



A QUESTION OF BREEDING

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OVERVIEW

The Setup

A Synopsis of the Current Situation

The Burgher Heinz Haushalter is a respected merchant whose daughter (Etelka) is engaged to wed a minor local noble, Karl Volte. The marriage is favorable to both parties, as Volte is fairly impoverished and Haushalter is keenly interested in social climbing. However Haushalter has a rival, Burgermeister Gunthar Steinhoff, who would prefer the noble wed his own daughter. Although Steinhoff can offer a richer dowry than Haushalter, Haushalter has a distant claim to noble heritage that is very important to Volte. To the bankrupt noble it is vital to maintain the appearance that he is not marrying below his station. In public Steinhoff maintains a friendly mien so that, as yet, Haushalter is unaware of the depth of Steinhoff's animosity to him.

Although Haushalter's noble heritage is commonly accepted history by many townsfolk, recent rumors (spread by Steinhoff's agents) have sprang up that it is untrue and the Haushalter family has been lying for years about this. Unfortunately Haushalter doesn't have any proof that his family history is true. With the rumors now reaching the ears of Volte, Haushalter is anxious to provide solid evidence of his heritage.

Heinz Haushalter was aware that his family moved into the town four generations ago and later grew into prominence. But he has recently determined that prior to this his family held lordship of the hamlet of Marlehof, some 3 days journey by foot from the town. Journal entries made by his great-grandfather (Vorster) indicate that a family crypt of some size existed near this hamlet. With the wedding approaching he sent two of his hired men on horseback to ask questions and see if there was anything in the family crypts to prove his great-great-grandfather's nobility. They were expected back in a week. It's been two weeks and they haven't returned. The wedding is 8 days away, Volte is getting skittish, and Haushalter is getting desperate. This is where the player characters come in.

A Timeline of Past Events

About 200 years ago (approx. 2320)

Heinrich Haushalter, a knight and veteran of the chaos incursions, returns home. Much of his other estates having been destroyed, along with family members, he builds a stone manor house on property inherited from his mothers side - the hamlet now called Marlehof. To house the bodies of his dead kin he commissions a family crypt. To see to their souls, he builds a small Temple of Morr and installs a priest to maintain it.

About 100 years ago (approx. 2420)

Bechtram Haushalter, the middle-aged and near-destitute Lord of Marlehof, sells the land to Gerhard Von Kleist, a distant cousin. Bechtram then moves his family, including his 16 year-old son Vorster, to the nearest town and invests his money in a merchant enterprise. By the end of his life Bechtram leaves behind his destitute past and re-invents himself as a rich burgher.

70 years ago (2450)

The Von Kleist family appropriates the Haushalter crypt for their own uses during a time when no priest is maintaining the Temple of Morr in Marlehof. Older bodies are removed and stacked in other parts of the crypt to make room from new ones. By the time a new priest is appointed, no one admits the crypt holds anything other than the Von Kleist family dead.

15 years ago (2505)

The head of the Von Kleist family and Lord of Marlehof, Felix, becomes afflicted with a disfiguring mutation. Working on his family loyalty and fears of discovery, his younger brother Frederik convinces Felix to fake his own death and live in exile. Once Felix is "dead", Frederik conveniently becomes the head of the family and the new Lord.

8 years ago (2512)

Hugo Faustmann, an ex-initiate of Morr, poses as a full priest in order to assume custody of the Temple of Morr in Marlehof. Over time he befriends the recluse, Felix, and learns his secret.

Two months ago (2520)

Lord Karl Volte agrees to marry Etelka, the daughter of the Burgher Heinz Haushalter, because of her large dowry and her family's noble blood. Gregor Steinhoff, the Burgermeister, is incensed that his daughter's hand is refused.

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One month ago (2520)

Vicious rumors surface, spread by Steinoff's agents, that the Haushalter family are commoners and liars. Word of this reaches Volte's ears and he demands proof of the nobility of his betrothed before the wedding date. Steinoff sets men to spy on Haushalter to see what he does in reaction.

Two weeks ago (2520)

Haushalter uncovers where his family is from. He sends two of his men (Udo Hockscharzer and Fritz Mansel) to Marlehof to find evidence of the family's noble line. Steinoff dispatches Adolf Grobschmeid to follow them. Grobschmeid meets with the Lord of Marlehof, Frederik Von Kleist, after Haushalter's men do. Grobschmeid convinces Frederik that the men are searching for evidence that will be used to dispossess the Von Kleist family of their land.

Hockscharzer and Mansel meet with the priest, Faustmann, and ask to see the crypt of the Haushalter family. Faustmann knows of no such family and, in searching the temple archives, pieces together how the Von Kleist family stole the crypt from them. Infuriated, Faustmann opens the crypt for the men to search but, while waiting for them to return, is discovered by Felix. When confronted by the priest about the Von Kleist family's dishonorable action, Felix kills Faustmann rather than have it revealed. Then he locks the two men in the crypt to die.

Hockscharzer and Mansel recover a book of Haushalter family records and the signet ring of Heinrich Haushalter. But before they can leave they are set upon by giant rats and both men are killed.

Two days ago (2520)

Haushalter becomes resigned that his men will not return. Determined to hire armed mercenaries, he seeks out a printer to print an offering notice. Steinoff's spy notifies his employer of this. Steinoff send Adolf Grobschmeid back to Marlehof with another warning for Frederik. Meanwhile, Steinoff sets about hiring some mercenaries of his own to take care of anyone lured by Haushalter's offer.

MODIFYING THE ADVENTURE

Location

The town in which the adventure starts (and the

nearby hamlet of Marlehof) can be located almost anywhere in the Empire that the GM desires. The only constraints are the roles of the NPCs and the distance between the town and Marlehof. The default assumption is that the town in question is Delberz. Throughout the text the word "town" is used in favor of Delberz to minimize confusion if the GM moves the adventure to another location.

Ignoring Scenes

If for purposes of playing time, pacing, or lack of interest the GM wishes to exclude certain scenes this is easily done. The only crucial scenes are 1, 4, 6, and 11. All others could be removed to have a very quick and straightforward story with minimal conflict. The optional scenes, if included, serve to add complications, opportunities for roleplaying, and interest to the adventure.

Altering Scenes

In order to provide the maximum flexibility to the GM, many of the scenes presented below include suggestions on how to modify them to improve pacing or to address problematic situations.

Sections titled "Keeping it Short" offer ways to bring the scene or encounter to a quick and decisive end. These can be used to make the adventure play faster and to increase or maintain the energy level of the players.

Sections titled "Drawing it Out" offer ways to expand a scene into something larger or more elaborate. These can be used if the players are enjoying a specific scene or to make the adventure play longer. Note that using the longer version of more than a few scenes will likely cause the adventure to run longer than one or two sessions.

Sections titled "Solving Problems" offer the GM ways to get the game going again if the PCs make choices or mistakes that derail the plot. This is not to say that the GM can't give the PCs a free hand to make any choice they want to and wander into uncharted territory. It only offers tools for GMs who want to run the adventure as described without improvising additional scenes or content.

Sections titled "Victory Nigh" apply to combat scenes where the PCs are close to winning. These discuss not only the exit strategy of the opponents but also additional complications the GMs can throw in to further challenge PCs and add spice to a "cakewalk" combat

Sections titled "Looming Defeat" apply to combat scenes where the PCs are close to losing. These discuss ways the GM can believably offer rescue or relief to PCs confronting death who are unable

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(or too stupid) to flee.

SCENE ONE: THE OFFER

Setting the Scene

Getting the PCs Involved

On the day that the PCs arrive in town, notices are being posted around the town in the main plazas and near the gates. The cheaply printed pamphlets read as follows:

To reliable persons of virtue and skill:

Your assistance is required with a short task of singular importance and minimal danger. A single week of work will be sufficient to complete the task. Applicants who are accepted will be handsomely rewarded upon success. Interested parties should present themselves at the Haushalter warehouse on Handelsstrasse during daylight hours.

A few town criers, paid by Haushalter, also wander through the market shouting a shortened version of the offer and brandishing more of the pamphlets.

Learning the Lay of the Land

The PCs may make a Routine[+10%] Gossip Test upon entering the town or on learning of Haushalter's offer. The degree of success indicates which tidbits of information they are able to gather regarding it. Note that even on a failure they hear about the offer itself, since everyone in town knows about that.

Failure

The PCs hear a town crier shout in their ears about the Haushalter offer.

0 degrees

Same as Failure + the PCs hear that Haushalter's daughter, Etelka, is getting married to Lord Karl Volte in 8 days time.

1 degree

Same as 0 degrees + the Haushalter wedding may not go forward. Lord Volte only agreed to marry her because Etelka possessed a good pedigree, but the talk amongst town is that the Haushalter family is actually as common as mud and the Haushalters have been lying all these years.

2 degrees

Same as 1 degree + the PCs hear that Burgermeister Gunthar Steinhoff tried and failed

to convince Lord Karl Volte to wed his own daughter, Anna, instead.

3+ degrees

Same as 2 degrees + two men who were loyal family retainers of the Haushalter for many years have recently disappeared. The story is they were seen riding out of town 2 weeks ago and haven't been seen since.

Arriving for the Interview

When the PCs arrive at Haushalter's warehouse it is busy with men loading and unloading goods. However, mention of the offer will cause Haushalter to be quickly sent for. Although obviously distracted (he's followed by his accountant, with two lists - one of business matters and one of a menu for the wedding feast) he is eager to greet the PCs. The better dressed, and better armed, the PCs are the happier he will be in meeting them (if the PCs don't carry weapons openly Haushalter may worriedly remark on it).

After dismissing the accountant (who appears miffed at this interruption) and inviting the PCs into his office, Haushalter will spend but a few minutes asking after the names, skills, and any credentials they care to offer. He especially asks regarding their skill at arms, all the while downplaying any danger involved in the task he has. As long as the PCs don't prove highly disreputable, he will be willing to offer them the work.

Haushalter openly explains the wedding situation (as he knows it - he is unaware of Steinoff's secret activities). He then asks them to travel as fast as possible to the hamlet of Marlehof, seek out his family crypt there, and locate any evidence that indicates the family's noble origins (he is certain there is some to be found). If the PCs press him for specifics, he will state that he is unsure what may be found, but urge them to look for the oldest family relics and any records of the Haushalter heritage.

If one character is designated to represent the group to Haushalter and does most of the speaking during the interview, have that character make an Average[+0%] Charm Test. Alternately, if all the characters are speaking for themselves, have the character with the lowest Charm skill make an Average[+0%] Charm Test. This determines Haushalter feeling for how trustworthy the characters are as a group.

Haushalter offers the group 1 gc each up front, plus 5 gc each if they are successful in returning with the evidence in time. If the Charm Test was

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a success, Haushalter adds an additional 1 gc each up front.

If a PC makes a successful Opposed Hagggle Test, Haushalter can be talked up to 3 gc each up front and 7 gc each if they are successful in finding evidence in time. He is also willing to use his business contacts to help the PCs secure information or materials of a legal nature if they are successful. Note that if the players believe that the sum offered is insufficient, it may be valuable to remind that for a week's work they are being paid more than twice what an average mercenary receives in a month.

If the PCs accept Haushalter's offer he will urge them to leave town with all speed, since time is short. He wishes them good luck and tells them to bring the evidence straight to him as soon as they return.

Keeping it Short

Just the Facts

The pace may slow down if the PCs are being slow to accept the offer or have gotten all the information they need and are asking unproductive questions. To move things along the GM can have the accountant, Etelka Haushalter, some of the warehouse workers, or a combination of these enter the office unannounced and demand Haushalter's attention on another urgent matter. Haushalter will delay any intruders for a moment and then, looking both eager and resolute, ask the PCs if they will accept his offer. The PCs can make one Opposed Hagggle Test (if they have not already done so) before accepting or refusing the offer. If they accept, Haushalter is gratified and pays them immediately. If they refuse he looks disappointed but thanks them for their time and tells them that they should return if they reconsider. In either case, he then shows them to the door.

