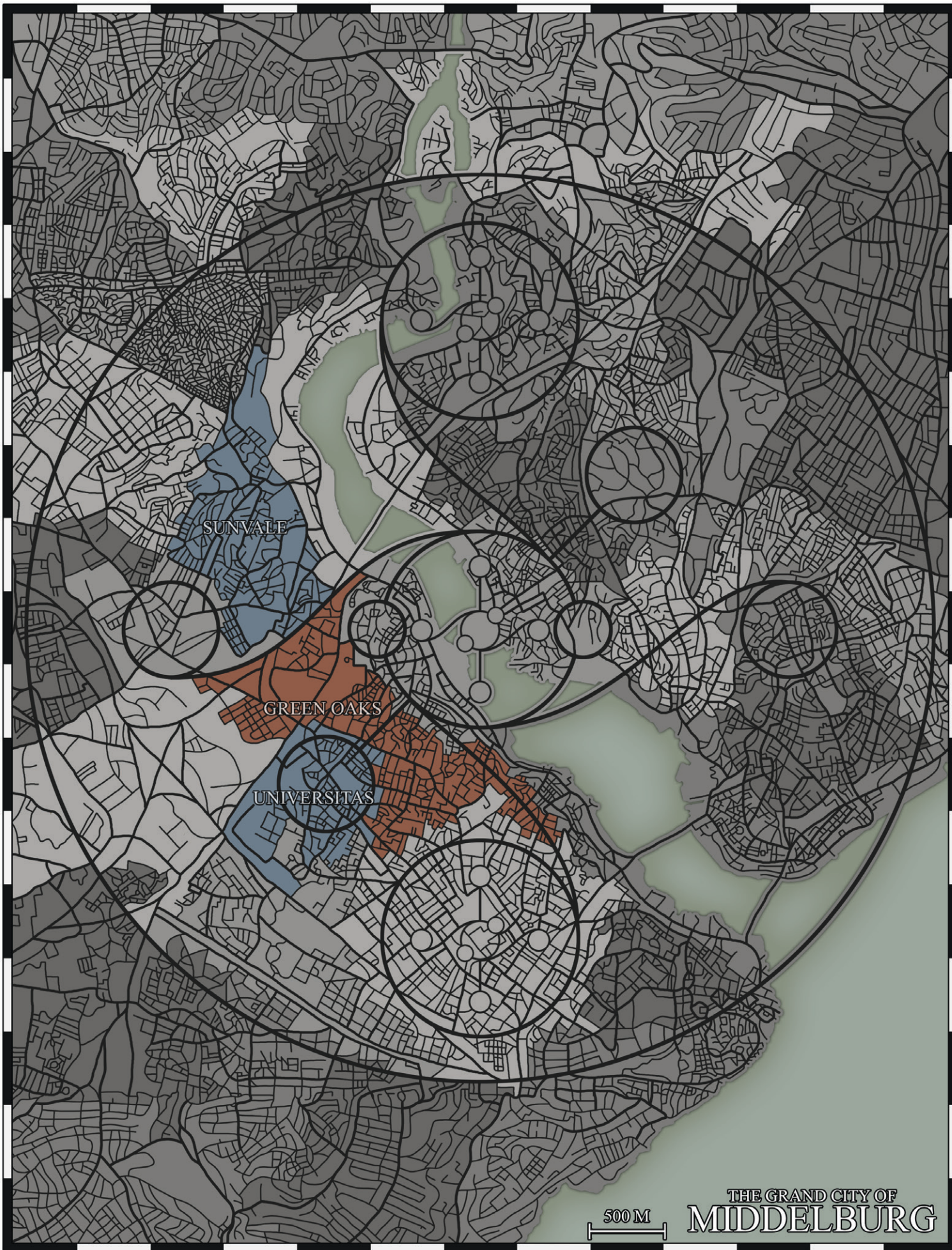
SAFE
HOUSE

160 M



CHAPTER 7

The dams of my
sanity flow over



SUNVALE

GREEN OAKS

UNIVERSITAS

UNIVERSITAS

UNIVERSITY
SPORTS GROUNDS

DEPARTMENT
OF RUNOLOGY

MIDDELBURG
UNIVERSITY

LAST RESORT
PUBLIC HOUSE

VAN HEERDEN
BOOKS & BINDER

100 M



UNIVERSITAS



It is not the soul, nor the heart, nor the iron fist, nor the purse, not even the lifeblood of the city, but it is its mind. Universitas is where all the greatest discoveries in the realms of engineering and natural philosophies have taken place in the city. It is where humble men go to learn and powerful men go to seek advice. The very presence of the district separates the grand city from the uncultured and unthinking towns and villages of the hinterlands, or so the scholars here say.

Much like Hospitaal Park, Universitas was nothing before the university was built and afterward it became everything. The university is the centre of Alfresian learning and as such Universitas is the centre of learning. While there are other schools and institutions of learning around the island nation, most prominently near temples and abbeys, there is nothing quite like the university and it intends to keep it that way. By offering lucrative salaries to the greatest scholars in Alfresia, it ensures that no other institution but it can claim the title of the best school on the island.

This headhunting approach has worked well for the university and for the district itself, as Universitas has become where every scholar of note on the island travels to. The university has

garnered itself such a reputation that scholars, and those wishing to become scholars, come from across the Fresian lands and beyond. There are many who study in Universitas that hail from the Heavenly Empire, the Delkans, Krunian lands and beyond. And with all these foreigners come money to spend in the city.

It is no surprise that Universitas is located where it is. Even four centuries ago when most of the land inside the City Array was farmland and plains, the city's governors knew that the university would draw in those foreign to the city who would gladly spend their money. It's location in the city means that should anyone come by sea, the most common way to enter Middelburg, they will have to cross a plethora of stores, stalls, shops, taverns and public houses before they even reach their destination. And every business along the way will collect a few coins along the way.

It is much the same in the district itself. Everything that can make money does so at the expense of the scholars and students at the university. The entire district caters to the whims of those attending the university and while it may seem demeaning, it does make them a large sum of money. From



the obscene number of taverns and public houses that supplies the copious amount of alcohol that fuel the students and provides the much needed food to the starving bachelors, to the tailors and paper stores that supply the equipment the students need at the university, the entire district revolves around the university.

That is not to say that the district does not have far reaching connections to the rest of the city. In fact the opposite is true. It seems these days that everyone and their dog wants a piece of the university, although few want to pay for the privilege. When you have the greatest institute of learning, knowledge and research in your city, it is more than understandable that you would want to take advantage of it in order to further your own ambitions.

The greatest of those that take advantage of the university is of course the Merchant League. Every Patriarch of every trade family of note has passed through the university before they took the reigns of their respective family. Of course, being the heir to a trade family in the Merchant League means very special treatment. None of the heirs ever failed a course and each had all the private tutoring they could need. Wealth grants the rich special privileges and they use to great effect in education.

The second greatest to take advantage of the university is the government itself. Whether it is the constabulary, the various branches of the military or even the senate itself, the government regularly calls on the university for advice from its philosophers. It also hires these professors to teach the officers of the constabulary and military, and even some senators, in order to create a more efficient and higher quality police force, military force, and government.

With all of these patrons, it means that a lot of money flows into the university, and when they have money, it eventually trickles down to the rest of the district's businesses. The small stores and shops are utterly dependent on the wellbeing of the university and when it prospers, so do they. It is no surprise then that they do

what they can to help it prosper, whether it is by convincing students to continue their study or by telling friends and family to tell their friends and family to spread the word of the university. They know that should the university ever fall, they won't be far behind.

MIDDELBURG UNIVERSITY

The greatest centre for learning in eastern Jytoh, or so the students and scholars at the university claim. Whether this is true or not is up for some very spirited debate, but what is true is that it is the only university in Alfresia and because of this simple fact it is one of the most important institutions in the nation. Should anything happen to the vast sum knowledge contained in its walls, the entire country would be worse off.

If it exists within academia then Middelburg University (or the University of Middelburg if you are feeling fanciful) can teach you about it, whether it is theology, mathematics, philosophies both natural and metaphysical, economics and even politics. Yet, as with all universities, Middelburg University has its own speciality, that one thing that is best known for across the academic world; and that is runology, or the study of the runes and arrays.

The university was not built with this area of study in mind nor was it planned in any sense, it was merely a natural evolution of the university and the city itself. The runes and arrays infest nearly every facet of our modern lives and this is mirrored in the university as every course, topic and subject it offers to students involve the arrays in some form or fashion. Whether it is understanding the rocks and soil beneath our feet or learning about the winds and stars above, the professors utilise the runes and arrays far more than any other known university. Because of this, Middelburg University has often been called the Runic University.

While it will, in all likelihood, always champion its department of runology, the university has a broad range of departments and

THE IMPERIAL ALPHABET

00 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
A B C D E F G H
I J K L M N O P
Q R S T U V X Y
Z a b c d e f g h i j
k l m n o p q r s t
u v w x y z

The Imperial alphabet is the predominant alphabet used on the continent of Jytoh, at least by the eastern nations, including Alfresia. Like nearly everything else from the Heavenly Empire of Man, this alphabet is a fusion of characters drawing from many sources. It is mainly based on the old Dayitic runes used in the time of Bür, but also draws inspiration from the archaic Rimien alphabet as well as from the Westerners.

For ease and simplicity of reading, none of the writings in the Ruined Man saga will be in the Imperial alphabet, but take note that this is the alphabet used by the people of Middelburg, at least by those that are literate. If you make use of hand outs during your games, you may write some of them in Imperial to show that most footmen are illiterate and writings mean little to them.

And as examples, "Middelburg" is "Tröoxdämp"; "footman" is "b+h+l"; "Alfresia" is "p+x+b+m-o-r-o"; "Bür" is "d+m"; "The Ruined Man" is "Nqo Mrlod Tol"; "The Ruined Age" is "Nqo Mrlod ppo"; and "The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog" is "Nqo T r k n d m t s l b t q r l l a y s o m n q o x o w l o t o".

schools of thought and has grown to such a degree that it occupies most of the Universitas District. Where it was once one single building four centuries ago, it is now a haphazard collection of campuses and buildings spread across the district. If you are studying the Botanical and Animal Philosophies, you might never even walk past the School of Thermal and Geological Studies as they are so far apart.

While it does have its fair share of pride, the university does hold a secret it dearly wishes everyone would forget about; and that is the Merchant League Institute of Research.

As with half of the city, the grand old Middelburg University was destroyed during the mad king Markus' siege of the city. Less than half of the tomes and books were smuggled out of the great libraries before his forces burnt the university down. Only a few shells of buildings remained standing. The School of Botanical and Animal Philosophies reside in one of these. The rest of the university had to be rebuilt, new professors employed and students coaxed back to come study and pay the university.

The Merchant League stepped up to the plate and paid for everything the university leaders wanted, but there was a catch: the new university had to be named the Merchant League Institute of Research. The first two decades were... unpleasant, shall we say, for the professors as the nascent Merchant League used the university as a workhouse to create new inventions for it to sell. The university became a farce of a learning institution and the professors and scholars did all they could to save it.

They did, in the end, by enlisting the help of the religious leaders, the politicians and even the military to put pressure on the Merchant League to stop this academic oppression. The now freed university took less than a day to rename itself the University of Middelburg, distancing itself from both the League and from the old, destroyed university of days past. It flourished with its new found freedom (even though the Merchant League still pays for most of its upkeep), but most folks still call it the

Middelburg University instead of University of Middelburg, much to the ire of the university leaders, although they can't argue that the name does have a history, a legacy and a certain prestige about it that they can use to their advantage.

Thus while the current university is less than a century old, it has its roots, quite literally in some cases, in the institution created over four centuries ago with the weight of all that history comes a wealth of knowledge to be used, hopefully, for the betterment of Middelburg, Alfresia and the world.

DEPARTMENT OF RUNOLOGY

The apple of the university's eye and its star performer. The department of runology is the university's largest department and receives more funding in a year than some smaller departments and schools see in a lifetime. It is what the university is known for and the reason why most foreign students come to the university and thus the professors and scholars here are afforded nearly every privilege in order to keep them here and keep the money flowing in.

The department of runology as we know it today began like a poor joke. An abbot, a merchant and a scholar walked into a tavern. They were there to discuss the future of the world, and to become a tad intoxicated, and they walked out of the tavern richer, and more intoxicated, men by far; and the department of runology was opened the very next day.

These were the Abbot of the Monastery of the Eternal Rune, the Patriarch of the van Rosedaal trade family, and the Chancellor of the University of Middelburg. It was during the transition between the Merchant League Institute of Research and the University of Middelburg. The Chancellor had gotten the government and military to put pressure on the League to free the university, but the League still wasn't convinced

CRAFTY COURIERS

Who wouldn't want a secure and anonymous way of sending messages? Well, that's exactly what the dovecotes of Middelburg are after years of neglect by the bourgeoisie. However, it's not as easy as simply tying a letter to a pigeon's leg and letting it go. You first have to know a specific someone who uses a specific dovecote, know which pigeons go to that dovecote, then you have to know which code that footman uses and if they even know about you. In short, to use this underground network, you first have to get into that underground network.

This is fodder for roleplay, in playing through the course of finding your criminal mentor, learning the ropes and expanding your nefarious network. This can be done through getting friendly with criminal handlers and employers, or having NPCs along with missions. It will of course, start off small, with just one or two contacts at the dovecotes across the city, but through these contacts you will be able to learn more dovecote-using footmen, and if you play your cards right and drop the right hints they might even find you first.

Once you have a few contacts, you can start working towards building a true Dovecote-Network, full of semi-anonymous Contacts ready and able to be used. Through this, and roleplay of course, you will be able to ask your newfound network of footmen across the city for information, assistance in a mission, or even if they have equipment or safehouses available. Always remember two things: pigeon post may be secure, but it is very slow, so be patient; secondly, just because you know them and ask, doesn't mean they will always say yes, you are dealing with criminals after all.

it was in their best interest. This meeting changed all of that.

Rather than appealing to the League's sense of morality and charity, of which there are none, the chancellor arranged a secret meeting with the Patriarch he felt most amenable to change to appeal to the League's sense of greed and ambition. The inclusion of the abbot was to show the Patriarch the gravity of the chancellor's plan and that he had the support to see it through. Keeping the Patriarch's glass full all evening certainly didn't hurt his chances either.

He told the Patriarch that, rather than being a subsidiary of the League, the university could be a willing partner. Giving it free reign would encourage freedom of thought that would lead to greater innovation, something the League could take advantage of. What's more, the university would create a department to focus entirely on

the future, to focus on extracting as much out of the runes and arrays as possible and marry this to technology. The department would begin with the best experts and greatest breadth of knowledge in the world to give it the best chance of success: its first professors would be monks from the Fellowship of the Runes.

Whether it was the eloquence of the chancellor's words, the merits of his plan, or the volumes of rich brown ale he drank that night, the Patriarch agreed to the chancellor's request and made his way back to the League to confer with other Patriarchs. The chancellor and the abbot, however, stayed long into the night, discussing what they would do now that their futures were in their own hands.

What they created has become iconic of the Alfresian spirit. It's professors are not seen as dreary

scholars but daring innovators. The residents of Middelburg are more familiar with the names of these professors than with the local politicians and are more apt to listen to the former than the latter. The power of the arrays is the power to alter reality and these professors know the secrets of the arrays and thus reality itself.

While not every new piece of technology in the city came from the department of runology, the vast majority did come from here, or from past students, or from business partners of the department, or based on research that stemmed from here. With the runes and arrays involved in every facet of life, it pays great dividends for every tradesman and craftsman to take an interest in the latest developments that the department uncovers and discovers. That is where the true allurements of the department comes from: to put the academia of the runes into practical application for the betterment of humanity.

The department of runology has its sights set on the distant future and is doing all it can to get there, come hell or high water.

LAST RESORT PUBLIC HOUSE

They say that there are only two things in life that students are good at: studying, and drinking; and we have far more proof of the latter than the former. Students drink. They drink a lot. In fact, there are few professions whose members drink more than students. Sailors are perhaps the only one that comes to mind. Barring them, the students at the university hold the dubious honour of consuming more alcohol per capita than any other demographic in the city.

And, as with everything else in the city, the merchants capitalised on this. On nearly every corner and on almost every street in Universitas you will find a tavern, a public house or at the least a push-cart selling alcohol; and they are

always well frequented. There has never been a recorded case of a tavern or public house closing due to lack of business. Plenty have closed due to damage done during drunken brawls and celebrations, but never to a lack of customers.


With so much product flowing, quite literally, into and out of Universitas, one would think that the emblems of the Merchant League would be plastered across the district. However, the Merchant League have, for once, taken a hands-off approach. Other than a few taverns and public houses being part of one the League's guilds, there is no sign or sight of the League anywhere in the district.

A university is a place of freedom of thought, of critical thinking, of reason and logic, and the League is well aware that the students, scholars, and professors would see through any amount of flattery, advertising and deception they put forth should they exert their control on the district. Rather than face such a loss of face, and business, the Merchant League have decided to control the district indirectly.

The taverns, public houses and all manner of alcohol sellers may be independent, but their alcohol isn't. Nearly every drop of alcohol that comes into Universitas has passed through League controlled hands at least once before it touches the lips of a drunken student. The League expertly controls the flow of alcohol around the city, especially those coming from outside Middelburg, and this is no different in Universitas. The League does not have to control the taverns and public houses if they can control what they sell.

Many have said that the League manipulates the price of alcohol around the city for its own, and its allies, needs. Whether this is true or would take a great detective to solve, however it is true that the same type of alcohol can cost wildly different prices across the city, more than what a tavern would sell it for.

In Universitas, this manipulation takes on a more political tone. It seems, at least to those more attuned to the conspiracies that surround



us, that whenever a candidate sympathetic to the Merchant League stands in the senatorial, mayoral or presidential elections that the price of alcohol plummets across the district. Perhaps it is a coincidence, or perhaps the League is simply dulling the minds of Middelburg's best and brightest who would not vote for their preferred candidate.

While many an allegation have been made, the majority of students care little. They care only for their drink. One would think that all this drinking would prevent the students from finishing their courses, but they say it only strengthens their resolve. They say that a university would be akin to a prison without alcohol and this sentiment is exactly why the taverns, public houses and the League are so successful in Universitas.

UNIVERSITY SPORTS GROUNDS

Sport is not about fun; it's not about games. If it was, there would be no winners or losers and everyone would always enjoy themselves; and there would be no money to make from it. Oh no, sport is about competition, about battle, about winning, about sorting the men from the boys and the weak from the chaff. Sport is a serious business, and none take it more seriously than the university.

At a university, a great sportsman or sports team is a mark of honour, of dedication and of distinction, and so the University of Middelburg does what it can to encourage its students, scholars and professors to put down their quills and books and spend some time sweating in the sunlight. After all, what institution doesn't want to say it has the best marksman, the quickest runner, the strongest thrower, the most agile fencer or the brawniest pugilist. Often times this can be as important as having the most intelligent scholar.

The University Sports Grounds cater

to dozens of different sports but it is a dire indictment of the times we live in that the more "militaristic" sports hold pride of place on the sporting ground and in the trophy halls. Among the plebeians there is no greater single-man sport than sharpshooting and the bourgeoisie are enamoured with the noble sports of jousting and fencing. The other militaristic sports such as javelin and hammer throw meet a second place for the proles while the equestrian games are found to be a more genteel form of horsemanship than jousting for the patricians.

The groundskeepers of the university are adept at using the runes and arrays to craft and shape the sports grounds for any type of obstacle course or foot race, or create free standing ponds for swimming events. It is no surprise then that the annual inter-departmental athletic events attract audiences in their thousands to witness what amazing, devious and wonderful obstacles the groundskeepers have designed for the teams of athletes.

The greatest sporting event, however, has to be the Fresian Games, held every year between the four Fresian nations and rotates its venue each year to the next capital city of one of the four nations. When it comes to Middelburg's turn to host the Games, it is held at the University Sports Grounds. The games are always accompanied by a weeklong celebration for the city, but while the public are celebrating, the groundskeepers and leaders of the university are working and worrying.

A good Fresian Games means a good city and a good university, and that translates well into more students and more money for the university. However, should the games be a failure, the pool of students will dry up and the city will cut its funding to the university. It is perhaps the most stressful time of the four year period for the university, unsurprisingly. However, there has not been a "bad" Games at the university in living memory and the groundskeepers outdo themselves with the look and feel of the Sports Grounds

in order to impress their masters at the university, the lords of the city and all the foreign guests who to gawk and cheer for their teams.

VAN HEERDEN BOOKS & BINDER

You can't be a scholar, the scholars say, until you have published a thesis. That is what separates a student and a scholar. Whether this thesis is on the formations of rock deposits or the paintings of the Migratory Era Caels, once your name is on a book you have entered the hallowed halls of the scholars.

And standing guard at the gates to these hallowed halls is van Heerden and his books and binding store. The van Heerdens have always had a close connection to the university (throughout its history and in all its forms),

even from the days before the invention of the printing press and each book was written out by hand by faithful scribes. This close connection continues on to this very day, with the present Van Heerden as much a critic of a student's work as the professors.

Van Heerden Books and Binder is no by no means the largest printing operation in the city, nor even the best (that title belongs to Bert's Paper Store in Langehoven), but it has two qualities that every student loves: it is reliable and affordable. Van Heerden's is also the most recommended printing store by the university, with van Heerden tailoring his printing to the specifications of the university in order to increase his business from students.

While this is clearly good for business, it also puts van Heerden into a very powerful position. If he does not like a student's thesis, then he is well within his rights to refuse to bind and print it. It is, after all, his store and he can do what he




THE LAW OF LORE

Knowledge is power. In our world it is a trite saying and perhaps good advice for would be academics and politicians, but on the planet Ård in the Runed Age it is a law of the universe nearly as much as the Laws of Thermodynamics. It is a simple fact of life, but for many footmen on the streets of Middelburg it is a simple fact of life and death. Those who know more, live longer, but that doesn't mean you have to spend every waking moment with your nose in a book.

You don't have to be educated in order to benefit from the power of knowledge, you just need to know someone that is educated. Friends in academic places are often more valuable than friends in high or low places. This is often for one of two reasons: information on a mission, or runic arrays. It is quite obvious why having newer and better arrays would save your life, but always remember that the more information you have about your mission, the more choices you can make about how to go about doing it.

In the game, there are two ways about getting information from the educated and that is either roleplaying your character finding, and going to an academic, or simply going to a Contact of yours (if you happen to already have one in the academic field). Both of these do come down to one origin: getting to know the people who know what you don't, and that's the important bit. Whether it is a professor or the neighbourhood pimp, a politician or your local barkeep, get to know them and they will save your life.



wishes inside it. This has led the final “grade” of many students’ courses to be called the “van Heerden passing grade”. It is no surprise that the students do whatever they can do please van Heerden, because if he won’t print it, they must look across the city for a printer who would, and every printer who is of a quality with van Heerden is far more expensive.

This simple truth has led to a lot of corruption. Van Heerden receives more bribes per year than any politician in the city, and there is almost always a freshly baked pie or a small keg of ale waiting on van Heerden’s doorstep each morning. It is because of all these bribes that van Heerden can afford to keep his prices so low, but these are the more benevolent bribes, they are not the issue.

The issue comes from what the van Heerdens, and others in the know, call the ‘bidding wars’. Not every bribe goes to ensuring a thesis or scholarly work is printed. Many bribes come to van Heerden in order to stop a work from being printed. Most often this is from students who are competing in the same field or working on a similar thesis, each one hoping to have his work printed first. Other times, however, it is far more sinister.

Many times van Heerden has been approached, with a purse full of coins, by teachers and professors at the university who wish to see one of their students fail, and in their failure these professors would steal their research and claim the credit. Others are inventors and researchers from outside the university who wish the same thing, to steal research and will pay a hefty fee to see a printed book go missing.

The worst, of course, is the League, who has van Heerden on retainer, and pays him well to make them copies of any thesis that could make them money. This “shadow binding” service makes van Heerden a lot of money, and the trade families benefit more than the scholars who write these books ever could.

GREEN OAKS

◆ MIDDELBURG TRIBUNAL

◆ EIKENHOUT PARK

LAN SMUT SCHOOL ◆

CULLEN'S OBSERVATORY ◆

THE BLACK HOUSE ◆

200.M



GREEN OAKS



It is often called the most well known district in Middelburg that no one knows about. This is because Green Oaks is stuck in the middle of four great districts: the Political District, the League District, the Docks and Universitas. Being the quickest and shortest distance between these four districts means that thousands of people travel through Green Oaks each day, and yet like most of the “landlocked” districts, it is often overlooked by those who do not live here.

While it is mostly a residential district today and has been for more than a millennium, Green Oaks holds a dark and twisted secret from aeons ago. Before the eastern Dayitic tribes known as the Fresians crossed the narrow sea to the island we know as Alfresia, there lived a different people here on the island called the Eilanni. They were a strange people who carved glyphs into great freestanding stones and sang their histories to each other. They made necklaces by intertwining strings of carved wooden disks and worshipped dark gods.

The Black Hart and Blue Rose are not kind gods like Bür and the Heavenly Mother and Father, or stern like the monolithic god of the Neoists. No, they are far more “human”. Much like the Inhumans were twisted reflections of ourselves so were, or are, the Black Hart and Blue

Rose. The Eilanni gods were closer in personality to kings with supernatural powers than classical gods. If you served them loyally and gave the proper gifts then they would grant your wishes, if it served their purposes.

The greatest of all gifts to the gods are, of course, human sacrifice. To kill someone of your own species for the gods, especially if it is a loved one, is the greatest gift a man can make. For the Blue Rose, the mother of the sea, this was at the Tenne River or in the ocean itself, but for the Black Hart, the antlered hunter, lord of land and tree, there was a special place to sacrifice.

It was a small grove of oak trees just to the southwest of the Eilanni town of Bedin on the banks of the Tenne river. Here, hidden from the sun by branches of the mighty oak trees, were sacrificed all living things to the Dark Hunter. Beasts, birds, Inhumans and humans alike met their end here and the soil even began to take on a reddish hue due to all the blood spilt. The Eilanni called this place Roiakkir. Red Oaks.

When the Progenitorist Fresians arrived with their notions of civilisation and order, their soft hearts did not take kindly to this wilderness of blood and bone in the midst of the great civilisation they wanted

to create. After the elimination of the Eilanni faith and the ascendancy of the divine Būr after the Great War, the priests believed that everyone had forgotten about the Death Stalker and his skull grove, but the place seemed haunted and the ghost stories of the children of the gods remained. The Gius, the children of the Black Hart and Blue Rose that possess the living were a myth that would not die.

The priests began a generations long propaganda campaign to eradicate all traces of the Roiakkir in the Fresian culture. It was a fruitless task and everyone would remember those myths of the Midnight Stag, but eventually all forgot about the Red Oak, and the shrine built in a grove of oak trees to the southwest of the king's fort called Green Oaks. To this very day, only those who have read about the Roiakkir in dusty tomes in empty libraries know of the secret of Green Oaks, yet you can't dig down more than a metre in the district without finding suspiciously red clay or ancient bones.

Since those dark and ancient times, Green Oaks has truly become an area of the 21st century. Cobbled roads, well maintained sewers, buildings reaching three, four, even five stories tall watching over crowded streets and busy markets; instruments played on street corners while scholars debate philosophy over a glass or two at the local tavern; sinister wilderness has become educated civilisation.

The Black Hart, however, may not be done with Green Oaks yet. The Black House in Green Oaks is fashioned in his image and hunters flock to soak the land in blood again. It seems the old idiom is correct: you can take the man out of the wilderness, but you can't take the wilderness out of the man.

EIKENHOUT PARK

The park is the last of the Roiakkir grove from aeons past. Where Eilanni once performed human sacrifices to a dark and hungry god,


now families come to have picnics and youths bring inflated leather balls to throw around. As one of the few open green areas in Middelburg, Eikenhout Park is worth more than any amount of money can buy, made more valuable by its intended purpose.

Where other parks and gardens are merely there to be enjoyed visually by those without enough work to keep them busy, and where others are meant for quiet meditation, Eikenhout Park has become a space for friends and families to come and enjoy themselves. It has become the most well known recreational park in Middelburg. There are so few places in the city where one can simply enjoy oneself and so this park has become a treasure to many people.

However, not everyone can simply come and enjoy themselves here. As Green Oaks is situated between the Political District, the League district and Universitas, there are some very wealthy and influential people who have made this district their home. As they and their families visit Eikenhout Park quite often, they have made sure that the park stays as pristine as the lives they show to the public.

While this means that there are regular constabulary patrols who ensure the lovely people in the park are never accosted by criminals and other ne'er-do-wells, it has had the unfortunate effect of keeping out the poor and downtrodden. The wealthy with their clean and sanitised lives enjoy their park as sterile as they are and what right do the filthy underclasses have to sully their park, and thus their lives, in such an unkempt manner. While there is, of course, no law against being in the park, the poor know that the constables are well paid and can cause them more than enough trouble.

It is no hyperbole to call Eikenhout Park "sterile". The people of Green Oaks knew that they had only a quite finite area within which to create a park that suited them, and so to create the most space within this area in which to enjoy and have fun, they removed almost everything. Other than one, lone, gargantuan oak tree in the exact centre of the park, there is nothing but



well kept grass. No other trees, no lampposts, no pathways, no bench, absolutely nothing at all but grass. In years past, the ground was even levelled using runic arrays to make sure there no slope would get in the way of a well thrown picnic blanket.

The park may have a joyous reputation during sunny days, but at night is known for quite a different sort of crowd. With no lights or lamp posts nearby, at night the park is an ocean of darkness in a city of stars. The constables themselves are often wary of walking through the park at night, preferring to patrol the edges where the light still reaches. They keep out most folks of a malicious nature, but the old great oak, last of the Roiakkir, still attracts the hunting sort.

It's a poorly kept secret in the area that footmen and their handlers often use the great oak as a meeting place in the dead of night. With no one else around, and nothing behind which to hide should someone bring a torch, it is a fairly secure meeting locale. Meetings of other types occur here as well, some not as pleasant as others. Fortunately the constables are paid well enough to dispose of any bodies when the sun rises and before the good people of Green Oaks spoil their delicate sensibilities.

There is no better metaphor for life in the Middelburg. The wealthy push the poor into the corners of society so they can keep their lives pure and clean, yet in the shadows and when the sun sets the monsters of society show civilisation's true colours, and it is all swept up before the wealthy know what happened.

IAN SMUT SCHOOL

A university does not exist in a vacuum. You can't go to a university and expect to be taught everything about the world from the ground up. You need a foundation on which to start building this knowledge. You need to know your letters and numbers, your grammar and addition, your subtraction and division and a host of other topics that are a prerequisite for a university

education. That is where a school comes in.

A school is there to teach you how to read, write and do simple arithmetic. Once you have mastered these simple tasks the world will be your oyster. After this you can expand your education by finding any book you want and read it to your heart's content. However, that is not to say that the few schools that exist in Middelburg stop at reading, writing and arithmetic. Far from it.

