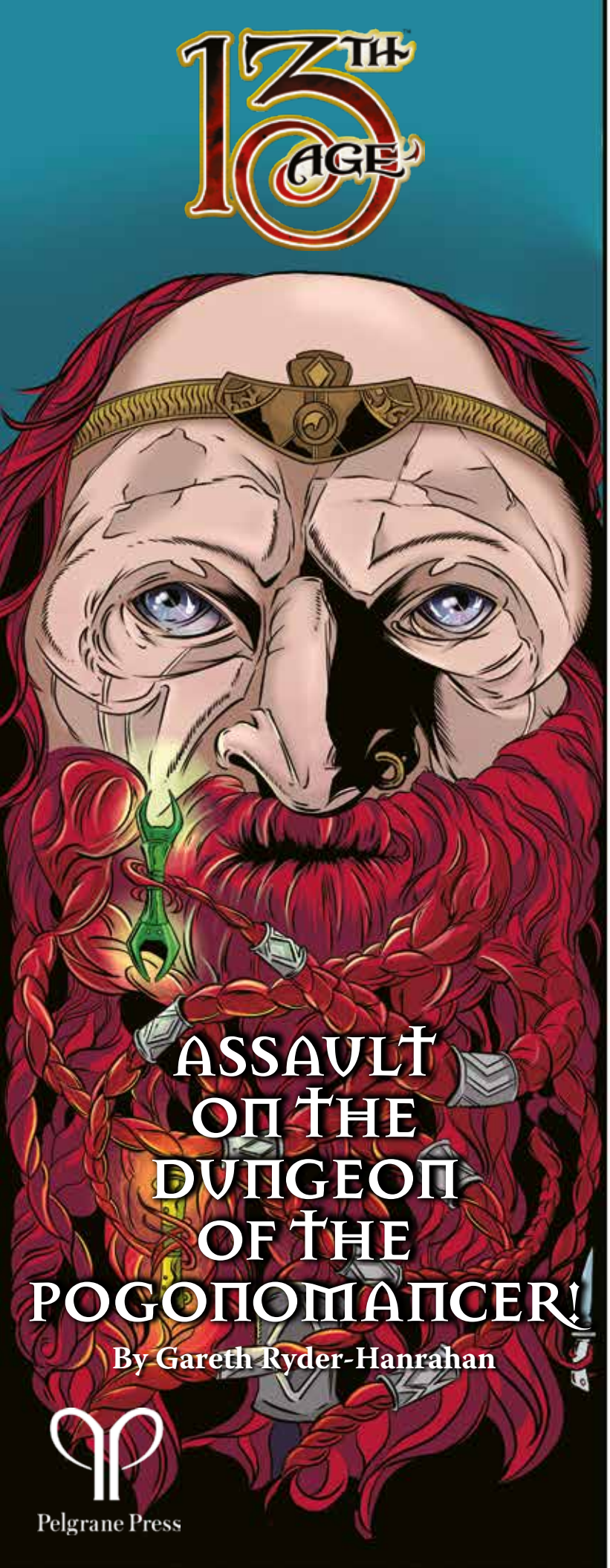
13th Age



Assault on the Dungeon of the Pogonomancer!

By Gareth Ryder-Hanrahan

Pelgrane Press

The Yellow King Roleplaying Game

The Doors to Heaven

By Sarah Saltiel

FREE RPG DAY 2019

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13th Age

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Assault on the Dungeon of the Pogonomancer!

Assault on the Dungeon of the Pogonomancer is an adventure for *13th Age*, designed to introduce gamemasters and players to the improvised, player-driven, free-rolling style of the game. In keeping with this spirit, the theme of the adventure was determined by polling Twitter. While the villain's somewhat comic – an evil, beard-themed wizard – don't play him just for laughs. Does it matter that much if the evil horror's ripping you apart with tentacles or animated beard hair?

The adventure's for 3rd level player characters. Mostly pregenerated characters (missing backgrounds, icon relationships and one unique things) are on pages 15-20.