Drawing it Out

A Few Things Left Unsaid

The Loss of Two Men

If asked about any danger, Haushalter will admit he sent two of his own men (Udo Hockscharzer and Fritz Mansel), both loyal and reliable, to perform the same task 2 weeks ago and they have not returned. He has no reason to suspect the area is particularly dangerous (though as a townsman he hears tales of the dangers that can fall upon travelers on lonely forest roads), but thinks some evil has befallen these men.

Haushalter will mention that he would very much like to know what happened to his men, but this is of secondary importance because of the wedding.

An Enemy at Work

Because of the loss of his two men, coupled with the recent rumors spread about his family, Haushalter has begun to suspect that someone is working against him. He won't reveal this final conclusion unless pressed by the PCs regarding any enemies he has. Haushalter doesn't know who would wish him ill. If the PCs have heard of Steinoff and suggest that he could be the culprit, Haushalter will dismiss this concern. He will state that Steinoff and he do business, and both have made overtures to insure that there is no bad blood. Steinoff even sent two silver goblets as a wedding present.

The Invocation to Morr

Before the PCs leave, Haushalter will press upon them a sealed piece of paper that contains a brief invocation to Morr (see handout 1). Haushalter will state that he is eager for the PCs not to offend any lingering spirits of his ancestors and consulted with a priest of Morr. So when they enter the crypt or remove any evidence they find, he would be appreciative if they would read the prayer to placate any listening ears. If asked he will tell the PCs that he did not supply his hired men with the prayer as neither of them could read. Note that this invocation is just a standard prayer, is not magical and, unless the GM intends otherwise, has no effect when read. It's just something to make the PCs worry.

Solving Problems

What if the PCs aren't interested?

If, after meeting with Haushalter the PCs are undecided or uninterested, the GM can try to coax interest with the arrival of Haushalter's daughter, Etelka. She can arrive at the warehouse as the PCs are leaving, or later at the inn in which the PCs have taken lodging. In either case, she will attempt to persuade them to help her family. She will confess that although she doesn't love her betrothed, she wishes greatly to please her father and that being Lady Volte would be no bad thing. At the GMs discretion she can simply cajole the PCs with praise, offer additional money (up to 10 gc total), a prized piece of jewelry (worth 25 gc), or an glowing introduction to her new husband at the wedding feast.

What if the PCs are on foot?

If the PCs don't have horses, the deadline still allows them enough time to walk there (3 days),

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spend a day in investigation, and return (3 days). If the GM or the PCs doesn't believe this is enough time, they have two options. They can try to convince Haushalter to get them horses, or pay for transport on a coach or wagon.

Haushalter, either at the GM's discretion or if the PCs play on his concern about the deadline, may offer them the use of a wagon and two horses to speed their journey. He of course expects them to return it on completion. The only issue is whether Haushalter (or the GM) trusts the PCs enough to not steal the horses and wagon which, combined, are worth many times the amount of their reward.

If the PCs want to pay for transportation, they will find that the best they can do is get dropped off on the main road where the track to Marlehof diverges (about 70 miles away from town). The available means of travel are merchant wagons and coaches heading in the direction they want. Prices for these options are as listed on page 121 of the rulebook.

What if the PCs want to shop?

If the PCs have accepted the offer but want to hang around the town and do some shopping first, this can seriously slow down the game. If the GM has the time to permit this activity, this is not a problem. But if the game is to run in one night, here are some suggestions on how to encourage the PCs to keep it short:

Remind them of the deadline. On foot, 3 days to the hamlet and three days back only leaves one day to look around. Every hour wasted in town reduces the time they have to look for evidence and return. If the PCs all have horses, this is obviously less compelling.

If the PCs are borrowing a wagon from Haushalter, he will inform them take the one that is just been unloaded in front of the warehouse. He will state that he can't have it blocking his warehouse door more than an hour as he is expecting other deliveries, so they will need to move it by then.

If the PCs are paying for transport, have it scheduled to leave in an hour. Unless they are ready to leave when it does, they'll be left behind.

NPCs

Heinz Haushalter

A balding, heavyset man in his early forties with a broad, good-natured face. Although a wealthy

merchant, of late the stress of wedding preparations and evil rumors have caused him to lose both sleep and appetite. His face has grown slightly sallow and his hair increasingly sparse under these effects. Even so he maintains his keen business sense and his affection for his daughter.

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
29	31	34	40	28	32	35	41

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	13	3	4	4	0	0	0

Skills: Charm, Common Knowledge (Empire, Tilea), Drive, Evaluate, Gossip, Haggle, Read/Write, Ride, Secret Language (Guild Tongue), Speak Language (Reikspiel, Breton), Trade (Merchant)

Talents: Dealmaker, Super Numerate

Etelka Haushalter

A young, pleasant looking girl of 17 with an overly long nose. She is very loyal to her father and, since her mother's death 3 years ago, feels that it falls to her to look after her father. Although she is not eager to be wed to Lord Volte, she is practical enough to see the advantages it will bring. And she is eager to make her father happy.

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
22	28	25	31	36	32	31	38

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	11	2	3	4	0	0	0

Skills: Charm, Common Knowledge (Empire, Tilea), Gossip +10%, Perception, Read/Write, Ride, Speak Language (Reikspiel, Breton)

Talents: Etiquette

SCENE TWO: STOLEN HORSES

Setting the Scene

Once the PCs complete any preparations and leave the town, travel is uneventful. The hamlet Marlehof is about 80 miles away, by road, from the town. The route to it follows a moderate sized

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road for most of the distance before diverting into a narrow track the last 12 miles. There are two coaching inns (every 25 - 28 miles) between the town and where the path for Marlehof turns off from the road. Once beyond the settlements surrounding the town, deep forests edge the road on both sides and finding a place to camp is difficult. This, combined with unfavorably damp weather, should encourage the PCs to stop at one or both coaching inns. These coaching inns have identical layout to the ones described in the Gamemaster's Pack (or WFRP 1st Edition book).

The first time the PCs stop at a coaching inn, there is a small crowd of merchants, travelers, and pilgrims inside. About an hour after they arrive a group of rough looking men (one more than the number of PCs) ride in, stable their horses, and enter the inn. Upon entering they look around the taproom with cold interest before seating themselves some distance away from the PCs. These men are mercenaries - hired muscle sent by Steinhoff to slow the PCs down or kill them if necessary. The mercenaries say little beyond ordering dinner and keep to themselves. But they can be seen to occasionally glance in the PCs direction over their ale and food. They will stay up, drinking steadily, until the PCs retire for the evening.

When the PCs head to bed the mercenaries get a private room and wait until the occupants of the inn are all asleep. They then leave their room and sneak out to the courtyard. Once there they will attempt to silently overpower the 2 grooms and the gateman. Finally they will try to steal the PCs horses plus as many as they can lead - each man rides his own horse and leads one of the stolen ones. They leave any carts, coaches, or wagons and ride off with the horses in tow.

Keeping it Short

A Discovery in the Morning

In the morning the 2 grooms and the gateman will be found beaten and tied up (or dead at the GM's discretion) and the horses missing. No other traveler will be willing to sell horses to the PCs, but coachmen or merchants with wagons may be willing to sell passage along the road up to the turnoff for Marlehof. Otherwise the PCs have to walk.

Drawing it Out

Taproom Confrontations

If the PCs are sufficiently suspicious they may demand to know why the mercenaries keep watching them in the taproom. The mercenaries

aren't there to start a fight or reveal themselves, so they'll be cold and uncommunicative, responding in monosyllables if at all. They will pointedly ignore any jibes or questions unless the PCs get physically in their faces. Then their leader, Klaus Wetzell, will finger his dagger and tell any loud mouthed PCs to, "Piss Off! Or I'll serve yer steamin' guts up on the innkeep's finest plate!" At this point the innkeep, eager to prevent a fight, will try to break things up and offer a free round. If the PCs persist the innkeep will threaten to turn them out if they don't settle down. It may also be helpful to remind the PCs that they're (a) outnumbered by these dangerous looking men and (b) in a tavern full of witnesses.

"I Think I Heard Something Outside!"

It's unlikely that both grooms and the gateman can be subdued without the alarm being raised. Have the PCs make Routine [+10%] Perception Tests to be roused by noise of a struggle or shouts of panic from the stableyard. A PC who fails can make one Perception Test per round to try to awaken, or be instantly roused by someone who takes a half action to wake them.

If the alarm is raised, the hired mercenaries will attempt to try to scatter the horses into the night. They will try to accomplish this by opening the stable gates, the main gates, and as many stall doors as possible before setting fire to the coach house hayloft. The mercenaries will then ride away on their own mounts. Although less effective than stealing the PCs horses outright, this action still almost guarantees that the PCs lose a horse either to flight or injury.

Opening either of the double gates (stable or inn yard) will take a full action. Opening a stall door takes a half action. Starting a fire by throwing a torch, rushlight, or lantern into the coach house hayloft takes a half action. The mercenaries may be delayed during this time by contending with the remaining gateman or grooms not already subdued by them.

On awakening, it will take the PCs a minimum of 3 rounds (combination of Stand Action, Half Actions to open doors, and Move actions), to get from the common room (or a private room) to the stable yard or inn yard. This doesn't include time for dressing or even grabbing a weapon (unless another PC has already opened the intervening doors). Servants and other guests will start to arrive after 5 or more rounds, having taken time to pull on robes or grab weapons.

Once a number of people (including any conscious grooms and gateman) arrive in the courtyard equal to the number of mercenaries,

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they will attempt to flee. If the hayloft is not already on fire one of the mercenaries will immediately attempt this as a delaying tactic, before mounting and riding off. The mercenaries know that none of the NPCs will pursue them if it means leaving the inn to burn.

One Last Chance

If the PCs don't arrive in time to stop the mercenaries from fleeing, they can still attempt to rescue their horses from the fire (if they are in the stalls) or catch them (if the stall doors and gates are open). This will be made difficult because the smell of blood and fire has driven the horses mad with fear.

Calming and controlling a panicked horse requires a Very Hard [-30%] Animal Care Test or a Hard [-20%] Animal Training Test. This Test takes a full action to perform and the character must be in physical contact with the animal (restraining and stroking it). Every full round in contact with the animal lowers the penalty by 10%, until it becomes an Average [+10%] Test.

If trapped in a stall, horses will kick at the door and walls, thrashing about. Anyone in the stall with the horse (to calm the animal, for instance) will be subject to an WS 35% / SB 1 attack each round (the horse receives a bonus to its WS but a penalty to its SB because of the close quarters; dodging is impossible in the narrow stall). If there is no one in the stall, the attack is still made with a 50% of any damage going to the stall door (TB 4 W 8) or the horse itself (it's injuring itself in an attempt to escape). If the stall door is open or destroyed for more than one round, the horse will flee on its action unless calmed.

If free, horses will flee out the gates as fast as possible, trampling anyone who is in the way. To catch hold of a fleeing horse requires an Unarmed grapple (and likely involves a Charge action). Because the horse is running, the attacker gets a +20% WS bonus to the attack. However, if the grappling attack fails, the attacker is dragged and then trampled, receiving an automatically successful SB 3 hit (roll for random location and damage) from the horse's hooves (note that this is not an SB -4 unarmed attack by the horse, because the hooves are viable weapons).

Offering Pursuit

Unless the PCs are able to calm and mount a horse within a few rounds of the mercenaries fleeing, pursuit is impossible. Even in this case, galloping after them in the dark, and without equal numbers, is a recipe for a bad end. Finally, if the inn is on fire, PCs are going to be shouted

at to help quench the flames before seeking vengeance, giving the mercenaries plenty of time to flee.

Solving Problems

What's the purpose of the scene?