History, geography, the basics of philosophy and even religion is taught in schools as the learners progress up through the years. In Middelburg, the history and geography is of course focussed predominantly on Alfresia and special attention is given to the War of Independence and century since then. The philosophy that the children are taught are elementary things such as that clouds are made of water and that the world revolves around the sun. Anything more is left up the children's parents and the children's own discretion.

Recently there have been efforts made by the government to have schools teach children how to properly use the runes and arrays. As the world slowly turns from one ruled by military might to one ruled by economic might, the Alfresian government is keenly aware that it now has a chance to become a dominant power, even though it is such a small nation. Having a runically literate population is the first step in realising this goal.

While an entirely runically literate population would be phenomenal for Alfresia, it is unfortunately not possible. That is because it costs a great deal to put a child through school, and seeing as schooling is not compulsory for all children, this means that the majority of the population would not never set foot in a school as a student. The poorer residents of the city are mostly unable to do basic arithmetic and are illiterate. There is a reason why so many taverns, inns and stores in Oldtown and other poor areas use mainly pictographs and runes to show their wares.

Similarly, the very rich also never set foot in a school, preferring to educate their children via private tutors who are often professors at the university who supplement their income through the vanity of the rich. Schools are often seen as the demesne of the growing middle class.

In Alfresia, school is most often a five year term for children, beginning when they are nine or ten and thus lasting until they are fourteen or fifteen. It never lasts until adulthood so as to give the teenage children a few years to learn about the world through apprenticeships at stores, workshops or guilds and gain skills before they set out on the unknown journey of life. Similarly, younger children are often needed at home to look after infant siblings and help around the house, and so the starting and finishing ages for school is set to best suit the needs of the public.

MIDDELBURG TRIBUNAL

Not every court in Middelburg deals with criminals just as not every grudge a person holds against another has to do with crime. In fact, most cases heard in Middelburg are of the civil nature rather than the criminal, and this is where the Tribunal Judges, or Tribunes, come in. It is their role, and the role of the Tribunal Courts, to see that these civil cases are handled in a civil manner, before it can escalate to crime.

Cases of a civil nature come in two very distinct flavours that should come as no surprise to anyone acquainted with the city: civil cases of the rich and those of the poor. Other than the grandeur of which court either class goes to, the amount of time the judges deign to give the arguing parties, and how much their barrister (if there even is one) charges, the types of cases each class brings to the Tribunal is wildly different.


For the wealthy and the powerful, the cases they bring before the Tribunes are most often suits of a technical variety. They come to argue how much a share of the inheritance each heir should be given and how the land and properties

are to be divided; or they argue how great a percentage of a store, business or guild each part-owner should be given; or they even come to argue matters of taxation law and how they, of course, should be exempt from it. There is no true case to be heard, as it all deals with the technicalities of the law, and so is merely more work for their barristers and the Tribune to deal with so that the arguing parties can scrape together a few more coins.

The poor, on the other hand, come with their hearts on their sleeves, growls in their throats and emotions writ large across their faces. To them, the Tribune is there to settle their disputes, disputes which could not be settled by them, their local constable, priest or barkeep. So they come to the Tribune before one of them ends up with his head caved in. They come to settled matters of divorce, of adultery, of fatherhood and of friendships broken and families torn apart. They come to argue whether possession is indeed nine tenths of the law and if what a man does behind closed doors ought to remain there. For the poor, it is not about legal technicalities and loopholes, and mostly it isn't even about the law at all. For the poor, the Tribune is a figure of authority, objective and reasonable, there to come to a decision that they themselves could not.

While the rich do offer a more modern look on civil matters, it is actually the poor which are using the Tribunal Courts in the manner for which they were originally intended. The Tribunes are a holdover from when Alfresia was part of the Empire, and is one of the few good things the Empire ever did. The Tribune was originally the court of the poor. The dukes, kings and emperors were far too busy reigning over their kingdom and keeping the nobles happy to deal with their peasants, and so the Tribune was created to be their voice and ears among the common people.

Anything a peasant wished to bring before their liege lord would instead be brought before the Tribune to be sorted out, while the rich nobles had the ear of their liege lord all to



themselves. Thus for a very long time in Alfresia, and elsewhere in the Empire, the Tribunal Courts were the only type of courts in the lands. In many of these lands it would be the local priest, bishop or Patriarch that would hold the office of Tribune and so the Tribunal Courts were also de facto Religious Courts where matters of blasphemy and heresy could be settled.

It would take many centuries for the Tribunal Courts to become what they are today (a court controlled by the government and set forth to deal with non-criminal cases brought from one citizen against another) but it would seem that, with the bourgeoisie in Middelburg, the role of the Tribunal Courts are changing again. Today it seems that the Tribunal Courts are to become a court where technicalities on legal matters are debated like philosophy rather than decisions made in the interest of the public good.

CULLEN'S OBSERVATORY

Never once has the question been asked: "Are we alone?". The answer has always, of course, been obvious: "No, because once there were seven sapient species on this very planet". The human race had never felt alone in the universe, but that was of little comfort. Knowing that there were seven species on this planet alone, the question quickly became: "How many more are out there?".

It is an unanswerable question, but the curiosity of mankind is boundless, and man has always looked up the heavens, hoping, praying, wishing for a sign from that inky blackness; a sign that perhaps, only perhaps, something was looking back. What mankind would do on that fateful day when the abyss indeed stares back, none can say, yet man still looked, still searched, and it has paid its dividends.

Every sailor, every explorer, every military scout worth his salt knows the major constellations and how to navigate by them. The stars are more than a curiosity and a pretty painting in the night sky. They are a valuable tool

for humanity to use to find his place in the world, to find his time in the world and, for some, to find their future in this world. It is because they are eternal and predictable that have made them so invaluable to mankind, even in this age of technology and innovation.

The field of astronomy is an ancient one, stretching back to the first man who used the stars for navigation. It has become so much more since then, with networks of astronomical scholars across dozens of universities sharing their research and building a vision of what the cosmos looks like, from this world's own satellites, to our solar system, to the universe at large. With every year that passes and every book published, more dots are connected, more holes in our knowledge are filled in and the world is better for it.

It was only 61 years ago that an astronomer transformed the way we look at the world and the cosmos. Humanity had always known they sat on a spherical globe, but it took this unnamed astronomer from the heart of the Heavenly Empire of Man to show us that the world revolves around the sun and not the other way around. The fact that we do not live in the centre of the cosmos meant absolutely nothing to the common man on the street, but it shook the foundations of the rich and powerful who no longer ruled the cosmos.

And now that we no longer resided in the centre of the cosmos, it meant we were no longer special, merely one more world drifting in the void, one of perhaps many. It renewed the interest in the cosmos and sent a whole new generation of astronomers looking for answers. One of these, a Cael by the name of Gerard Cullen, petitioned the University of Middelburg to renovate its ageing observatory in Green Oaks and bring it into the new era.

With funds from his noble family in Ullacht and connections among the Middelburg bourgeoisie, the newly named Cullen Observatory was the envy of Jytoh's eastern coast. Sitting on top of a seventy metre tower, the

observatory rises above the smog and clamour of the city to peer into the void nearly unaffected by the mortals scurrying below. Middelburg, however, is a powerful and envious creature and it made sure the builders of the observatory paid attention to it.

To the city dwellers there are plenty of stars, but to those in the rural areas of the island the stars are uncountable. Why such a difference? Because light is as polluting as smoke and smog. A city of a million souls creates enough light to create a false dawn for ships coming in from the west, and it is this light which dims the stars themselves much as the sun does during the day. An observatory in the heart of the city would seem to be madness then, but the builders had a clever idea.

Using the runes, the builders designed arrays to block out the light in a cone shape around the observatory's giant telescope. This cone stretches for hundreds of metres, ensuring that the light from the city had no effect on the views the telescopes have of the night sky. When the arrays

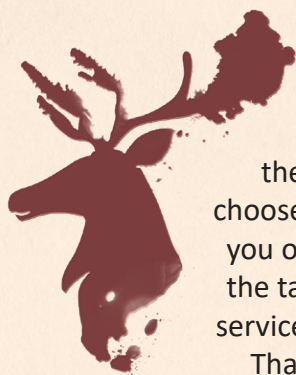
are activated, it looks from the ground that a great sword had suddenly cut straight through the sky, leaving only utter blackness in its wake. It might be discomforting to the people below, but such an inconvenience is nothing next to discoveries to be made in the name of astronomy.

THE BLACK HOUSE

The Black House doesn't exist. That is a simple fact. You won't find a single soul in the city who knows where it is, although many a drunkard in a tavern will have claimed to have been there. Rumours and hearsay are all that exist, but the Black House does not. That is an unequivocal fact. A fact that is repeated ad nauseam to every footman starting out on their criminal career. And there is a very good reason for this.

People who go looking for the Black House vanish. No one knows how or where, if they are even alive or not, but they are never heard from again. Their lives as well seem to just vanish.


THE BEAT OF THE BLACK HART



The Black House doesn't exist, and if you go looking for it, neither will you. That can't be overstated. If you want to play as a member of the Black House, you won't be a footman anymore, you won't be free to choose what jobs and missions you do anymore and you will lose any Contacts you once had, because you no longer exist (although new Contacts aren't off the table). If you play as a Black House member, everything you do will be in service to the Onyx Hunter.

That is if you can even join them. There is no sign-up sheet and the interview process is more lethal than you would expect. GMs, if your players seem interested in the Black House, you can start them on a series of dangerous missions, nearly all involving assassinating well protected persons, all given by a handler the PCs never see, they will only ever get the handler's messages, and monetary rewards, in places they wouldn't expect (like their homes, on their seat at a tavern, hidden in their coat pockets).

If the PCs have survived all the trials that you deemed necessary to show their conviction, the last message will simply say "The Black House waits". The last trial is for the PCs to find this place that doesn't exist. Through their contacts and chasing every rumour they can find, they need to get themselves down that ladder in the alleyway in Green Oaks in front of that bronze door to give the phrase, a phrase that you would have inserted in one of the numerous messages the handler gave them. Once through the door and sent stark naked through the Send array, their lives now belong to the Midnight Hellion.



After they disappear, so do any document that ever bore their name. It is as if they are erased from existence. All that remains are their friends and families' memories of them, and sometimes even this is erased. None have ever admitted to being bribed, threatened or blackmailed to purposely forget a friend or relative, yet many would swear before whatever gods they believe in that they suddenly never had a brother, sister, spouse or best friend.

Even though every half-decent footman knows never to go looking for the Black House, the curiosity remains. Does it truly exist? What does it house? What does it do? And why, why does it do it? Questions that would forever remain unanswered, at least to the wrong person.

If the Black House did exist, it would reveal itself only to the right sort of person, and the right sort of person would have no morals and a sense of loyalty that could not be broken. That is because the Black House would only reveal itself to those it would want to recruit, and once you are part of the Black House you can never go back to your old life. If you were chosen by the Black House, you would become one of the vanished and your whole world would shrink down to the Black House.

If the Black House did exist, its entrance would be found down a hidden ladder, in an alleyway in Green Oaks. At the bottom of that ladder, you would find yourself in a small room faced with a single, heavy, aged bronze door. It would have no handle, visible hinges, or other means of opening it. If you were to say the correct passcode, the door would swing open and reveal another featureless, unlit room. The only thing inside this room would be a bronze array sunk into the stone floor. All this array would do is runically transport a human somewhere across the city if at least one pint of blood is spilt.

If you were to give this offering of blood you would find yourself stark naked inside the Black House, if it did exist, that is. You would never know where the Black House is; even its residents don't know where it is, all they know

is that it is somewhere underneath Middelburg. With no windows or doors to the outside world, the complex would be as hidden as a grain of sand in the desert.

The residents of the Black House would be a strange lot. Never numbering more than a dozen, they would be a brooding and somber people, but that is to be expected if you didn't exist anywhere but in one underground lair. They would come from all walks of life, ages and sexes, from across the known world, united only in their sense of loyalty to each other and to the Black House. While they would be mostly reverently silent in the House, they would be able to tell you their story.

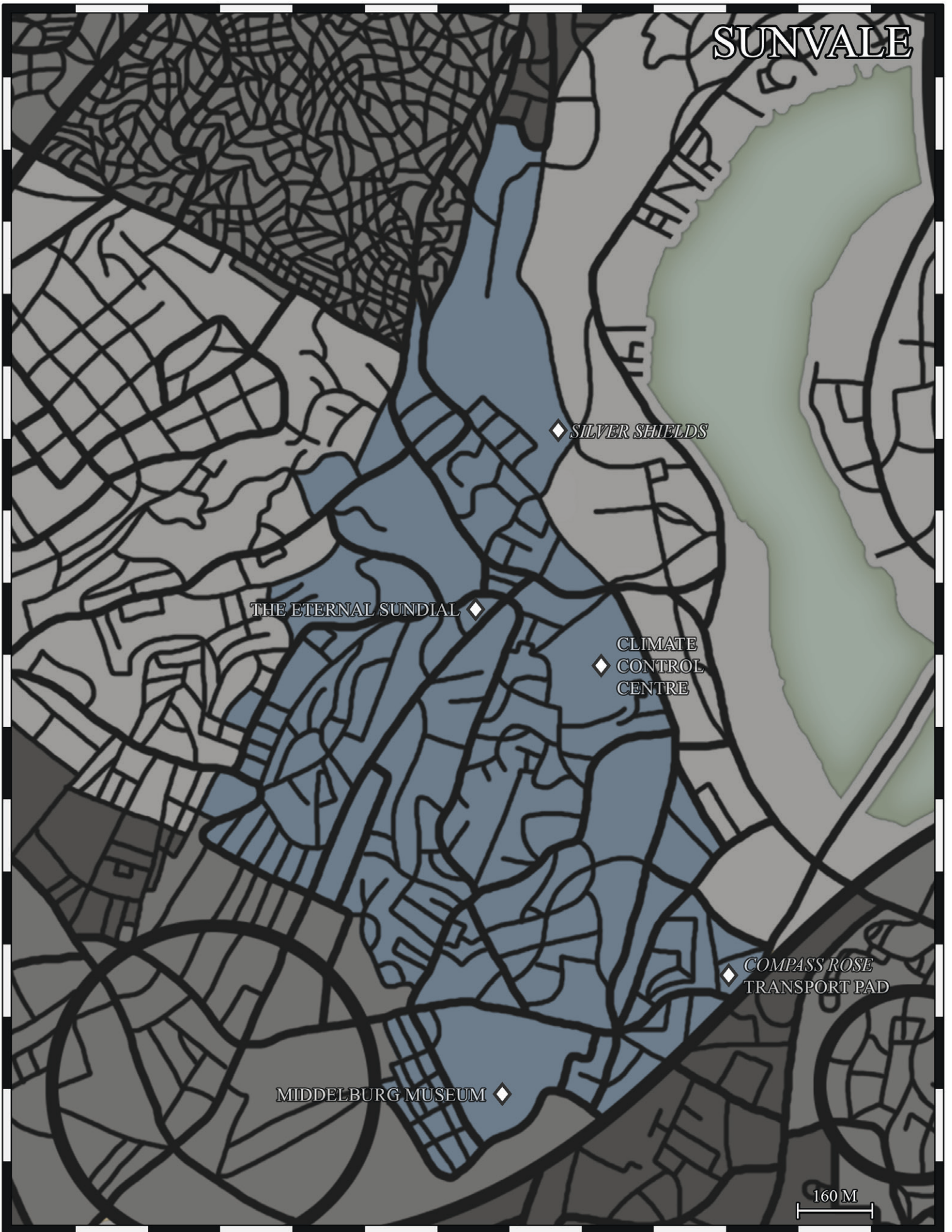
The story behind the Black House, if it did exist, would be that worship of the dreaded Black Hart never stopped, not before the Great War and not one year since. While the resurgence of the Eilanni faith on the surface may have been the "return" of the Death Stalker's public worship, down here it never stopped. It continued in secret after the Fresians came, lurking beneath the surface, but influencing the outside world more than anyone could know.

Worship of the Onyx Stag means one thing: human sacrifice. In the Black House, when they offer human lives to the Antlered Doom they do so in its entirety. Body, mind, soul and history; they give everything and leave nothing behind. But they don't sacrifice merely anyone, oh no, they are very selective of their sacrifices. They offer only those as morally repugnant as they are to the Abyssal Fiend, men and women who make the world a worse place simply by existing.

They are, in their own way, a small force of justice in the world, avenging the wrongs done to those who cannot defend themselves. And they know that one day they too will stand before the umbral altar and breathe their last in service to their dark god, sent to serve him in the afterlife as they do in this life.

That is all, of course, if the Black House actually existed.

SUNVALE



◆ SILVER SHIELDS

THE ETERNAL SUNDIAL ◆

◆ CLIMATE
CONTROL
CENTRE

◆ COMPASS ROSE
TRANSPORT PAD

MIDDELBURG MUSEUM ◆

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SUNVALE



Middelburg sits in between two mountain ranges, hence its name, however the valley in which it is located also has a name, or rather it used to have a name. These days, the area around Middelburg is simply referred to as the Middelburg Canton, however before Alfresia ever became a republic, and before Middelburg ever became as large as it is now, the valley was once called the Valley of the Sun.

As the years rolled on and language evolved, the name would eventually be shortened down to Sunvale before disappearing entirely as the city of Middelburg kept on growing. For a short while, however, the Valley of the Sun was a place of adventure and danger, where the feral wilderness was right on the city's doorstep. Leaving the city was an expedition, where you could meet the savage Eilanni or the brutish Ogres. Nature was untamed and wild, as was everything that lived within it. The Valley of the Sun had deep, dark forests and imposing cliffs, powerful rivers and enchanting meadows. Later authors would look back at this time and see the Valley of the Sun as a small piece of paradise.

Then, of course, humans did what they do best: they tamed the wilds. They built their cities and towns, connected them with roads, and surrounded them with farmlands. The

wild Valley of the Sun was gone, replaced with the peaceful and quaint Sunvale. Here, the neighbours all looked out for one another, and cared for any traveller that would walk past. The pasture was good, the animals healthy, and the people happy. Nothing much happened in Sunvale, and that is how the people there liked it. No one bothered them, and they did not bother anyone.

But the city at the other end of the vale kept growing, and soon it was the "city down the road", and then "the city next door". After that, people just called everything around it "the city" as well. Soon enough, the only people who referred to the valley region as Sunvale were the elderly that could still remember that the name held any real meaning, and scholars who argued about the region's place in history. To everyone else, it had simply become "Middelburg and its surroundings".

The name hung around, though, being seen here and there in various texts and notebooks, and when the Grand City was formed and its regions divided into Districts, the name cropped up again for some unknown reason, and thus the Sunvale District was born. Unlike many other districts, Sunvale did not have

a rich history full of traditions. It was simply a place to live and work in. Much like the Valley of the Sun, the district used to be empty land, and then the city swallowed it up and now it is teeming with people.

While it did not start off with its own identity, it has certainly grown into one. The Climate Control Centre has for the most part been the cornerstone of the district, providing sufficient work for the area's men, and enough business to keep the district ticking over, but it is Sunvale's propensity for art that has brought the district some much needed attention. However, unlike Park West's bohemian debauchery, the art of Sunvale is respectful, tasteful, and understated. It has class. The Museum holds the best artwork outside private hands, and most people who come to Sunvale come because of it. The Eternal Sundial is a far more modern art piece, but one that shows off the engineering marvels that Middelburg can create. Beyond these, Sunvale hosts the most public statues and sculptures of heroes and figures of history in the entire city. Perhaps because it did not have an illustrious history, or in spite of it, the people of the district have done much to ensure that Sunvale's future is as beautiful as its present.

MIDDELBURG MUSEUM

There is quite the controversy amongst curators about what a museum ought to be. They are definitely collections, everyone can agree upon that, but collections of what? The very idea of a museum as a collection of items for public viewing is fairly recent in Jytoh, but nearly all nations on the continent's east coast has at least one of them. However, none of them can quite agree what they are intended to collect and display.

The Nacitanian and Vallion museums are filled with art pieces donated and lent by their nobility, the Delkan museums are filled with statues, monuments and relics of their tumultuous history, and the Tolian museums

hold so many books that they might as well be called libraries. All of these collections are important, at least to their respective cultures, yet other than the name "museum", they share very little in common. As with most things in Alfresia, the Middelburg Museum takes a cosmopolitan approach to its collections, showing a bit of art, a bit of history, some philosophy and naturalistic displays, and everything in between.

Safeguarding our history from vandals is ensuring our future is protected from the ignorant.

~Prince Mikael Drucomnis

One may think that such a highly regarded public institution had its origins in one of the old Archdukes and their love of the Alfresian people, but in this instance the Archdukes were the villains of the story. The Middelburg Museum, or at least its building, was owned once upon a time by the van Rosedaal dukes of the north. This Ducal family, not to be confused with the more modern Merchant League family of the same name, were the rulers of the city of Rosedaal before their downfall and kept a mansion in Middelburg for when they had business with the Archduke.

This mansion was rarely used and when it was used, after the dust had been swept away, it was only for entertaining the other nobility and the Archduke himself. Thus, it was brimming with all sorts of paintings and sculptures, antiques and archaic relics, anything and everything that showed off the wealth and power of the northern Dukes. It worked just as intended, and even after the slow decline of the Dukes' fortunes, the other nobility still thought of them as the rich and decadent rulers of the north.

When a humble and pious man inherited the Ducal throne, he changed all of this. Better to graciously admit one's shortcomings, than be prideful before the inevitable destruction. However, he could not insult his ancestors by selling off their artistic fortunes to the public, and so he did the next best thing: he invited

INHUMAN REVENANTS



The Inhumans are dead, and humanity reigns alone... but that isn't entirely true, is it? Even within Middelburg there sits one of the few Riusdyr that still live, and in the mountains to the east of the Grand City is the last great Ogre Reservation where these mammoth beats can roam free.

But surely that's it, right? Perhaps. In the dark heart of the southern continent, there have come some concerning rumours: the Kwendyr never actually died out. These apelike creatures, often heretically called cousins of humanity are said to be commonly seen by the southern natives, and more than one colonial merchant have told tall tales of seeing a Kwendyr in the wild, although thus far it has remained just that: rumour and tall tales.

If the Inhumans were really back it would be an existential crisis for humanity. The last time they had any power they nearly wiped mankind off the face of the planet, and it was only by the grace of Bür and his divine runes that we survived. Because of this, any rumour of Inhuman activity other than the Ogres are investigated by agents of the Alfresian Intelligence Service, with orders to shoot first and ask questions later.

This is a perfect opportunity for a Runed Age campaign that is different to anything you'll find in the city. By working for the AIS Inhuman Hunters, you'll go on missions that feel closer to Science Fiction media and investigating extraterrestrials, because even if the Inhumans are from this world, their way of thinking is so alien to humans that they may as well be true aliens.

the public to come in. For a while, the mansion was available to rent and lease to anyone who wanted it. The Duke's intentions were for the income from this to just pay for the mansion's maintenance, but soon it started turning a profit.

The profit was never enough to save the van Rosedaals, and when their family line ended in misery and disgrace, the Archduke took control of the Rosedaal Arthouse as it was called. The Archdukes never took much interest in it, until the last Archduke disbanded the nobility, and as a result most had to sell off their valuables to prevent themselves falling into debt. The Archduke was happy to take the art pieces off their hands, and used the Arthouse as a storehouse, and there they sat collecting dust.

Only after the Republic of Alfresia was formed, did someone take a look at the Archduke's Arthouse to see what was inside. The temptation to say there was nothing inside and simply lock the doors was strong, but better hearts prevailed and the government opened

the newly renamed Middelburg Museum to the public, to show that they cared more for the common man than the old aristocracy ever did. The fact that they knew they could make a profit from it, one they could keep out of the Merchant League's hands, had clearly nothing to do with it.

The modern Middelburg Museum is a motley collection of art pieces and naturalistic displays that grows by the day. It is no longer just the home of expropriated noble art pieces; in fact the majority of the displays are curiosities from across the known world, mostly donated to the government by dignitaries. Taxidermied animals from the dark southern continent, exotic weapons from Uttosia, lavish clothes and jewellery from the western side of the Jytoh Wastelands; you can find a little piece of the whole world right here. Just as Alfresia is the trade hub between the north and south, between east and west, so is the Museum a reflection of the movement of people throughout the globe.

CLIMATE CONTROL CENTRE

Meteorology has nothing to do with meteor, unfortunately. Instead, it has everything to do with studying the weather, and while that may seem drab and dull, for the men working at the Climate Control Centre, it is at once both the most interesting and complex thing there is.

It has not rained naturally in the Grand City of Middelburg for over three centuries, and you can thank the Climate Control Centre, or the CCC for short, for that. When you walk outside on the city streets, it is always a lovely sunny day with only a few clouds to dot the sky. At worst, you will have a grey, overcast day and a misty night, but natural rain is absolutely unheard of in living memory. It may seem a trivial matter, but that could not be further from the truth. The weather is more an art than a science, and keeping it just the way you want it is a full time job for a whole platoon of men.

At its simplest, and most basic, the CCC is a complex full of runic arrays that regulate the temperature, pressure, and humidity in the skies above and around Middelburg. If you get all of these correct, then you will have the exact weather you want, but getting these varying measures perfectly correct is the problem. The CCC has the best and most modern instruments known to mankind in order to determine the temperature, pressure, and humidity, but the accuracy of their instruments leave much to be desired.

To add to this, it was only twenty years ago when a Nacitanian philosopher invented the barometer. Before that, the only tools that the workers of the CCC had were their own senses and their experience. As such, controlling the skies above Middelburg is more art than mathematics. You have to “feel” the air around you in order to change it, and an incorrect adjustment could spell disaster for the city’s weather. However, the CCC has an unbroken record of three centuries, and that means that


they are doing their job well.

To say it has not rained naturally in Middelburg for three centuries is to put the emphasis on “naturally”. It does rain in the city, in fact it rains precisely once every five years unless the need for rain arises. If it never rained, all the filth and grime on the streets and buildings of the city would build up until Middelburg looked and smelled like a cesspit. Thus, to wash the city clean, the CCC organises a great deluge to occur every five years, working for months to get the climate just right for the occasion; and then frantically hurrying to stop it at the end of the day to prevent it raining for the next month.

“Rain Day” has become a tradition to celebrate in the city, with many people making as much of a mess the day before with excessive drinking and riotous fireworks, knowing that everything will be washed away the next day. On Rain Day itself, the entire city closes off, with everyone making sure they have left nothing outside and that their homes are waterproof. The constables and military police even do a patrol of the city to ensure that everything is clear, because once the rain starts, everything left in the streets will be swept away. Not everyone listens, and every year bodies are fished out of the river and the harbour, along with a great mountain of rubbish.

Sometimes, if the weather just does not want to play along, the CCC will simply create an ocean of water above Middelburg, truly creating an artificial deluge to wash the city clean. They have to be careful, as the last time they attempted this, many roofs and a fair few buildings were crushed under the weight of the water falling from above.

The CCC are not just caretakers of the weather. They play an important measure in the defence of the city. During both the Independence War and the Zeerijk War, the CCC used their mastery over the weather to create thick fog to obscure the city’s defenders from the invaders’ cannons and muskets. When Markus VI’s forces started burning the city down, it was



the CCC's rain-making abilities that prevented the entire city from going up in flames, but unfortunately they could not save the eastern part of the city.

For the majority of the populace, controlling the weather is as esoteric as the fairy tales of magic, and the men of the Climate Control Centre are pleased to be known as the Weather Wizards of Middelburg.

COMPASS ROSE TRANSPORT PAD

It should come as no surprise that the more religious a fellow is, the more he tends to believe in a divine plan for not only his life, but for the world as well. This is particularly egregious amongst the Runists and Seekers when it comes to the runes, and the reasons why Būr only revealed to us a certain number of them. We have discovered far more runes than what Būr originally gave us, so why did he only give us those few runes, and specifically: why the transport runes?

Many philosophers have said that the Send and Receive runes are the under-appreciated treasures of the runic arrays. They are so often overlooked, but in the right hands, and for the right task they can become spectacularly powerful. Their one drawback, and it is the one that causes most men not to use them, is that they can only affect what the runes can target. No mixed materials, no alloys, nothing that we do not have a rune for. Thus, physically travelling through them means doing so naked, unarmed, and unable to defend oneself from the unknown potential dangers on the other side.

This is not the sole reason, or even the greatest reason, why runic travel has not become mainstream, but it has been the reason why no serious research or investigation into the safety of runic travel had ever been done. This changed with the advent of the Lightning rune. Now that the Send and Receive arrays could have a stable

and secure means of power, more thought was put into the affair.

The Compass Rose Transport Pad began as an experiment by Runists, with funding from the van Rosedaal Trade Family, to see if it would be possible to create a stable network of transport arrays between cities that would be both feasible to operate, safe to use for the travellers, and profitable for the Trade Family. It began simply enough in an empty warehouse in Sunvale, bought by the van Rosedaals, in which there was only a single Send array and a Receive array. These were linked to arrays in the city of Rosedaal in the north, and for the next year and a half, the Runists were kept busy to perfect the transportation.

How can we be sure that the man stepping into the transport array is the same man that steps off it?

~Professor Jan Potgieter

It was not merely out of pride in their craft that took the monks so long to find the right answer. Instead, it was pressure from Patriarch van Rosedaal that prevented them from stopping their work before they reached perfection. He wanted to make money off the transport pad, and if it was not as safe and reliable as the monks promised, he knew that the first death or mangled body would mean he would forfeit all of his investment. There had been many people in history that tried to perfect this, and they all left a trail of bloody corpses behind them. The Patriarch would not add his name to that ignoble list. Thus, he kept the monks working, and while they toiled away, he had his labourers transform the warehouse into a grand looking terminal while he himself convinced the other Trade Families to buy into his scheme.

When the Compass Rose Transport Pad was unveiled to the public, it was already linked to similar pads in Rosedaal to the north, Windburg to the south, and Strandfontein in the east. Whenever they wished,

customers could travel in a blink of an eye to and from each of these cities, if they could afford the exorbitant fees that is. Yes, they would still have to do so naked, but the Patriarch had lavish changing rooms built into the Transport pad, and attendants waiting on either side to ensure that no customer would have to be exposed in transit. This eased the fears of the bourgeoisie, and with the mechanics and engineering of the transport pad hidden from view, it seemed to them as if nothing had happened, when they had already travelled hundreds of kilometres.

When a customer enters the Transport Pad terminal, and they have paid their fee, they are escorted to a private changing room, asked which of the three cities they wish to travel, and then left alone to disrobe. A lamp inside the changing room turns green (through carefully crafted coloured lenses), and when it returns to normal, a different attendant enters with clothing the customer had ordered. Then the customer leaves the changing room and the terminal, only to find that they are in a different city.

What had actually happened is that the terminals, and everything inside them, in each of the four cities had been built to look exactly the same, down to the last details. The Merchant League did not want its customers to even know that they were being teleported around the island, to ease any fear the customer might have, and to make the transition as smooth and clean as possible.