Quick Background & Structure

The renegade dwarf wizard **Owlbeard** has allied with evil forces from the underworld and launched an attack on his former dwarven clan. While the dwarven clan battles Owlbeard's legions in the open air and upper caves, the player characters are on a mission to sneak through the deeper reaches of the underworld to locate the wizard's secret lair and assassinate Owlbeard. As the player characters make their way through the underworld, they must survive various perils, possibly make some allies, and race against time to eliminate Owlbeard before the wizard's forces defeat the dwarves.

The adventure's a nice and simple underworld crawl on the way to the wizard's lair, then a little dungeon hacking before a boss fight.

Owlbeard & His Allies

Owlbeard's an eccentric dwarven wizard. Long ago, he was exiled from his clan for conducting bizarre but mostly harmless magical experiments – as his sobriquet of 'the Pogonomancer' implies, he specialized in beard-related spells. Now, he's returned armed with some sort of mind-controlling magic, and has launched an assault on his former kinfolk and anyone who stands in his way, using an army of mind-controlled dwarven thralls as his legion.

The dwarven warriors fighting against Owlbeard's malice are faced with a horrible dilemma – they don't want to kill his mind-controlled thralls if they can avoid it.

- There are rumors that Owlbeard has recruited new allies from the underworld. The nature of Owlbeard's allies depends on the players' choices of icon relationships (pp. 2-3). In fact, Owlbeard's partially a victim of his own allies – his magnificent beard makes him uniquely vulnerable to their magic, and they're playing on his feelings (shame at being exiled from his clan, hatred of his clan's ancient enemies) to manipulate him. Players whose tastes run towards roleplaying rather than dice-rolling can appeal to Owlbeard's emotions instead of just stabbing him.
- A possible sidequest involves meeting Owlbeard's former research partner, **Ogroad the Cerulean Wizard** (p. 6).

The Surface Battle

While the adventure's going on, the heroic dwarves are battling the thrall legions. The Strength of the surface dwarves is measured in d6s. They start with 8d6, and various challenges in the adventure risk losing some of these dice. The last roll to determine victory happens during the final confrontation with Owlbeard (p. 13). Give the players this pool of 8d6 at the start of the adventure, and let them choose if they want to deplete the Strength of the dwarves or lose their own recoveries when they run into trouble (see p. 13).

Getting Started

Hand out the pregenerated characters. Tell the players the following:

- You're on a race against time to defeat the wizard Owlbeard from the underworld before his mind-controlled thrall legions defeat the dwarves.
- You got a vital clue (see below) to help you locate Owlbeard.
- The Strength of the dwarven clan is 8d6 – this'll get rolled at the end of the adventure. If you delay, the Strength of the dwarves drops.
- Let each player decide on their one unique thing, backgrounds, and icon relationships. Have each player briefly describe their characters.
- Pay particular attention to the dwarf player characters, and look for ways to integrate their backstories into the adventure. Let them decide:
  - What Owlbeard's clan is called.
  - Who that clan's ancestral enemy in the underworld once was.
  - If they're part of that clan too.

One fact is always true about the clan – they were among the last dwarven clans to flee the deep underworld when the old dwarven homeland was destroyed. Some of their former holdings and fortresses are still accessible.

Next, roll icon relationships.

For the **evil allies:** whichever of these icons got picked by the most players as Negative/Conflicted is the evil ally of Owlbeard.

- **Diabolist/Elf Queen:** Owlbeard's in league with drow demon-summoners who've called up mind-warping demons. Drow thieves stole locks of dwarven hair, and use these as foci for their spells.
- **Lich King:** Owlbeard's working with lich emissaries, who call up the dwarven dead by reanimating their beards.
- **The Three/Orc Lord**: Malicious poison-brewing kobolds who use dwarven beard hair as an ingredient in their noxious vapors.

Anyone who rolled a 5 or 6 on one of these relationships gets a magic bane weapon (+1 to hit/damage, +2d8 damage against the evil allies only).

For the **vital clue**, pick another icon. This icon or their followers provided the vital clue that gave away Owlbeard's location. If the player rolled a 5 or 6, that player gets the benefits of Improved Initiative (+4 initiative) for this adventure. According to the vital clue, Owlbeard's lair is somewhere in the fabled Flint Chasm in the underworld.

Leave the use of other iconic benefits up to the players – there'll be opportunities to use them in the adventure, or to cash them in for bonus Strength of the dwarven clan in the final scene (p. 13).