It may seem like this scene, especially the short version, is just gratuitous abuse of the PCs. However the short scene serves two purposes. One is to slow the players down, forcing them to eat up time traveling on foot and cause them to feel the pressure of the deadline. The other is to set up the following scene so that they players are forced to fight and can't just attempt to outride their foes. Both scenes also serve to add emotional weight to the ambush, so the PCs can enjoy getting some revenge on the thieves.

What if the players are upset?

A serious issue to consider when using the short version is that the players are likely to be upset about losing their horses without any chance to prevent it. It's likely that this action will be perceived as GM fiat. One possible way to mollify them is to point out that (a) other NPCs also lost horses and (b) if the PCs had been present they might have been beaten or killed like the grooms. However, the best way to prevent hard feeling is to give the PCs some ability to affect the outcome by running the longer version.

What if the PCs don't have horses?

If the PCs don't possess mounts (either for riding or for pulling a wagon), then the mercenaries won't try to steal them. However, the taproom confrontation can still be played out. And at the GMs discretion, during the night, the mercenaries subdue the gateman, block the exits of the inn, and try to set it on fire. In this case fleeing PCs will have to contend with other panicking guests, smoke inhalation, and trying to break down doors or jump out windows. And after all this, the mercenaries may still be waiting outside to attack any PCs who emerge without their weapons.

What if the PCs spy on the mercenaries?

If the PCs are suspicious of the mercenaries, they can sneak out of their room and try to spy or listen in on them. Shortly after the PCs go to bed, the mercenaries will be lead to their private room by the innkeeper. They will remain in the room for about two hours, until they think the inn is asleep. Listening at the doors of private rooms requires a Average [+0%] Perception Test to hear any voices on the other side, and at least 1 degree of success to understand what is being said. If overheard in their room, the mercenaries will be heard to make incriminating comments

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regarding their plans – it is left up to the GM how specific their statements are. If the PCs draw attention to themselves, the mercenaries will attempt to quickly and quietly subdue them. If this fails, they will try to put their original plan into immediate action. If the alarm is raised by the PCs, the mercenaries will fight their way to the stables and try to ride away (starting a fire if possible to delay pursuit).

What if the PCs are injured?

If the PCs don't have the Heal skill, one of the pilgrims (Klara Hausier) is an initiate of Shallya with the Heal [46%] skill and several Healing Poultices. If the PCs were visibly heroic, she will offer to bind their wounds (using Healing Poultices if necessary). Otherwise, the PCs can convince her to do so with a Average[+0%] Charm Test (vs her WP of 32%) or the offer of a donation of at least 1 shilling. Note that any PC who has a Healing Poultice applied to them, whether successfully or not, will suffer a -10% Fellowship penalty from the smell for 12 hours or until they take a bath.

SCENE THREE: AMBUSH

Setting the Scene

If at least half of the mercenaries survived Scene 3, they will attempt to ambush the PCs on the road. The ambush will occur on the narrow track that leads to Marlehof, about a ¼ mile from the main road where the forest crowds close on either side. If the mercenaries were unable to steal the PCs horses, they will have rigged a small tree to fall across the road when they launch the attack (cutting the rope to do this requires one of the mercenaries to take a half action).

The mercenaries will have men hidden on both sides of the road. The GM should make a secret Willpower Test for any PC with the Sixth Sense Talent and warn them of a feeling of being watched if successful. The GM should also make a Hard [-20%] Perception Test for each PCs. If any PC succeeds they hear the crack of branches and the whinny of horses from their left, off some distance in the forest.

As soon as the last PC draw abreast of one of the mercenaries, or if the PCs show signs of being aware of the ambush, the attack is launched. The first round those with missile weapons will use them while those with melee weapons will rush the weakest looking PCs. After the first

round, missile fire will be used on any PCs that are not engaged, otherwise all the mercenaries will close to melee combat. Note that as soon as the mercenaries enter melee combat, they are immediately recognizable to the PCs as the men who burned the coaching inn.

Victory Nigh

Bad Footing

If the PCs are winning, the mercenaries may try to using the Maneuver action to force the PCs off the roadway and into the undergrowth. PCs fighting while in this position suffer a -10% WS penalty because the roots and shrubs cause footing to be uncertain. If both opponents are off the road, they both suffer this penalty.

The Foes Take Flight

The mercenaries will not fight to the death, but turn and run if at any time the PCs outnumber them by two to one or more. If forced to flee, they will run to where the horses are tied back in the trees. Each mercenary capable of doing so will attempt to mount one of the horses and ride away, leaving the other horses behind.

Looming Defeat

A Roadwarden to the Rescue

If the PCs are in serious danger of losing (and therefore dying), at the GMs discretion a roadwarden, patrolling the main road, is drawn by the sounds of combat. He will charge in on horseback, firing his pistol at the mercenaries and then drawing his sword to engage them in melee. The mercenaries are demoralized by this unexpected resistance and will give up the fight in short order and flee.

Aftermath

If captured, the mercenaries can be Intimidated or bribed to tell some details about who hired them (Adolf Grobschmeid - they don't know the man's name or position, only physical details of his appearance) and the deal they made (20 gc to delay or kill the PCs). Additionally, the PCs will find that horses (the attackers plus any they stole from the inn) are tied up nearby in the woods. If the mercenaries have fled battle, any of them that can make it back to the horses will have ridden away on one, leaving the remainder for the PCs to recover.

NPCs

Klaus Wetzell, Mercenary Leader

A thick, grizzled man in his mid thirties with overlapping scars running through his patchy beard. He wears stained leathers, and several weapons on his person, under a thick wool traveling cloak. Morose and untalkative, he is prone to explode with violence when pushed. He tries to keep him and his men focused on their work as distractions only cause trouble.

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
47	35	41	44	30	25	35	34
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	14	4	4	4	0	0	0

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Strategy/Tactics), Command, Common Knowledge (Empire, Tilea), Dodge Blow +10%, Drive, Gamble, Gossip +10%, Intimidate, Perception, Secret Language (Battle Tongue), Speak Language (Reikspiel, Tilean)
Talents: Coolheaded, Disarm, Marksman, Menacing, Rapid Reload, Sharpshooter

Armour: Light Armor (Full Leather Armour, Mail Coif)

Armour Points: Head 2, Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 1

Weapons: Crossbow, Hand Weapon (Sword), Dagger, Shield

Trappings: 20 Bolts, Riding Horse, Lantern, 5gc, 26 s

The Mercenaries

There are an number of mercenaries equal to the number of PCs. Each is an ugly, grim male human between 20 and 30 years old. All are smart enough to do what Klaus tells them because he pays the bills, but none of them like him very much.

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
35	30	33	35	30	25	35	28
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	11	3	3	4	0	0	0

Skills: Common Knowledge (Empire, Tilea), Dodge Blow, Drive, Gamble, Gossip +10%, Perception, Secret Language (Battle Tongue), Speak Language (Reikspiel, Tilean)

Talents: Coolheaded, Disarm, Marksman, Rapid Reload, Sharpshooter

Armour: Light Armour (Full Leather Armour, Mail

Coif)

Armour Points: Head 2, Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 1

Weapons: Crossbow (only two of the mercenaries have these), Hand Weapon (Sword), Dagger

Trappings: 20 Bolts (if they have the crossbow), Riding Horse, Lantern, 20+1d10 shillings

SCENE FOUR: ARRIVAL AT MARLEHOF

Setting the Scene

The hamlet of Marlehof lies in a small valley and is home to 14 families of farmers and herders. Besides fields and cottages, structures of note that are visible from the lip of the valley are a mill, smithy, a shrine (of Taal and Rhya), a manor house, and a strange dolmen at the far end of the valley (the Leiche Gatter or "Corpse Gate").

Anyone entering the valley will be seen when they reach the low stone wall that encloses the tofts and crofts of the peasants. Shortly thereafter Rudolf Fenske, the Reeve, leading a party of men armed with farm implements will arrive to greet the PCs and find out their intentions. Simultaneously, a man is sent running to the manor house to inform the Lord.

Keeping it Short

"It's Only Gossip, But..."

As long as the PCs don't seem too threatening, they are allowed to enter the village after a minimum of explanation. The rest of the men disperse to their work and the Rudolf leads the PCs to the manor house, explaining that the Lord had left word that any visitors should be brought before him.

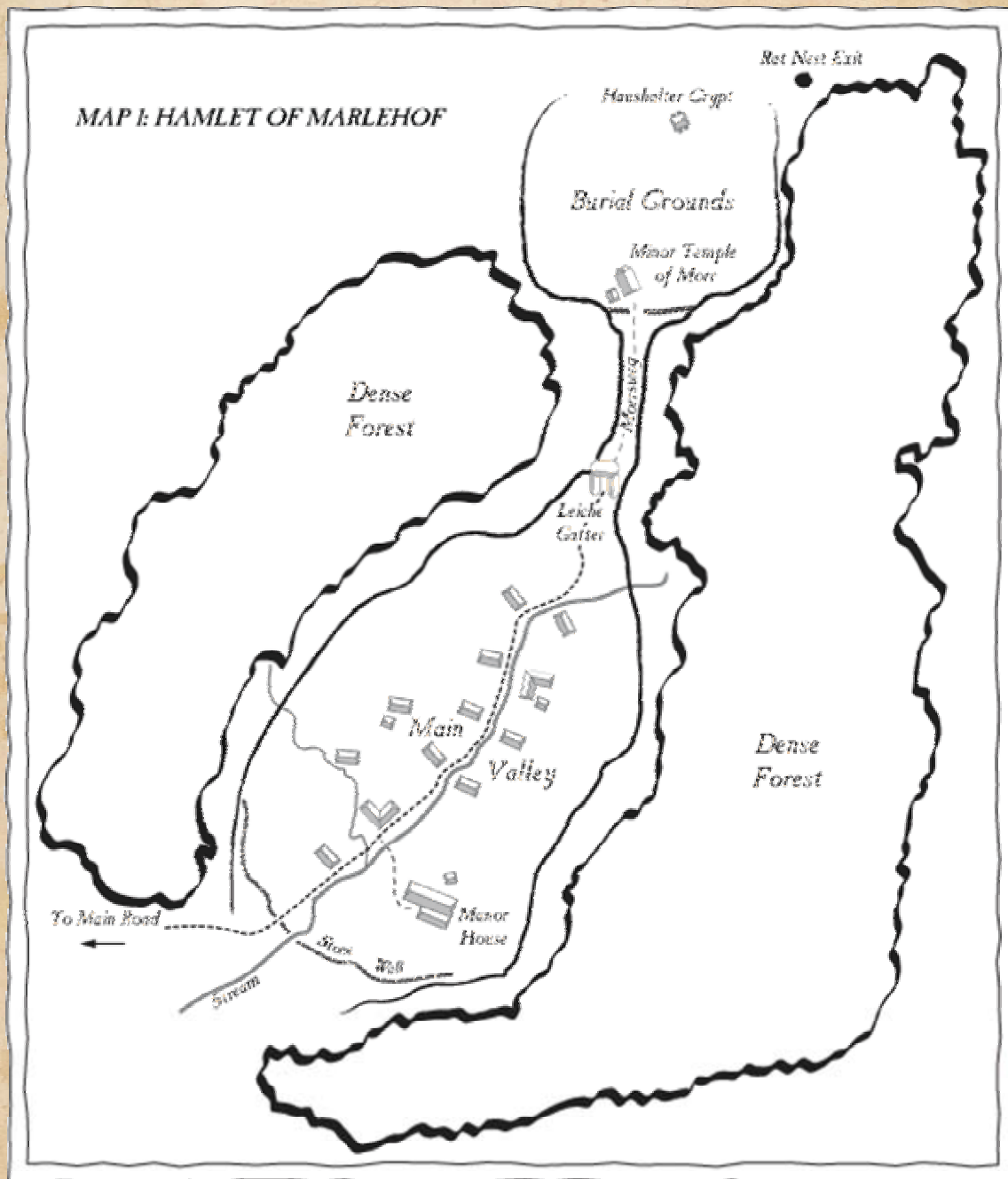
If the PCs are civil to Rudolf, he's a talkative fellow and interested in what's going on in the wider world. Any PC may make a Routine [+10%] Gossip Test with Rudolf to find out the recent news of the village.