Behind the scenes, the attendants from all the cities are in near constant communication, via their own transportation arrays that only transport sound, so that they can coordinate the teleportation and arrange the clothing and affects each customer needs on the other side. This communication is crucial, as each transport has its own elemental code on the Send and Receive runes, meaning each transport is a unique array. If this was not done, any man could discover the code used for transport, and hack into the network with their own arrays, and transporting anything they wished into the transport pads,

potentially maiming or killing the League's customers. The only way to prevent this is to have mechanical, gear driven arrays underneath each changing room that can be altered by the attendant with each transport, to ensure their customers arrive safe and sound.

The Compass Rose Transport Pad has only been in operation for a few months, but it has already paid off the League's investment in that short time. It has few customers, as only the very wealthy can afford it, but the convenience and ease of using the transport pads is enough to keep those few customers coming back.

SILVER SHIELDS

There are two types of men in the world: those who work with the Merchant League of Alfresia, and those who do not. You may say that the latter group are more principled than those sucking at the teat of corruption and greed, but you definitely cannot say they are the wealthier of the two groups. A man may have to sell his soul to the League, but the League certainly does pay well for it. So what are those men to do if they do not wish to work with the League?

The Merchant League wants you to believe that there is nothing you can do outside their purview and authority. They want you to believe that they have always been here, and will always continue to be. Both of these could not be further from the truth. The League is merely a century old, and even though it has consumed nearly every trade practice and guild on the island, the traders and merchants of Ooston at least show that it is possible to survive, and even thrive, without the League.

Doing business is one thing, however, but what about if you want to protect yourself? The League has the Golden Talons on retainer, but the rest of us? Of course, there are always footmen, but not everyone wants to bet their lives on the loyalty of criminals. For those with enough money, there is a third option: the Silver Shields.

TO BOLDLY GO...



No one can say with a hundred percent certainty what happens with a runic transportation between a Send and Receive array. All that have been discovered thus far is that the process is instantaneous and that you do move from one array to the other, but that is it.

This sliver of ambiguity, this gap in the knowledge of transportation, is how you can introduce nearly anything to the world of the Runed Age, or introduce the magic of the Runed Age to any other setting.

After all, since no one truly knows what is going on, who is to say that something or someone from a different world can't accidentally end up on a Receive array in Middelburg; or that you can step onto a Send array in the Grand City and never reappear on this world, but find yourself standing on an entirely different world.

In short, if you have ever wanted to do a cross-over campaign, this is how you can work it into the narrative. You can take the runic magic of the Runed Age to any other setting by having someone jump across with the knowledge, or just see how your party of criminal footmen would fare in a different universe. You can do it as a one-off adventure, a filler episode in your campaign; or you can transition completely to a story of world-hopping adventurers.

Or if you are playing in a different world and want to start a game in the Runed Age, you can bring your characters along, approximate their stats in this system, leave their old magic behind and see what the fish out of water can do in the Grand City of Middelburg.

For as long as men have been assaulted, kidnapped and assassinated, there have been bodyguards to prevent this from occurring. For the nobility, they could afford to have knights and champions of valour protect them from evil, but for everyone else it was a choice between opportunistic mercenaries and greedy criminals. The Merchant League changed all this when they showed that you can turn protection into a profit when they let the Golden Talons be hired by whomever had the deepest pockets.

As the Golden Talons' fame as a protection service grew, they drew in many former soldiers into their ranks, seeking their own fame and riches. Some old soldiers had better principles, however, and chose not to work for the League. Still wishing to put their skills to good use, and make a decent living, they formed the Silver Shields in direct competition with the Golden Talons.

The Silver Shields brand themselves as being homegrown, independent, honourable, and

trustworthy. Everything they claim the Golden Talons are not. What you see is what you get with them: former soldiers, seamen and constables applying their hard-earned skills to keeping the people of Middelburg safe... at a cost that is. Their appeal to the emotions and nostalgia of the wealthy elite in the Grand City paid off, and the company has done well for the past half century of its existence. It cannot hold a candle to the Golden Talons in terms of manpower and revenue, but for a small independent outfit, they cannot complain.

In recent years, even the larger players in Middelburg have started to take notice of them, and it is no longer a rare sight to see a Silver Shield walking around the Political District or Nieuton, escorting some bourgeois politician or statesman. Even the Merchant League has, from time to time, used the services of the Silver Shields when they needed someone impartial within earshot that would not tell the Patriarch van Windburg everything

that has been said. The rich and powerful have begun taking notice of them, but it has come at a cost.

With their reputation growing, the Silver Shields no longer just protect others, they now have to protect themselves. More than one team of footmen have tried to assassinate the leaders of the company, and such attacks are becoming more frequent. Unlike their League counterparts, each man the Silver Shields lose is difficult and costly to replace. It is a slow battle of attrition the Silver Shields hope that they can win.

The Golden Talons themselves have also taken to smearing the names of prominent Silver Shield soldiers in order to scare away potential clients. With the tensions and hostility high between these two groups, more than one brawl and shootout have occurred in the alleyways of the city, making life worse for all involved. Whether the Silver Shields can survive the next few years is anyone's guess, but if there was ever a group with the skills, experience and talent to do it, it would be them.

THE ETERNAL SUNDIAL

Before the invention of the mechanical clock, there were many ways people kept time and none of them was particularly accurate. The sun, however, is one of the great constants in life, and even its progression across the skies throughout the seasons, it does not require extensive experience to keep track of the day by seeing where the shadows lay. As such, almost every culture developed their own type of sundial to formalise and standardise this method, and even today many towns and villages across Alfresia still have an archaic sundial in their village squares; as ornamental as they are useful.

There is a fair bit of romance and spectacle with a sundial that one simply cannot have with a mechanical clock. How can a few gears and a pendulum compare with the majesty and grandeur of the sun? The mechanical clock may be technically more accurate, but there is more


to life that bland mathematics. Surely something could be done to improve on the sundial to bring it into the modern period.

Ironically, it was a clockmaker that eventually came up with a solution, one that could marry the technical accuracy of a mechanical clock, and the romantic nostalgia of the sundial. At the end of the day he was merely doing it to increase his own reputation, hoping to bring in more wealthy clients to commission his clocks. However sordid his motivations were, it was a grand success, and not only for his own betterment. The Eternal Sundial has become Sunvale's most memorable feature, earning the pride of the entire district, even if the people were hesitant about it at first.

Sunvale originally had a magnificent sundial that was the centre of its grand square. This sundial dated back to the formation of the Heavenly Empire of Man, and while no one truly used it for keeping time, the historic significance of it could not be overstated. Thus, when the clockmaker approached Sunvale's Alderman to remove this piece of history and replace it with a modern mechanical contraption, people were understandably upset. Even when the Alderman's palms were greased in order to make it happen, the clockmaker and his apprentices faced a great deal of hostility when they tore down the historic sundial. More than one apprentice never returned for a second day of work, being too afraid of Sunvale's residents.

The clockmaker pushed on, however, and kept a small retinue of footmen around him to keep the fragile peace. It was an uphill battle, but when all was said and done, he won the people over with the sheer spectacle of the Eternal Sundial.

The Sundial is a gargantuan mechanical contraption, built of gold, bronze, silver and more mirrors than one can count. No one but the clockmaker is quite sure how it works, but the gears within it can turn and tilt the arrays of mirrors to always be focussing on the sun, regardless of the time of day or even the season. These mirrors then reflect the sun's light onto floating golden numbers around the great



sundial in such a manner that these numbers appear to glow. The Sundial even manages to keep track of minutes and seconds, and the runic arrays that control it emits a sound at each quarter of an hour, and even rings like a bell at each hour.

The machinery of the great clock is exposed for all to see, and watching the gears and arms turn and move can be a performance all on its own. This is not to say that the machinery is able to be tampered with. On the contrary, runic force fields in the style of the Middelburg Standard array keep out nearly all types of materials, even humans, so that nothing can come close to the machine's exposed parts.

What the grand square of Sunvale lost in terms of historic significance, it more than made up for in this display of modern genius.

MISSION 7

The Case of the Disturbed Professor

SYNOPSIS

This mission takes place seven weeks after the last and that means it has been nine months since Mission 1 and the campaign started. Nine months is a significant number, because just like a pregnancy takes 9 months, this mission will see the PCs uncover clues about the origins and birth of the Ruined man.

While Mission 5 was the investigation mission, and Mission 6 was the action mission, this mission will be the horror episode. Mad scientists, secret societies, dark and dank laboratories, and even monsters will be in this mission to terrorise and tantalise the PCs. One thing to remember in this mission is to emphasise the creepiness of the scenes. Get the hackles on the players' necks rising.

Don't forget that by now, it should be very difficult for the PCs to move throughout the city without encountering something odd or nefarious and that trying to be social will be harder than ever. With this being Mission 7 every Random Encounter Roll will have a +24 bonus and each Social Skill Check will have a -18 penalty.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE MISSION PROPER IS AS FOLLOWS:

This mission starts off in a much more traditional fashion than the previous two and will be dark, mysterious, and have a touch of horror. Through one of their contacts, the PCs have received a note that mentioned a time, a place, and a promise of money. The PCs go to Eikenhout Park at night to meet who turns out to be a descendant of the mad king Markus VI who nearly burnt Middelburg to the ground a century ago. This new Markus asks the PCs to steal the royal sceptre of Alfresia. The sceptre lies in the vault of an underground laboratory, but when the PCs go snooping around they find it full of monsters. Should they ever make it out alive and back to Eikenhout Park, there will be an ambush waiting for them!

THE META-STORY IS AS FOLLOWS:

It's more than halfway through the campaign and the pieces are starting to fit together. This mission ties in directly with Mission 5 and the Ruined Man list. By now only two on the list still remain and one of them takes an indirect role in this mission. The question however remains: who are these people on the Ruined Man list? What connects them to each other and to the Ruined Man? This mission answers some of that by giving you more questions. Professor Edmund von Richthofen has brought back the Inhumans through some esoteric fashion only he knows. It seems he has also done this with many other types of creatures. What does this have to do with the Ruined Man? Can this perhaps answer what ties the people on the list to each other and to the Ruined Man?

OVERVIEW

SCENE 1: THE BRIEF:

- ▶ Takes place at night in Eikenhout Park with Markus de Brant from Corebook short story.
- ▶ PCs mission is to steal the Archduke's sceptre from Professor von Richtofen at the University
 - » Name is from Ruined Man's list from Mission 5.
- ▶ De Brant wants to reclaim the throne and promises to make the PCs nobility.

SCENE 2: THE LEGWORK:

- ▶ Two areas:
 - » University grounds and von Richtofen's office are unmapped and provide only contextual information
 - » von Richtofen's laboratory is underground and has the vault with the sceptre.
- ▶ Clue is living Inhumans.

SCENE 3: THE MISSION:

- ▶ NPCs, both civilians and constables will be

around university and nearby throughout mission.

- Inhumans attack while inside laboratory.
- Logic puzzle to unlock vault.

SCENE 4: THE COMPLICATION:

- Takes place back at Eikenhout Park.
- De Brant is missing and other Monarchists ambush PCs for the sceptre.

SCENE 5: THE DEBRIEF:

- No true debrief and no true reward.
- PCs will, however, still have the sceptre... if they survive that is.

SCENE 1: THE BRIEF

The PCs are waiting underneath an ancient oak tree in a deserted park in the middle of the night. The atmosphere is dreary and somber. A figure dressed in black and hiding his face steps toward the PCs. This man turns out to be descendent of a mad king and wants to reclaim what is his, the kingdom and madness both.

If there is anything you should emphasise it's the mystery of it all. Alone in a deserted park with only this disturbed man? No one will reach them in time should they need help and they will never know if more black clad men are hiding on the fringes of the park. The PCs should be on edge by the end of the scene.

NARRATE OR PARAPHRASE THE FOLLOWING AS APPROPRIATE:

"The nights have become far too quiet these days," you think to yourself as you sit on a bench beneath the gargantuan oak tree in Eikenhout Park. The curfew had been lifted over two months ago and still few choose to wander out into the darkness, but it is not the constables they are afraid of anymore, it's each other.

Every day that the Ruined Man goes uncaptured is a day the citizens of Middelburg trust each other less. "He is one of us," is a phrase


you have heard quite often these past few weeks. One of the million souls in Middelburg is tearing apart the very spirit of this city. He seems to be everywhere at once and nowhere at the same time. No one can find him, yet there are sightings every week, and his grisly works have become commonplace. Last night you read in the paper that his latest victim was one from the list you found several months ago. Only two names remain.

More and more citizens have turned to crime as the terror has continued, and not the wholesome, decent sort of crime you indulge in. Petty theft, muggings, rapes, assaults, murders, everyone seems to have gone mad. People talk without speaking these days and hear without listening. Their eyes are always fixed on one another, judging each other, wondering if they are going to attack them that night; wondering if they are the Ruined Man.

But perhaps it is just this place which has made you so melancholy. Eikenhout Park is one of the few open green areas in the city and the park is utterly flat and empty except for the grand old oak under which you sit. No pathways, no lamps, nothing but the darkness and sound of the wind. It is an ocean of darkness within a city of lights, and as you watch those faraway lights, you realise just how alone you truly are here.

The moonlight glittering through the branches and leaves above you is almost peaceful, but you know that peace to be a lie when you see a figure approach. Time for work. At least your handler isn't late. You know nothing about your handler or the job tonight other than that. The note you received was infuriatingly vague, only promising riches beyond your imagination for stealing a worthless trinket. It can't be as easy at that, it never is, but with the state of the city being what it is, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush" has become a popular saying among your kind.

You finish your philosophical thoughts as your handler comes within speaking distance. Dressed in black from his hat to his boots, he would be nearly invisible if it weren't for the full



moon tonight. The only thing about him that stands out is the masterfully crafted hilt of his sword. Inlaid with fine leather and orichalcum, and studded with gems, you start to wonder just what sort of man this is.

Your curiosity is quickly sated when he says, without so much as a 'hello': "My name is Markus de Brant, last true heir to King Markus VI that once ruled this island a century ago. One day, my compatriots and I will reclaim what my ancestor lost, and tonight you will help us take one more step along that journey. All you need to do is steal one piece of art from a private collector, and for that I will make you wealthy beyond your dreams. What say you?"

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY MARKUS DE BRANT:

- Information freely provided:
 - » The sword was made for his ancestor Markus "the Incendiary" VI of Fresland.
 - » The "piece of art" is the sceptre of the old Archduke of Alfresia. Markus will say: "It is utterly worthless to anyone not of my blood. It is mine by right and I shall have it."
 - » The "private collector" is Professor Edmund von Richthofen, Professor of Botanical and Animal Runism at the University of Middelburg.
 - The Professor is the same Asst. Prof. E. v. Richthofen from the Ruined Man's list in Mission 5. If this is not immediately obvious to the players, you can gently remind them of this piece of information.
 - Markus has no knowledge of the Ruined Man's list.
 - » The sceptre is housed in the basement of the Professor's laboratory, which is itself in the basement of one of the University buildings. Markus will give the PCs the exact address.
 - » The sceptre is blue and gold coloured orichalcum inscribed with the image
- of the Alfresian sea lion.
- » The Professor is currently in the city of Rosedaal speaking at a philosophical conference and will return at noon in two days time. The PCs have until then to steal the sceptre.
- » Markus won't say if he is alone in the park, but he will imply that they are all being watched.
- » When asked about payment, Markus will say: "I know that your sort loves money more than the fat merchants in Nieuton, and if that is your desire then money you shall receive. However, I come bearing a much greater reward. One day I will be king and my compatriots will be the new nobility. If you return the scepter to me, when I am king, I will name each of you Freiherr/Freifrau. You will find no greater prize offered on this city's streets."
 - Freiherr/Freifrau is the equivalent of a baron/baroness.
 - Should the PCs not accept the offer of future nobility, Markus will offer money equivalent to a +60 bonus to Wealth Skill to each PC should they complete the mission successfully.
 - Markus will offer a quarter (+15) upfront but have brought half (+30) with which to haggle.
- Information that will require a Social Skill Check (additional to the -12 global penalty):
 - » +10 Social Skill Check will uncover that Markus is part of the Monarchists, a terrorist organisation in Alfresia trying to bring back the old aristocracy. These are the "compatriots" of which he spoke.
 - If the players played the introductory adventure in the back of the Runed Age Corebook,

they might remember the Monarchists as those who ambushed them at the end of the adventure.

- » -10 Social Skill Check will uncover that Markus is currently being hunted by the constables for the murder of a senator last year. That is why he doesn't want to do this himself.

Once all the questions have been asked or answered or if they PCs are taking too long, Markus will say: "Enough. You have what you need. Now go, for like my ancestor I am not known to be a patient man. Meet me here again at night when you have finished." And with that, Markus will once again stride off into the night without so much as a goodbye or acknowledgement to the PCs.

If this scene has carried on for a long time, it may well be a good idea to go over the key points of information with the players so they don't forget something vital that their PCs would have remembered.

SCENE 2: THE LEGWORK

Unlike the last mission, the PCs have plenty of time for legwork in this mission. As Markus said, the Professor returns to Middelburg in two days' time. This means the PCs could explore everything they need to and then go look for any equipment or help they require. They might, however, decide that travelling is far too dangerous these days (with the ever increasing bonus on the Random Encounter Rolls) and head straight in.

There are three locations to visit in this mission, though they are all nested within one another; so the PCs only need to visit the University of Middelburg to find all the necessary waypoints.

SCHOOL OF BOTANICAL AND ANIMAL PHILOSOPHIES

The Botanical and Animal Philosophies (BAP) are what we would call Biology today, and it is as old a practice in Jytoh, as it is in our world. As such, the School of BAP is one of the more archaic buildings on the University grounds. It was built around the time of the first king of Fresland and so bears a lot of Imperial and early Royal features such as grand archways and buttressed walls. It is built nearly entirely of creamy brown sandstone with dark granite supports, making the entire building seem like it was carved from rock.

The interior details of the School won't be mapped out as it is a grand five story building above ground filled with endless lecture halls, offices great and small, laboratories and dissection halls, storeroom after storeroom, and its own library. It is far too easy to get lost in the School if you don't know where you are supposed to be, and as such this mission won't be heading into the School proper at all. All the PCs need to know is that the entrance to the Professor's laboratory is located at the northeast corner of the building.

That is not to say that the PCs won't enter the School, hoping to find something of use. They do have free reign of their own fates, after all. Should they enter the School of BAP, this is what they will find:

INFORMATION GAINED FROM THE SCHOOL OF BOTANICAL AND ANIMAL PHILOSOPHIES

- The Professor's office is located on the top floor, the fifth floor, along with the offices of the other eminent professors.
 - » There is very little other than paperwork in his office, however along the walls in between books are what appears to be strange floating organs still pulsating with life. What organs are they and how they work are a mystery.

- » There are some scattered notes in the office regarding what transpires in his laboratory and this will be covered in The Clue section.
- » There is no mention of the vault nor a key for the laboratory or vault.
- In nearly every office the PCs will find the robe and hat of a professor or lecturer should they wish to disguise themselves.
- In the dissection halls the PCs will find medical tools of all varieties from scalpels to saws. Similarly, in some of the storerooms they will find hardware tools such as hammers, tongs, and screwdrivers.

How much the PCs find of any item and whether they get lost or not is entirely dependent on the modifiers you can put in the required Luck and Investigation Skill Checks. Since it is not strictly part of the mission, the severity of any modifier can be set to how well the PCs have done thus far. If the Random Encounter Rolls have taken their toll, then it would be best to make these Skill Checks fairly easy.

PROFESSOR EDMUND VON RICHTHOFEN'S LABORATORY

One of the perks that come with the title of Professor is the privacy one needs to do what must be done. The university relies on the innovations and research done by its professors to attract wealthy benefactors by showing them what wonders can be achieved at the university. Because of this, the university fervently keeps this research a secret, lest any other scholar steal it and claim the rewards themselves.

All the professors' laboratories are located in the basement level of the university on the northeastern side. A simple, unassuming door from the outer edge of the building leads to a stairway that will take the PCs down the basement level. This stairway itself leads to a windowless barrel vaulted hallway with thick bronze doors spaced evenly down this long

hallway. Each doorway is locked and inscribed with only a set of initials such as "I. T.", "A. M. D.", "K. N. S.", "G. W. T". These are the initials of the professors, each door marking their respective laboratory.

The door the PCs are looking for is labeled "E. V. R." for Professor Edmund von Richthofen. The lock requires a -20 Burglary Skill Check to pick, although for every half hour the PCs spend trying to pick it, reduce the penalty by +20. If the PCs spend more than 1.5 hours, then this becomes a +40 bonus per half hour. The PCs can always try and break the door down (though it is bronze and immune to being targeted by runes, as are the inside of the walls).

Once inside the laboratory, it will be as pitch black as the hallway, as it too, is windowless. Inside the doorway on the right is a lever that will activate the runic-electric lights along the ceiling. If the PCs choose to turn on the lights, they will find that the lights are intentionally kept dim. The PCs will also find that the walls are made of bronze that have begun to oxide and show its age, and that all the tables, desks and drawers are nailed to the floor. All the cabinets and chests have also been locked (requiring only a +10 Burglary Skill Check to unlock).

The reason for this, as well as everything they will find in the laboratory will be covered in The Clue section.

The laboratory is divided into four sections. The first is the workshop which occupies the most space and is the room the PCs enter into first. This is where the Professor does most of his work. Branching off from the workshop are the other three rooms. The lavatory contains a toilet, a bath, a sink, and an area to change clothes, while the storeroom houses all the spare materials a laboratory needs. As with the cabinets, the storeroom's wooden door is locked and requires a +10 Burglary Skill Check to open. The last room is the Professor's office. It contains his desk and chair, cabinets to hold all his paperwork, and the bronze door of the vault.

PROFESSOR EDMUND VON RICHTHOFEN'S VAULT

The vault is accessed through a bronze door in the Professor's office. There is no latch, handle, or keyhole on the door. What is inside the vault is not as valuable to the world as what is in the laboratory, but what is in the laboratory is the Professor's pride and joy and what is in the vault is his secret shame.

The vault can only be opened through a series of switches spread throughout the laboratory. There are five switches in total and they must be flipped on in the correct sequence for the door to open. There is one switch in plain view in each of the four rooms in the laboratory although these switches will at first have no apparent effect should they be used by the PCs. The fifth switch is at the back of the bottom drawer of the desk in the Professor's office. Unless the PCs specifically say they are looking in that drawer, it will require a -20 Investigation Skill Check to find it. For each PC that joins in the search per half hour, add a +10 modifier to this Skill Check.

The order that the switches have to be flipped on to open the door is: Lavatory, Office, Workshop, Storeroom, Desk. If the players do not figure out that these apparently useless switches are part of a pattern, then a +15 Investigation or Logic Skill Check should let them figure it out.

Of course, if the players can think of a way to force the vault to open, more power to them.

The vault itself is a small semicircular room, large enough only for the leather armchair and the racks on the walls filled with the Professor's collections. The sceptre is easily visible and apart from it, what is stored in the vault are mementos of death, suffering, and war. The Professor is not a mentally healthy man and secretly delights in what others despise.

Other than the many instruments of torture (both penal, inquisitive, and sexual in nature), the PCs will find artifacts of various wars and

battles. A bloody tabard from one of Duke Lukas' soldiers from the war 30 years ago, a burnt Alfresian flag from the War of Independence, a scrimshawed skull of a native from the southern continent, the flayed skin of a Uttosian rebel, a whip of a Neoist slaver, a piece of the Shield Wall drenched in Completist blood. This is what the Professor collects and what he hides from others.

The sceptre was collected because it belonged to the last Archduke of Alfresia and his death started the War of Independence. It holds no place of honour above anything else in the vault. It is merely one more memory of death and suffering to the Professor.


THE CLUE

The clue in this mission will give insight into the origins of the Ruined Man. The players will find a taste of this if they venture into the Professor's office on the top floor of the School of Botanical and Animal Philosophies, but the meat of the matter will be found all over the laboratory.

Other than a mountain of tongs and clasps, beakers and flasks, candles and runic burners, the laboratory contains the Professor's great work: the creation of life. The Professor has spent his entire career trying to create life... And he has succeeded. How? No one other than those poor dead souls on the Ruined Man's list knows how. That is one topic on which the Professor never kept notes. It was far too valuable to put to paper only to have someone steal it.

What the PCs will find in the Professor's office on the top floor of the School of Botanical and Animal Philosophies are floating plants. Underneath these plants are arrays which simply say to Float and Sustain Plants. A +20 Logic Skill Check will uncover to the PCs that these plants are not natural but have been created by arrays. A +0 Logic Skill Check will let the PCs remember that runically created plants, or any other living thing, cannot be kept alive after creation (they start to die and decay immediately) yet these plants seem to be in perfect health.

In the laboratory things take a turn for the



macabre. While there are still artificial plants, specifically in the lavatory and storage room, the workshop and office caters in the animal variety of biology. On almost every bench and table in the workshop, and even on the floor in between the benches there are arrays that Float and Sustain their Targets above them.

In most of these array fields the PCs will find organs and body parts of animals, humans and Inhumans, all of these will be alive and responsive. A human heart will be beating, a Froskdyr hand will clench if the PCs touch it, the heads of a proto-bear and a Riusdyr will snarl silently and their eyes will follow the PCs.

If the players don't immediately start drawing connections between this and the Ruined Man, you can tell them that they know from the newspapers that the Ruined Man often levitated body parts and kept them alive runically in much the same manner as these floating organs.

This, however, is still not the greatest of the Professor's treasures.

His greatest work, well second greatest, are the 2x PC numbers Sauddy and 1 Akkedyr in the workshop. These are whole body, unharmed specimens that are completely and truly alive. When the PCs first enter the laboratory and look at the Inhumans they will see they are alive but will appear catatonic and unresponsive to all stimuli. A -10 Perception Skill Check will allow the PCs to see that the Inhumans' eyes are following the PCs around the laboratory when they think the PCs aren't looking.

As with the plants in the top floor office, a +20 Logic Skill Check will uncover to the PCs that all these specimens in the laboratory are not natural but have been created by arrays. A +0 LogicSkill Check will let the PCs remember that runically created living things cannot be kept alive after creation (they start to die immediately) yet these specimens seem to be in perfect health. The Inhumans will spring into action at a set trigger and this will be covered in Scene 3 below.

Inside the laboratory, in front of the vault, inside the Professor's office is the most important

part of the clue, and one that the players won't have the roll for. On the desk, amongst all the papers and files, is a document titled "Creating Runic Human Constructs". Most of the 10 page document is drab and dull academic writings, but the gist of the paper is that it is an essay about how to create living breathing humans from the runic arrays, ones that won't simply die immediately upon creation. The essay specifically notes that it won't say how to do this, as it is the Professor's greatest secret, but it does give a few uses for such Runic Human Constructs: free labour, dangerous expeditions, and to be used as living expendable weapons in armies.

SCENE 3: THE MISSION

Since there is only one real point of interest on the map for this mission, the PCs will start the mission proper once they are comfortable enough. That means that you may have to move between this section and Scene 2 as the situation demands.

As Scene 2 has explored all the physical locations the PCs will go through in this mission, this Scene will cover the NPC behaviours. Markus has told the PCs that the Professor returns to Middelburg in two days at noon. Given that Scene 1 takes place at night it means the PCs have two nights and one and a half days to steal the sceptre before the Professor comes back. This means that the number of NPCs at and around the School of Botanical and Animal Philosophies and their behaviour will be different at day and at night.

CIVILIANS

AT DAY:

- The university is as full as it can be during the day when the PCs visit. There will be hundreds and hundreds of students, lecturers and professors, and many more workers, walking in

and around the School.

- It should be difficult for the PCs to be walking around unseen due to how many NPCs there are.
- If the PCs are not dressed in a respectful and formal manner, they will look out of place, doubly so if they are armed and armoured.
- While the School is technically open to the public, if the PCs are wandering aimlessly or loitering around, or entering lecture halls uninvited, the lecturers and professors will ask them what their business is and if not satisfied will ask them to leave.
- If the PCs assault any NPC or are caught breaking into any room or area, the constables will be called immediately. The same will be true if the same NPC catches the PCs loitering around or entering lecture halls that they are not enrolled at, and refuse to leave if asked to.
- No students or workers are allowed to go into the basement level where the professors' laboratories are, thus if any student or worker sees the PCs entering they will attempt to stop them and tell them they do not belong there.
- There will be no one in the barrel vaulted hall in the basement where all the entrances of the laboratories are, however, you can have a professor exit his laboratory at the same time the PCs are walking through the hall as a GM Intrusion.
- There will be no NPCs in Professor von Richthofen's laboratory.

AT NIGHT:


- There will be barely any NPCs at the School during the night. The only ones who would be there are students looking to get some extra credit, staff working overtime, and professor's marking grades late into the night.
- PCs should be able to walk around

much more freely and NPCs should only appear as GM Intrusions or if PCs fail Stealth Skill Checks at crucial times.

- While there are less NPCs at night, they will be much more eager to call the constables if they spot armed, armoured, and mercenary looking persons skulking around the hallways of the School.
- As for entry to the basement and to the Professor's laboratory, apply the same guidelines as during the day.

CONSTABLES

- The constables will only be an issue for the PCs outside of the laboratory. The laboratory is sealed and soundproofed so anything they do inside will not be noticed. The heavy bronze door and walls will also protect the PCs from the constables, until they have to leave of course.
- Because the university is such a valued asset to the government, the city, the League, and all the wealthy elite in Nieuton, the constables take a special interest in keeping it and its students safe and secure. During the day, once any student, staff member, or worker has gone to alert the constables they will not take longer than half an hour to arrive. At night, this can take anywhere up to an hour due to how few people are at the university.
- During the day 2x PC numbers constables will arrive to investigate the disturbance, but at night only 1x PC numbers will come. Once they arrive, they will begin looking for the PCs so the PCs' actions will determine how long the constables stay at the university and how intensive the search for them will be. If they keep quiet and remain unseen after the constables arrive, the constables' visit will be over quickly. However, if they keep being a nuisance then the constables could well track



them all the way to the laboratory.

- If combat should happen between the PCs and the constables then roll a d100 after each PCs action. On a roll of 1, more constables have been called due to the commotion, and 2x PC numbers constables will shortly arrive to deal with the PCs.

INHUMAN SPECIMENS

- In the laboratory are 2x PC numbers Sauddyr and only 1 Akkedyr.
- The Inhumans are alive and conscious, but have been meticulously trained by the Professor. As such they have been trained to only attack once the vault has been opened or their own lives are in danger.
- Until those events trigger, the Inhumans will act catatonic and lifeless, as far as the world is concerned they are supposed to be nothing more than failed experiments.
- The Inhumans will be keeping a keen eye on the PCs and will be following their every move. A -10 Perception check will allow the PCs to notice the Inhumans' eyes following them around the room.
- The Akkedyr of old had a unique gift, they could get into the minds of others to such a degree that they could believe they were of another species. The Professor hadn't gone quite that far with his pet Akkedyr but has taught it to mimic human phrases much like a parrot. None of the Inhumans understand human speech, so to the Akkedyr the phrases are nothing more than meaningless sounds.
- The Akkedyr will say these phrases in a hoarse whisper, imitating the popular image of what a poltergeist sounds like.
- Whenever the PCs are all out of the workshop area of the laboratory, the Akkedyr will utter one of its trained phrases. The intention is to create

a sensation of horror in whoever trespasses into the laboratory.