Underworld Travel Montages!

Rather than map every cave and corridor, this adventure recruits the players to help make the journey interesting. Here's how it works.

- Pick one of the players to describe an obstacle or peril the party encounters. This can be a combat, but it won't be resolved using the regular combat mechanics, so encourage the players to go for physical barriers (chasms, labyrinths, magic doors) and perils (spore clouds, flash floods, pit traps).
- That player then picks another player to describe how their character got past the obstacle. That player then makes a skill check using their more appropriate background at a DC of 15 (drop the DC if the player's method for getting past the obstacle is especially apt or amusing).
- If the skill check succeeds, yay, the players get through the obstacle successfully.
- If the check fails, there's a cost. Pick one of the following:
    - *Delayed!* The company has to take another route/gets lost/is otherwise slowed down. Reduce the Strength of the dwarven clan by one die.
    - *Wounded!* One PC (not necessarily the character who undertook the skill check) gets hurt and loses three recoveries.
    - *Strain!* All the PCs take a little damage and lose one recovery each.

1. Welcome to the Underworld

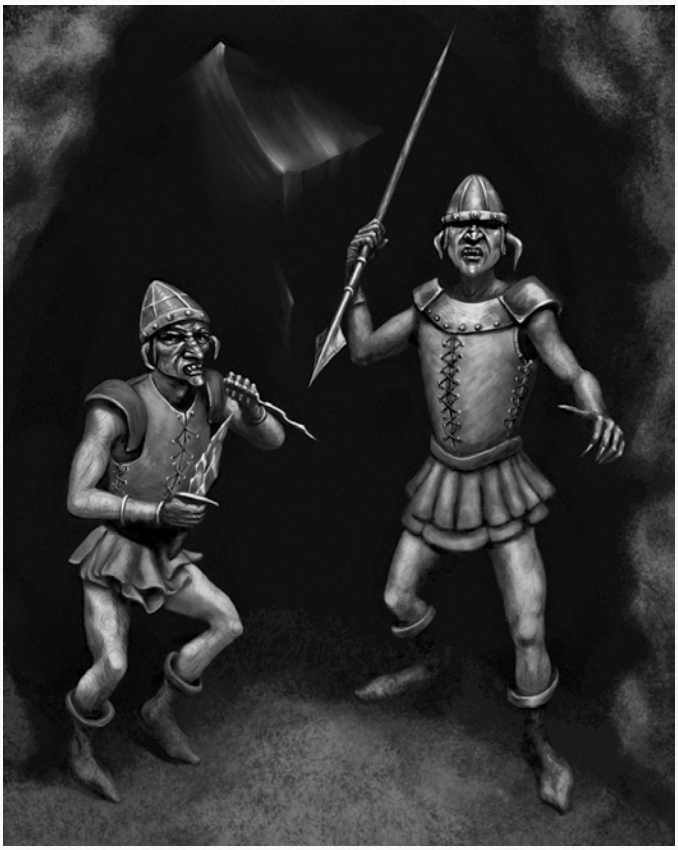
Kick things off with an underworld travel montage! (See the sidebar). For context, the adventurers are travelling through a section of the underworld that's mostly abandoned dwarven tunnels and fortresses – it's the old outer line of defenses for the dwarven kingdom. So, lots of gates blocking tunnels, drawbridges over chasms, cave-castles and stern statues staring out into the darkness. Cue the epic keening bagpipes and/or choruses going 'aaaaAAAAH' as the metaphorical camera spirals up around the titanic pillars and ancient halls of the dwarven forefathers.

In the middle of the montage, the characters are ambushed by a largely gratuitous fight scene! A group of howling cave goblins emerges to attack the players. Some of the goblins have spears and javelins which they hurl at the adventurers; others armed with clubs hang back as if expecting a charge. And, oddly, still more goblins don't seem to be paying much attention to the adventurers, but instead wield strange, glowing wands. Commanding the attack is a levitating goblin shaman, who wears an elaborate mask of rubber tubes and brass valves, as well as thick swaddling robes.