Drawing it Out

A Measure of Suspicion

At the GM's discretion, Rudolf and the villagers are more suspicious than normal because of the recent disappearances (and likely to blame strangers for any troubles). This means that they will brandish weapons in PCs faces, will demand

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to know where the PCs are traveling from and on what business, and will try to extort a blatant bribe (1s per PC) from the PCs by telling them that there is a toll for crossing the village road. This should be played deadly serious as the PCs are surrounded by twice their number of grim, filthy men wielding reaping scythes, hay forks, and other sharp tools. As long as the PCs keep their heads and placate Rudolf's ego, eventually the Reeve and his militia will escort the PCs to the manor house. They'll offer no explanation of this behavior other than, "You're to see the Lord Von Kleist before aught else."

In this version, any Gossip Test made with Rudolf or his men is Challenging [-10%]. If the bribe was

paid the men are more relaxed, the Gossip Test is Average [+0%].

Information Available

Directions & Admonitions

Any PCs asking where the local burial grounds are will be directed to pass through the Leiche Gatter and follow the Morrsweg. Even if they do not make a Gossip Test, the asking PC will still be warned about the ghost of Felix Von Kleist.

Gossip Test: 0+ degrees

If any PC succeeds at a Gossip Test, the following information is related to them.

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Two Missing Strangers

Two strangers came to the village 2 weeks ago (The villagers don't know their names but they were Udo Hockscharzer and Fritz Mansel, the missing men Haushalter sent). They asked questions about the crypt of a family no one had heard of before. The Lord met with them briefly and then sent them off to see Faustmann, the Priest of Moor. The last they were seen, they entered the Leiche Gatter and followed Morrsweg ("Morr's Path") out of sight. The never returned and talk is that the ghost of Felix Von Kleist took them.

The Disappearance of Faustmann

Hugo Faustmann, the Priest of Morr who buried the dead and kept the Temple in the burial grounds, disappeared the same time that the two strangers did. Some think the strangers killed him and others believe that Felix's ghost took all three.

The Ghost of Felix Von Kleist

Ever since the Lord's older brother, Felix, died 12 years ago under mysterious circumstance, folks have seen his ghost haunting the Morrsweg and the burial grounds. Since the disappearances, everyone's been too afraid to go looking for the priest or the strangers for fear of the ghost.

Gossip Test: 1+ degrees

The Well Dressed Visitor

The Lord has been visited by the same finely dressed rider twice in the last month. The first time was a few hours after the two strangers (Hockscharzer and Mansel) left the manor house. And the second time was two days before the PCs showed up. A physical description of the man can be gotten, but only on two degrees of success does someone remember his name as Adolf Grobschmeid.

Solving Problems

What if the PCs are injured?

If the PCs don't have the Heal skill, there is a local man named Matthias Bahnweg (secretly a Hedge Wizard) who maintains the shrine of Taal and Rhya. He has the Heal skill [38%] and several Healing Poultices. If the PCs are visibly injured when met by the Reeve, after they convince him that they are not bandits he will suggest that "the Lord would not wish you to be bleeding all over his floor." He will lead them to the old man and, for a few pence, he will bind their wounds (using Healing Poultices if necessary). Note that any PC who has a Healing

Poultice applied to them, whether successfully or not, will suffer a -10% Fellowship penalty from the smell for 12 hours or until they take a bath.

NPCs

Rudolf Fenske, Village Reeve

A ruddy-faced, dirty man in his mid thirties with a wild tangle of reddish hair. He's been the Reeve of Marlehof for several years and is respected by the villagers, though the butt of many jokes. Rudolf is not terribly bright but he makes up for it by being persistent and reliable. Despite being married, Rudolf is also a lecherous fellow, so any semi-attractive female below the age of 30 receives a +10% bonus to any Fellowship based Test with Rudolf.

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
35	31	35	46	28	29	35	38

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	14	4	4	4	0	0	0

Skills: Animal Care, Charm, Concealment, Common Knowledge (Empire), Drive, Gamble, Gossip, Intimidate, Set Trap, Speak Language (Reikspiel), Swim, Trade(Farmer)

Talents: Hardy, Flee!

Armour: None

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0

Weapons: Hand Weapon (Club), Dagger

Trappings: 1d10 shillings

Average Villager

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
32	37	36	41	30	27	32	34

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	13	3	4	4	0	0	0

Skills: Animal Care, Concealment, Common Knowledge (Empire), Drive, Gamble, Gossip, Set Trap, Silent Move, Speak Language (Reikspiel), Swim, Trade(Cook, Farmer)

Talents: Hardy, Flee!

Armour: None

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0

Weapons: Improvised Weapon (Farm Tool), Dagger

Trappings: 2d10 pennies

SCENE FIVE: THE LORD'S WELCOME

Setting the Scene

The manor house is a long two-story stone building with an undercroft. There are general signs of wear as only the most necessary maintenance has been performed to keep the building livable. The slate roof shows a few holes stuffed with thatching which some industrious birds are busy turning into a nest.

The PCs are led up a set of worn stone steps and met at the door by an aged retainer, Otte Ferber. Ferber looks the PCs over with distaste, dismisses the villagers contemptuously, and motions the PCs to follow him. He leads them through the house into a small chamber where Frederik Von Kleist is seated in a high-backed, finely carved chair of dark wood. The chair stands on a small stone dais next to another door; besides this there is no other furniture in the room so PCs must stand. Before ushering the PCs into the room, Ferber pauses and in reverent tones announces, "The Lord Frederik Von Kleist, of Marlehof, will see you now." Ferber then departs, closing the door behind him.

Keeping it Short

A Show of Hostility

Frederik Von Kleist has been led to believe that the PCs are here in order to deprive him of his land somehow. He will be sharp and short with them, insisting on answers. He expects to be lied to and will jump on any inconsistencies in the PC's statements. Although there are no satisfactory answers the PCs can give, he will demand to know who they are, who they work for, and what their business is Marlehof is.

As the GM, you can make this a short painful interview or a sweat inducing ordeal as appropriate. Whenever you feel the PCs have had enough of Frederik's cold manner he'll dismiss them but leave them with a warning finish their business and leave.

Drawing it Out

A Brittle Welcome

In this version Frederik Von Kleist begins with an apparent welcoming manner that changes as the

audience continues.

When the PCs first arrive, Frederik will be calm and interested, shying just short of true politeness to reinforce his superior station. Welcoming them to his land, he will inquire as to the PCs names. Have each PC make a Charm roll – the one who succeeds by the most is the PC most frequent addressed by Frederik and receives the majority of his attention. Success by more than 2 degrees means that Frederik may even offer the PCs some refreshment, summoning servants with ale for them.

Frederik will briefly answer any preliminary questions of the PCs (that don't seem too presumptuous) but forestall further questions by inquiring as to their employer and their business.

Heated Words & Veiled Threats

Once Frederik starts asking about the PCs business on his land, his manner begins to change. Intent scrutiny replaces bland calm. His questions come faster and his face turns hard and cold. What starts as a few questions quickly becomes an inquest into anything that appears suspect.

If the PCs are recalcitrant or their answers unsatisfactory (almost guaranteed), Frederik will start making subtle threats about compelling them to answer truthfully. Veiled attempts at coercion will rapidly give way to open threats as he mentions that, "the disappearance of a few more strangers in these lands would draw little notice, I fear." Rising to his feet he will make it known to them that he is the law in these lands and that if they don't reveal their true purposes, "perhaps hot irons will cause your tongues to wag more freely!"

If at any point the PCs offer threats or violence in return, Frederik is electrified as he is convinced that their true intentions are now revealed. At a word from him the door at his back opens and armed yeomen, equal to the number of PCs, spring out to defend their Lord (the don't attack unless the PCs do).

Defusing the situation is difficult. The PCs can attempt a Hard [-20%] Opposed Charm Test to placate Frederik. The Test is Very Hard[-30%] if they have threatened him verbally or physically. Alternately, the PCs can just outlast him. If after his threats and tirades they haven't "shown their true colors" (i.e. threatened him) then he throws himself back down into his seat, disgusted. He will tell them that he will generously let them go for now, but warn them not to tarry long on his land else he might change his mind.

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If the PCs took his bait, threatened him, and then failed to Charm him - the result is a tense stalemate. Satisfied that he has caused the enemy to blink, Frederik smirks at the PCs. At last he will tell them they have until dawn tomorrow to finish their business in Marlehof and leave. As a parting statement he instructs them to tell their employer that Frederik Von Kleist will not be so easily removed. The audience is now over.

Secrets Best Left Unspoken

If any of the PCs question Frederik on any of the following subjects, he will instantly be on his guard. Anyone seeming overly interested or persistent on these subjects will be marked as a threat that must be eliminated given the opportunity.

Felix Von Kleist, The Dead Brother

Frederik feels certain that if his brother's mutation, or the fact that his brother still lives, is revealed he will lose his land.

Frederik will restrict himself to stating that his brother died 12 years ago, of a disfiguring illness, and was quickly buried in the family crypt for fear of contagion. Any questions about the ghost of Felix will be dismissed as foolish nonsense.

Hugo Faustmann, The Priest of Morr

Frederik knows that Felix murdered Faustmann 2 weeks ago – He broke his neck by throwing him down the crypt steps.

Frederik will state that the he did not know the man well as the Priest kept to the Temple of Morr. But he always did his duty and was respected by the village. Frederik will state that he believes the two strangers killed the Priest, hid the body, and ran off. He further states that he sent some of his men around to look for them, but no trace was found [this is easily verifiable as a lie by the PCs; if asked the village folk will report that none of the yeomen have been sent out since the priest disappeared].

Hockscharzer and Mansel, The Two Strangers

Frederik believes both the strangers are dead. He knows that Felix locked them in the crypt and thinks that the giant rats that infest it have eaten them. And since Frederik has the key to the crypt door hidden, he doesn't believe that the PCs can readily open it or find the bodies of the two strangers.

Frederik will state that he believes the strangers were criminals who murdered the Priest for what

little he had and ran off to avoid capture for the crime. If asked about the audience he had with them, he will state that they tried to beg money from him and he threw them out. He later heard they entered the Leiche Gatter.

If the PCs identify the themselves as being employed by the same man as the Hockscharzer and Mansel (or try to protest the innocence of the men in some other way), Frederik will give them all a long considering look. He will then state that this information is, "distressing." If asked to elaborate, he will coolly comment that this news forces him to consider whether his own judgment was in error, or whether the PCs are friends to murderers. Frederik will not be pressed to further comment on this and will encourage the PCs to ask less dangerous questions.

Adolf Grobschmeid, The Well Dressed Visitor

Frederik believes Grobschmeid was sent by a unknown benefactor in town. Grobschmeid told him that the two strangers had come, under false pretenses, to find something that would be used to dispossess the Von Kleist family of their land. Grobschmeid claimed he was sent because it was to the benefit of his master (whose name was withheld) that their mutual enemy not succeed at this. When Grobschmeid returned a second time, he brought his master's effusive thanks as well as word that another group could be on its way with the same aims.

Frederik will state that the man was a courier employed on private business that is none of the PCs concern.

Solving Problems

What if the PCs Attack Frederick?

This is a significant likelihood. Most players have itchy trigger fingers whenever they feel threatened, especially if the yeomen are called out by Frederick. The GM has two options here. One is to remind the PCs that murdering the local lord, whether justified or not, is definitely going to get them branded as criminals if the news gets out. They will be under the threat of hanging anywhere they are recognized.

The other option is to let them put themselves in hot water and attack. If they do this, the yeomen will give their lives so that Frederick can escape out one of the doors. In addition, the servants will raise the alarm. More yeomen and the village militia will eventually be summoned, though the PCs have time to escape before anyone else arrives.