- » If there is always at least one PC in the laboratory, you can have the Akkedyr speak one of its trained phrases whenever the PC is far enough away from it that the player will not be sure from where the voice came.
- You can use and create any ominous, creepy or threatening phrases to raise the hairs on the back of the PCs' necks, but here are some examples.
 - » "Who dares enter my realm?"
 - » "I have you now."
 - » "Leeeeeave."
 - » "I can taste your fear."
 - » "I desire blood, human blood."
 - » "No one will know you perished."
 - » "Do you think I will let you leave?"
- Once the Inhumans begin their attack, they will not stop until either the PCs or they are dead.

SCENE 4: THE COMPLICATION

There is no true debrief in this mission as the Complication takes care of that.

Once the PCs have retrieved the sceptre of the old Archduke they will presumably and eventually return to Eikenhout Park to meet with Markus at night as he instructed. Unfortunately for both Markus and the PCs, they will not find Markus waiting on the bench underneath the great old oak. Instead what they will find is an ambush.

When the PCs arrive at the great old oak in the middle of Eikenhout Park they will find a man dressed in black from his hat to his boots sitting on the bench underneath the great old oak. This man is dressed exactly as Markus was. Like Markus, the moon has cast a

shadow of his hat over his face. There is a key difference of course, this man does not have the sword of the Incendiary which the PCs can determine with a +20 Perception Skill Check.

Once the PCs come within speaking distance, this man will silently hold out his hand for the sceptre. If the PCs give it to him, the ambush begins automatically. Otherwise, they will of course converse.

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE MAN IN BLACK:

- He will only identify himself as Mr. Swart.
- Mr. Swart also works for the monarchists.
- If asked about Markus he will only say: "Markus is tied up at the moment, but I assure you he would do anything to be here tonight." Further questions in this regard will be met with a request for the sceptre.
- He will honour the deals Markus struck with the PCs. A successful Intuition Skill Check from the PCs versus Mr. Swart's Deception Skill Check will reveal this to be a lie.
- If asked if he is alone, he will say yes. A successful Intuition Skill Check from the PCs versus Mr. Swart's Deception Skill Check will also reveal this to be a lie.
- At any time if the PCs say anything about Mr. Swart lying, the ambush will begin.

Mr. Swart will demand the sceptre first before paying. If the PCs continue to refuse, the ambush begins immediately. If the PCs hand over the sceptre, the ambush begins immediately.

Mr. Swart will have brought 1.5x PC numbers (round up) Monarchists with him. Two Monarchists will be hiding in the branches and leaves of the great old oak tree above Mr. Swart and the PCs. If at any point the PCs specifically say they are examining the tree, it will take a -30 Perception Check (if they don't have a lantern or

other source of light) to see the black clad figures through all the branches and leaves in the middle of the night.

If there are more than two Monarchists, then the rest will be waiting on the outskirts of Eikenhout Park and will creep up behind the PCs as they approach the great old oak tree. If at any point the PCs specifically say they are examining the surrounding park, it will take a -10 Perception Check to see the black clad figures crawling through the grass in the middle of the night.

If the ambush happens before the PCs have caught on to what is going on, each Monarchist will have a free turn before you can start a proper combat turn order with Initiative.

Once the ambush starts, the Monarchists will continue fighting until they believe they are going to die and will then attempt to flee.


If the PCs win the fight and there are any Monarchists still alive and conscious, the PCs can interrogate them where they will tell the PCs that there is a split in loyalties in the Monarchists between Markus, descendent of the last king to rule over Alfresia, and a distant relative of the old Archduke of Alfresia. These Monarchists serve the latter and want to install him as king of Alfresia and not Markus. They believe Alfresia will never accept a descendent of the Incendiary but will rally around a new Archduke.

Because of the secluded nature of the park and it being the middle of the night, any constables will take more than an hour to arrive, long enough for the ambush to be over and done with.

SCENE 5: THE DEBRIEF

FOR THOSE PCs THAT WERE ARRESTED:

They will be taken to the constabulary or provosts gaols, stripped down naked, and thrown into the cells where they will in all likelihood



be forgotten. The constables have more than enough proof of the criminality of the PCs and the PCs should know that Markus and the Monarchists will never come to help them and even mentioning they are working with a known terrorist group will make the situation much worse. At the very least, they will be in gaol for the remainder of the campaign.

IF ALL THE PCS DIED

Once the last PC died, tell the players how a merchant ship sails into the Middelburg harbour. Owned by Captain Jan de Vis, the ship has come from Rosedaal carrying goods and cargo and one certain Professor named Edmund von Richthofen, on his way back from a conference. The ship came into harbour much later than expected and at full sail. The ship ignored all warnings and rammed straight into, and through, a pier.

Once the constables went on board they were met by a grisly sight. Every sailor had been strung up by his feet to the beams and masts of the ship and left hanging headless. All the heads had been collected in the captain's quarters, held suspended in the air by runic arrays. Poor Professor von Richthofen had been tied to the ship's figurehead, his rib cage torn open and his head stuck inside, forced to look out from inside his own body. Above his body, where his head once was, a rune was drawn in the Professor's own blood.

IF THE PCS SURVIVED THE WHOLE MISSION

There is no true debrief, no true closure for this mission. If the PCs survived, then they are left standing in a park in the middle of the night with dead men at their feet, no handler in sight, and a stolen artefact in their hands. Someone will eventually discover this grisly scene and report it to the constables, if the constables don't find it first. The PCs have to leave, but then what? That's up to the PCs to decide. They have been left hanging, they might not even have been paid, so it's up to them to set things right.

AFTERMATH

There are quite a few loose ends in this mission as it was an adventure of mysteries. First and foremost of these is the fact that the PCs are left with a valuable artefact and (perhaps) no payment. This could well turn into a mission as they seek some black market dealer to take it off their hands, while the rich descendents of the old aristocracy try to steal it for their own ends.

Of course there is also Markus who promised them nobility for their aid. Where is he now and what has the Monarchists done to him? The Monarchists themselves have a lot to answer for and a mission focussing on retribution in the shadows could make for an interesting tale.

Then there is the Professor, second to last on the Ruined Man's list. Due to arrive shortly in Middelburg. The PCs, if they are pure of heart, can try to aid the unwitting man before he reaches Middelburg and suffer a grisly fate at the hands of the Ruined Man. Of course, he is a dead man walking, and the Ruined Man doesn't take no for an answer.

Lastly, there are the Inhumans. For the first time in two millennia, the Inhumans walked on mortal soil. They are officially not extinct anymore, but what does that spell for mankind? And more important, are there more of them hidden in the city by the Professor? What will they do now that their master is dead?

NON-PLAYABLE CHARACTERS

CONSTABLES

Athletics	40	Intuition	30
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	50
Burglary	40	Logic	30
Constitution	40	Luck	30
Deceive	30	Might	40
Diplomacy	30	Perception	40
Drive	50	Shoot	50
Fight	40	Stealth	30
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	30
Intimidate	50	Will	40

RUNIC ARRAYS

- Middelburg Standard Defensive array on Cuirass, Helm and Quilted Jacket.
- Constable's Friend Offensive array on Pistol rounds and Billy Club.

EQUIPMENT

- Bronze Cuirass and Open Faced Helm (Strong Armour) covering Torso and Head Hit Locations.
- Quilted Jacket (Soft Armour) covering Torso, Arms and Legs Hit Locations.
- Bronze Billy Club (Medium melee weapon).
- Steel and Wood Pistol with lead rounds (Medium Near ranged weapon).

CIVILIANS

Athletics	35	Intuition	35
Broad-Craft	35	Investigate	35
Burglary	35	Logic	35
Constitution	35	Luck	35
Deceive	35	Might	35
Diplomacy	35	Perception	35
Drive	35	Shoot	35
Fight	35	Stealth	35
Fine-Craft	35	Wealth	35
Intimidate	35	Will	35

RUNIC ARRAYS

- In their day to day business, not everyone will be wearing defensive and offensive arrays.
- For Defensive arrays: roll a d100, if below 50 then the person is wearing the Middelburg Standard on their Arms, Legs and Torso Hit Locations.
- For Offensive arrays: if they are carrying weapons, roll a d100, if below 50 choose any offensive array from the Array Section at the back of the book. .

EQUIPMENT

- Miscellaneous articles.
- For weapons: roll a d100, if below 25 then the person is armed with a sword and pistol.

MARKUS DE BRANT

EXALTED NPC

Athletics	40	Intuition	30
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	30
Burglary	30	Logic	40
Constitution	50	Luck	60
Deceive	30	Might	40
Diplomacy	30	Perception	50
Drive	50	Shoot	40
Fight	50	Stealth	30
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	40
Intimidate	60	Will	70

SPECIALISATIONS

- › Fight Specialisation:
 - » Arming Sword - Skill Level 75
- › Logic Specialisation:
 - » Markus VI's history - Skill Level 100

RUNIC ARRAYS

- › Armour of Light Defensive array on all Hit Locations.
- › Bloodhound Offensive array on Pistol rounds.
- › Markus' Gift Offensive array on the Incendiary's Sword.

EQUIPMENT

- › Simple clothing covering all Hit Locations (No Armour).
- › Markus "The Incendiary" VI's golden and bronze arming sword (Medium melee weapon).
- › Steel and Wood Pistol with lead rounds (Medium Near ranged weapon).

SAUDDYR

Athletics	50	Intuition	30
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	30
Burglary	30	Logic	30
Constitution	40	Luck	30
Deceive	30	Might	50
Diplomacy	30	Perception	45
Drive	30	Shoot	40
Fight	60	Stealth	30
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	00
Intimidate	40	Will	60

RUNIC ARRAYS

- › None

EQUIPMENT

- › None, but natural scaly skin counts as Soft Armour.

AKKEDYR

Athletics	40	Intuition	100
Broad-Craft	75	Investigate	75
Burglary	50	Logic	150
Constitution	30	Luck	50
Deceive	80	Might	40
Diplomacy	70	Perception	75
Drive	40	Shoot	45
Fight	30	Stealth	70
Fine-Craft	75	Wealth	00
Intimidate	90	Will	150

RUNIC ARRAYS

- › None

EQUIPMENT

- › None, but natural keratinous skin counts as Sturdy Armour.

MONARCHISTS (INCLUDING MR. SWART)

Athletics	45	Intuition	30
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	30
Burglary	40	Logic	30
Constitution	40	Luck	40
Deceive	45	Might	45
Diplomacy	30	Perception	40
Drive	40	Shoot	50
Fight	50	Stealth	50
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	30
Intimidate	35	Will	50

RUNIC ARRAYS

- › Armour of Light Defensive array on all Hit Locations.
- › Bloodhound Offensive array on Pistol and Musket rounds and Cutlasses.

EQUIPMENT

- › Simple clothing covering all Hit Locations (No Armour).
- › Bronze Cutlasses (Medium melee weapon).
- › Steel and Wood Pistols and Muskets with lead rounds (Medium Near ranged weapon).

EDMUND VON RICHTHOFEN'S LABORATORY

VAULT

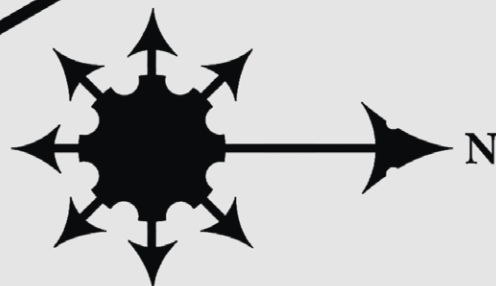
OFFICE

LAVATORY

STAIRS

WORKSHOP

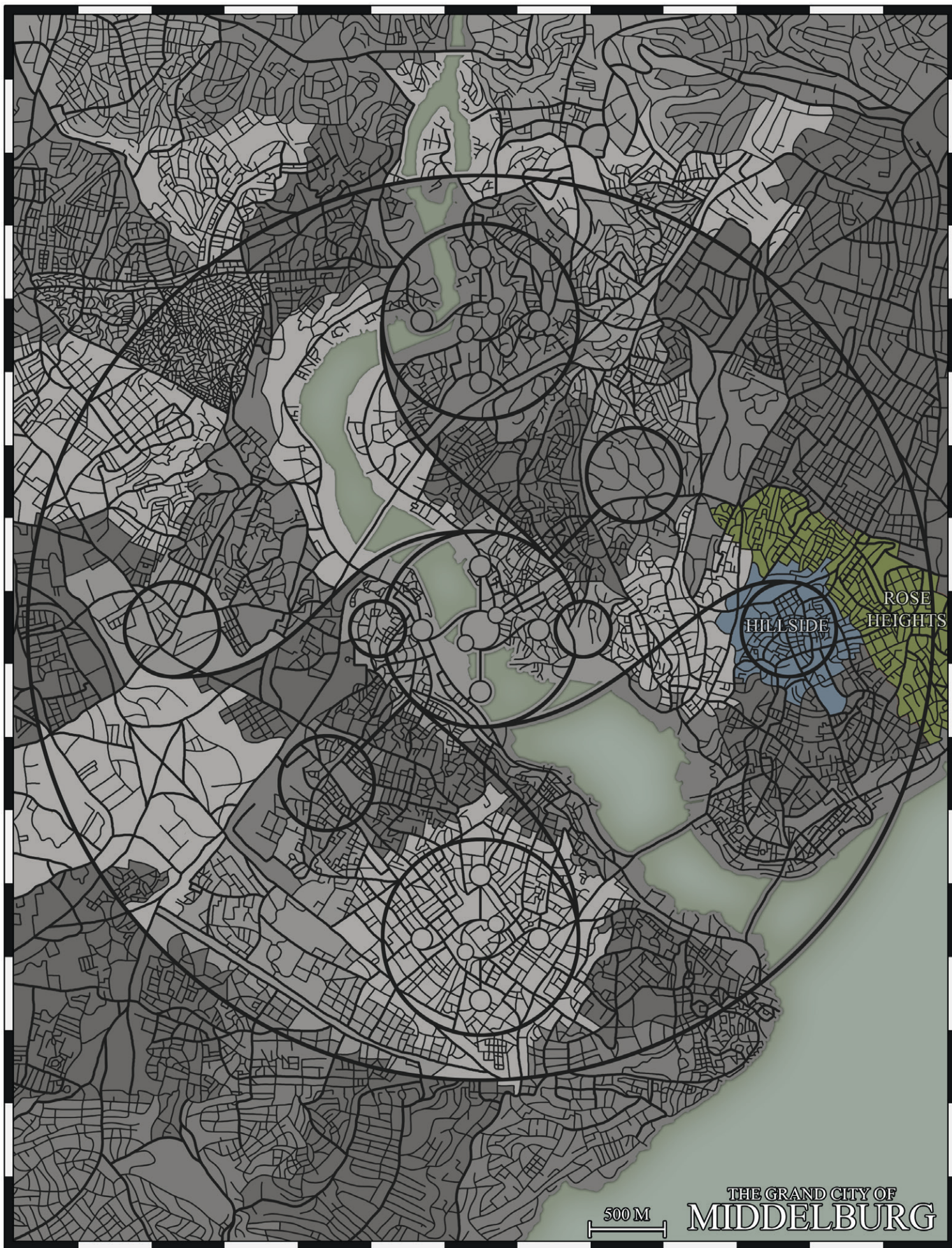
STORE
ROOM



2 M

CHAPTER 8

The voices speak only
of wrath and ruin



ROSE
HEIGHTS

HILLSIDE

500 M
THE GRAND CITY OF
MIDDELBURG

HILLSIDE

SAFEHOLD ♦

♦ *THE LAST WATCHTOWER*

THE DUCHESS' BATTERY ♦

♦ *ABBHEY OF THE STARS*

110 M



HILLSIDE



A military district without much of a military presence. While the Military District houses the headquarters of the military and the majority of the soldiers in Middelburg, and many interested parties have done their very best to keep it this way, it would be impossible for the military to be effective if it were confined to only one walled off district. As such, there are military offices and barracks in key strategic positions across the city so that, should the worst happen, they can respond to threats immediately while the bulk of the military readies itself.

Hillside is one such “strategic position” which the military has occupied in a fairly unofficial manner. The reason for this is quite simple, it is the nearest hilltop to the eastern side of the docks and provides a favourable view of the bay. Not only can anyone on top of Hillside spot an invading fleet coming in from kilometres offshore, but cannons placed here can do incredible damage to such a fleet before it has a chance to come within range of the city’s raised walls.

For centuries the military has thus kept a lookout on Hillside as well as a battery of cannons, but it has not been needed in three decades and most in the city have forgotten about it. Instead, Hillside is famous for one thing

and one thing only: the Last Light Watchtower. It dominates the surroundings and is the reason that the district exists. Other than its regularly scheduled testing, it has only ever been used once, but still it fascinates adults and children alike. The people who live beneath and near the Watchtower have taken to calling themselves “the Watchers” and this moniker has become synonymous with all those who live in Hillside.

Hillside, it must be said, did not always exist and the perceptive among the newly arrived in Middelburg have often pondered why it seems so out of place in the city. True to its name, Middelburg lies between two great mountain ranges. The eastern mountain range lies kilometres to the east but its low lying foothills creep into Middelburg to terminate in Nieuton, giving the district its commanding view over the city. Hillside, however, is nowhere near Nieuton and yet the flattened hilltop is higher still than the aristocratic district to its north.

It’s a mystery few in the city have seriously pondered, and fewer still that have gone through the effort of uncovering it. In dusty tomes buried deep in the City Hall’s libraries the curious would find their answer, but most would not even be able to read the fifteen hundred year

old version of Alfresian the document was written in. Should the curious become maddened and find a scholar of archaic Alfresian, they would at last find the answer they seek: Hillside is one of two artificial hills in the city (the other being Navalsig), created entirely through the power of the arrays.

After the Great War with the Inhumans finished and as their Great Purge was slowly grinding forth into unknown territories across the world, the King in Middelburg made an arrangement with the King on the Mountain to the east to ensure that no Inhuman army could ever take the island by surprise again. Their solution was a network of lighthouses stretching from the eastern coast to Middelburg. Should the Inhumans come from across the eastern ocean again, Middelburg could ready its response before they ever set foot on shore.

In those days, Middelburg barely filled up the present day Political District. The last of the great lighthouses to be built was therefore built a fair distance outside the city because it needed elevation in order to see the next lighthouse on the horizon and the King in Middelburg did not want to destroy his own home for that purpose. It wasn't very long then before what we call Hillside today was created.

A gargantuan array was carved into the soil and every man and woman who swore fealty to the king had to shed a pint of blood to power it. Soon enough, one of the greatest runic works on the island was finished: a whole hill was created in a blink of an eye. The construction of the old primitive lighthouse began and the rest is history.

These days, it takes a keen eye to see the artificial hill that Hillside once was. It is covered in buildings and roads like a sugary treat is with ants and it nearly blends in with its surroundings because of this. The caves and sewer systems that have been carved into its depths have also ensured it has become a true part of the landscape. While its intended purpose has long since been forgotten, it has gained a new purpose in life that has fitted it better than as a lonely outpost.

LAST LIGHT WATCHTOWER

The Last Light Watchtower, and the network of lighthouses it connects to, has been called the greatest waste of money in Alfresia. The network has only ever been used once, centuries ago, and so all the money that has been invested in the network, for its construction and continual maintenance, has never once paid off. The network has faded into the landscape over the centuries, becoming little more than a routine for its cleaners, a military exercise for the army and navy to test, and a line in the budget of the government.

While it has become little more than an annoyance for treasurers and bureaucrats, the Sentinel Star Network is perhaps the most important measure of defense the island has and is quite definitely the most significant piece of runic engineering in Alfresia and, mayhaps, the entire continent. The runic technology in the power stations, trains, paddle-boats and even airships can trace their lineage back to these ancient lighthouses.

During the long years of the Great Purge, the fair island we call Alfresia was divided into five petty kingdoms and Alfresia's motto, "unity creates strength", was still a dream centuries from being realised. While the island may have been divided, the King in Middelburg and the King on the Mountain were of one mind when it came to defending their people. Unfortunately, to communicate long distances meant a horse or a runner and that in turn meant that the island would never be able to mobilise an army in time should the Inhumans return.

Thus the Sentinel Stars were created. Stretching from the east coast all the way to Middelburg, it takes less than a minute for the light cascade to travel that immense distance. Every town and village along its route, or even only within sight of the lighthouses, would know something was amiss and would begin mobilising their militias and military. It was a grand plan that took most of the money in the two kingdoms' treasuries and required the best



and brightest individuals to realise this dream.

Centuries later, after the fall of the Empire of Man and before the Heavenly Empire of Man claimed the island as its own, the Falcon King of Windburg ordered the creation of his own lighthouse network, called the Southern Stars, that connected to the Sentinel Star Network. It did not take long before the Falcon King's rival, the Wolf Among The Roses, King of Rosedaal in the north of Alfresia, built his own network to link to the Sentinel Stars. When the Heavenly Empire of Man came to reclaim back what it had lost, it found the entire island connected to each other, capable of warning one another if and when they were attacked.

For all the work that had been put into the creation of the Sentinel Stars Network, it has only ever been needed once. Not long after Alfresia became a territory of the Heavenly Empire of Man, Jytoh had its first brush with the might of Uttosia when the empire across the eastern ocean sent a gargantuan fleet of giant warships to Jytoh. It was a conqueror's fleet, meant to colonise whatever patch of dirt it saw first and establish a foothold for the Khan of Khan's armies to land and expand his great empire.

The network worked as intended, alerting the entire island to an oncoming threat the moment Dawnwatch's scout ships spotted the immense fleet. While frantic messages were sent across the narrow gulf to the mainland, the Uttosians found the nation completely readied and prepared for their invasion. As the Heavenly Empire prepared to send forth its armies and navies, Alfresians fought and died for their island, but they gave the Heavenly Empire the time it needed to send its fleets and crush the Uttosian forces.

Rivers of Alfresian blood were spilt during that brief war with the easterners, but every man knew it would have been a slaughter not seen since the Great War had it not been for the Sentinel Stars. It is for that reason and that reason only that the network of lighthouses still stands to this day, no matter the gnashing of treasurers' teeth.

While the machinery in each lighthouse has become more complex and sophisticated as the centuries crawled by, the principle in how they operate remains the same today as it did when they were first constructed. In the lantern room atop each lighthouse sits a Receive array on the floor and a Send array on the ceiling. When the array in the first lighthouse in any of the four cardinal points (the Last Light Watchtower being one of these) is activated, a light is created which travels through its Send array and is received by the next lighthouse in line. This light travels through each lighthouse's Send and Receive arrays to light all the lantern rooms in every lighthouse nearly instantaneously.

The Sentinel Stars have become quite technologically sophisticated in their old age. Each of the lighthouses now contain four separate Send arrays on the floors of their lantern rooms, each array corresponding to one of the cardinal cities. Each of these arrays are also covered with a coloured glass lens, so that their light too is coloured. This allows everyone along the network to know exactly which city activated the network and thus requires help. Strandfontein's colour is red, Rosedaal is green, Windburg is blue and Middelburg is gold.

THE ABBEY OF THE STARS

There is a lot that can be said, as is said, about the grand city of Middelburg. "Beauty" is rarely a word used in these conversations. "Corrupt", "criminal", "infested", "wretched", "stinking"; these are adjective common to any description of the city, but it takes a fierce sort of patriot to use the word "beauty" and "Middelburg" together in any sentence. However, even in the magnificently monstrous metropolis of Middelburg there is a wondrous type of beauty to be found, if only you know where to look.

It has been many centuries since Hillside has been described as "the hill outside of town". It is part of the city just as any other

district, and that means that it has been shaped, moulded, flattened and raised to accommodate the needs of the people and buildings now living on top and around it.

It is not just the surface of the artificial hill that has been altered during history, but its innards have been mangled as well. To satisfy the people living on it, sewers have been carved through the hill and wells have been sunk deep into its belly, mistakenly believing the hill to be natural and thus filled with water; even caves have been dug in centuries past by smugglers and other ne'er-do-wells. So much has been done to this poor hill that it barely resembles the mountain of rock it was at creation.

It is often in humanity's greatest deeds of destruction that results in the greatest beauty. Just as a forest fire may result in a field of wildflowers, so did the gutting of Hillside over a millennium ago give us the most beautiful thing in the city.

It was only a few centuries ago when a morose monk, at the brink of misery and madness, came upon an opening in the side of the hill. No one saw the monk enter behind the abandoned and run down house to squeeze into the crevice, and the monk believed that was the last he would ever see the world. He had hoped to find only eternal darkness in which to rest his world weary soul, but instead he found the cosmos.

As he moved deeper into the cave tunnels, deeper into darkness, with the sounds of water dripping and flowing around him, the sad old Prodigalist monk was finally enveloped in total and utter blackness. As he lay down to sleep, and die, he thought his eyes were playing tricks on him, for he could see the stars in their multitude above him. He could scarce count the specks of light filling the darkness and they even twinkled like stars and slowly moved as stars, holding their course and aim across the firmament.

As he stood and inspected the walls of the cave closer, he found not stars, but tiny glow worms. Thousands, tens of thousands illuminated the halls of the caves, creating the

most beautiful painting of starry night. It seemed that with all the wells sunk and sewers carved, one of them struck water deep beneath the hill, which filled up all the caves that had been dug by strangers across the centuries. And with the water came the worms, the beautifully shining worms.


Proclaiming it a gift from god, the monk attracted the notice of a passerby, whilst still in the cave, and sent him with a message to the bishop. When the bishop came and observed this miracle himself, he agreed that it must be protected from the cruelty of man and summarily purchased the small property at its entrance. It would be remade into the gate house of the Abbey of the Stars, and the monks who would live here would take care of these pretty and defenceless worms, protecting the most beautiful thing in the entire city.

So it has been for the past few hundred years, the greatest beauty in the city also being its greatest secret. Not even the mad king Markus VI knew of it or ventured inside and it was spared that particular horror. As to the morose monk who discovered this heaven? He was quite correct; he never did see the outside world ever again and spent the rest of his life bathed in the dim light of the glow worms, until his body became their nourishment and he now lives among them, another star in a glowing night sky.

THE DUCHESS BATTERY

There are two schools of thought when it comes to defending a static target. The first is, of course, the well known idiom "offence is the best defence" where you ride out heroically to do battle with and defeat the enemy before they have a chance to get near the target you are defending. The second school of thought, while not immortalised in a laconic and rhyming idiom can be best summed up as "build a wall and then go have dinner", or less frivolously as "the best defence is the best defence".

Looking at the Duchess artillery battery



in Hillside, and its brother the Duke battery in Navalsig, as well as the ease with which the city can raise a twenty metre tall, and thick, wall, it is no surprise then that Middelburg has always favoured the second school of thought when it comes to defending the city. A siege, while arguably worse long term, is a far less risky prospect than a great offensive strike at an invading army, and risk is something no government, great or small, craves. Stability, safety, security, regularity, boredom, that is what a government craves and there is nothing as stable, regular and boring as years long, drawn out siege.

When Hillside was first raised to create a platform for the Last Light Watchtower, the watchtower, and the artificial hill itself, served a dual purpose as a lookout post to keep an eye on anyone approaching the prosperous little town of Middelburg. It was the most practical and logical location for such an outpost and as the town became a city and the small village at the coast became the town's docks, the lookout post turned its eyes towards one direction only: the ocean. It was from here that most threats would come and so the lookouts kept a weather eye on the horizon for many years.

When the city gained a proper navy, there was no longer a need for a lookout on land. However, a few battles and a war or two made the city realise that while its walls may be impressive, walls only keep attackers out, they don't make them go away. An incentive to leave was needed, and thus the first cannons were placed on top of Hillside.

The cannons of those times were crude things compared to the marvels that exist today, and it was cumbersome to roll them out onto the newly created walls each time there was a siege. It was far better to have them in one advantageous position where they can be used even before the wall was raised to deter attackers. That was the philosophy then, and it has remained barely unchanged to this day: unleash the artillery battery upon any attacker and give the city time to raise the wall, and then bombard the enemy

some more until they leave.

What has changed, however, are the cannons themselves. A millennium and a half ago, cannons were ugly and crude and consisted of hollowed out tree stumps and logs with only a rune carved inside that created a great volume of air to push the, often, spherical cannonball out. Both the materials from which the cannons and cannonballs were made meant that the cannons had a very limited range, only managing to reach past the city walls due to the height at which they were stationed.

Today, however, we have cannons made of hardened steel, cannonball of solid lead and a combination of runic engineering and explosive black powder to propel the runically inscribed cannonballs to their fate. The cannons now have a reach that extends far out to sea, able to hit oncoming ships well before they even reach the shore to disgorge their troops. The battery is also covered by thick stone walls and parapets covered in defensive arrays, making the battery exceedingly difficult to destroy and keeping it a thorn in any enemy's side.

SAFEHOLD

"Privilege" is a portmanteau of two archaic Rimien words "privus" and "legus" from which we have also gained the words "private" and "legislature". It should come as no surprise then that that is exactly what a privilege is: a private law or rule. As an example: Alfresians, by virtue of their citizenship of this fair isle, have the privilege of voting in the presidential and mayoral elections, however that could be taken away should an Alfresian ever spend a day in prison. That is a secondary part of what constitutes a privilege: it can, as the gods are often wont to do, be given and taken away.

With the transient nature of privileges, one often does what one can to keep a steady hold of these privileges. While an Alfresian's privileged right to vote might only be taken away

if the nation was ever conquered again, one's access to resources, locations and avenues can be changed at whim. This is where politics comes in. Politics is the grease which keeps the wheels of privilege turning. Knowing the right people and knowing what to offer them is the key to keeping, and gaining ever more privileges. After all, what senator or president ever held office from a hovel?

There is, of course, something every man, woman and child wants; something that you can offer to anyone in order to gain and keep your privileges. That is, without a shadow of a doubt, money. A wise man once said that the love of money is the root of all evil and while the veracity of that statement is up for constant debate, what isn't up for debate is the power that money gives you over others. Every man has a price and every woman wants something. With enough money you can bribe just about everyone to get what you want.

The four richest people in Middelburg all belong to the same exclusive club: The Fresian Merchant League. The three Patriarchs and the Matriarch of the League have achieved that

vaunted level where they truly have too much money to know what to do with it all. They each spend more money in bribes every day than most honest, hardworking folks see in a year. While most of this money is spent against each other in order to weaken another family and strengthen their own, they have, at rare times, joined forces in order to bribe others for their own collective good.