The wand-wielding goblins are actually goading small gelatinous cubes into battle. These cultivated gelahedrons are the goblins' battle strategy – the idea is that the enemy will charge into the goblins and get stuck to the cubes. The shaman's actually *inside* one cube, protected from external attack by the jelly and from the digestive acids by his suit.

Hey, Watch Out!

If a PC has a suitable background in heroic underworld-delving, or is unusually perceptive, give that character a chance to spot the goblins' trap before anyone goes charging into a cube.



Cultivated Cube

They're cultivated *cubes, not* tame *cubes.*

2nd level double-strength blocker [Ooze]
Initiative: +1

Schlorp +7 vs. AC – 10 acid damage
Natural 18+: The target is *stuck fast.*
Stuck Fast! Anyone stuck to the cube is stuck, weakened (-4 to all attacks and defences) and takes 5 ongoing acid damage (easy save, 6+ ends all). Only one character can be *stuck fast* to a cube at any time.
It's A Trap! Anyone who rolls a natural 1-5 when making a melee on a cube (or moves to engage an enemy near the cube without being aware of the cube's presence) becomes *stuck fast* unless someone is already stuck to the cube..
Great Barrier Cube: Any goblins near the cube can try to hide behind it; ranged attacks on them have a 50% chance of hitting the cube.
Rampage! If there aren't any nearby goblin cube tenders, the cube has a 50% chance of attacking goblin mooks instead of the player characters.

AC 17
PD 15 **HP 70**
MD 15

Goblin Shaman

In the dungeon of the cubes, the goblin with the acid-proof robes is king.

3rd level caster [Humanoid]
Initiative: +6

Get Them, My Minions! Instead of making a melee attack, a number of nearby goblins equal to the value of the escalation die may make a free basic attack.

R: Poison Fog +8 vs PD (up to three enemies in a group) – 5 poison damage, plus 5 ongoing poison damage (11+ save, or moving towards the shaman ends)

Gleaming the Cube: Any attacks on the shaman hit the cube instead. However, on a critical hit, the shaman's breathing snorkel is blocked, and he's forced to leave the cube immediately.

AC 19
PD 13 **HP 45**
MD 17

Goblin Cube Tender

All the acid burns from close proximity to the cube make cube tenders very tender indeed.

2nd level troop [Humanoid]
Initiative: +4

Magic Goad +7 vs AC – 7 damage
Natural even hit: The target also pops free
Critical hit: The target is stunned for one round.
Goad the Cube! Instead of attacking, the cube tender may allow a nearby cultivated cube to make a free Schlorp attack. Doing so inflicts 5 damage on the cube.
Very Shifty: The goblin gains a +5 bonus to disengage checks; on a 16+, the goblin may force the character it's disengaging from to engage with a nearby cultivated cube.

AC 18
PD 16 **HP 30**
MD 12

Goblin Skirmishers

Death to the surface invaders!

2nd level mook [Humanoid]
Initiative: +7

Club +7 vs. AC — 5 damage
Brutal Beating: +3 damage against stuck or stunned targets.

R: Thrown Javelin +7 vs. AC – 5 damage
Very Shifty: The goblin gains a +5 bonus to disengage checks; on a 16+, the goblin may force the character it's disengaging from to engage with a nearby cultivated cube.

AC 18
PD 14
MD 14
HP 9 (mook)

Mook: Kill one Goblin Skirmisher for every 9 damage dealt to the mob.

Number of PCs	Shaman	Cubes	Tenders	Skirmishers
3	1	1	1	3
4	1	1	1	9
5	1	2	2	9
6	1	2	3	12

After the Battle

The only treasure worth salvaging is the shaman's *Robe of Acid Resistance* (+1 AC, Acid Resistance 12+, *Quirk:* Obsession with skin care routines).

Questioning the goblins confirms that Owlbeard's allies have been sighted in this region recently, in the Writhing Caves. The adventurers are on the right track!

2. Into the Writhing Caves

Long ago, a living dungeon slithered out of the deeper underworld. Dwarven heroes manage to kill the monster before it reached the surface and spawned a new megadungeon, but the death throes of the creature created a magically unstable region called the Writhing Caves. The tunnels here shift position regularly; the caves are more like rotten abscesses in quasi-living stone. Some of the chambers are tiny and cramped, but in places the caves open up and you can see for miles. Stalactites of congealed magic hang from the ceiling, and flickers of wild sorcery boil through the air. It's *weird* here.