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If, for whatever reason, Frederick is killed his daughter, Anika, can handily stand in for him in Scene 9, "Locked In!"

NPCs

Frederik Von Kleist, Lord of Marlehof

45 year old male and titular Lord of Marlehof. Husband of Johanna. He has a dour face with a deeply-lined, tightly pursed mouth. A cold and calculating man with no love for anyone, including himself. Not intelligent enough for true villainy, he distracts himself with hunting and occasional bouts of violence directed at local scapegoats (including his own family). Secretly filled with shame about the poverty of his tiny fief and yet fearful of losing it. His only source of pride is his young son Lukas.

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
37	31	32	34	35	37	36	44
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	12	3	3	4	0	0	0

Skills: Charm, Command, Common Knowledge (Empire), Consume Alcohol, Gossip, Intimidate, Read/Write, Ride, Speak Language (Reikspiel)

Talents: Etiquette, Savvy, Schemer

Armour: None

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0

Weapons: Dagger

Trappings: 7gc, 10 s, silver pendant (8gc), gold signet ring (16 gc)

Johanna Von Kleist

32 year old wife of Frederick. A sad and withdrawn woman, bullied by her husband and desperate to please him. Keeps to her quarters and sews. Dotes on her young son, Lukas, and all but ignores her daughter, Anika. She is the only one besides Frederick who knows that Felix still lives. She has so far hidden the fact of Lukas' mutation for fear that Frederick would kill them both or exile them (like Felix).

Anika Von Kleist

14 year old daughter of Frederick and Johanna. She is an incredibly composed girl, having iron self-control. Bitter and cold like her father, but incapable as yet of doing anything about it. She has contempt for her weak mother and is filled with hate for her unloving and cruel father. She hopes one day to punish him for his sins against her mother and herself. She is conflicted about

her young brother, who is still an innocent and yet the only recipient of the regard she secretly desires from her father. She saw a cloaked man meet in secret with her father during the night 2 weeks ago and heard her father call him by her dead uncle's name, "Felix." She wonders if this can be used to her advantage.

Lukas Von Kleist

7 year old son of Frederick and Johanna. He already shows some signs of mutation (patches of warty, grey skin on his chest and legs) that afflicted his uncle Felix. A spoiled brat.

Yoemen

These are local men who serve the lord as his constabulary. They are motivated by fear of their Lord. They know that they, or their family, will be punished if they show cowardice or fail to follow orders. Unless directly ordered to they will not initiate combat, preferring to intimidate foes by their numbers alone.

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
34	37	33	41	30	29	32	30
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	13	3	4	4	0	0	0

Skills: Common Knowledge (Empire), Dodge Blow, Follow Trail, Gamble, Gossip, Intimidate, Search, Speak Language (Reikspiel)

Talents: Coolheaded, Disarm, Marksman

Armour: Light Armor (Leather Jack)

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 0

Weapons: Crossbow, Hand Weapon (Sword), Dagger

Trappings: 10 Bolts, 5+1d10 shillings

SCENE SIX: FINDING THE CRYPT

Setting the Scene

This is potentially one of the largest scenes of the game, as it involves investigation and the way that the PCs find (or fail to find) the crypt is open to a variety of methods. There is a lot of scenery that the PCs can wander about while looking, but the included descriptions are for the GMs benefit rather than the players. The GM should not feel the need to overwhelm the players with a travelogue. Instead, be responsive to the PCs' actions and move things along if they've made a

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fruitless choice.

The Burial Grounds

The Leiche Gatter

The "Corpse Gate" is a dolmen - two wide standing stones capped by a broad flat stone that forms a 12' high by 8' wide doorway. The gate stands at the far side of the valley where the exposed rock of the valley narrows to form a gorge the connects to the next valley. This is the entrance to the burial grounds. No one, apart from corpses and the Priest of Morr, goes through the gate unless they are recently bereaved mourners.

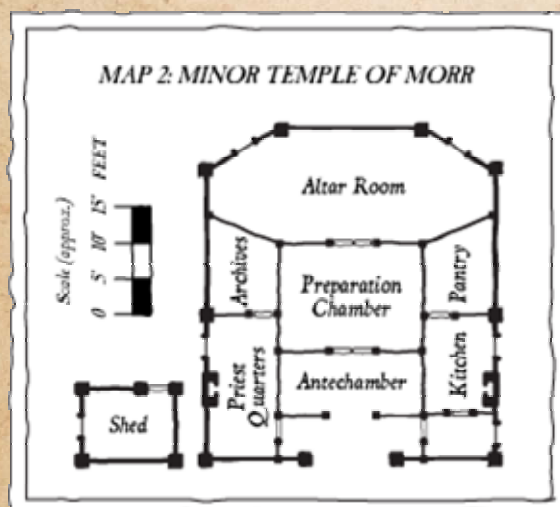
Morrsweg

The path that leads through the narrow defile beyond the Leiche Gatter is know as Morrsweg ("Morr's Path"). The rock walls on both side are between 12 to 20 feet in height and the grassy path is barely 5 feet wide in most places. The path extends for about a quarter mile and is frequently shrouded by morning and evening fogs.

Burial Grounds

The burial grounds are a shallow bowl shaped valley in whose rocky soil the people of Marlehof have been burying their dead for over 200 years. The Morrsweg runs up to a low fieldstone wall that encloses the mouth of the valley. There is a 15' wide gap in the middle, just beyond which is the Temple of Morr. The valley itself is a little over ¾ mile wide and a ½ mile long. The ground here is grassy, uneven, and dotted with cospes of trees.

The Temple of Morr



The Temple of Morr is small and simple in construction. It has large, open doorway with a broad stone lintel and no door. The rooms inside are almost bare of furnishings.

The Shed

A nearby stone shed doubles as a workshop. Seasoned wood is stacked against one outside wall. Inside there are picks and shovels for digging graves, as well as carpentry tools for making caskets.

The Preparation Room

A small room with a 6 foot long stone bier on which the bodies of the dead are washed and wrapped in a burial shroud before interment. Wood shelves on the walls hold incense, candles, a small bronze water pitcher, a bronze bowl, scissors, and a razor. A chest holds an undyed linen winding sheet.

The Altar Room

A holy area where mourners can pray on behalf of the dead. The walls and altar have a small amount of ornamentation depicting stylized ravens – a symbol of Morr in his role as the God of Death.

The Kitchen and Pantry

A small cooking area with a door leading to a pantry. The kitchen holds a few utensils, a cooking pot, and a pan. The pantry contains a small quantity of food including flour, salt pork, and a small cask of ale.

The Priest's Quarters

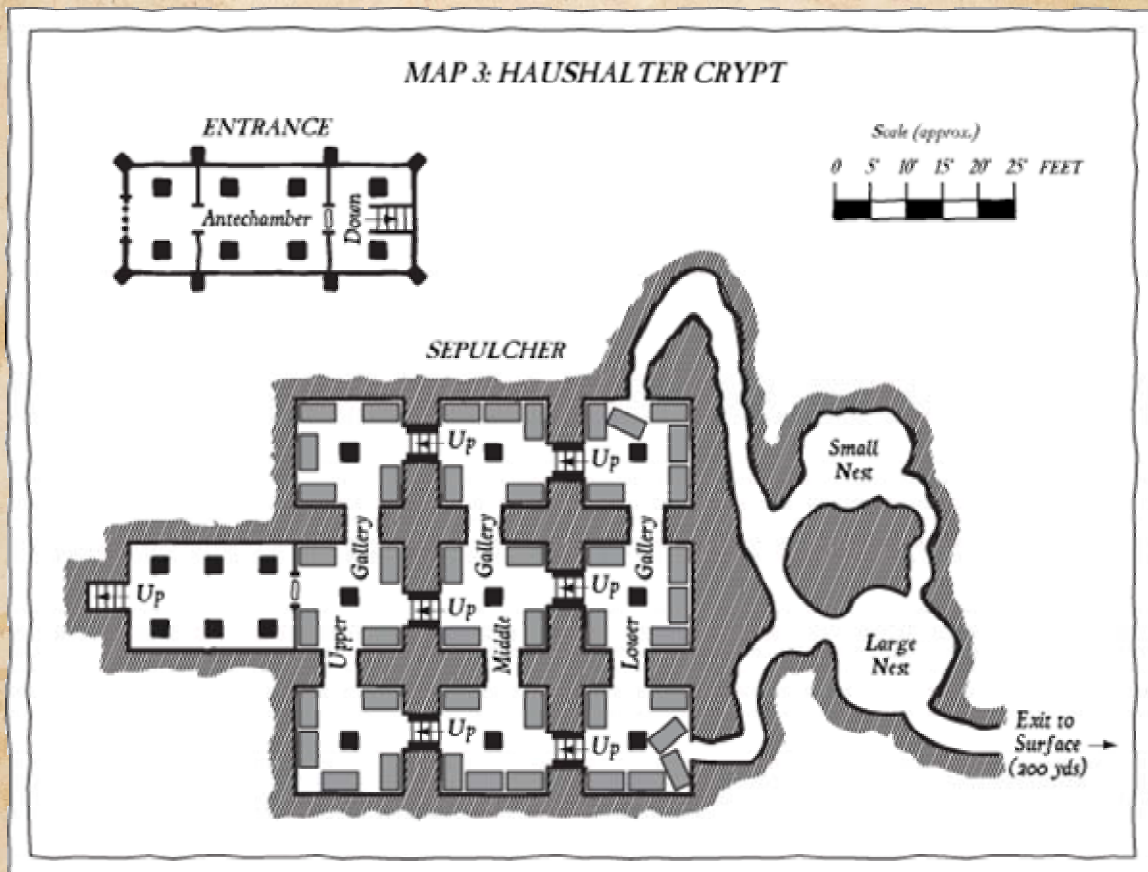
A bedroom with a fireplace, an unmade bed, a small chest, a desk with chair, and a washing basin. The chest contains three unadorned and carefully mended black hooded robes and some underclothes. The desk has several papers, inkpot, and book on it. There are two doors from this room.

A successful Average[+0%] Search Test will reveal a small purse hidden under the straw mattress (contains 11s 2p). If the PCs read the papers on the desk see "Faustmann's Final Notes" below.

The Archives

This cramped space has a few wooden shelves and some candle stubs. On the shelves are 5 codices. Each of these are gatherings of several folios sewn together and crudely bound between wood covers. They contain records of the dead, kept by the previous Priests of Morr, as well as occasional notations about events that affect the temple or the burial grounds.

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If the PCs attempt to read through the codices, see "Consulting the Temple Records" below.

The Haushalter Crypt

The Haushalter Crypt is a small stone building built into the slope at the edge of the valley that encloses the burial grounds. The crypt lies about ½ mile away, and almost directly opposite from, the gap in the stone wall that encloses the valley mouth.

Antechamber

An above ground antechamber with an rusted, wrought iron door bearing a stout lock. On the other side of a partition is a larger space with low benches and a dusty stone lectern with nothing on it. At the end of this room is an iron bound wood door (latched but unlocked), beyond which is a set of steep stairs that descend 20' into the valley floor.

If the PCs attempt to open the wrought iron door without the key, see "You Can't Miss It" below.

If the PCs search the antechamber (Search) or examine the lectern (Perception) have them roll the appropriate skill as a Routine [+10%] Test.

On a success, the turn up nothing but notice that the dust on the lectern outlines where a book shaped object recently rested [This was the resting place for the book of Haushalter family interments and was removed by Hockscharzer].

Sepulcher

[Note that as soon as the PCs reach the bottom of the stairs that lead to the entry hall of the sepulcher, it triggers Scene 7]

This lower area is excavated out of the earth and walled in stone. A pillared hall leads to another iron bound wood door (latched but unlocked), beyond which is the sepulcher or burial vault. The sepulcher is composed of 3 galleries separated by stairways. Each gallery is formed by 3 interconnected chambers. Each of the chamber contains a central pillar, two or more arched exits, and four or more stone sarcophagi arranged against the walls.