One of these collective ventures was, and still is, Safehold. Safehold is only one of many safehouses and bunkers the Merchant League has across the nation. Over the century that the League has existed, it has bought the rights to many plots of lands as well as the right to dig, excavate and build whatever they wished and the government had never rejected their offers. If ever any member of a Trade Family (no matter how great or small that family might be) is in danger, they can use the safehouses and bunkers to escape this danger.

The League District, under absolute control of the League, is of course its most secure bunker. It can raise its walls at any time it wishes and deny entry to anyone it so chooses, but in


VAULT 101



Safehold is one of, if not the, most secure bunkers in Alfresia, but it belongs to the Merchant League and they are as miserly with their favours as with their money. This is where it pays to have friends in high places, because if you get in there you will be safe no matter what. The entire might of the Heavenly Empire of Man could be after you and you would still be safe and sound. That is if you can get in.

You need someone on the inside, and not just anyone, but someone high up enough to offer you the protection of one of the many Trade Families. For the smaller, weaker Trade Families this could simply be their handler, but for the great Families this will have to be someone with their name to grant you their aegis. This can take a lot of roleplay, but working on building some Contacts in the Merchant League, if only a minor Trade Family, will pay massive dividends at the end of the day.

Just as Safehold can save you, it can also save any Trade Family mark you are hunting. Be careful if your mark starts fleeing, because if they reach Safehold, there is nothing you can do to get them. Even if you have a way inside, Safehold is neutral ground and any crime committed inside is punished most cruelly. Always keep track of where you are in relation to Safehold when going after a Trade Family, so your mark doesn't escape like a rabbit down a hole.



times of crises, not every member of every Trade Family can make it to the League District. That is where the bunkers and safehouses like Safehold come in.

Safehold is the most secure bunker that the League owns in Alfresia, and it is quietly advocated among the Trade Families to be the first point of call should a crisis erupt and they are too far from the League District to make it there safely. When Duke Lukas invaded three decades ago this was the case with many minor Trade Families whose compounds were not located in the League District. For them, the only safety available was Safehold, dug deep into the rock of Hillside.

There are only a few things the four governing Trade Families of the League ever agree on. Safehold is one of them. The bunker is guarded by a mixed cohort containing soldiers and guards from each of the four governing Trade Families as well as any minor Trade Family who wishes to sponsor a soldier for this duty. It is even written into the very constitution of the Merchant League that Safehold is sacrosanct. No single family, or even a conspiracy of them, may take control of either the bunker or the soldiers guarding it and it must remain intact and operational for any member of any Trade Family to come seek sanctuary at any time.

Safehold is a matter of survival and there is nothing the four governing Trade Families take more seriously than their own survival, and so they will spend as much money as is needed to keep Safehold firmly within the grasp of the Merchant League.

ROSE HEIGHTS

◆ MARSHAL OF ARMS

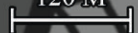
◆ TEPID BATHS

*MONTGOMERY'S
MAGNIFICENT MILK* ◆

MIDDELBURG POST OFFICE ◆

THE STARS & CARDS ◆

120 M



ROSE HEIGHTS



One of the perks and privileges of being exceedingly wealthy is that you don't have to deal with the lesser fortunates in life. Your entire life is surrounded by luxury and you move from one place of opulence to the next. At worst, the only poor folk you are ever likely to encounter in your daily life is the "help", those people of meager money and value that you, and those like you, have taken it unto your responsibility to give a better life. But the "help" are a step above the rest, they have been trained to be civil. The rest of the louts and dregs of society must be kept at an arm's length. For the good of all, of course.

In olden days, this was easily accomplished by living in grand manors, castles and palaces where only the right sort of people were allowed. These days, it is not quite so simple, but the wealthy have found their refuge in Nieuton. However, a sanctuary is only as good as its walls and, in lieu of having actual walls around Nieuton, there is a need for a "buffer zone" between it and the rest of the city. Having the poor surround them is not good for property values or the health and wellbeing of Nieuton's inhabitants.

Nieuton is bordered on its western side by the prosperous Ooston and the noble Temple Park. It is south, though, which has always been

of greater concern to the wealthy, because that way lays the docks and all the poor, dirty and slovenly workers and foreigners who spend their time there. Something had to be done to prevent them from coming into Nieuton and so the aristocratic upper class decided to begin creating a middle class of society, to live around them and protect their delicate sensibilities from the lower class.

That is how Rose Heights came to be. It was not always called that, but the wealthy in the city has done all it can to ensure the district previous name has been forgotten. They don't want to give the poor any opportunity to claim they "belong" here, after all, by some ancestral claim or another. While the Rose Heights of today has quite evolved since the aristocrats began their project a century ago, it has served its purpose in keeping the lesser fortunates in the city from reaching Nieuton too often.

The "restructuring" of Rose Heights happened at the same time as the rebuild of Nieuton after the War of Independence and for many aristocrats, it was a temporary home until their mansions and manors were constructed in the neighbouring district. As such, it is a well developed district with

well paved roads and excellent plumbing, although few come to the district to inspect the cobbles and sewers. Other than business and trade, many who come here with a purpose come for politics.

That is because quite a few of the minor Trading Families of the Merchant League have made their home here. Some because they grew fond of the quaint district while Nieuton was being rebuilt, and other Families because they earned their way into the League through hard work and good politics but are not quite rich enough for Nieuton, and not independent enough for Ooston, so they came here.

Today, the middle class of society has grown far beyond Rose Heights, and the aristocratic Nieutonians' expectations, but for many the dream of becoming one of the middle class remains here. Stuck between the trade of the Docks, the money in Nieuton, the grace in Temple Park and the military presence in Hillside, Rose Heights is an excellent location in which to take that first step into becoming one of the middle class: outright owning your own business and property.

While most elsewhere in the city most people are both employees and tenants, or if they do own property it is either their business or their home, here in Rose Heights there is a degree of private ownership. This has not gone unnoticed by the high and mighty in the city and has been the cause of quite some consternation. If people own both business and home, then they are not indebted to anyone (barring tax of course) and the wealthy have always gotten most of their fortunes through investment and debt collection.

This has given the middle class a new found power in the city, one which they intend to wield with all their might to influence the city, and one which the upper class hope to squash as soon as possible. Power in the wrong hands, i.e.: not theirs, is far too dangerous a prospect for them. After all, there is only one thing those with power fear: losing that power.

TEPID BATHS


Where you will always find a lukewarm reception. Puns aside, the Tepid Baths are the largest public bathing complex in the city and is perhaps the strongest symbol of the new, free Republic of Alfresia. That is because it caters to anyone who wants to come, whether they are male or female, rich or poor, foreigner or native, all are welcome to enjoy the baths here.

The Tepid Baths were constructed by a conglomerate of aristocrats from Nieuton in the hope that such a grand recreational centre would draw in those with money to the district and form a solid middle class wall to keep out the barbaric lower class from invading Nieuton. The plan worked, perhaps too well, as the growing middle class settled in Rose Heights and enjoyed the luxury of the Tepid Baths. However, now that they were here, they wanted control of their lives, their homes and their district, and that included the Tepid Baths.

Soon enough it was the middle class that owned the Tepid Baths and they turned it into quite the opposite of what the aristocrats wanted. Rather than being a place of luxury meant only for those who could afford it, the people of Rose Heights turned it into a haven where anyone and everyone could come for relaxation and recreation. A free, open and democratic baths for a free, open and democratic republic.

Unfortunately just as the republic is neither free, open, nor quite democratic, so it is with the Tepid Baths. The Baths is a large complex divided into dozens of baths that all depend on your sex, character and the depth of your pocketbook. While it is technically true that the Baths are free and open for all, in truth there are only a few baths like this. Most of the baths here require a payment before one can enter, while others have other restrictions which can bar a great deal of the population.

The largest of the pools is the People's Pool and this is the only truly free, open and democratic pool as everyone and anyone is



allowed to come here free of charge. As with all the Tepid Bath's pools, the temperature of the water is controlled by arrays to keep it lukewarm in summer and quite hot in winter, but this pool is open to the elements. The vast majority of people who ever visit the Tepid Baths never venture further than this point.

The next two pools are the Father's and Mother's Pools and are reserved for only men and women respectively. While they are technically free, there is restriction on entry other than sex, and that is that one must be of good character to enter. As these pools are within the Baths building proper, they don't want just anyone to muddy up their floors. Cleanliness is the highest priority when allowing access but equally as important is ensuring patrons do not disturb those already in the pools or others in further pools. The Tepid Baths is supposed to be a haven of peace for the soul and shouting and splashing is not allowed.

From here on in, you will find no pools, but only baths, even though the distinction is tenuous and literary at best. There are fresh water baths, seawater baths, runic water baths, near boiling baths, freezing baths and even mud baths. Some are restricted by sex, others by age and others can be booked for private "functions". Whatever your taste in water and bathing might be, the Tepid Baths are there to assist, for a price.

That is the greatest conceit of the Baths. No matter how much they proclaim they are for the people, everything comes with a price and the more luxury you wish, the more you will have to dig into your pocketbook. The most luxurious of baths come with a plethora of runic controls that allows the patron to exactly control the temperature of the water, the amount of minerals in it, whether the patron wants bubbles or instead water jets or even both. The technology and infrastructure is there for all, but restricted to a few so that profits can be made.

MARSHALL OF ARMS

There is an old saying that states "the runes are the gods' gift to men and their curse to kings". This is because the runes and arrays give men a lot of autonomy, and thus freedom, from any ruler. A man can create his own food, water and shelter easily, quickly and freely without interference from any oppressive government. The runes gave men power that they could never dream of and that could never be taken away.

And yet the nobility persisted. For over two thousand years since Bür came ashore to Jytoh and gave mankind the runes and arrays there have been kings and emperors, nobles and aristocrats, bourgeoisie and oligarchs. Instead of gaining their power through such primal resources as food and water, these rulers and oppressors of lower classes simply found other resources to exploit and with which to enrich themselves.

Heraldry is the science of myth and the art of facts. It is the romance of reality and the fiction of facts. It is the mark of nobility and the trade of peasants.

~Karl von Vüren, Imperial Marshall of Arms

Land, of course, was the most easily exploitable resource. There is, after all, only so much of it in the world. Anything that is finite is valuable. While land was the easiest with which to accumulate wealth and power, there was something even greater, something that promised unlimited power to the right sort of person who could play the game. It was an exclusive game to which you had to know the rules first before you could play, but no one was ever taught the rules and so it could forever be kept out of the hands of the poor.

That game was, is, and will always continue to be: politics. It is politics, not military force, that forms kingdoms and empires, that starts and ends wars, that creates republics and destroys revolutions. Politics, much

like the gods themselves, can give and it can take. It makes and it breaks entire governments and it is why the rich sit in Nieuton and the poor squabble for a place in the rest of the city.

Alliances, pacts, treaties, agreements, contracts and deals are what makes politics so powerful. It isn't what you know, it is who you know, and more importantly, it is what they and their own contacts can do for you. It is about networks that sustain each other and themselves and protect themselves from malign outside influence. A king is nothing if his dukes and counts won't fight for him. A crusade would grind to a halt if all the nobles involved refused to fight alongside each other. Politics is everything.

And that is where heraldry and the Marshal of Arms step into the picture. When the Middelburg Herald became a newspaper, the nation needed a new authority to oversee

the coats of arms and heraldry of the people of Alfresia and created the Marshal of Arms to deal with it. It is one of the most important governmental branches that exist, even though a silly picture painted on a shield may not seem very serious.

In a world where who you are and who you know are more important than what you are, what you know and what you can do, reputation is paramount. If your reputation precedes you then you have already won the game of politics. This is why heraldry is so important, it is a symbol that can be rallied around and it is a symbol that can be used as a visual shorthand for who you are. Everyone knows the iron falcon of van Windburg, the bloody stag of Hugenberg, the golden ship of Heisenstein and the field of gold of van Rosedaal. And of course, there is the much more sinister black flame of the mad king Markus VI.

Every citizen of Alfresia can create and claim




HERALDIC ACHIEVEMENTS

The arrays can provide you with as much food, water, shelter and warmth as you need. The runes were supposed to turn the world into a utopia, yet that dream never arrived. Why? Because man found another currency from which to gain power: the currency of influence. What you are or who you are and who you know means far more than what you know and what you can do. If you want to move up in the world, you will have start earning that influence, and what better way do that than through your image.

Signs, symbols, logos, emblems. A picture is worth a thousand words after all and what better picture to represent you and your reputation than a coat of arms. A well known coat of arms is a better introduction than any title and will go before you on any vessel, carriage, cargo, or item you own to spread your reputation before you ever arrive. Who doesn't recognise the bloody stag of Hugenberg or the iron eagle of van Windburg and if you are lucky enough to be in one of these families, you will never have to introduce yourself to anyone. They will introduce themselves to you.

Heraldry is the science of coats of arms and like all sciences, there are rules and there are guidelines, far more in fact than can fit in this small box, so if you are interested in making a coat of arms for your PC or their family, have a look online as there are plenty of resources and forums on the internet that will give you libraries' worth of information about heraldry. And when you have finished, remember that this is now your PC's passport to the world of influence and intrigue in Middelburg, so use it well.



their own arms, yet few other than merchants and the wealthy take advantage of this. What need has a dock worker of a coat of arms, or a locksmith, or a farmhand? It is the wealthy and those who aspire to join this elite that concern themselves with heraldry, who learn the arms of all the great houses so as to impress others with their knowledge, and hope that one day their arms will be as well known as those of the Patriarchs and kings.

And at the heart of all this sits the Marshall of Arms, whose duty it is to record all the arms in the land and the details of those who bear them. As coat of arms are inherited, the Marshall of Arms has become the de facto genealogist of Alfresia, marking the lineages of the rich and powerful on the island like a horse breeder tracks his thoroughbreds, and for the very same reason. When the rich and powerful start arranging the marriages of their children, they come to the Marshall to see from which lineage they would most prosper. And so the cycle of politics continues.

MONTGOMERY'S MAGNIFICENT MILK

One would be surprised to hear that quite a lot of the foods we take for granted today were not in fact created for their taste, but were merely created to extend the lifespan of their ingredients. Meat rots and so were cured, dried or smoked to preserve them. Wine was a sure way to extend the life of a grape and so were raisins. And milk that can spoil in a few days was turned into cheese that can be edible for months if not years.

Then the runes and arrays came along and changed the way we look at food, for a time and only for some. With the ability to change temperature, stop time and create an absolute vacuum, the arrays can guarantee the preservation of food for as long as one needs them. However, the arrays cost energy and inevitably that energy comes down time or

money, things the poor have very little of. So while the rich could have as much fresh milk as they needed, whenever they needed, the poor had to make do with cheese.

Now cheese is all well and good, and none can deny the pleasure of eating a slice of cheese on some freshly baked bread smeared with some rich butter, but fresh milk is a beverage fit for a king. Unfortunately it also costs a king's ransom and you have to deal with the seasons when the cows are milkings. So the poor had to save up for the right time to enjoy that thimble of milk. While dairies like Montgomery's have made milk more accessible, it still remains somewhat of a badge of wealth, a symbol that you have what is required to keep milk fresh.

When the Lightning rune was discovered nearly three years ago and with the construction of the few power relay stations, the city has had its first true taste of "free energy". Now you can use your arrays to your heart's content without worrying about the costs involved; the city will deal with that. There are only a precious few power relay stations in Middelburg, but there is one in Nieuton, naturally. That power relay station has just enough range to cover Montgomery's Magnificent Milk and has allowed it to exist.

Montgomery's Magnificent Milk is a business just over a year old and came about specifically due to the construction of the Nieuton power relay station. Mister Montgomery, as the somewhat snobbish Cael prefers to be called, was a cheesemaker for many years here in Rose Heights and built up his contacts and networks among the farmers east of Middelburg. When the power relay station was constructed and free energy came to his cheese shop, Montgomery saw his chance and took it.

Renovating, and nearly demolishing, his entire workshop and business, Montgomery turned it into a dairy to house and sell milk and cream. Using the newly free energy to power an almighty variety of arrays, Montgomery created huge steel vats to house

his milk, inscribed inside with arrays to both cool and slow time. These huge vats became his shop, each filled with as much milk as he could buy and housed as perfectly fresh as the day he received them.

The simple fact that Montgomery can store his milks and creams for as long as needed has dramatically increased their availability. It has not yet made it into the poorest of hands, yet far more folks can enjoy a fresh glass of cold milk in the morning. His thick creams and smooth milks have also made the sales of coffee nearly triple in the city, as the people enjoy the creamy and bitter combination. Montgomery even has a special contract with the Black Penny Coffee House in nearby Nieuton to give them an endless supply of fresh milk.

MIDDELBURG POST OFFICE

There are some things that just require the human touch. The runes and arrays may be wonderful things capable of making men seem

like gods, but there are things they simply cannot do. They cannot give a warm smile or a friendly handshake, they can't make promises and they can't go that extra mile for you. Those are things only humans can do and that is why communication is still a human operated business.

Of course there has always been attempts to create a communication network based on the arrays, but they have all failed for the same reason: humans. Once you add humans into the mix, the rules change, and only a human can account for another human. This can easily be seen by the runic communication technology everyone turns to time and time again, hoping it would work this time: a Send array that sends Sound to the Receive array. It is a very simple system that works remarkably well. However, Send and Receive arrays require the elemental code to ensure it gets sent to the right array and received from the right array without any interference from other arrays.

This is always where the problems have come in. Without a code or too simple a code




PUTTING DOWN ROOTS

The Ruined Man Saga can feel like a high octane ride, rushing between missions and encounters at a breakneck pace... but remember that it is spread across months and months of time. Most of the time during the Ruined Man's story, your characters won't actually be part of that story. They only dip their toes into the narrative for a few days every few weeks.

So what are they doing when not on missions? Living, just living their lives in the Grand City, but what sort of life do they live? The

Downtime mechanics cover most of what you do in-between missions, but put some thought into *where* you do it. Where you live in Middelburg says a lot about you, as does what sort of house you live in and whom you share it with. Do you live in a standalone house in Heuwelsig or a cramped apartment in the Docks? Do you have a family and children to look after, or do you flat with other footmen?

Your home is where you will spend most of your time, so put careful thought into it. Draw a floorplan of it to get a feel of how your character will see it, see where on a map of the city's District it would be, so you can see what locations of interest is within walking distance. As much as your character's history will shape how they act, so will their present circumstances and where they live. Also keep in mind that upgrading to a better home is a good longterm motivation for a footman.



and everyone will talk over everyone else, or curious busybodies will listen in to everyone's conversations. Too strict a code and you need a new array and device for each person you wish to contact. This is why such runic communication has always been kept to short ranged devices for constabulary, military and clandestine uses. While instant communication is worth more than all the money in the world, it is an impersonal affair.

Unlike, of course, writing a good letter. Writing takes skill, time, energy, patience and thought. You have to put your heart into writing a good letter and a great letter requires a piece of your soul. The way a letter is written often says more than the words on the page. What is unsaid can often be more important than what is said. Subtleties, implications, innuendos, there is so much about a written letter that cannot be seen or heard over a runic communication device. And of course, what is said over these devices cannot be kept, but a letter can, and you can always go back to read it again and again to relive those memories.

This is perhaps why the runic communication device has never been perfected. Surely, the technology must be there to do it, but the heart isn't. The other reason why letter writing is still so fashionable is that it is hand delivered directly to you. Every district has its own Post Office with its own dedicated army of mailmen ready to deliver you your mail with a warm smile and a friendly handshake. The mailmen become part of the landscape, part of the district and are as welcome at the door as any neighbour.

While every district has its own Post Office, some are far better staffed than others and some often require an extra touch. This is because the vast majority of Middelburg's residents are illiterate. Literacy is as much a status symbol as it is a valuable tool in life. As such, the Post Offices in the poorer areas of the city have far fewer mailmen than the more affluent districts. These mailmen are also as likely to read the letters they deliver to the recipients as give it to them and

so the position of mailmen has itself become a position of status, as the mailman might be the only literate person on the streets they are walking.

THE STARS AND CARDS

In a world where every man, woman and child has access to the very powers of divine creation and destruction, one would think that belief in the supernatural would be rare indeed. After all, what intrigue can magic have when the runes and arrays can teleport a person across the face of the world, make buildings fly and create food and water out of, seemingly, thin air? This would be a reasonable line of thought, and one incessantly and unsurprisingly propagated by scholars across the world, however it would be far from correct.

While the old myths of winged lions, dragons and half human-half Inhuman tribes have slowly faded over time, superstition is as strong among mankind as it has ever been. Most people will admit, somewhat sheepishly in the majority of cases, that they believe in ghosts, spirits, poltergeists and that there are simply things which are beyond the scope of natural philosophy. The pagans and those in far flung rural communities would even admit to believing in gnomes, kobolds, witches and creatures of a more fey variety.

While each and every person has their own superstitions, it is easily observable that the most widespread superstitions in the supernatural are found among the poor. Many scholars and philosophers have postulated that this is because the poor do not have as much power of their lives as the rich do and so seek comfort, and perhaps excuses, in a supernatural world, in fate, and in luck. However, whether they are rich or poor, it seems everyone has a vested interest in the future and many often wonder if there is a way to see what is to come.

And that is where The Stars and Cards come in. Mistress Brunhilde von Braun is a self proclaimed

YESTERDAY'S CARDS FROM TOMORROW

Representations:

The Jester: The hero of a story on a journey

The Runist: The manipulator of what is good and evil.

The Priestess: The attainment of knowledge without understanding.

The Kaiserin: The open minded creation of ideas.

The Kaiser: The figure of authority.

The Monk: The teacher of wisdom.

The Lovers: The choices in a relationship.

The Carriage: The surprise of an old friend.

Toil: The courage is the face of hardship.

The Footman: The unseen dangers that lurk in the shadows.

Lady Luck: The harbinger of change.

Vengeance: The reclamation of what was lost.

The Headless Man: The martyr of firm belief.

Conquest: The end, and the new beginning.

The Waterbearer: The sacrifice for others.

The Sauddyr: The seduction of the material world and its pleasures.

The Wall: The sudden, destructive and irrevocable end.

The Cosmos: The withdrawal from the material world.

The Night: The fear of what cannot be seen.

The Day: The blind optimism of naivety.

Fate: The unchangeable decisions of the past.

The Sage: The hero at the end of a journey, ready to rest.

Bür: The granting of power and influence.

The Mother: The shelter in a time of need.

The Father: The death that all must face.


ROLL	CARD	ROLL	CARD
1-4	The Jester	53-56	Conquest
5-8	The Runist	57-60	The Waterbearer
9-12	The Priestess	61-64	The Sauddyr
13-16	The Kaiserin	65-68	The Wall
17-20	The Kaiser	69-72	The Cosmos
21-24	The Monk	73-76	The Night
25-28	The Lovers	77-80	The Day
29-32	The Carriage	81-84	Fate
33-36	Toil	85-88	The World
37-40	The Footman	89-92	Bür
41-44	Lady Luck	93-60	The Mother
45-48	Vengeance	97-100	The Father
49-52	The Headless Man	---	---

Tarot divinations can make for powerful storytelling. The heroes who fight against destiny or race to beat the toll of fate are the stuff of legends and echo throughout the ages. They can also make your games more interesting by giving your players clues about what you have planned for them in an oblique and poetic way. Or if your players are getting too close to the truth, how better to throw them off the scent with prophetic vaguery? Or perhaps you want an adventure, but haven't planned for it; how best to start it off than with a tarot reading? The reading itself can then become the adventure.

The standard Alfresian tarot deck contains 25 cards, so to do a random tarot reading, simply roll 5d100s (reroll double results) and consult the table here to see what card you pulled from the deck and what it represents.

The first card is the root cause of whatever issue, problem, or conundrum the tarot reader is asked about. The second, third, and fourth are all the various aspects of the issue, whether people involved, the ideas it creates or the conceptual dimensions. The fifth and last card is the issue's future, how it will be resolved.

For example: Let's say the PC asks about the job in Mission 7 and you drew, in order: The Monk, The Father, The Headless Man, Lady Luck, and The Priestess. So you could reasonably tell the PC that the tarot says the job started because of a teacher, it concerns death and dying for what you believe in and it will change all the PC knows is true and at the end the PC will have learnt much but understood little.



expert in divination and whether it is through the rolling of bones or dice, stringent meditation or through the dealing of tarot cards, she professes that she can see the future. Whether this is true is up for debate, although Mistress Brunhilde has a very loyal following and has rarely had to go looking for clients. In fact, most days she has quite the waiting list.

Mistress Brunhilde is a mysterious woman and it is partly this mystery that has made clients flock to her store. She is quite honest and open about her past, and uses this great tale of adventure to attract clients, but it is the reason for her past actions which have created this aura of intrigue and mystery that so surrounds her.

Brunhilde von Braun was born in a castle in the northern reaches of the Heavenly Empire of Man. Castle Braun is a stoutly built and ancient castle that was at one point the home of the Heavenly Empire of Man. Oh yes, Brunhilde and her noble house is descended from Emperor Claude “the Brown”, so named for his brown hair, brown eyes, and large brown birthmark on his face. The von Braun family has grown wealthy and powerful since their founder and yet she gave it all up.

At the young age of sixteen, the young Princess von Braun decided she had had enough of luxury, opulence and the politics that came with it. A bird in a gilded cage, Princess Brunhilde snuck away in the middle of night with the aid of a stable boy and began her lifelong quest of understanding her place in the world. She claims she has traveled to every nation in Jytoh in the thirty years she travelled before settling down in Middelburg, and she has volumes of tales to tell of each nation.

Other than the wondrous tales of adventures she has of each nation, she also learnt each culture’s divination rituals as she passed through the towns and villages. From the dozens of methods and means she uses to scry the paths of the future, this can well be believed. It is also the way through which she gained such patronage in the city when she first arrived, that she quickly gathered together enough money to purchase

property for her business and a home.

She did this by divining the future of the foreign diplomats and ambassadors in the Embassy Enclave in the Political District, and still today these diplomats and ambassadors are her most well paying customers. It is not just the foreign politicians who come asking for advice however. More than one mayor, senator and president has come to ask Mistress Brunhilde what the future has in store for them. It should come as no surprise that she is a powerful force in this city, with friends in very high places.

MISSION 8

The Case of the Last Living Memory

SYNOPSIS

This mission takes place eight weeks after the last one, five months since the end of the last book, eleven months since the campaign began, and almost a whole year since the Ruined Man killed his first victim. It's been a long road for the PCs, full of ups and downs, mysteries and questions, and very little in the way of answers. This mission will attempt to give some of that closure to the PCs by giving them the opportunity to actually speak to the Ruined Man. But to get that privilege, the PCs must do battle with the whole Merchant League and help a poor young woman in her time of need.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE MISSION PROPER IS AS FOLLOWS:

Through their various contacts, the PCs have gotten news that a young woman in some distress requires their help. When they get to the top of the Last Light Watchtower they find that the young woman is none other than Marjolaine Du Toit, the last living person on the Ruined Man List. She asks the PCs to collect a chest from the MLS Silver Prince, a merchant vessel at anchor in the bay. To get to the chest and get it back to Miss Du Toit, the PCs will have to go through teams of footmen from each of the governing trade families of the Merchant League. But once they get back to the watchtower, Miss Du Toit is already dead and they find the Ruined Man waiting. Do they talk, fight, or flee?

THE META-STORY IS AS FOLLOWS:

It has been an itch on the inside of his skull that he could not scratch for over a year. It has driven him even deeper into the madness he calls existence than even he could dare to admit. But now it is almost at an end and he can nearly taste the freedom, imagining it to be like the finest of wines that he has heard the people in the city speak of. But there is one person who stands in his way, who would dare to take his happiness away from him. The little girl, the writer, the one who watched while they worked. She sat there and looked at

him, oh how he remembers her face, and he now knows where the little mouse has run to. She will die and he will be free.

OVERVIEW

SCENE 1: THE BRIEF:

- Takes place on top of the Last Light Watchtower.
- The employer, Miss Du Toit, is the last living person on the Ruined Man's list.
- PC's mission is to retrieve chest with evidence from a ship in the harbour.
- Evidence will keep her alive from being hunted by the League and government.

SCENE 2: THE LEGWORK:

- One main area of interest: HMS Silver Prince.
- Has three decks with several rooms for crew, officers and cargo.
- Chest is hidden on the lowest deck.

SCENE 3: THE MISSION:

- Four teams of footmen are after both Miss Du Toit and the chest.
 - » Heisenstein team near Last Light Watchtower.
 - » Van Windburg team (Golden Talons) are at the Docks.
 - » Van Rosedaal team is on the Silver Prince.
 - » Hugenberg team are on the water near the Silver Prince.
- Clue is the chest of evidence.

SCENE 4: THE DEBRIEF:

- Takes place at Last Light Watchtower.
- Ruined Man is there and has killed Miss Du Toit.
- Chance for PCs to speak with and ask Ruined Man questions.
- Inside chest is key and address to Miss Du Toit's house.

SCENE 1: THE BRIEF

This scene takes place at the top of the Last Light Watchtower. It is the last tower in the line that starts at Dawnwatch on Alfresia's east coast. The watchtower hasn't been used for centuries, and so no one ever visits. It is quite a tall structure that sits alone on a hill which means unless you are specifically going to the Last Light Watchtower, it will be deserted. Perfect for a handler's meeting.

From on top of the watchtower you can see nearly the whole of Middelburg to the north and west and can see far out to sea to the south. It is quite picturesque and should leave a fond imprint on the PCs. Coupled with a scared, young woman hoping against hope the PCs will help them, this should put the PCs into the mindset of a valiant knight in shining armour. Emphasise that this could be one of the precious few times the PCs feel they could actually do good in this city.

NARRATE OR PARAPHRASE THE FOLLOWING AS APPROPRIATE:

Your work always involves someone asking for (or sometimes demanding) your help, but you can't remember that you've ever heard it in such direct terms. "Please help me! You are my only hope!" That was all the note said. Your contact had to fill you in on the rest: a distressed and desperate young woman, at noon, in the Last Light Watchtower in Hillside.

A desperate young woman on top of a lighthouse waiting for a hero? Sounds like either a lot of money or the start of a terribly trite romantic novel.

The great lighthouse is as empty as it always is when you arrive. It is a relic of a bygone era. The only people who come here these days are the city's municipal workers to clean up any vandalism and repair any damage, and the military personnel that come test the machinery every few years. It seems today isn't one of their cleaning or testing days. Coincidence? Perhaps.

There are no people in or around the base of the tower and you eye with some dread the steps spiralling upwards around the inside of the tower. It's a long way up, but at least no one will be able to eavesdrop on your meeting. You hope.

The narrow window slits along the staircase gives you a grand view of the city sprawling out towards the horizon and the long climb gives you time to think. The senate house you see in the distance no longer holds the master of the city. It's true master now dwells in the shadows. The Ruined Man controls the city and its people far more than its politicians. He has turned it into a ruined city full of ruined people.

You wonder if the city will ever recover. With everyone turning to crime, you have not had to want for work ever since the first Ruined Man's murder, yet you don't simply work here, you also live here and that has been getting more and more difficult to do. It seems like not a day goes by without some drunk, thief, or constable accosting you on your way home. It's simply not safe anymore.

Your gloomy thoughts are interrupted by the spectacular vista around you as you reach the top of the tower. From up here, in the bright midday sun, the city has a certain shine about it. It looks almost peaceful from up here, but you know it's only the distance that makes it seem that way.

"It is beautiful, is it not?" you hear from behind you. A young woman peeks out of the lantern room and says: "The city I mean. You can almost forget what happens at night." She walks out of the lantern room and behind her you can see clothes, bedding and the remains of her last meal on the floor.

"I want to thank you for coming," she says. "My only hope of surviving the night is if you can help me get a chest from that ship." She points over to a lone merchant ship resting at anchor some ways out to sea. "But before we begin with all the questions you must have, let me introduce myself." She holds out her hand. "I am Marjolaine Du Toit."

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY MARJOLAINE DU TOIT:

- Information freely provided:
 - » Miss Du Toit is the last living name on the Ruined Man list. If this is not immediately obvious to the players, have them roll a +25 Logic or Intuition Skill Check to remember this piece of information.
 - » If the players make any mention of the list and Miss Du Toit's place on it, she will say: "So you know of the roster? Then you must know that I am the only one that remains. That is why you must help me. When I am gone, there will be none left to remember what happened."
 - » Any questions regarding the list, what it means, what her connection to it is or who and what the Ruined Man will be met with the response: "I will tell you everything once you retrieve the chest. The information I have is the only thing that is keeping me alive."
 - » The chest is 10cm high, 25 cm wide and 35 cm long, or just large enough to hold a stack of regular sized papers. It contains everything Miss Du Toit has that connects her to what has been happening in Middelburg. It, she says, is what is keeping her alive.
 - » She will say that she knows she is in danger. "It is not just the Ruined Man that wishes me dead, but the Merchant League as well. The League knows about it all and wants what I have. They have bribed me, blackmailed me, threatened me, begged me, and now they send men to kill me. The constables will not help me unless I give them the proof that is inside that chest."
 - » The chest is hidden in the hold of the merchant ship MLS Silver Prince. At dawn, the ship will be loaded and set sail. The mission must be completed
- before the ship comes to the docks for loading.
- » Any talk of payment will have Miss Du Toit say: "I know I am asking a lot from you and have little in the way of the payment you normally receive, but do this for me and I will give you everything I have. My house, my belongings, all the money I have will be yours. That is how serious I am."
- » Miss Du Toit will have brought no money to haggle with, but if the PCs insist on payment upfront then she will find whatever she can among her belongings in the lantern room which will be equivalent to +5 bonus to Wealth Skill to each PC.
- » Miss Du Toit has no way of getting out the MLS Silver Prince, and says the PCs will need to figure something out.
- Information that will require a Social Skill Check (additional to the -12 global penalty):
 - » +20 Social Skill Check will uncover that Miss Du Toit is staying here because no one visits here and no one knows she is here.
 - » +10 Social Skill Check will uncover that Miss Du Toit believes the Ruined Man only attacks at night, that is why they are meeting at noon. The Ruined Man hates the light, she says.
 - » -10 Social Skill Check will uncover that Miss Du Toit's contacts have told her that the Merchant League may have discovered the location of the chest and could already be sending footmen to retrieve it.

Once all the questions have been asked or answered or if the PCs are taking too long, Miss Du Toit will say: "Please, we do not have much time. If I am to survive, you must do this now. Now go, before someone sees us. Remember, you are my only hope."

If this scene has carried on

for a long time, it may well be a good idea to go over the key points of information with the players so they don't forget something vital that their PCs would have remembered.

SCENE 2: THE LEGWORK

There is only one important location in this mission, the MLS Silver Prince, so once the PCs reach the vessel they will most likely commence with the mission proper. In that event, proceed to Scene 3 which will show the behaviour of the NPCs as well as the twist to this mission which takes place in Scene 3.

Since the MLS Silver Prince is out to sea, the PCs can choose to swim if they are brave enough, but most likely they will have need of a boat. If they are not privileged enough to own one, then they can either steal or hire one. Stealing is the safest, all things considered, seeing as there are no loose ends; however, a little honest living never hurt anyone. Since the PCs aren't going very far, they won't have to hire anything called a "ship". A small boat will do and won't cost them much more than a -0 to -10 Wealth Skill Check.

If the PCs do decide to hire or steal a vessel, then wherever they choose to take this vessel, have them see, on a successful +20 Perception Skill Check, a group of sailors nearby in a tavern. These sailors will be quite loudly speaking of their ship sailing at dawn for the north.

THE MLS SILVER PRINCE

The Silver Prince is a hoy ship (a popular Fresian design) under the employ of the Merchant League, and specifically the van Rosedaal family. It is a double masted, three deck vessel measuring forty metres long by fifteen metres wide. It is currently lying at anchor a hundred metres off coast in the Middelburg harbour after unloading its goods from the northern city of Rosedaal. It will be brought to the docks at dawn, loaded with goods bound for Ossenzee and set off soon after.

One thing that is immediately noticeable is that the ship carries no cannons nor any other offensive measures. The hull of the vessel is covered in arrays to repulse all metals and fire, but no weapons. The Silver Prince relies mostly on its speed and the reputation of the Merchant League to ward off attack and if the worst should happen it's crew is always armed and ready for a fight.

THE WEATHER DECK

This is the main deck upon which the burly sailors do most of their work. It also includes the sterncastle which holds the Captain's Cabin and the Treasurer's Cabin. On top of the sterncastle is the Stern Deck, which can technically be called the fourth deck, and this is where the ship's wheel is located along with the lever that will retract the anchor from the seafloor.

Both the Captain's and Treasurer's Cabins contain only two rooms, a large open area where their beds, desks, cabinets, and chests are located and a small lavatory each. For the curious of mind, these lavatories are "vacated" by runes and arrays that incinerates everything inside it at a flick of a switch and then Sends the remains to an array on the outside of the ship where the ashes float harmlessly to the ocean.

Inside the two Cabins the PCs can find some well to do clothes that may or may not fit them, a small collection of jewelry on a +0 Investigation Skill Check, various papers and reports on the goings-on of the vessel and its funding and spending that may be of value to competitors, and some novelties and curios collected from across the ship's voyages that the PCs can sell.

Other than the Cabins, the Weather Deck contains the stairs down to the Berth Deck, the two masts with their sails currently furled, the ropes tied to secure points to hold the sails in place, and the deck hatch to the Berth Deck below. The deck hatch is six by six metres across and is made of two doors opening outwards to the port and starboard of the vessel.



THE BERTH DECK

This deck is just below the Weather Deck and is the area where the crew of the vessel sleeps. Astern of the forward mast, the Berth Deck is divided into four crew cabins, two on each side of the ship. This is where the crew's bunks and hammocks are slung and where they keep their belongings. While it may seem crowded to put a few dozen men in four cabins, the ship rosters the men around the clock as the sailors also double as the security for the vessel.

Because the crew is ashore, there is nothing of value for the PCs to find here unless they intend to bring home a hammock. As all sailors are, the crew are a suspicious bunch and leave nothing behind.

Below the sterncastle, other than the stairs leading to the Hold, is the communal lavatory on the starboard side of the vessel that consists of a series of troughs for the sailors to do their business in and a few arrays to create water to flush it all out a series of holes on the stern wall of the lavatory. On the port side of the vessel and beneath the sterncastle is the kitchen where the ship's cook prepares food for the captain and treasurer first and foremost and then for the rest of the men.

Forward of the crew rooms, and below the deck hatch, sits another deck hatch on the floor which leads to the Hold. When both deck hatches are open, cargo can be lifted out from the Hold straight onto the Weather Deck and put ashore. Along the sides and forward of the deck hatch is a series of arrays inscribed on one metre wide disks and set on pedestals and the controls that can manipulate the disks to tilt at any angle and lever that can turn the arrays on and off. These arrays are Float and Push Wood. It is through these arrays, and more in the Hold, that the cargo (always in wooden crates or on wooden pallets) are loaded and unloaded from the hold.

While the arrays in the Hold do the bulk of the lifting, the arrays in the Berth Deck are responsible for fine manipulation to ensure the cargo does not fall or hit the side of the deck.

THE HOLD

The lowest deck of the ship where all cargo is kept. Nearly all the cargo was delivered to Middelburg when the ship docked several days ago, but that does not mean it is completely empty. Other than the handful of crates bound for the smaller towns on the way back north, the hold is filled with an assortment of metal chains, leather straps, and hemp ropes used to tie the cargo down, not to mention stacks of wooden pallets at the fore end of the hold used to bring cargo up on the array.

In the aft section of the Hold, the PCs will find 9 crates of various sizes still bound to the walls and deck. None of these are larger than a person and have been kept onboard to be delivered to various towns on the way to Ossensee. The crates contain various types of linens, workman's and farmer's tools and equipment, as well as dried foodstuffs. Whole crates can be valuable to the PCs but the individual items won't get them much money.

Amidship the PCs will find the crate bindings left in loose heaps across the deck. They are made of metal, leather, and hemp and come in varying thickness and lengths.

Forward of the mainmast is, as with the other decks, the area used to transport the cargo. A large array to Float and Push Wood will be found on the floor along with a lever on the starboard hull to activate it. Forward of the array the PCs will find the runic generators to power the array. The generators are connected to the array and lever through copper wires which can be used to power any array the PCs want.

Other than these items, there is a good layer of detritus covering the deck. As the lowest deck, the Hold collects all the dirt and rubbish from the other decks. Straw, paper, rags, screws, nails, loose planks, and bits of broken weapons litter the floor.

SCENE 3: THE MISSION

This mission is as straightforward as can be: get the chest from the hold of the ship and return it before dawn. No mission is of course that simple. There must always be some twist and complication thrown in to make the PCs lives interesting and miserable. The twist for this mission happens during this scene and is thus:

Miss Du Toit's contacts were correct in saying that the Merchant League families have sent out their own footmen to look for the chest and some have even deduced where it is hidden. Over the course of this scene, the PCs will come up against four teams of footmen (one from each of the four governing trade families) that they will have to either defeat, deter, or escape in order to get the chest.

THE HEISENSTEIN TEAM

The first team of footmen that the PCs will encounter. Whether they go straight to the docks to acquire a boat or go look for whatever equipment they need first, the PCs will have to travel away from the watchtower where they met with Miss Du Toit. This of course will mean a Random Encounter Roll to see who or what they meet. Luckily for the PCs there will be no Ruined Children or Military Hit Squads waiting for them in their first encounter roll, rather they will encounter the Heisenstein footmen.

Roll the Random Encounter as per normal, only ignore any result that you would get and have the Heisenstein team show up. The plan is to have the players think that this is just another random encounter.

This encounter will take place only a street or two away from the watchtower where the PCs will find 1 x PC numbers (minimum of 2) Heisenstein footmen looking for Miss Du Toit. If the PCs pass a +0 Perception Skill Check then they will hear the Heisenstein footmen around a corner questioning a civilian about whether they

had seen Miss Du Toit. This will give the PCs the advantage and time to consider a plan.

If the PCs fail this Skill Check, the Heisenstein footmen will comically bump into the PCs as both groups round the corner, whereupon the footmen will hold up a sketch of Miss Du Toit and ask if the PCs have seen her. The footmen will mention her by name and say that the Matriarch is looking for her, promising a reward for any information. This reward is equivalent to a +5 bonus to Wealth Skill Check for each PC but a successful Social Skill Check can increase this to a +10.

If the PCs give the implication that they know of Miss Du Toit or her whereabouts then the footmen will become much more interested and if the PCs do not give them the information they will threaten the PCs and, if the PCs are adamant about not giving the information, will attack the PCs.


If the PCs tell the footmen where Miss Du Toit is hiding then the footmen will proceed straight to the watchtower where they will interrogate Miss Du Toit about the whereabouts of the chest. Miss Du Toit will not give in, resulting in the footmen killing her and taking the key to the chest from her corpse. If the PCs are still in the vicinity and have not already told the footmen where the chest is, they will interrogate the PCs as well and attack if the PCs refuse to answer.

Should the PCs give Miss Du Toit's location to the footmen and she dies, proceed to Scene 4 where the repercussions of this will be explored.

THE VAN WINDBURG TEAM

While the Heisenstein family have an idea where Miss Du Toit is hiding, the other three trade families do not. The van Windburg family have instead gotten word through their various contacts that the chest is near the quays and piers of the Docks District.

The van Windburg team is 0.5x PC numbers (rounded up) Golden Talons. Neither Sergeant



Aarden or The New Talon from previous missions have been selected for this task. When the PCs have arrived at the shoreline, and after their Perception Skill Check to detect the Silver Prince's sailors in the nearby tavern, they will encounter the Golden Talons.

If the PCs have elected to hire a vessel, the Golden Talons will interrupt their conversation with the owner of the soon-to-be-hired boat and ask questions regarding ships that have been at anchor or docked for longer than four days, whether any of these have been left unattended for any period of time, and whether any single, suspicious looking person have made a voyage to the ship. The owner of the soon-to-be-hired boat will answer yes and no to these questions in whatever fashion you desire but will ultimately come to the conclusion that it is the Silver Prince that the Golden Talons are after.

If the PCs are having the owner of the soon-to-be-hired boat take them to the Silver Prince, then the Golden Talons will pay to go along. If the PCs are rowing themselves, then the Golden Talons will pay for another boat from the owner that they will take to the Silver Prince.

The PCs can always use the conversation between the Talons and the owner of the soon-to-be-hired boat as an opportunity to interrupt and provide false information to the Golden Talons. However they will have to pass a Deception Skill Check versus Intuition Skill Check against both the Talons and the owner of the soon-to-be-hired boat in order for the lie to work.

If the PCs have decided to steal a boat, then the Golden Talons will approach them, believing them to be the owners of the boat. The Talons will ask the PCs the same questions as above and will ask if they know anything about the Silver Prince if they haven't mentioned the ship first.

If the Talons suspect the PCs are lying, in either situation, they will become suspicious and threaten the PCs to give them the information. This will result in attack if the PCs continue to lie or withhold information.

There are a few ways the PCs can handle the Talons. If they decide to misdirect the Talons and their lies are believed then their problems are solved. Otherwise, they can attempt to take care of the Talons at the docks, on the water, or even on the Silver Prince.

THE VAN ROSEDAAL TEAM

The van Rosedaal team are the most well informed of all the teams the PCs will encounter. They know that the chest is on the ship; however, they don't know the exact location. Thus, by the time the PCs arrive at the ship, the footmen are already on board and searching the ship for the chest. The only evidence that they are on board is their longship, tied to the far end of the ship and hidden from view from Middelburg. The PCs can determine that this is not the ship's longboat by the fact that its own longboats are still tied up to the back of the ship.

There are 2xPC numbers (minimum of 4) van Rosedaal footmen onboard the Silver Prince and will be spread throughout the ship. None will be on the Weather Deck but one footman will be in each of the Captain's and Treasurer's Cabins while the rest will be spread out equally between the Berth Deck and Hold.

The footmen are not interested in talking or making deals as they have already committed murder on this vessel and are in the mindset of "in for a penny, in for a pound". Whether the PCs approach by day or by night, there would have been 5 sailors on the ship to make sure people like the footmen and PCs don't come aboard and rummage through the ship. Unfortunately for them, the footmen approached unnoticed and killed them without much fuss.

There will be no corpses as the footmen would have runically disposed of these, but the PCs will find bloodstains and discarded bloody clothing and weapons in the Captain's Cabin, the Berth Deck Lavatory and on the Weather Deck.

If the footmen sees the PCs they will immediately move

to attack and will only flee if they believe they are about to die.

There are only two real ways for the PCs to deal with this situation and that is either by killing all the van Rosedaal footmen, or leading the Golden Talons to the ship and having the two League teams fight it out amongst themselves.

THE HUGENBERG TEAM

The Hugenberg team may not be the most numerous or well informed of the four teams but they can perhaps be called the smartest. They had no idea where the chest or Miss Du Toit were, but did hear about the teams the other trade families had sent out. So rather than go looking for the chest or Miss Du Toit themselves, they simply followed the other teams.

They followed the Golden Talons and van Rosedaal Team to the docks and saw them and the PCs travel to the Silver Prince. Rather than try and go in after the three groups, the Hugenberg team decided to wait it out and let the groups fight it out between them and pick off the last one standing.

There are 1x PC numbers Hugenberg footmen and they have commandeered a pilot cutter, a small single masted boat used to guide ships into the harbour to the piers. When the PCs have finished on the Silver Prince and start heading back, they will see the pilot cutter moving across the water toward them. The footmen will fire a few warning shots and come within shouting distance.

These are the least aggressive footmen the PCs will meet. They will ask for the chest in return for letting the PCs live and go free. If there are more than one footman, they will even offer to send all but one footman along with the PCs to get the Silver Prince ready for sail and help the PCs steal the ship. If the PCs refuse the footmen will attack and not surrender. They are more afraid of the Patriarch than the PCs.

THE CHEST

The chest can be found in the Hold of the Silver Prince underneath one of the cargo crates in the aft section of the Hold. The PCs can find it through Investigation Skill Checks, or if the players are stating they are searching the crates they will be able to see that one of the crates resting against the port hull is tilted slightly forward. Underneath the back of this crate is the chest.

The chest is 10 cm high, 25 cm wide, and 35 cm long, just as Miss Du Toit. The papers within are the evidence that Miss Du Toit believes will save her life.

The box is made of wood, but a close inspection or holding it up to the light will allow the PCs to see veins of gold running throughout the wood. This is a security measure to prevent arrays from targeting the wood. The chest is also covered in Middelburg Standard arrays as well as arrays that exclude fire and water.


The other security measure on the chest is the method of opening it. There are no seams on the chest, nor hinges, nor any other way to open it except for the bronze mechanism that occupies the one of the short sides of the chest. About 2 cm deep, it contains three locks that seem to require three different sized keys.

Each lock requires a successful -40 Burglary Skill Check to open, however every half hour the PCs plan to spend picking the lock they will receive a +10 bonus to this Skill Check.

If the players unlock all three locks (either by picking the locks or using Miss Du Toit's key once they return the chest), the entire bronze mechanism will be able to be taken off from the chest and the contents can be slid out. Inside they will find three things: a key to Miss Du Toit's house with a slip of paper tied to it containing the address of the house; a deed to the house; and the Clue.

THE CLUE

The Clue is a thickened paper folder tied up



with string with the word “CENTRUM” printed in big, bold, red letters on the front. Inside the folder is a small stack of papers all belonging to the same document: a military order, called “PROJECT SHATTERED SENTINEL”, signed by the Field Marshall, the Director of the Alfresian Intelligence Services, and the Patriarch of the Hugenberg trade family.

Most of the pages of the documents are dreary contract terms and conditions, logistical agreements, orders, and preparations. Most of this will be meaningless to the PCs as it references terms, dates, people, and locations the PCs do not know. There are however, some names the PCs will know. One of the pages of the Shattered Sentinel document is a requisition form to acquire several people to assist in this project. This page is the restored Ruined Man List, undamaged so the PCs can see what it is supposed to look like.

The other main point the PCs will take away from the document is the stated goal of Project Shattered Sentinel. The Alfresian Military have long looked for a technology that could tip any balance of power onto Alfresia’s side. In this mindset the military decided to collect some of Alfresia’s most intelligent, and morally questionable, people and bring them together to “design and produce the ultimate weapon to secure and safeguard the Republic”.

This had to remain a secret, not only because the military did not want rival foreign powers to know of their plans for the ultimate weapon, but also because the government was putting enormous amounts of public money into this project. Thus, the project was given over to the Hugenberg trade family. As a member of the Merchant League, they were not technically Alfresian and with the Patriarch’s noble title in Wesfresland there were no Alfresian sympathies. They were the perfect hiding place for Project Shattered Sentinel.

As the documents are merely the orders and preparations for the project, it does not say what the ultimate weapon is, or the results of the project.

SCENE 4: THE DEBRIEF

Similar to the last mission, this mission has no true Debrief. When they return to the Last Light Watchtower, they will find Miss Du Toit waiting for them, unfortunately the poor woman will be dead and her corpse accompanied by the Ruined Man.

Once the PCs have obtained the chest from the Silver Prince and have started making their way back to dry land, but before the Hugenberg team approaches, have them roll a -20 Perception Skill Check. A successful result will mean that they saw, for the briefest of moments, a small flash of light from the top of the watchtower. If they rolled a 30 or more for this Skill Check then they will have noticed the flash of light was a distinctly smoky orange colour.

They will see no more light or flashes thereof coming from the top of the watchtower as they confront the Hugenberg team and approach the watchtower.

To further the narrative it would be best if the PCs arrived at the watchtower at or after dusk. As Miss Du Toit may have told the PCs, the Ruined Man dislikes light. This is a fairly busy mission that starts after noon by the time Scene 1 finishes, so it is highly possible that even if the PCs went directly to the Silver Prince that it will take them till dusk anyway. Between the four footmen teams, the time spent travelling to and from the docks district and the ship itself, not to mention searching for the chest inside the hold, and trying to pick its three locks, there are more than enough events that you can use to stretch out time until dusk arrives.

Once they reach the watchtower, it will seem as silent and deserted and when they first arrived here in Scene 1. If they attempt to call out to Miss Du Toit from the bottom of the tower or try to draw her attention in any way, they will clearly receive no answer as she is already dead and the Ruined Man is not interested in revealing his position. It is of course possible that the PCs may

have determined the orange flash of light they saw is the Ruined Man and decide not to go up the tower. If that is the case then go to the sections below detailing the What If scenarios.

Should the PCs decide to go up the watchtower, either oblivious of the Ruined Man, or with a plan to kill him, have them roll a -20 Perception Skill Check. If they fail this check, all they can hear is a quiet but frantic murmuring and muttering echoing down the tower. If they succeed they can make out a language they have never heard before, no matter what language they can speak. Once they reach the top of the tower where they spoke previously with Miss Du Toit, the murmuring will stop and it will become eerily silent.

If they look inside the lantern room they will see Miss Du Toit's possessions, bedding, and clothes lying on the floor much in the same way as in Scene 1.

If the PCs do not specifically look up towards the ceiling of the lantern room, the Ruined Man will draw their attention by saying in his hoarse whisper: "Again, again, again. Still not you, still not yet." The Ruined Man will be squatting on top of a narrow ledge near the ceiling of the lantern room, above the tall windows in shadows, looking down at the PCs. With his hood drawn up, the PCs will only be able to see the glowing coals of his eyes. In his right hand, dangling down from the ledge he will be holding Miss Du Toit by her hair. It will be obvious to the PCs that she is dead by her utter lack of response to the goings-on around her, her vacant expression, and the odd angle at which her head is turned, indicating a broken neck.

At this time the PCs can decide to flee, talk, or fight. If they flee the encounter is over, proceed to the sections below detailing the What If scenarios. Any attempt at fighting will have no effect on the Ruined Man. No projectiles or bullets will harm him and no array will target him. Should the PCs be lucky enough to get into melee range or if the PCs destroy the body of Miss Du Toit, he will disappear after saying his

final quip below.

If they decide to engage in conversation with the Ruined Man, it might become quite tricky for you. The PCs will clearly have a lot of questions, accusations, and inferences for which they, perhaps rightly, deserve answers to. However, there are still four more missions to go and then the grand finale, so the PCs can't have all the information yet or it would ruin the surprises that await them and you in the following books.

This means that the Ruined Man's responses will be limited, and so to curb any repetition or awkwardness, if the PCs keep pressing on an issue for which there is no response or keep asking the same question in multiple ways to elicit a different answer, have the Ruined Man make his final quip and leave.

Because the PCs can ask any variety of questions on any variety of topics, the information below will be of a vague sort. Paraphrase the quotes from the Ruined Man as necessary in order to adapt to the exact questions the PCs ask. As any person who has supped deeply from the cups of insanity, the Ruined Man has certain phrases that he repeats often. "Not you, not yet" is one of his favourites and can be applied to a range of questions the PCs might ask. "Evil people deserve to have evil rendered unto them" is also a phrase you can adapt whenever the PCs might ask questions regarding his motives. Phrases about dreams, nightmares, and the nature of sleep can also work both to confuse and intimidate the PCs.

Remember that silence is as appropriate an answer as any when the PCs ask a question that the below answers do not cover. The Ruined Man is a mad monster and his silence to a question can be as sinister as if he did answer. To add to his menacing appearance (or lack of an appearance) you can also have him cackle hoarsely and maniacally at the PCs' questions, finding humour in them in ways only a madman can.

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE RUINED MAN:

- If asked his name or who he is, he will say: "Names are for friends and I have none."
 - » If asked if they could be his friends, he will say: "Not you, not yet."
- If asked the reason why he killed Miss Du Toit or any of the other people on the List, the Ruined Man will say: "They were evil people and evil people deserve to have evil rendered unto them."
- If asked if he will let go of Miss Du Toit, he will say: "No, this one is mine."
- If asked the reason why he killed any of the vagrants, homeless, prostitutes, or any other that were not on the list, the Ruined Man will say: "They were filth to be swept away, unnoticed, unwanted, unremembered."
- If asked if he knows anything about Project Shattered Sentinel, he will mimic the line from the document "to safeguard and secure the Republic" and begin cackling.
- If asked about any details about the Project, he will say: "my birth was a series of nightmares now faded by this dream."
- If asked if he will kill the PCs, he will say: "Not you, not yet."
- If asked if he will kill again, he will say: "Evil people deserve to have evil rendered onto them."
- If asked if he is evil, he will simply say: "No, this dream is mine."
- If the PCs say anything about him being crazy or insane, he will say: "Is there a line separating sanity from insanity, or do they change, one into the other as the world changes? Soon we will find out."
- If asked why he waited for the PCs, he will say: "I waited for the moonlight on water; not you, not yet."
- If asked if he feels better now that everyone on the list is dead, he will

say: "I had hoped, I had wished, I had dreamt this dream would be sweeter, but no, this is not freedom, this is the hollow emptiness of dreamless sleep."

- If the PCs used an array to destroy humans (or any array to that effect) to destroy Miss Du Toit (or by sheer ingenuity manage to destroy her body in any other way), he will say: "Even in dreams, nightmares fade like smoke in the wind."

If all these questions have been answered, or the PCs keep repeating questions, the Ruined Man will take his leave.

The Ruined Man's last quip will be: "Evil people deserve to have evil rendered onto them, and every person in this city is as evil as this one." He will shake Miss Du Toit as he says the last few words. He will then murmur something (in the same foreign language as before, which the PCs can hear on a successful -10 Perception Skill Check) and then disappear in a smoky, orange flash of light. As the light fades, Miss Du Toit will fall to the ground.

As she hits the ground, out from her clothes will fall a strange bronze key in plain sight of the PCs. This is the key to the chest and can be manipulated to fit all three keyholes.

FOR THOSE PCs THAT WERE ARRESTED:

They will be taken to the constabulary or provosts gaols, stripped down naked, and thrown into the cells where they will in all likelihood be forgotten. The constables have more than enough proof of the criminality of the PCs and Miss Du Toit will be dead long before the PCs are even interrogated and the chest will have been taken by the Merchant League. At the very least, they will be in gaol for the remainder of the campaign.

IF ALL THE PCs DIED BEFORE MEETING THE RUINED MAN

Once the last PC has died, tell the players how Miss Du Toit is busy

eating a paltry meal from a tin plate when a smoky, orange flash of light appears in front of her. While the appearance of the Ruined Man gave her a fright, she doesn't seem scared of him or try to run. She looks quite resigned to her fate as the Ruined Man simply stands there quietly and looks at her.

She asks to see his face, to which he replies: "To see what you did?" She will sadly say she didn't do anything to him and he replies: "You stood by and did nothing. That was all they required. It is time." He places his right hand around her throat. A tear streams down her face and she says, quietly: "I do not deserve this." His hand tightens as he says: "We all deserve to die. Even you. Even I." He twists his hand quickly to the side and life leaves the young woman.

IF THE PCs GAVE UP MISS DU TOIT'S LOCATION TO ANY OF THE FOOTMEN OR DID NOT RETURN TO THE TOP OF THE WATCHTOWER

The main drawback here is that the PCs won't get their encounter with the Ruined Man. Otherwise the PCs can go about the mission in the same way as if they intended to go back to Miss Du Toit. They will still have to deal with the teams of footmen and they can still get the chest and even open it if they are skilled enough. It means they can still get the clue as well as Miss Du Toit's house.

IF THE PCs STOLE THE MLS SILVER PRINCE

The short of it is that now they have a ship to call their own. The problem is that it belongs to the Merchant League and the League always collects on its debts. Even though the Hugenberg footmen helped them steal it, they only did so to get the chest and will deny all knowledge of the event. It's up to the PCs to decide if they will simply park it at the nearest town and leave it or if they will change its name and become merchants, privateers, or pirates.

AFTERMATH

There are a few avenues to explore after this mission, but the first one has to be Miss Du Toit's house. A map of its location and blueprints are provided, but it is up to you to fill and furnish the house with whatever you wish. It is a plain and average house so there won't be anything too special as its purpose in a game sense is to simply provide the PCs with a central base of operations for further missions if they do not have one already. They can, of course, choose to sell the house if they so wish, but a free house doesn't come around every day.

The second avenue to explore is the Merchant League. They encountered footmen from each governing family and the PCs might wish revenge or to make amends, or the families themselves might send more footmen to deal with the people responsible for making them look bad. There is a good opportunity for Merchant League politics if the PCs have any ambitions to climb the merchant ladder of the League.

There is of course the elephant in the room: the Ruined Man. This is, perhaps, the second time the PCs have encountered the Ruined Man, and other than the zealous followers of the Ruined Man, the PCs are the only ones to have seen and spoken with the Ruined Man and survived. By this time in the campaign the PCs could have collected a trove of evidence about the Ruined Man and could try and solve the case. They are welcome to try and some good adventures will be had, but their fight with the Ruined Man must wait for the end of the campaign. Luckily for them, there are plenty of Ruined Children to go around to act as decoys.

NON-PLAYABLE CHARACTERS

CONSTABLES

Athletics	40	Intuition	30
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	50
Burglary	40	Logic	30
Constitution	40	Luck	30
Deceive	30	Might	40
Diplomacy	30	Perception	40
Drive	50	Shoot	50
Fight	40	Stealth	30
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	30
Intimidate	50	Will	40

CIVILIANS

Athletics	35	Intuition	35
Broad-Craft	35	Investigate	35
Burglary	35	Logic	35
Constitution	35	Luck	35
Deceive	35	Might	35
Diplomacy	35	Perception	35
Drive	35	Shoot	35
Fight	35	Stealth	35
Fine-Craft	35	Wealth	35
Intimidate	35	Will	35

RUNIC ARRAYS

- Middelburg Standard Defensive array on Cuirass, Helm and Quilted Jacket.
- Constable's Friend Offensive array on Pistol rounds and Billy Club.