Each pillar has 2 torch brackets riveted to it (there is a 10% chance a given bracket holds an partially unburnt torch that, if lighted, burns for 1d10 x 5 minutes). Most of the sarcophagi are carved with decorative relief patterns on the outside, and the oldest ones (in the Lower Gallery) have a bas-relief carving of a reclining

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figure (the deceased) on the top surface.

Originally all three galleries contained the Haushalter dead. However, about 70 years ago during a time when there was no Priest of Morr at the Temple, the then Lord of Marlehof (Lorenz Von Kleist) decided to appropriate the Haushalter Crypt rather than build a new one. The Haushalter coffins in the Upper (and later Middle) Gallery were taken out of their sarcophagi and piled up against the walls in the Lower Gallery. Over time, coffins containing deceased Von Kleist family members were put into the empty sarcophagi.

Over 20 ancient, rotting coffins (and their contents) now lie in tumbled stacks, shoved against the walls and piled on top of sarcophagi in the Lower Gallery. The air here is unpleasantly heavy with scent of decay. The smell has attracted a small pack of giant rats. They have burrowed into the Lower Gallery in two places, collapsing part of the walls and pushing some of the sarcophagi into the aisles. Now they enter whenever other food is too difficult to find and tear open the coffins to chew on the rank bones.

Opening a sarcophagus requires a Challenging[-10%] Strength Test. If one person assists another in opening the lid, have the stronger character make the Strength Test with a +10% bonus. Using a crowbar or other lever grants an additional +10% bonus.

Opening random coffins will reveal corpses in varying states of decay, usually wrapped naked in a burial shroud. However a few corpses (15%) have been buried with grave goods – usually personal keepsakes, religious items, or jewelry. If the corpse does have grave goods, they will be worth a combined 1d10 gc 20% of the time, otherwise they are worth only 1d10 shillings. Also note that for each coffin opened, any PCs within 1 yard have a 10% chance of being exposed to The Green Pox (page 136 of the main rulebook); anyone actually handling a corpse has a 25% chance of being exposed to it.

If PC enter the Middle Chamber of the Lower Gallery, roll a Easy[+20%] Perception Test for each one. On a success the PC notices that the coffins and debris have been cleared away from one of the sarcophagi in the room. If they succeed by 1+ degrees, or approach the sarcophagus, clearly visible is a dark bloodstain on the front, deep scratches in the bas-relief figure carved on top, and the fact that the lid is slightly askew. The sarcophagus bears the name "Heinrich Haushalter" carved into the side and top, along with the year 2348 – this is the oldest

year that any of the sarcophagi in the crypt bear.

Opening the sarcophagus reveals that there is a recently dead body inside (Mansel), arm in arm with an ancient skeleton and the both of them lying in an open coffin. A pool of blood has congealed over the inside of the finely made coffin, staining the rich wood and tarnished silver decorations. The fresh corpse has had most of its right leg torn off and its bloodied hands are clutched together over its chest.

A successful Very Easy[+30%] Search Test, or simply opening the fresh corpse's hands, will reveal that it is holding a gold signet ring. Any PC seeing the ring can make a Easy[+20%] Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry) Test, Challenging[-10%] Common Knowledge (The Empire) Test, or Hard [-20%] Intelligence Test to realize that it is solid proof of the nobility of the Haushalter family.

[Hockscharzer & Mansel had found the tomb of the Haushalter patriarch, Heinrich. They opened it and had gotten the signet ring from the coffin when they were attacked by the giant rats. Hockscharzer was dragged away and Mansel had his leg bitten off. While the rats were quarreling over his leg Mansel, in desperation, crawled into the sarcophagus and pulled the lid shut to keep them away. The rats tried to claw the lid open but failed and eventually gave up. Mansel subsequently died of blood loss, trapped inside.]

Rat Tunnels

These short (4' tall) packed earth tunnels wind back and forth unevenly. Because of the cramped conditions in the tunnels some PCs suffer penalties to Agi, WS, and BS – PCs taller than 4' suffer -10%, taller than 5' suffer -20%. Two chambers (one larger than the other) filled with leaves, fur, small bones, and other debris are where the rats make their nest.

From the larger nest, a lone tunnel leads off to the surface, climbing slowly for 200 yards before opening out of a hill slope near a small stream. This tunnel brings with it fresh air and the scent of water. Any PC standing in the tunnels (or even in the crypt at the edge of a tunnel) can detect this breeze with a Routine[+10%] Perception Test. An Easy[+20%] Outdoor Survival Test will make clear to them that a fresh breeze means a connection to the outside somewhere.

The freshly gnawed bones of a man (Hockscharzer) lie in the Large Nest chamber. A successful Average[+0%] Search Test of the Large Nest takes 5 minutes and uncovers 22s 5p

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from Hockscharzer's purse. It also reveals a badly gnawed leather wrapped book. Although the pages are damaged, the book contains the interment records for the Haushalter family, along with an elaborately maintained family tree going back over 200 years.

Any PC seeing the family tree in the book can make a Very Easy[+30%] Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry) Test, Average [+0%] Common Knowledge (The Empire) Test, or Challenging [-10%] Intelligence Test to realize that it is solid proof of the nobility of the Haushalter family.

Keeping it Short

"You Can't Miss It"

If the PCs ask about the Haushalter crypt around the hamlet, no one knows of the family. Have the PC asking make a Routine[+10%] Gossip Test. If they succeed, they will learn that the only crypt that anyone knows of is the Von Kleist family crypt, which is located at the far edge of the burial grounds.

Assuming the PCs thoroughly check the burial grounds, there is only one structure that could possibly be described as crypt. If the PCs make a comprehensive search of the valley looking for the crypt, have each of them make a Routine [+10%] Search Test; if searching at night the Search Test is Challenging [-10%]. If persistent they find the crypt after 1 hour of searching (every degree of success reduces the time by 15 minutes, minimum of 15 minutes; conversely every degree of failure increases the time by 15 minutes).

Once they approach the crypt they notice that set into the stone lintel above the wrought iron door is the name "Von Kleist", spelled out in wrought iron letters. Have each PC make a Challenging [-10%] Perception Test or a Average [+0%] Trade (Stoneworker) Test. If they succeed, they notice that the lintel behind the letters is not smooth like the rest of the stonework, but appears to have been chiseled flat fairly crudely. If they succeed by 1 degree they realize that something was originally engraved on the stone; with 2 degrees of success and a lot of squinting they can faintly make out the name "Haushalter".

The wrought iron door is locked, but can be opened with a Challenging [-10%] Pick Locks Test - the lock itself is rusty, so if the PCs apply oil before attempting to open it they receive a +10% bonus to the attempt. Alternately, with a half-hour of determined effort using a cold chisel

and a hammer, the lock can be chiseled free of the door. The time required to do this can be reduced to 10 minutes by making a Routine [+10%] Trade (Smith) Test. Using a crowbar or other metal lever will permit a Hard [-20%] Strength Test to bend the lock enough to open the gate.

Drawing it Out

If the PCs don't wish to try to search the burial grounds or don't think the Von Kleist crypt is the correct one, there are two alternate ways by which they could learn of where the crypt is.

Consulting the Temple Records

If the PCs enter the Temple of Morr, anyone with the Read/Write skill can try to search the Temple archives for a record of the Haushalter crypt. Since there is no index or visible organization to the records (except chronological), this is a time-consuming and boring process. Have each searcher make an Average[+0%] Read/Write Test. This takes 2 hours [-30 minutes for each degree of success, minimum of 30 minutes; +30 minutes for each degree of failure). If persistent they find a brief burial record of a member of the Haushalter family which mentions that they were interred in the crypt on the far slope - It is an Routine[+10%] Navigation Test to realize that this is the same place as the Von Kleist Crypt.

Faustmann's Final Notes

If the PCs search the Faustmann's Quarters, they will find a small desk with signs of recent use. There are papers, ink and books on the desk, as well as a drained ale cup and the remains of a meal. Items of note:

- ◆ A 190 year old record, from the temple archives, that mentions the Haushalter family crypt being built and indicates its location - It is an Easy[+20%] Navigation Test to realize that this is the same place as the Von Kleist Crypt.
- ◆ An ale stained piece of foolscap with a scribbled chronology, showing the gaps of time during which no Priest of Morr was maintaining the Temple. One of the gaps, 70 years ago, has a note next to it that reads - "Is this when the bodies were moved? Who was responsible for this impious act?"
- ◆ A battered holy book of Morr with a passage marked by a piece of parchment. The passage is one of several that describes sinful acts against Morr's word. On the bookmark one of the verses has been copied down; "Let none defile the

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resting place that I have blessed. Let no hand profane the bones of one that I have called my own.”

Watchful Eyes

Felix quickly notices anyone walking in the burial grounds. If the PCs approach the crypt, he will hide at the edge of the woods and watch them – roll a secret Routine[+10%] Opposed Concealment Test against the PC with the highest Perception Skill. If the PCs do not spot him, Felix will run off to warn Frederick as soon as they enter the crypt (see Scene 9). If the PCs do spot him, Felix will try to frighten them away by letting out a blood-curdling howl and shouting out “Flee defilers! For I am the spirit that haunts these grounds!” All the PCs should make Willpower Tests to avoid the effects of Felix’s Unsettling appearance when this happens. If the PCs approach him, Felix will run back into the forest. PCs can successfully keep up with him with an Opposed Agility Test or follow his tracks with a Routine[+10%] Follow Trail or an Average [+0%] Perception Test.

If the PCs manage to follow him, he runs back to his hovel to get weapons. Felix attacks by throwing a crude javelin and then pulling out a rusty axe. It is possible, if the PCs keep their distance, to calm Felix with a Hard[-20%] Charm Test against his Willpower. If the Charm Test failed, Felix attacks until wounded then tries to escape in order to warn his brother. He will attack anyone following him in order to dissuade pursuit, fighting to the death if he cannot escape.

If the Charm Test is successful, Felix will be suspicious but willing to parlay. He wants the PCs to leave and not disturb the Von Kleist crypt. As he has already killed to protect the family’s secrets, he refuses to explain the truth; but at the GM’s option he may make up a plausible lie. He will grow angry if the PCs refuse to leave the crypt untouched or reveal that they already know about the Von Kleist family stealing the crypt. If either of these occur, Felix realizes he cannot stop the PCs and tells them to go away. He is unwilling to answer questions about himself. As soon as the PCs leave, Felix will go to warn his brother.

Felix’s hovel stands nearby in a small clearing. Inside there is louse-ridden bedding, tools and food. An Average[+0%] Search Test will uncover two items of importance. The first is an iron key hidden behind a clay pot. Although not immediately identifiable, this key unlocks the crypt door. The second item is tiny wooden box hidden in a crack in the wattle and daub wall. Inside, wrapped in a scrap of cloth, is a heavily

tarnished silver cloak clasp bearing a stylized “VK” within an border of thorns. This is one of the symbol of the Von Kleist family and was present given to Felix by Frederick’s wife, Johanna, before his mutation.

NPCs

Felix Von Kleist, Mutant

Felix is truly frightening. His grey-green, leathery skin is covered in warty protrusions and clings to his emaciated frame. To avoid showing his skin Felix always wraps himself in several layers of rags and wears a rough cloak pulled tight around him – it gives him the look of a corpse wound in a filthy burial sheet. He is 49 years old, the eldest living male and true patriarch of the Von Kleist family in Marlehof. Felix Von Kleist began to suffer from a mutation 15 years ago. Felix’s younger brother, Frederik, saw this as a clear opportunity to take over as the Lord of Marlehof. Playing on Felix’s shame and fear that this would bring doom on the family, Frederik convinced Felix to fake his own death. For the last 12 years Felix has lived in squalor in the woods near the burial grounds, while his brother has ruled as the Lord. He has suffered the combined effects of mutation and deprivation in exile, in order to preserve his family’s honor.