EQUIPMENT

- Bronze Cuirass and Open Faced Helm (Strong Armour) covering Torso and Head Hit Locations.
- Quilted Jacket (Soft Armour) covering Torso, Arms and Legs Hit Locations.
- Bronze Billy Club (Medium melee weapon).
- Steel and Wood Pistol with lead rounds (Medium ranged weapon).

RUNIC ARRAYS

- In their day to day business, not everyone will be wearing defensive and offensive arrays.
- For Defensive arrays: roll a d100, if below 50 then the person is wearing the Middelburg Standard on their Arms, Legs and Torso Hit Locations.
- For Offensive arrays: if they are carrying weapons, roll a d100, if below 50 choose any offensive array from the Array Section at the back of the book. .

EQUIPMENT

- Miscellaneous articles.
- For weapons: roll a d100, if below 25 then the person is armed with a sword and pistol.

MISS MARJOLAINE DU TOIT

EXALTED NPC

Athletics	30	Intuition	60
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	30
Burglary	30	Logic	50
Constitution	30	Luck	20
Deceive	50	Might	30
Diplomacy	55	Perception	30
Drive	30	Shoot	30
Fight	30	Stealth	30
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	40
Intimidate	40	Will	30

RUNIC ARRAYS

- Middelburg Standard Defensive array on all Hit Locations.
- Splinter Offensive array on Knife.
- Peace of Mind Offensive array on Pistol rounds.

EQUIPMENT

- Standard clothing on all Hit Locations.
- Steel knife (Light melee weapon).
- Steel and Wood hold out Pistol with lead rounds (Medium Near ranged weapon)

MERCHANT LEAGUE FOOTMEN

Athletics	50	Intuition	30
Broad-Craft	30	Investigate	30
Burglary	50	Logic	30
Constitution	30	Luck	30
Deceive	45	Might	50
Diplomacy	40	Perception	40
Drive	40	Shoot	45
Fight	45	Stealth	60
Fine-Craft	30	Wealth	30
Intimidate	50	Will	30

RUNIC ARRAYS

- Any of Middelburg Standard, Imperial Zephyr, Flame Ward and Steel Dragon Defensive arrays on all Hit Locations.
- Any Offensive array on ranged and melee weapons, with priority being given to quickness and efficiency.
 - » E.g.: Manstopper, Terminator, Sculptor
- Any Utility array on tools, equipment and metal spheres.
 - E.g.: Ice Bomb, Smoke Bomb, Sound Bomb

EQUIPMENT

- Standard Clothing that covers all Hit Locations (No Armour).
- Half of the Footmen will have Steel Cuirass (Strong Armour) covering Torso Hit Location.
- Variety of weapons, both melee and ranged.
 - » Ranging from swords, daggers, knives, billy clubs, maces for melee weapons and pistols, muskets for ranged weapons
- Burglary tools and other useful items for criminality.
- Steel spheres for holding Bomb arrays.



THE RUINED MAN

Athletics	???	Intuition	???
Broad-Craft	???	Investigate	???
Burglary	???	Logic	???
Constitution	???	Luck	???
Deceive	???	Might	???
Diplomacy	???	Perception	???
Drive	???	Shoot	???
Fight	???	Stealth	???
Fine-Craft	???	Wealth	???
Intimidate	???	Will	???

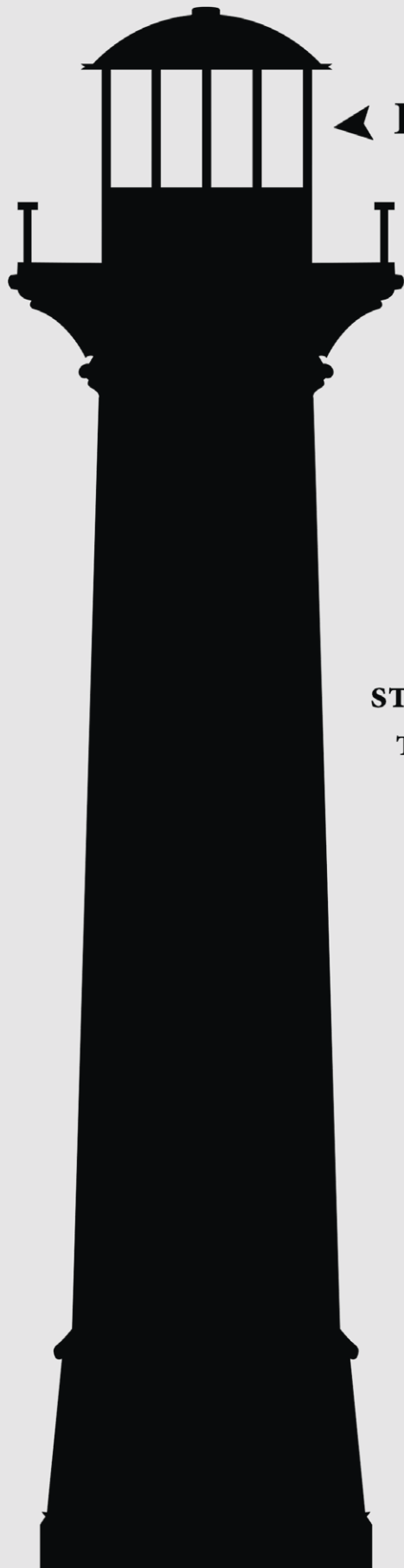
RUNIC ARRAYS

- It is not known what arrays the Ruined Man is using. All that is known is that they are exceedingly powerful.

EQUIPMENT

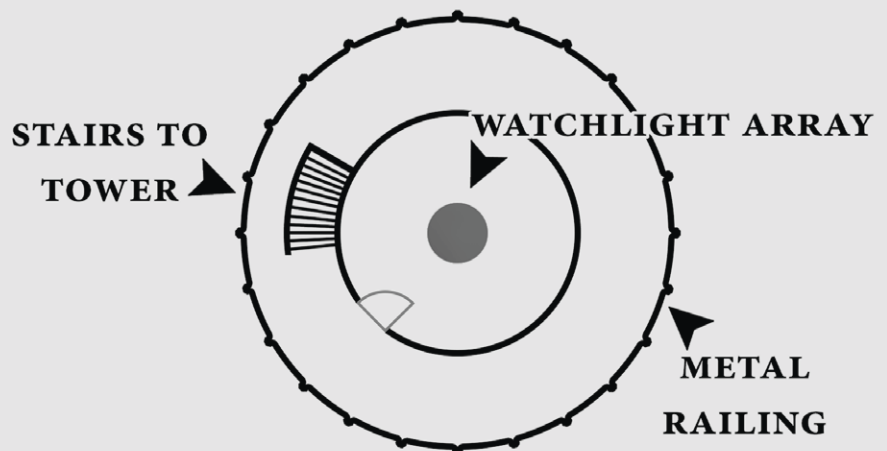
- The only thing the Ruined Man is ever seen wearing is his tattered coat. In fact, that is all anyone ever sees of the Ruined Man. No one has yet seen what he looks like.

THE *LAST LIGHT* WATCHTOWER



◀ LANTERN ROOM

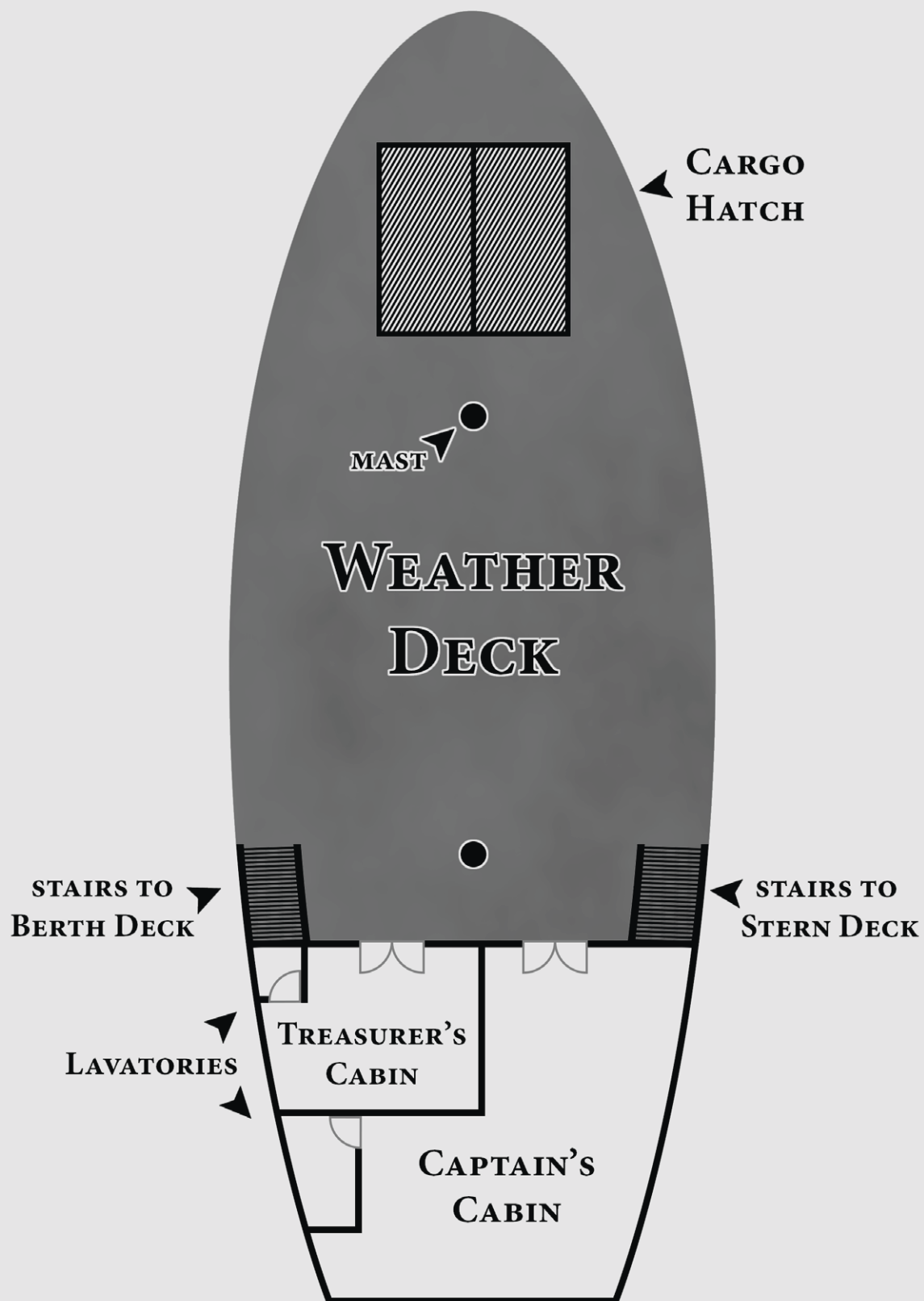
LANTERN ROOM



2.5 M

THE *MLS SILVER PRINCE*

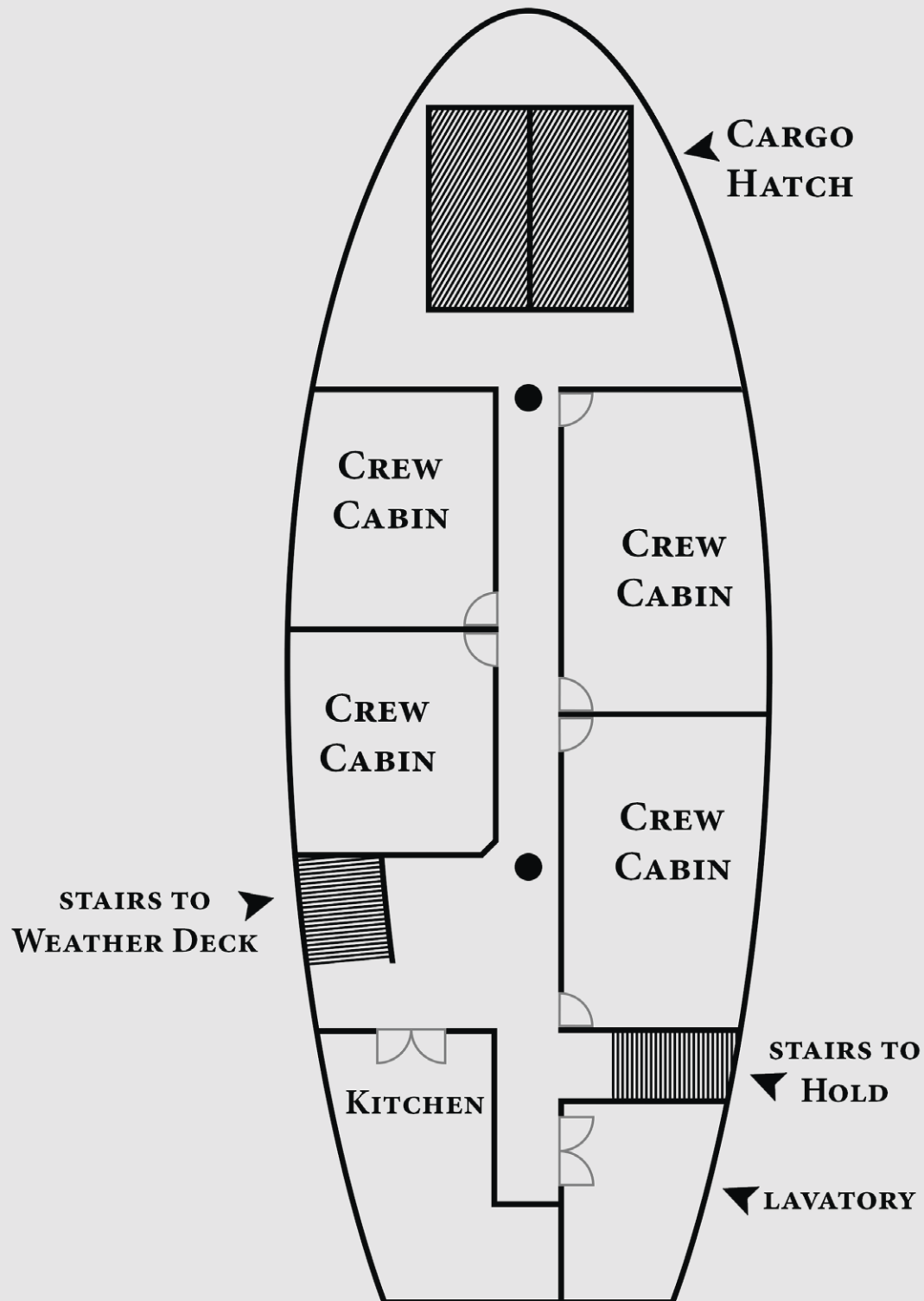
WEATHER DECK



3 M

THE *MLS SILVER PRINCE*

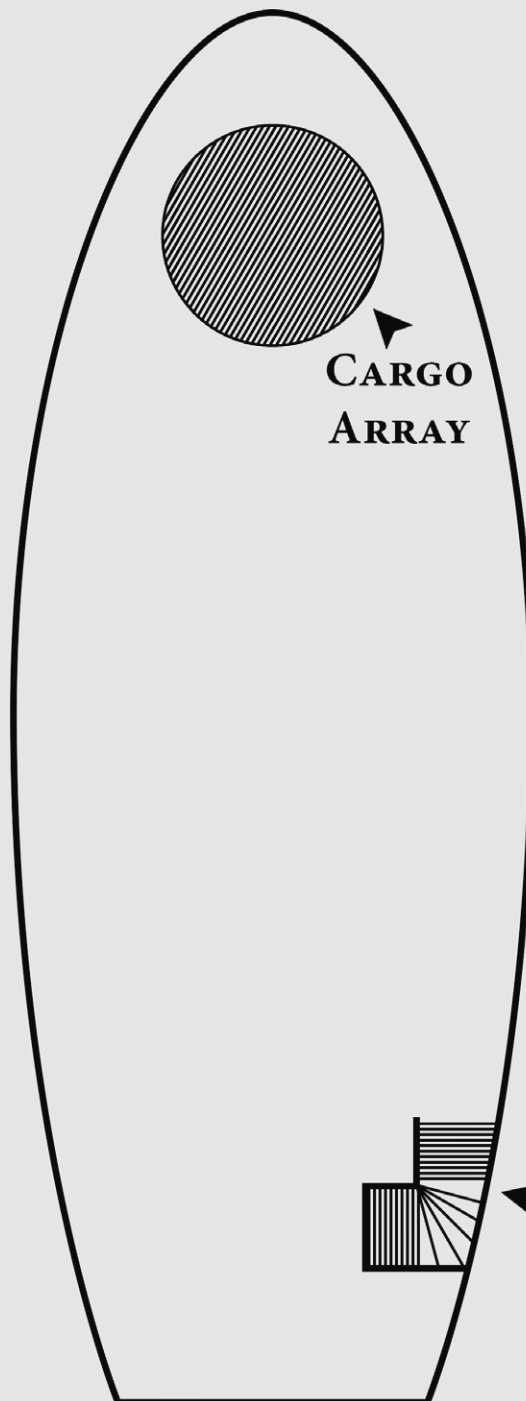
BERTH DECK



3 M

THE *MLS SILVER PRINCE*

THE HOLD

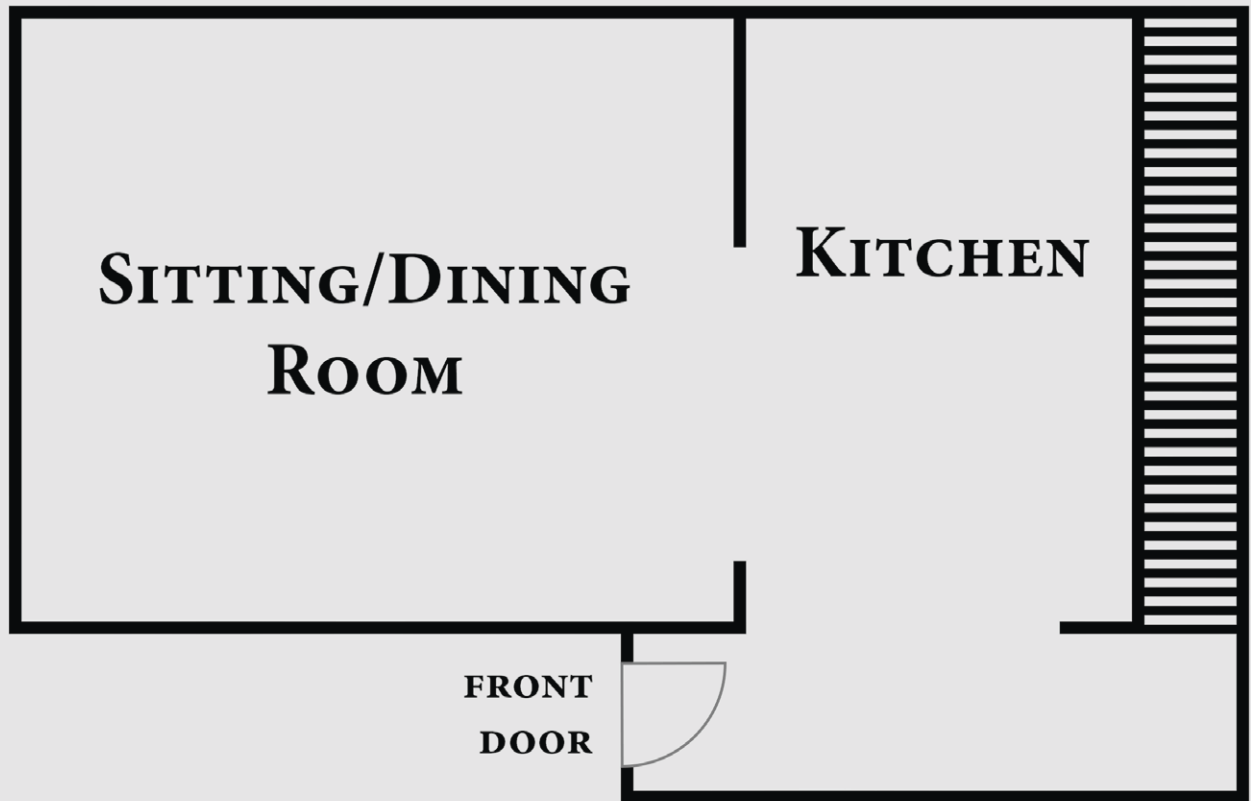


3 M

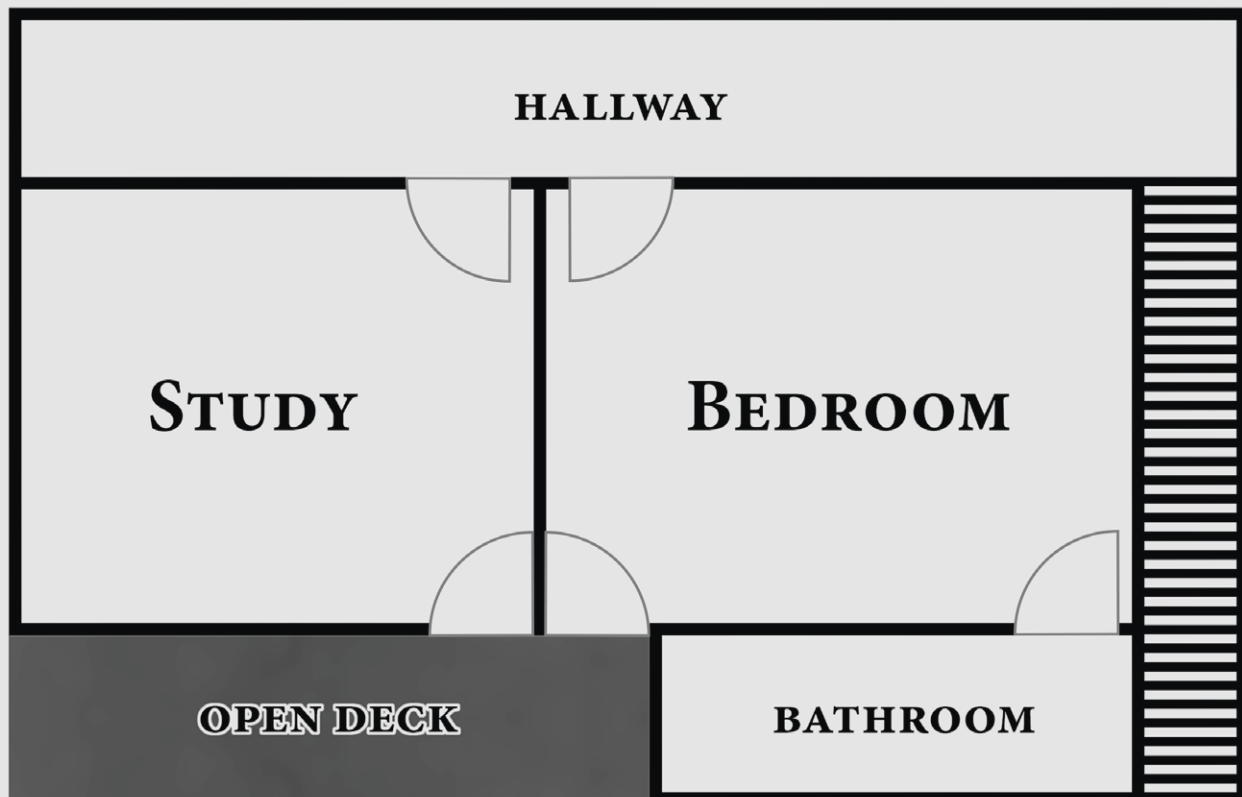


MISS DU TOIT'S HOUSE

GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



1 M



ROSE HEIGHTS

MISS DU TOIT'S HOUSE ♦

120 M



RANDOM ENCOUNTERS



ENCOUNTER LIST

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 A black cat crosses the party's path, hissing at them. | 14 A fire-brigade coach speeds past, its runic sirens blaring. |
| 2 Mischievous children pull a prank on a store-owner. | 15 A bounty hunter asks around about his target. |
| 3 Men sit around a table, gambling with dice. There's a seat open. | 16 A building nearby is on fire and there are people trapped inside. |
| 4 Two merchants argue about who can set up his stall on the corner. | 17 A carriage at speed tips over and crashes into a building. |
| 5 An old, overweight constable chases after a fleeing child. | 18 An old man collapses with a cry and starts convulsing. |
| 6 A children's puppet show on a corner mocks the Merchant League. | 19 An erratic man tries to convince others to join his cult. |
| 7 A woman in the crowd cries out for help. She's in labour. | 20 A set of burnt shackles lies smoking in an alleyway. |
| 8 A masked youth paints graffiti onto a nearby wall. | 21 An elderly couple sits under an awning, begging for money. |
| 9 A group of children mocks a lonely, cowering child. | 22 The party sees a wandering toddler with no parent in sight. |
| 10 A funeral procession fills the street with mournful prayers. | 23 A nervous man places down a sack and then quickly walks away. |
| 11 A cock-fight in an alley, with the organisers taking bets. | 24 A merchant chases a youth down the road, yelling "Thief!" |
| 12 A bourgeois lady is lost and asks to be escorted home. | 25 A homeless boy cries for food as his mother sleeps behind him. |
| 13 A few scions of the League argues heatedly with the constables. | 26 A homeless old woman tries to sell the PCs some floral crowns. |

27	A man yells at the party "We don't take kindly to your sort here!"	46	Constables have blocked off part of a street, without saying why.
28	A street preacher standing on a crate preaches the end of the world.	47	Constables destroy a makeshift shrine built on a street corner.
29	Constables evicts a woman, who tries to fight for her home.	48	A pair of constables on patrol.
30	A protest against the government threatens to turn ugly.	49	Suspicious constables question anyone bearing arms.
31	A nearby building explodes, releasing noxious gas onto the street.	50	Someone unseen in the distance calls out a PC's name.
32	A few criminals start burglarising a nearby house.	51	The party find a corpse in an alley, and the constables spot them.
33	The party sees a freshly severed head, festooned with jewellery.	52	A bedraggled prostitute propositions a PC while her pimp looks on.
34	A coach stops; masked men jump out; a kidnapping in action.	53	A blind beggar woman steps into the party's path and asks for alms.
35	A figure follows the party for several blocks before disappearing.	54	A gypsy woman at a rickety table offers to read the party's future.
36	A cry for help rings out from an alley. Someone is being attacked.	55	A half-naked, jittery, ill man asks the party for illicit narcotics.
37	A crowd tries to lynch a woman for whoring and adultery.	56	A monk tells the PCs to repent. He knows details of their sins.
38	A group of drunk beggars accosts passersby for money.	57	A group of child thieves try to pickpocket one of the PCs.
39	A group of soldiers on leave are drunk and getting rowdy.	58	At a small market, a vendor accuses the party of stealing.
40	A group of thugs harass a citizen.	59	A beggar attacks a PC, but is too weak to do any real damage.
41	A group of young bourgeois harasses the poor for sport.	60	A flash of light, and one random PC suddenly falls unconscious.
42	Two rival streetgangs ready themselves for a battle.	61	The PCs witness a burglary in progress near them.
43	An armed robbery takes place at a nearby store.	62	The PCs witness a mugging in progress near them.
44	Horsemen stop at a building and fire their pistols into it.	63	The PCs witness an assault in progress near them.
45	An anti-rune luddite starts attacking people that wear runic arrays.	64	The PCs must pass a Perception check to avoid a harmless trap.

- | | | | |
|----|--|------|---|
| 65 | The PCs walk into an an array that sends them across the city. | 84 | An explosion near the PCs puts them in jeopardy. |
| 66 | The PCs pass a building that has been closed off due to plague. | 85 | Victims of the plague approach the PCs, asking for alms. |
| 67 | An angry man walks up and punches one the PCs. | 86 | The PCs get caught up in a riotous mob. |
| 68 | The PCs hear that a minor trade family put a bounty on one them. | 87 | Constables stop the party and wants to search all their belongings. |
| 69 | The PCs hear that a major trade family put a bounty on one them. | 88 | A group of beggars become hostile and attempt to mug the PCs. |
| 70 | The PCs come across a fresh Ruined Man murder scene. | 89 | A PC is challenged to a duel for perceived transgressions. |
| 71 | Someone sees the PCs near a fresh murder scene and runs off. | 90 | A group of scoundrels ambush and try to mug the PCs. |
| 72 | A gang tells the PCs they must pay a toll to pass through here. | 91 | The constables come to arrest the 1 or more of the PCs. |
| 73 | A child asks the party for help, but leads them into a mugging. | 92 | A religious cult attempts to kidnap the PCs for a sacrifice. |
| 74 | Constables hold up a wanten poster that looks like one of the PCs. | 93 | A crazy gunman starts firing at the PCs. |
| 75 | Someone being chased by constables asks the PCs to help them. | 94 | Another group of footmen come to kidnap or kill the PCs. |
| 76 | The PCs overhear a bounty hunter asking NPCs about them. | 95 | A pack of feral dogs attack the PCs. |
| 77 | Someone points a PC out to a constable, accusing him of a crime. | 96 | Homeless plague victims try and mug the PCs. |
| 78 | The PCs find a nearly dead constable, and are seen by a witness. | 97 | PCs see men engaged in illegal activity, who try to silence the PCs. |
| 79 | A group of scoundrels try to start a fight with the PCs. | 98 | The Golden Talons have been sent to eliminate the PCs. |
| 80 | A carriage comes barrelling towards the PCs. | 99 | A military squad attacks the PCs, thinking they're with the Ruined Man. |
| 81 | A small airships come crashing down on/ near the PCs. | 100 | The PCs witness a Ruined Child killing someone. |
| 82 | The PCs are caught in a shootout between constables and a gang. | >100 | One of the Ruined Children comes to kill the PCs. |
| 83 | The PCs must pass a Perception check to avoid a violent trap. | | |

THE RUINED CHILDREN

The Ruined Man isn't a mystery to every person in Middelburg. There are a few in this metropolis who knows exactly who and what he is. They have seen him in all his morbid glory, they have spoken to him and they have learnt from him.

More than anything, they have done their best to become like him. They may not know exactly how he became to be the monster that he is, but between the whole lot of them they have done their damned best to become facsimiles of him.

As he is the Ruined Man, they have become his Ruined Children. They are the cause for much of the mystery surrounding the Ruined Man murders. They look like him, they dress like him, and they act like him. There is no surprise then that people think the Ruined Man can be in more than one location at once. Very few people have seen the real Ruined Man, most have in fact only seen the Ruined Children.

The Ruined Children have also been responsible for the death toll associated with the Ruined Man. There is only one man who knows why the Ruined Man kills and why he chooses his victims the way he does... and that man is the Ruined Man. The Ruined Children have as little clue about the Ruined Man's motives as the average man on the street. They believe that he kills simply because he is their god and "his will be done".

It is this fanaticism that has driven one of these Ruined Children into the path of the PCs. For one reason or another, this specific Ruined Child has seen fit to decide that the Ruined Man wants the PCs dead and he will make sure that happens.

It is also this fanaticism that ensures the Ruined Child will never give up or surrender. It will fight to its last breath to do what it believes must be done.