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
40	38	37	50	35	26	42	26

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	14	3	5	4	0	0	0

Skills: Common Knowledge (Empire), Concealment, Perception, Read/Write, Ride, Silent Move, Speak Language (Reikspiel)

Talents: Flee, Rover, Unsettling, Very Resilient
Special Rules: Leathery Skin

Armour: None

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0

Weapons: Javelin, Hand Weapon (Axe), Dagger

Trappings: None

SCENE SEVEN: A RESTLESS SPIRIT

Setting the Scene

At the bottom of the steep stairway that leads down from the crypt antechamber sits the

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crumpled body of Hugo Faustmann, the priest of Morr. Faustmann's body is battered, and the neck clearly broken, from what appears to be a tumble down the stone steps.

If anyone approaches or touches the body, there is a swirl of wind and dust. And then, after a moment of silence, the dust coalesces into the translucent form of a thin, robed man with a miserable expression upon its face – the ghost of Hugo Faustmann.

The spirit will seem confused briefly, but will not be aggressive at all. It will cover away from any attack, whether magical (which can hurt it) or physical (which just passes harmlessly though). If the PCs don't flee immediately or refrain from attacking for a few moments, the ghost will turn to face them and try to communicate.

Keeping it Short

A Ghostly Plea

The spirit addresses the PCs by saying, "Good folk – I am the miserable revenant of Hugo Faustmann. Do not fear me, I pray, for in life I was a servant of Morr. Though in truth I know not whether this wretched circumstance arises from my sins or the violence done against me. Help me, I beg you."

The spirit desires most of all for his body to be properly buried and a prayer of Morr read over it [*The prayer that the PCs were given by Haushalter is sufficient for these purposes*]. He will not press them to perform the deed immediately, only asking that they agree to do it soon after they leave the crypt. If the PCs accept he will be gratified and disappear for the moment. He will re-appear if they call on him in the area of his body.

If the PCs wish to question the spirit about anything, it will willingly answer any reasonable question to the best of its ability. He will not lie, having nothing to lose at this point. Questions of note include:

How have you sinned? See "Faustmann's Secret" below.

Who killed you? See "By a Dead Man's Hand" below

Do you know where the Haushalter family relics are? See "Pointing the Way" below.

Drawing it Out

At the GMs discretion, the giant rats found the body before the PCs did. They have torn much of the flesh off the face and chest. Through some

twist of fate the skull, now missing its jawbone, has ended sitting upright and seeming to look back at anyone descending the stairway.

Playing Charades

When the ghost appears, instead of speaking it appears to be mute and plays "charades" with the PCs. It will visibly beg them, kneeling by its skull and motioning them forward. It will appear to touch the skull (it is Routine[+10%] Perception Test to notice it touches the jaw socket) and then its own chin repeatedly.

Finding the Jawbone

If the PCs figure out what is desired, an Easy [+20%] Search Test will reveal the half-gnawed jawbone lying under the torn scraps of Faustmann's black robe behind a pillar. The spirit will be visibly relieved and joyous when the jaw is found and motion repeatedly for it to be put onto the skull. Putting the jawbone back in place causes the spirit to be sucked into the skull itself. And then the skulls speaks in Faustmann's grateful but sad voice, as described in "A Ghostly Plea" above.

Faustmann's Secret

Faustmann never completed training as a priest and is actually only an Initiate of Morr. Therefore, he is not permitted to perform services in Morr's name, even though he has done so dozens of times. He fled the abusive Master of Initiates at the Temple of Morr in Bersburg and found his way to Marlehof. Penniless when he arrived, he claimed to be a full Priest in order to take custody of the Temple and keep from starving. For the last 8 years he has conducted the rites of Morr, buried the dead, prayed with the mourning, and felt the weight of that sin every day. He had recently turned to drink to ease his conscience.

By a Dead Man's Hand

Felix Von Kleist is still alive and was responsible for killing Faustmann by throwing him down the crypt stairs. In Faustmann's tenancy, he had gotten to know a diseased recluse who lurked in the woods around the burial grounds. Befriending him with charity, he discovered that he was a mutant. After hearing the stories of the ghost of Felix, he finally guessed who it was in truth but agreed to keep Felix's secret.

Year later, when the two strangers came to Faustmann looking for a crypt of the Haushalter family, he was confused. The priest was familiar with the burial grounds and did not know of that family. On searching the records kept by previous caretakers of the Temple, he discovered the Von Kleist crypt had originally been the Haushalter crypt. Faustmann was outraged that the Von

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Kleist family would dishonor the Haushalter dead, simply to avoid building a new crypt.

Faustmann, more than a little drunk at that point, opened the crypt for the two strangers in the middle of the night and waited for them in the antechamber. Felix came upon him, demanding to know why Faustmann had let the men into the "Von Kleist" crypt. Faustmann harangued Felix for the Von Kleist family's transgressions against the strictures of Morr and said that there would be a reckoning for it. In a fury, Felix announced that, "For the sake of my family's honor I have been in exile for 15 years; you shall not make that sacrifice worthless!" And then threw Faustmann down the stairs to his death.

[After taking the key, Felix locked the strangers in to starve or die at the hands of the rats. He then travelled in secret and told his brother Frederik of what had transpired, giving him the crypt key to keep safe.]

Pointing the Way

Faustmann knows that all the Haushalter bodies are now in the Lower Gallery of the sepulcher (either in piles of coffins or still in their original sarcophagi). From the records he read, he believes that the first Haushalter bodies interred in the crypt were all in the Lower Gallery.

Faustmann also knows that Hockscharzer took a book from the lectern in the crypt antechamber which contain Haushalter family records. He doesn't know what became of the two men, but if told that they are missing he will surmise that the creatures that dwell down in the sepulcher may have gotten them. Faustmann has never seen what they are, but was told by Felix that "strange large rats" had been seen in the crypt during Felix's faked interment.

NPCs

The Spirit of Faustmann

The ghost appears as the indistinct form of a robed man, seemingly coalesced out of dust and fog. Faustmann feels deeply the horror of his new state. He is caught between feeling that his suffering is appropriate punishment for his sin, and that it is a terrible result of Felix's murderous attack. His true desire is to be rid of this half-life and enter Morr's realm. But he can be momentarily overcome by thoughts of self-recrimination or revenge.

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
25	0	30	30	40	40	25	30

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	15	3	3	6	0	0	0

Skills: Concealment, Gossip, Perception +20%, Speak Language (Reikspiel)

Talents: Ethereal, Night Vision, Undead

Special Rules: Fearful Touch, Invisible, Place of Death (see Old World Bestiary page 109)

Armour: None

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0

Weapons: None

SCENE EIGHT:

SKITTERING SHADOWS

Setting the Scene

The GM should capitalize on the oppressive atmosphere of the sepulcher to try to put the players on edge. Describe the oppressive darkness, the rank odor of decaying flesh, the shadows that flicker across the rows of tombs, and the fact that something could come from almost any direction in the galleries - with no doors to stop it.

If the PCs have heard about the rats, put them on edge with a few sounds at the edge of hearing - the skitter of nails on stone; the rustle of a hairless tail dragged through the dust.

Once you have them all wound up - delay the attack of the rats until the right moment. When the PCs are engaged in another activity and are making noise, like moving coffins or when they've recovered the signet ring, the rats spring their attack from as many directions as possible.

Since the rats will only attack in the company of greater numbers than their prey, and are cowardly even then, the GM is at liberty to have them fall back at any time he feels is appropriate. This retreat can be a temporary lull between attacks or outright flight from the crypt.

Victory Nigh

Lying in Wait

If the PCs manage to put up a good fight, the rats scatter into the darkness of the crypt. They will

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then wait in hiding for an opportune time when there is a lone PC they can gang up on.

Alternately, if the PCs enter the tunnels, the rats will take advantage of this. In the tunnels the rats suffer none of the penalties the PCs do. They will try to trap the PCs in a tunnel that leads to one of the nests – a group of rats will muster at the tunnel opening while others come from behind to pin the PCs in.

Looming Defeat

If the PCs are in trouble, the primary tool the GM has to contrive salvation is the rats innate cowardliness. Other options are listed below.

Something Catches Fire

If in the crypt or nest area, one of the PCs or rats overturns a lantern or knocks a torch into a pile of the dry coffins and bones, which quickly catch fire. The fire will unnerve the rats, panicking them into flight. At the GMs option the fire is easily smothered or turns into a blaze that can't be controlled and forces the PCs to abandon the burning chamber and hurry on with their search. Quarreling Amongst Themselves

One of the frenzied rats may randomly choose to try to establish dominance over another. These rats begin furious biting and clawing each other and more rats may start to join in against the loser. They may consider a wounded rat to be easier prey than the PCs. The fight lasts long enough for the PCs to flee or regroup.

NPCs

The Giant Rats

These are diseased, grey pelted rats the size of small mastiffs. There are as many rats as the GM needs to challenge, but not overwhelm, the PCs. This can be between four and a dozen or more. But the rats should generally only attack in groups of no less than three and no more than one and a half the number of PCs.

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
25	0	31	30	42	14	18	5
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	7	3	3	6	0	0	0

Skills: Concealment, Perception +10%, Silent Move, Swim +10%

Talents: Keen Senses, Natural Weapons, Night

Vision

Armour: None

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0

Weapons: Teeth

SCENE NINE: LOCKED IN!

Setting the Scene

Taking Heinrich Haushalter signet ring (from his tomb) or the ledger book containing the interment records for the family (from the large nest chamber) should provide sufficient evidence of the family's noble heritage.

Once the PCs have one (or both) of these in hand, they will likely wish to leave the crypt (possibly with Faustmann's corpse in tow). As they enter the antechamber, through the wrought iron door is visible several figures holding torches. Felix, having seen the PCs enter the crypt and discovering that the lock is now useless, has summoned his brother. Frederick, on horseback, and several yeomen armed with crossbows wait outside the wrought iron door. As the PCs watch the local smith appears to be hammering stout metal stakes into the stone to keep the crypt door shut permanently.

Frederik and his men are surprised to see the PCs (believing that the rats would have eaten them). Frederik will visibly gloat, telling the PCs that he warned them to leave. Now they have a choice of facing death by crossbow, starvation, or rat.

Keeping it Short

A Ghost of a Chance

As Frederik and the PCs confront each other there is a sudden blast of wind and a cry of "Murderer!" Faustmann's ghost appears near the PCs, pointing a hand at a dimly seen cloaked figure behind the yeomen. The spirit moves forward, a torrent of wind throwing the wrought iron door open before it, as it rushes at the astonished figure. All eyes turn to follow as the wind tears the cloak off the man's face and Faustmann cries out, "Felix! Morr's judgment is at hand!" At this everyone outside scatters, running for their lives. Felix too takes off, running towards the woods with Faustmann close behind him.

The PCs can take this opportunity to pursue Felix, bury Faustmann's body, or make a quick exit. Frederik and his men won't chance the burial

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grounds again tonight, so the PCs are safe for the moment to finish their business and leave.

Drawing it Out

Running the Gauntlet

If the PCs are pigheaded enough to want to try to burst out of the crypt and take on the yeomen, let them try. Frederik will stay back and gallop away at the first sign of the PCs gaining the upper hand. Felix, lurking in the shadows, will attack the PCs with a roar as soon as they emerge and fight until dead. And the yeomen will fight until more than half their number are incapacitated, and then flee or surrender.

If the PCs survive (or manage to flee the flight) they will find no opposition preventing them from leaving the environs of Marlehof.

Finding Another Way Out

If the GM wishes to force the issue, have the smith just finishing as the PCs arrive, the echo of his last hammer blow resounding deafeningly in the antechamber. Even if the PCs tried open the door, the yeomen would fill them full of crossbow quarrels. The PCs at this point have only two means of escaping without fighting Frederick's men.

Their best hope (whether they know it or not) is to chance the rat tunnels and find their way out the exit tunnel. Once they do this, a successful Average[+0%] Navigation Test will let them circle around Marlehof and return to the road, taking a half-day to accomplish.

More time-consuming and risky is trying to outwait Frederick. If the PCs stay in view, Frederick will eventually have his men try to shoot them. If the PCs retreat out of site and remain hidden for more than 8 hours, Frederick will leave with his men. Two yeomen will be stationed with crossbows and Felix will be watching from a hiding place within a nearby copse of trees. If the PCs stay out of site for another full day, the guards will be gone. Felix will continue to watch the crypt for two more days so unless the PCs are incredibly patient, and have lots of time before the deadline, they won't escape without fighting him. And remember that they still have to break open the crypt door somehow.

SCENE TEN: AN IMPERSONATOR

Setting the Scene

If the PCs manage to recover evidence and are returning to town, a finely dressed rider (Adolf Grobschmeid) will gallop up from the direction of town while the PCs are a little less than a day away. He will claim to be sent by Haushalter. He will offer the PCs prompt payment for delivery of the evidence, claiming his master instructed him to ride home without delay at top speed. The only immediate clue that this man is not what he says is that he doesn't know how much the PCs were promised. When delivering their payment he will give each 10 gc and, if the PCs mention anything about overpayment, he will call it a bonus. If the PCs mention simply that it's the wrong amount of money, he'll look nervous and give them another 5 gc each. If the PCs subdue him, he can be made to tell that he was sent by Steinhoff.

Keeping it Short

Well Founded Suspicion

If the PCs don't catch on to the fact they are being deceived, a kind hearted GM can secretly make Average[+0%] Intelligence Test for each PC. On a success, they remember seeing this man briefly in one of the coaching inns they stayed at on the journey to Marlehof – he was quiet and kept to himself. On one degree of success they can match him to the description they received (if any) regarding Frederik Von Kleist's well dressed visitor.

Drawing it Out

Everything's Negotiable

If the PCs do catch wind of his trick, they can easily compel him to reveal that he works for Steinoff with any credible threat of violence or an Easy[+20%] Intimidate or Easy[+20%] Torture Test. Once he reveals this, he will try to convince the PCs that the deal is still in their favor. He will urge them to be businesslike and accept the money as fair payment for a few dusty old items they have no use for. If they won't agree, he will ask to be set free. If they refuse, he will pay them the money he has to be set him free. It's up to the PCs what they do with him. If set free he will return to Steinoff as soon as possible and relate

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what happened.

A Little Insurance

If the mercenaries from Scene 2 didn't launch an ambush in Scene 3 because they were too few of them (or for other reasons), then at the GM's discretion they have been paid by Grobschmeid to be backup. It's also possible that Grobschmeid has hired some new mercenaries as replacements or to bolster their numbers.

The mercenaries are mounted and watching the exchange from around a bend in the road. It is a Challenging[-10%] Perception Test for the PCs to notice their presence; with one degree of success they can determine that they are armed men; with two degrees of success they can identify any mercenaries who escaped Scene 2. If the PCs see through Grobschmeid's ploy, or threaten him, Grobschmeid will signal the mercenaries to attack by waving his handkerchief. Their primary purpose will be to rescue Grobschmeid but, if at all possible, they will try to steal anything that looks like it could be evidence. There should be enough to give the PCs some concern (perhaps one or two less than the number of PCs), but not enough to overwhelm them.

Solving Problems

What Happens if the PCs are Tricked?

If, despite hints, the PCs still blithely give up their hard won evidence for money – feel free to let them. Grobschmeid will give them Haushalter's "thanks" and ride back to town at top speed (and put the evidence in Steinoff hands). If the PCs actually return to town and seek out Haushalter, enjoy the delicious irony that results from this encounter as Haushalter listens in disbelief to their foolish mistake and then throws them out of his home in a fury.

What Happens if the PCs are Greedy?

Clever PCs may realize that Grobschmeid is offering them more money now than Haushalter is. If they decide to accept Grobschmeid's offer you can rightly call them low, money-grubbing scum and then promptly congratulate them on their fiscal good sense. Besides proving their lack of character and missing out on any business connections that Haushalter may have helped with, there is no real downside to this choice.

NPCs

Adolf Grobschmeid

A foppish man in his early 20s, dressed in expensive clothes and riding boots. He has carefully coifed and perfumed blond hair and a neatly trimmed goatee. He affects a regal air and a snooty accent, but if threatened quickly shows his cowardice and low class roots. He has been working for Steinoff for several months and vainly thinks that Steinoff is grooming him as his right-hand man.

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
37	31	32	34	34	29	31	48

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	11	3	3	4	0	0	0

Skills: Blather, Charm, Common Knowledge (Empire), Consume Alcohol, Gossip, Read/Write, Ride, Speak Language (Reikspiel)

Talents: Etiquette, Suave, Schemer

Armour: None

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0

Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword), Dagger

Trappings: (15gc per PC) + 12gc, 8s, Riding Horse

SCENE ELEVEN:

DELIVERING THE GOODS

Setting the Scene

The PCs can find Haushalter in his warehouse by day (except the day of the wedding) or at his home at night. No matter what the hour, the PCs will be recognized by the staff and Haushalter will be summoned to greet them.

Keeping it Short

Rewards & Gratitude

If the PCs return the evidence in time, Haushalter will be so gratified he will pay them and add a 1 gc bonus as thanks. In addition, he will invite them to the wedding as special guests. The wedding is a time for having fun rubbing elbows with the town's finest, making some contacts, and eating well. Any special equipment or materials that the PCs need (so long as its legal)

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Haushalter will try to help them find at reasonable prices.

Drawing it Out

Relating the Deaths of the Retainers

If the PCs bring back a coherent story of what happened to the two retainers, Haushalter is visibly saddened. He thanks the PCs for this extra kindness and gives them an extra 3 GCs to split amongst themselves. If the PCs actually returned with the bodies of the two retainers, Haushalter becomes overwrought upon seeing the corpses. He gives the PCs 12 GCs and begs them to take the bodies to the local Garden of Morr to be buried. Any money left over they may keep.

Guests at the Wedding

Gunthar Steinoff is a guest at the wedding as well. He will take an opportunity to examine the PCs, perhaps even speaking briefly to them to test their mettle. By their actions they have made an enemy of him, though he won't tip his hand openly as yet. In time, as the opportunity presents, he may act against them for ruining his plans.

Solving Problems

What Happens if the PCs are Late?

If the PCs arrive back in town before noon on the day of the wedding, they will be directed to the church where Haushalter is on the verge of collapse. On delivering the evidence the whole party will be rushed before Lord Karl Volte. He will have a scribe with a voluminous tome carefully compare the signet ring, or family tree, to heraldry and genealogy records in the book. After scrutiny, the evidence will be pronounced sufficient. Volte and Haushalter will both sigh with relief and shake hands. Then they rush from the room to proceed with the wedding, leaving the PCs with the scribe, who shoos them away.

If the PCs arrive back in town after noon on the date of the wedding, they will discover that Haushalter has collapsed from a nervous condition and the PCs will be seen by his daughter, Etelka. She will still accept the evidence but only pay them half of what they were promised for delivery (since they did not deliver on time). The wedding, at ruinous expense, has been postponed, but may go forward once her father recovers. The PCs will not be invited to attend.

NPCs

Gunthar Steinhoff

A narrow, balding man in his late 40's, with a fringe of grey hair on his head. His eyes are unusually sharp and alive in his dull face. Steinoff speaks with a calm, forceful tone as if everyone he address is a servant or social inferior. He is a greedy but patient man who believes that power and privilege is the only thing worth having.

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
29	31	33	37	28	38	37	45

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	12	3	3	4	0	0	0

Skills: Charm, Common Knowledge (Empire, Tilea), Evaluate, Gossip, Haggle, Read/Write, Ride, Secret Language (Guild Tongue), Speak Language (Reikspiel, Breton), Trade (Mechant)

Talents: Dealmaker, Savvy, Schemer

Armour: None

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0

Weapons: Dagger

Trappings: 20gc, 15s, Jewelry (40gc)

Karl Volte

A thin, distracted looking man with a long, finely waxed mustache. He seems unfocused and his gaze roves around the room. Volte is a noble of few means, his meager inheritance having been spent on his own education and the vestiges of finery he can afford to surround himself with. Although his clothes are finely made, to the trained eye they are discernable as no longer fashionable and have been carefully patched in several places.

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
32	27	31	31	36	38	31	35

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	11	3	3	4	0	0	0

Skills: Charm, Common Knowledge (Empire), Consume Alcohol, Gossip, Haggle, Read/Write, Ride, Speak Language (Reikspiel)

Talents: Etiquette, Suave

Armour: None

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0

Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword), Dagger

Trappings: 5gc, 5s, Riding Horse

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Experience Point Rewards

Scene 1

- If the PCs get Haushalter to talk about his missing men or his suspicions of an enemy at work, they receive 5 xp.

Scene 2

- If the PCs drive the mercenaries off before they can set the inn on fire, they receive 15 xp.
- If the PCs rescuing one or more horses from the burning stable or capture them as they are fleeing they receive 10 xp.
- If the PCs help put out the fire before it destroys the inn they receive 5 xp.
- If the PCs do something heroic, like rescue someone from the burning inn, they receive 10 xp.

Scene 3

- If the PCs defeat the mercenaries without being rescued by the roadwarden they receive 20 xp. If they put up a good fight but the roadwarden has to save them, they receive 5 xp.

Scene 4

- If the PCs learn about the recent events in the village from the Reeve or the villagers they receive 5 xp.

Scene 5

- If the PCs somehow convince Frederick that they are innocuous or put him off his guard they receive 25 xp. Note that this should be very difficult to do, as his suspicions are already raised.
- If the PCs raise Frederick's suspicions, but never threaten or offer violence to Frederick during his tirade and thereby wait him out, they receive 15 xp.

Scene 6

- If the PCs discover the crypt's true history and how it was defiled, they receive 5 xp.
- If the PCs discover Felix and defeat him or choose to let him go, they receive 10 xp. If Felix escapes, the PCs receive no xp.

Scene 7

- If the PCs agree to bury Faustmann's body and actually do so, they receive 10 xp.

Scene 8

- If the PCs manage to drive off or kill the rats they receive 15 xp.
- If the PCs recover the signet ring from

Heinrich Haushalter's crypt they receive 5 xp.

- If the PCs recover the book containing the Haushalter family tree from the large nest they receive 10 xp.

Scene 9

- If the PCs discover a way out of the crypt via the rat tunnels, and avoid Frederick and his yeomen, they receive 10 xp.
- If the PCs defeat Frederick's yeomen and Felix they receive 20 xp.
- If the PCs defeat Felix alone they receive 10 xp.
- If the PCs are saved by Faustmann's ghost driving off everyone they receive no xp.

Scene 10

- If the PCs identify Grobschmeid for who he is or avoid being taken in by his lies, they receive 10 xp. They receive this xp even if, knowing he was sent by Steinoff, they agree to sell him the evidence.

Scene 11

- If the PCs deliver the evidence before the wedding they receive 10 xp.
- If the PCs give Haushalter a full account of the fate of Hockscharzer and Mansel they receive 5 xp.
- If the PCs not only bring an account of the retainers' fate, but bring the bodies of Hockscharzer and Mansel back to Haushalter and have them buried at his request, they receive 10 xp.

Miscellaneous

- The GM may, at his discretion, assign 5-25 xp per PC for good roleplaying as a bonus.

Handouts

Handout 1

Oh Lord of Death, hear the elegy we raise to honor thee.

We pray thy mercy be upon us and these,
the mortal remains of a soul in thy charge.

Stay your hand from vengeance.
Call the angry spirit to rest.
Quiet the fearful ghost.
Let no harm befall from them.

And for our trespass here, on the threshold of thy realm,
forgive us. That we may serve the living in memory
of the dead.

In the name of Morr, so mote it be.

Given by the hand of Ehrmann Weinrich
Priest of Morr