But it also knows that secrecy is paramount, and so will only ambush the PCs if no one else is around and will give up pursuit if the PCs escape into a crowded area. The safety of the Ruined Man is more important than the lives of the PCs.

RUINED CHILDREN

EXALTED NPC

Athletics	30	Intuition	50
Broad-Craft	40	Investigate	40
Burglary	40	Logic	15
Constitution	60	Luck	70
Deceive	20	Might	45
Diplomacy	10	Perception	50
Drive	20	Shoot	15
Fight	40	Stealth	60
Fine-Craft	60	Wealth	00
Intimidate	60	Will	100

SPECIALISATIONS

- Athletics Specialisation:
 - » Giant Leap - Skill Level 60.
- Logic Specialisation:
 - » Runology - Skill Level 70.
- Fight Specialisation:
 - » Pugilism - Skill Level 65.

RUNIC ARRAYS

- Middelburg Standard Defensive array tattooed on all Hit Locations.
- Furnace Fist Offensive array on knuckles.
- God's Razor Offensive array on claws.
- Constable's Friend Offensive array on heel bone.

EQUIPMENT

- Inhuman Bone claws grafted into fingers (Light melee weapon).
- Inhuman Bone grafted into heel (Light melee weapon).
- Inhuman Bone Armour (Sturdy Armour) covering all Hit Locations.
- Ragged Cloak (Basic Clothing) covering all Hit Locations.

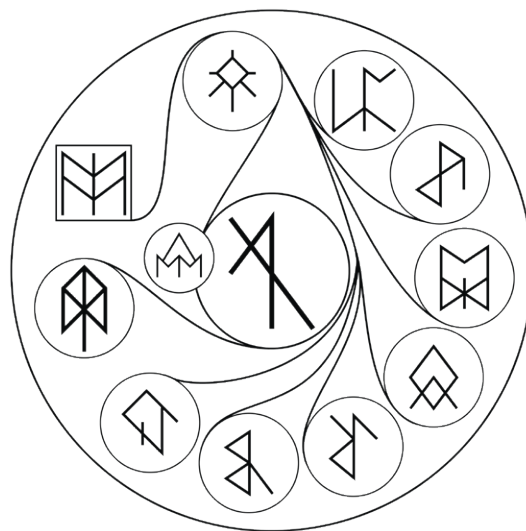
SAMPLE RUNIC ARRAYS



ARMOUR OF LIGHT

NOTATION: Transmute Copper, Gold, Iron, Lead, Silver, Tin and Wood into a Gargantuan amount of Light and Contain the transmutation to the array. Sustain the Light.

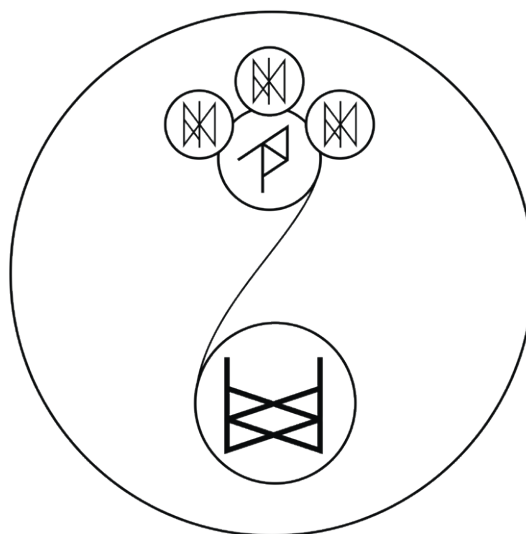
DESCRIPTION: Defensive array that transmute materials into a spotlight to shine back the attackers, hopefully blinding them.



BLOOD DRINKER

NOTATION: Pull Blood at a speed of 30m/s.

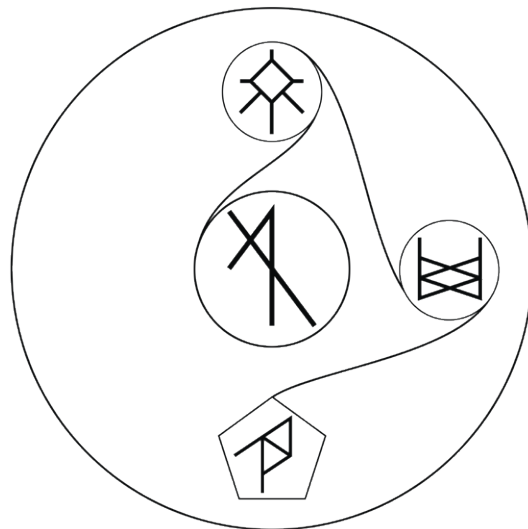
DESCRIPTION: Draws blood inside the body to the weapon/ammunition to bleed the victim to death.



BLOODHOUND

NOTATION: Pull Blood at a speed of 1m/s and Transmute that blood into Light.

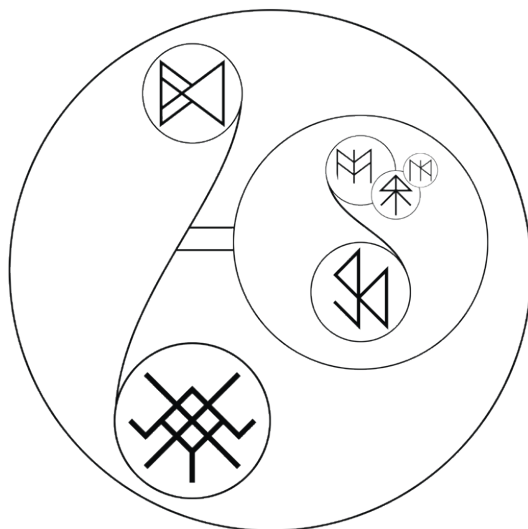
DESCRIPTION: Makes the weapon/ammunition glow brightly to add dramatic flair to swords and to make victim glow from their wounds when shot.



CONSTABLE'S FRIEND

NOTATION: Create Lightning only if a Human is within an area as wide across as the array and with a depth 1% of the array's diameter.

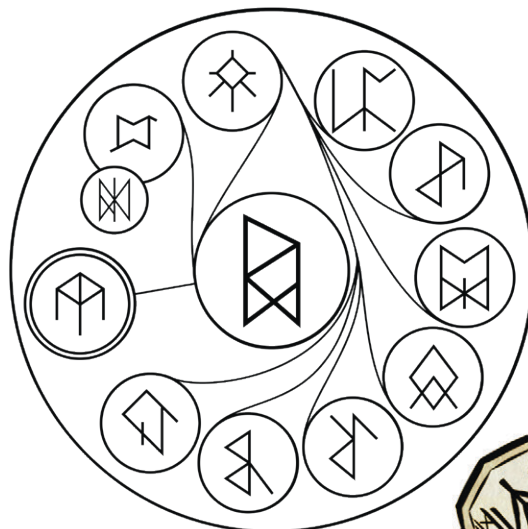
DESCRIPTION: Intended to shock and stun victims when the weapon/ammunition hits flesh.



FLAME WARD

NOTATION: Transmute Copper, Gold, Iron, Lead, Silver, Tin and Wood into Fire and Push the Fire at a speed of 10m/s. The Fire excludes Water.

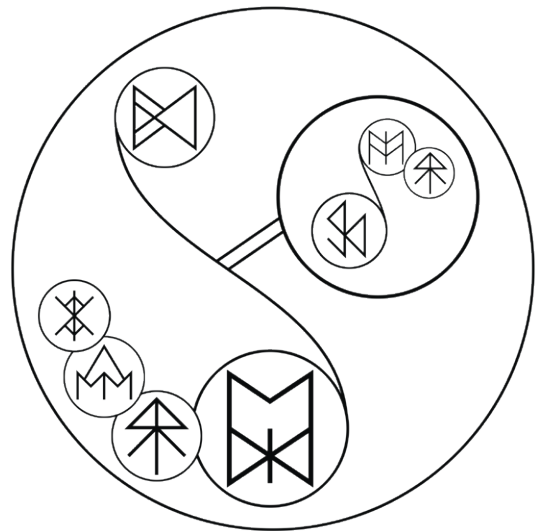
DESCRIPTION: Defensive array that transmute materials into a gout of flame that is thrown back at the attacker. Intended for melee combatants.



HATCHLING

NOTATION: Create a cylinder of Iron as wide as the array's circumference and 100 times as tall if a Human is present within a distance 1/10th of the circumference of the array.

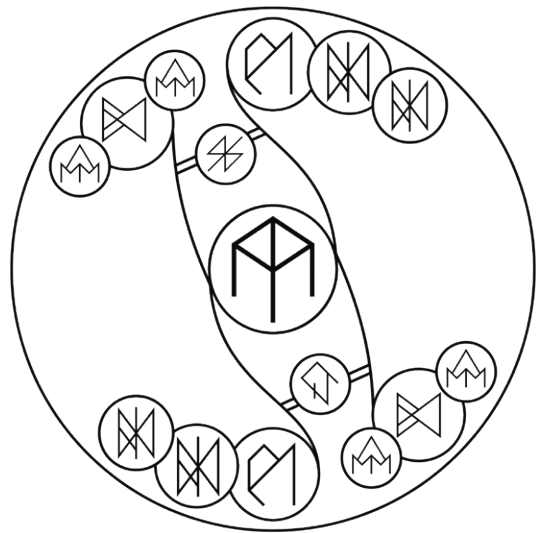
DESCRIPTION: Put on all sides of ammunition, creates metal rods once inside the body that stick out of the body. Can hurt nearby people if they stand too close to the victim.



ICE BOMB

NOTATION: Create Water in an area 200 times the size of the array and Cool it at a rate of 100 Degrees Celsius per second if either Wood or Stone is present.

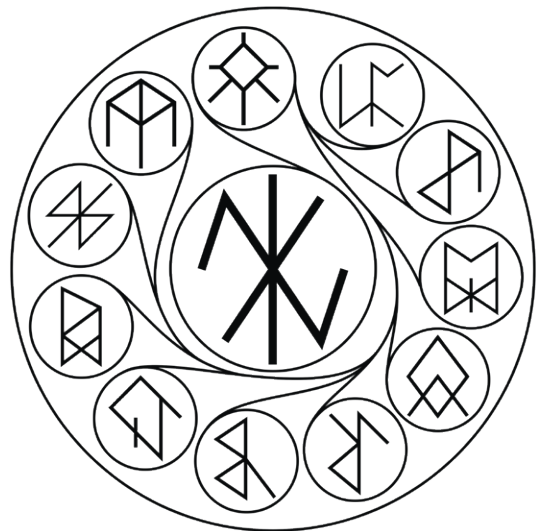
DESCRIPTION: Put on small metal balls that create large ice obstacles when thrown on the ground.



IMPERIAL ZEPHYR

NOTATION: Transmute Copper, Cold, Iron, Lead, Tin, Silver, Wood, Fire, Stone and Water into Air.

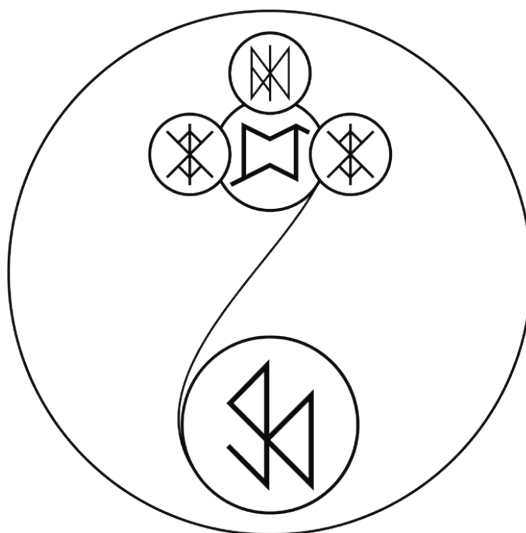
DESCRIPTION: Defensive array that transmutes materials into harmless air.



MANSTOPPER

NOTATION: Push Human at a speed of 10m/s 20 times the area of the array.

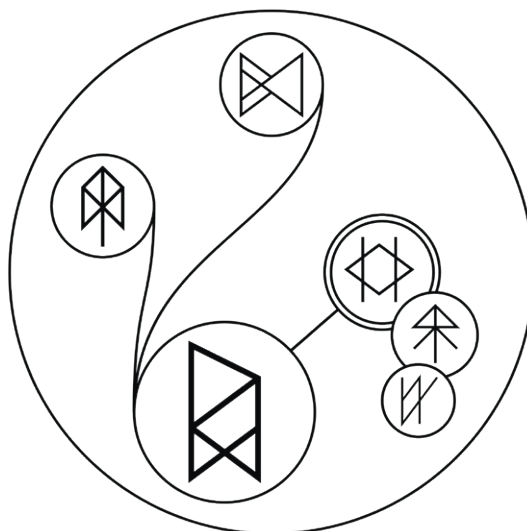
DESCRIPTION: Put on ammunition, creates a massive hole in the body, worsening any wound.



MARKUS' GIFT

NOTATION: Create and Sustain a Fire that Excludes Heat from the lowest 0.1% of the array.

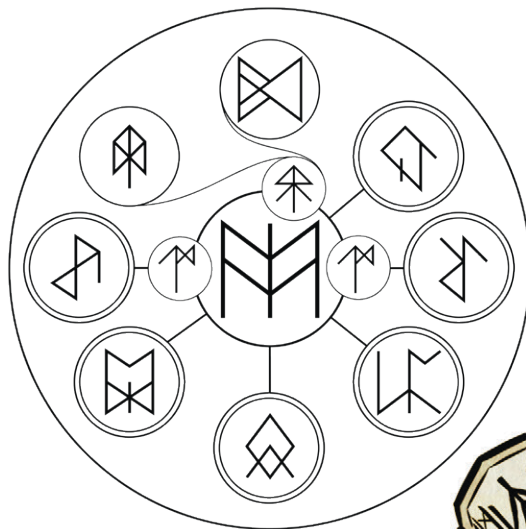
DESCRIPTION: Put on a melee weapon and it wreathes the weapon in flame, while protecting it from the heat.



MIDDELBURG STANDARD

NOTATION: Create and Sustain a Containment field that is twice as Large as the array's area size, and 1/10th as deep that Excludes Wood, Silver, Copper, Lead, Iron and Gold.

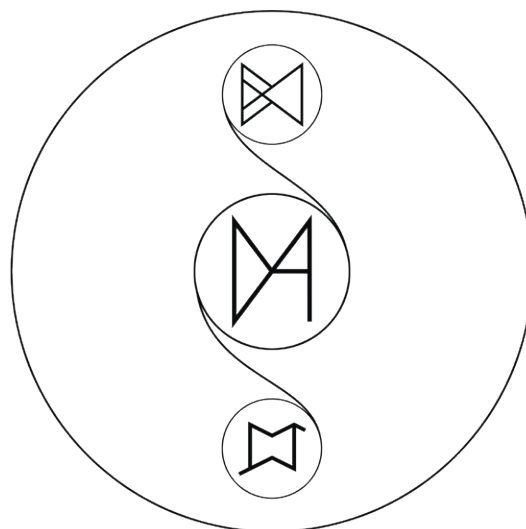
DESCRIPTION: Defensive array that creates a forcefield to stop incoming attacks.



PEACE OF MIND

NOTATION: Create and Push Arsenic at a speed of 1 m/s.

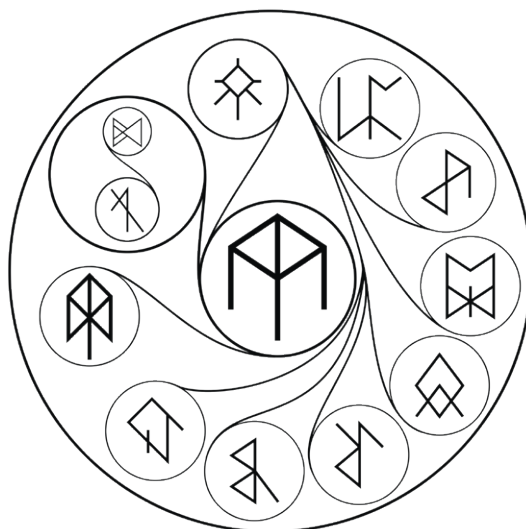
DESCRIPTION: Poisons the victim with arsenic.



PROPHET'S BLOOD

NOTATION: Transmute Copper, Gold, Iron, Lead, Silver, Tin and Wood into Water. Create Light and apply this to the transmuted Water.

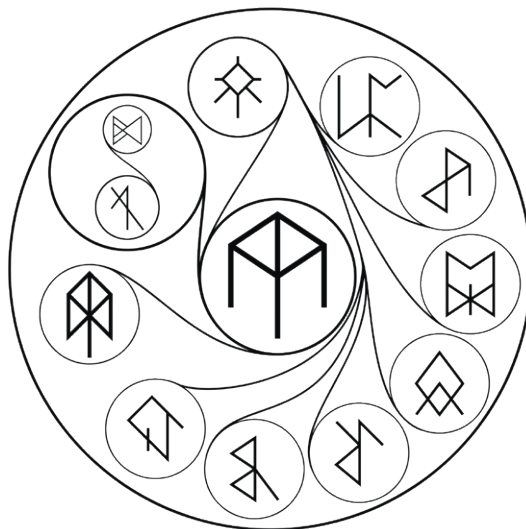
DESCRIPTION: Defensive array that transforms materials that hit into glowing water, to look like glowing blood.



QUICKSILVER METTLE

NOTATION: Transmute Human into Mercury if Human Blood is present and Contain that transmutation to the boundary of the array.

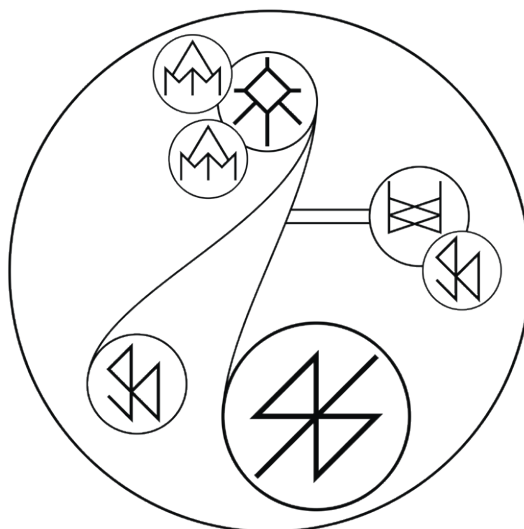
DESCRIPTION: Turns the victim's blood (presumably while inside them, into a poison to kill them.



SCULPTOR

NOTATION: Transmute, an area 200 times the area of the array, Human into Stone if Human Blood is present.

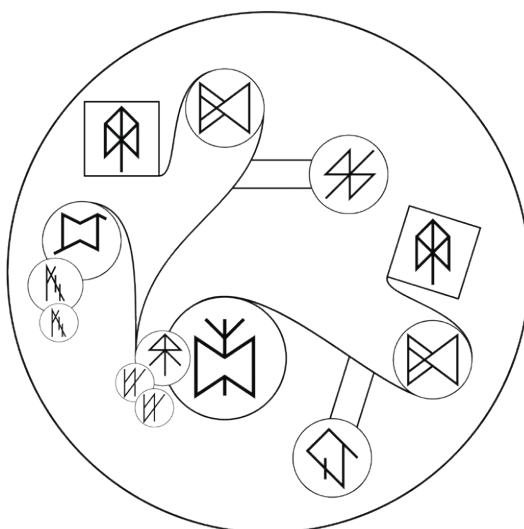
DESCRIPTION: Turns a human to stone.



SMOKE BOMB

NOTATION: Sustain the Creation of a disk of Carbon as thick as 1/10,000th of the diameter of the array if either Stone or Wood is present; and Push Carbon at a speed of 4 m/s.

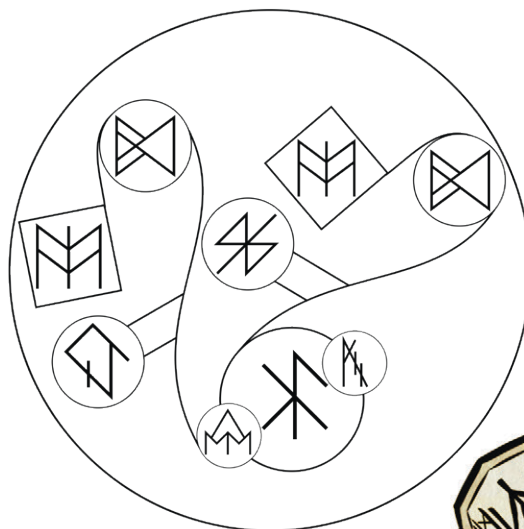
DESCRIPTION: Put on small metal balls. Creates clouds of smoke when the balls hit the ground.



SOUND BOMB

NOTATION: Contain the Creation of a Gargantuan amount of Sound at a frequency of 2 kHz if Stone or Wood is present.

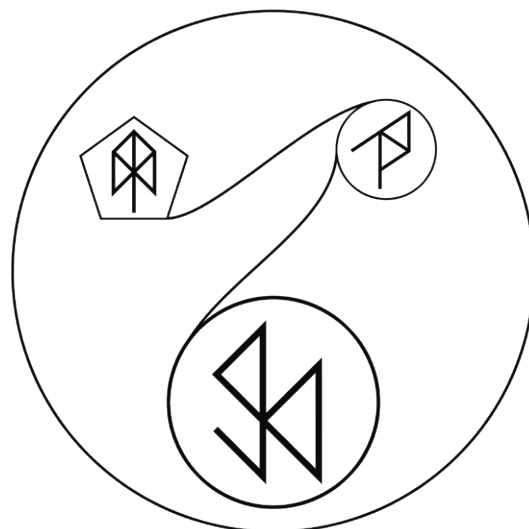
DESCRIPTION: Put on small metal balls. Creates a deafening sound when the balls hit the ground.



SPLINTER

NOTATION: Sustain the Pulling of Humans.

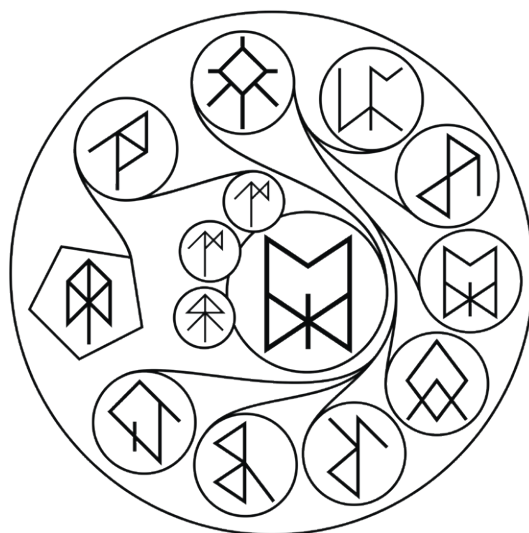
DESCRIPTION: Put on ammunition, throwing weapons, or normal melee weapons and makes the weapon stick inside the body.



STEEL DRAGON

NOTATION: Transmute Copper, Gold, Iron, Lead, Silver, Tin and Wood into a disk of Iron with twice the area size of the array and with a depth 1/10th that of the array's diameter. Pull this disk towards the array at a speed of 1 m/s and Sustain this Pulling.

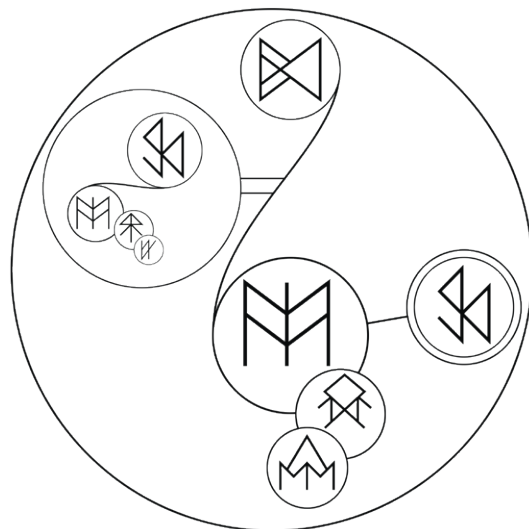
DESCRIPTION: Defensive array that transmutes material into steel disks which are then held against the body, creating physical armour plates.



TERMINATOR

NOTATION: Create (if a Human is Contained within a Circle with a depth 0.1% the surface area of the array) a Containment Field in the shape of a Dome one hundred times the size of the array's surface area that excludes Humans.

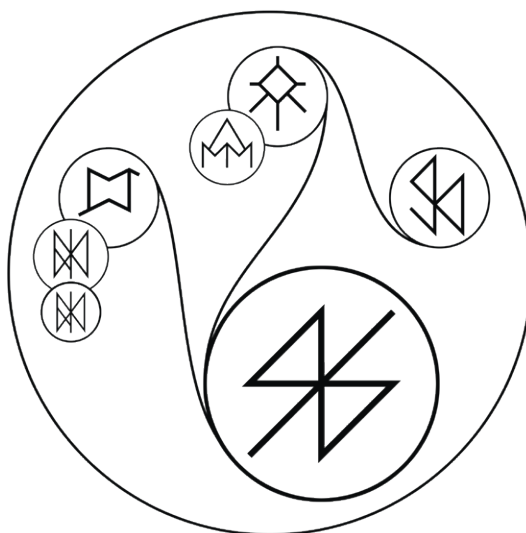
DESCRIPTION: Creates a large area of effect that destroys humans. Meant to kill multiple people standing close together.



WALKING BOMB

NOTATION: Transmute, of a size 100 times that of the array, Human into Stone; and Push Stone at a speed of 100 m/s.

DESCRIPTION: Turns a human into a rock that explodes to hit everyone around him with shrapnel.



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As the Prophets of Old Foretold

~Wilhelm Krige

Every generation brings about its own motley collection of oracles, soothsayers, seers and prophets claiming to be able to see the multihued and varied strands of the future and predict what is to come. The gods know that I have never been a spiritual man and the very fact that all of these oracles, soothsayers, seers and prophets were poor and destitute tells the cynic in me that they were not very adept and telling the future.

However, it has now been well over a year since the madness in Middelburg began, a year since we have all been forced to live in fear of a murderer that appears to be unnatural, otherworldly and, to some editors here at the Herald, Inhuman. While I do not subscribe to such views, it is clear that fear can drive a man to do something utterly against his nature.

Fear can make the most devout forsake and rebuke their faith and their gods. Fear can make the most upstanding and moral of citizens become as the basest of criminals. Fear can turn brothers against each other, and make neighbours shut their doors on lifelong friends. Fear turns enemies into brothers, and rivals into allies against a common foe. Fear can also drive the most hardened of cynics to cry out to any god who would listen and beg for salvation from that which frightens him so.

I find myself all the more drawn towards the latter sort. While it will take a far greater dose of fear for me to seek succour in the arms of the Mother, I have lately been captivated by what the ancient prophets of the major religions had to say about the future, about the end of days and the times of turmoil. Surely, if at least some of the gods do exist and can influence the world in some capacity, it would be through these mouthpieces whose words have become immortalised in scripture.

A wise man once said that whatever you have lost can always be found in the last place you would seek. Thus, heeding such trite words of wisdom, I went to the Eternal Temple where my elderly parents still hobble to every Bürsday to hear the haranguing of the archbishop. I was brought up as a good Prodigalist boy and I thought that if the words of the Prodigalist prophets are good enough for my parents, perhaps it is time that I too started listening.

It did not take awfully long before I found a verse in the scriptures that chilled me to the bone. I immediately brushed it off as a childish reaction. It must have been a coincidence, or

perhaps a clever trick by a charlatan, and so I investigated further as any good reporter must, and what I found chilled me even further.

In the Counsels of Woudas there lies a verse which the priests tell us means everything but in truth means nothing: "Those who dance in the light of the dread moon hide their savage nature in the light of the sun". Exquisite poetry without substance, yet keen readers of the Herald will have spotted something quite familiar.

On the twenty ninth of Tennemaand last year, at the end of an article written by Pieter Retief there was an astrology report. Nothing out of the ordinary thus far, as it is a common feature here at the Herald, but the unnamed astrologer used the same phrase "the dread moon". When I read the article I had thought it some astrological jargon, yet in my hunt for this anonymous astrologer, no astrological enthusiast could tell me what it meant. No priest at the Eternal Temple (the archbishop was suspiciously absent) could shed any light on this phrase either.

I eventually found the astrologer, through a series of events I am not altogether proud of, and discovered my answer. I gave my word that I will protect his identity, yet I can say that he spent time in the Neoist priesthood in far flung Allepioch and that is where he found his love for divination. He told me that the "dread moon" is an archaic term for a star, not a moon at all, that appears once every millennium and spells doom for all who look upon it.

Whether this is true or some theological fantasy, I cannot say, yet I found a thread at which I can tug to reveal the truth I sought. I found myself at the University of Middelburg, harassing every scholar I could lay hands on, hoping to wring an answer from them. Eventually I found it, although it was not the answer I was hoping to find. Between the browbeaten scholars and I, we had solved the puzzle.

The mention of the "dread moon" appears in all four dominant faiths, and the prophets from each faith's scripture speaks of it as an ill omen that brings ruin and destruction. That itself could be no coincidence. Stranger still is the fact that, while eyewitness testimony of the mysterious star abounds in literature, no natural philosopher had ever tracked it down. And yet, it may well have an effect on all of us.

Three millennia ago when the first ancient texts speak of it, the Great Migration across the Ridgeback Mountains occurred and civilisation in eastern Jytoh took hold. Two millennia ago, the "dread moon" was seen mere days before

the start of the Great War of the Inhumans. One millennium ago, both Neoist and Progenitorists priests saw the "dread moon rise" at the same time the Completists claim their holy prophet spoke with the angel Woudas and began their religion and reign of conquest.

And today? My anonymous astrologer says that the dread moon has not yet risen, but we are in the shadow of its ascension when the seeds of chaos are sown. He could not say exactly when the dread moon is to rise, yet he believes the time draws near. What harvest will be reaped when it rises, none can say, but I am of a mind to say it would not be a pleasant one.

It is with all my heart that I wish this to be little more than a fantasy born out of paranoia, superstition and coincidence. Yet I can't bring myself to ignore this. With each rising of this "dread moon" the world was plunged into mayhem and bloodshed and that it should happen now, with all this horror occurring in our city through a murderer that seems more demon than man? It cannot be a coincidence. The Ruined Man appeared like a thief in the night, and in less time than it takes to read the morning paper he has transformed this city into an asylum where the insane seems more sane by the day.

I know that it must be my civic duty not to spread fear and panic, as there are more than enough of that sort of nonsense floating around the city. Yet I feel that I can no longer hold what I know to myself. This must be told to others even if only for the vain hope that someone who reads this article can prove me wrong; can prove that the signs and portents I sought were misread and that there is no "dread moon" and no time of strife to come.

My father always said that if you do not believe in the gods, then you should fear them all the more, for they still believe in you. Well, good folk, I can honestly say that I do not believe in the gods and yet the only thing I fear in this world or the next is the Ruined Man.