The Writhing Caves are known for three things. First, they're a cross-roads – the fastest way to get through this part of the underworld is to go through the caves. Second, their wild magic attracts arcane scavengers and predators of all sorts – sorcerers, alchemists, cultists, weird monsters. And third, they're dangerous.

Crossing the Caves

As the characters make their way through the Writhing Caves, run another underworld travel montage (p. 3). If your players are stuck for inspiration:

- The cave tunnel starts to close around them, tightening like a sphincter.
- A storm of wild magic blows through the cave, threatening to disintegrate them.
- Stalactites fall on them like spears.
- To find their way, they've got to read the swirl of magical radiation and discern the right path.

Ensure you pick different players to those involved in the first montage; give everyone at the table a chance to tell the story.

A Choice of Paths

After (or better, during) this montage, the player characters get a glimpse of three possible destinations.

- If they keep following their current route, they'll continue to the Flint Chasm, where the vital clue told them Owlbeard's lair lies. That's where they'll find the wizard – and they're up against a time limit, so they should *obviously* head straight there.
- Off in another direction, there's a weird underground tower. And it's surrounded by what appear to be some species of… underground owl. Owls – and they're hunting a wizard called Owlbeard. It's probably nothing. There *definitely* aren't any vital clues in that tower.
- Finally, in yet another direction, the PCs find clues possibly connected to Owlbeard's sinister allies. While they've heard rumors of these foes, there *definitely* won't be any useful information to be found that way.
  - If the allies are drow, then the adventurers find strands of silvery webbing strung across the tunnel – it's an early warning system used by dark elves to defend their outposts.

- If the allies are undead, then one tunnel is weirdly lifeless – other passageways crawl with bugs and other vermin, as well as fungal growths, but this tunnel is cold and empty. The dead have passed this way.
- If the allies are kobolds, then there's the stench of noxious fumes roiling out of the cave mouth, and the distant sound of tapping on stone.

If the players head to either the Owl-Girded Tower (p. 6) or the Camp of the Enemy (p. 8), that delay costs them one die of dwarven clan Strength.

Across the Caves

Once the players have chosen their destination, run another underworld travel montage en route.

3. The Owl-Girded Tower

The inhabitant of the tower is Owlbeard's former friend and research partner, a human wizard named Ogroad the Cerulean. Anyone with a suitable background (or a relationship with the Archmage) has heard of Ogroad; like Owlbeard, he has a reputation for eccentricity and unpleasant magical experiments, but isn't actively evil. He was exiled from the Archmage's university and the city of Horizon for taking dangerous magical shortcuts in his experiments. (As one side effect, he turned himself bright blue from head to toe.)

Ogroad and Owlbeard went down into the underworld to gather magical supplies; Owlbeard fell in with his evil allies, and turned on his former partner. Owlbeard tried to use his mind-controlling beard magic to bewitch Ogroad, and Ogroad fled back to the tower, hastily shaving his head and tearing out his beard to protect himself. Now, the owls watch him, holding strands of Ogroad's discarded hair. If one piece of hair touches Ogroad's head, Owlbeard will have power over him again.

Approaching the Tower

As the adventurers approach the tower, they notice the following:

- The tower wasn't built down here in the underworld. It's made of metal, and leans at an unlikely angle. Also, it doesn't fit into the cave – the upper level's embedded in the rock of the ceiling. Probably some sort of magical transportable wizard's tower.
- The owls flapping around the tower aren't normal owls. They're bigger and meaner, with black feathers and eyes that glow an eerie green. The owls all have something clutched in their talons – hard to tell at this distance, but it might be some sort of nesting material.
- There's someone in the tower – there are lights shining through gaps – but some of the windows are barricaded, likely to keep the owls out.
- If the PCs peer through a keyhole or crack in the window barricade, they see a weird figure – a blue-skinned human, apparently completely hairless, dressed in a filthy wizard's robe – muttering to himself and cursing the owls. (The countdown to *Arrested Development* jokes begins now; show the first player to make such a joke this paragraph. That character gains a bonus recovery.)

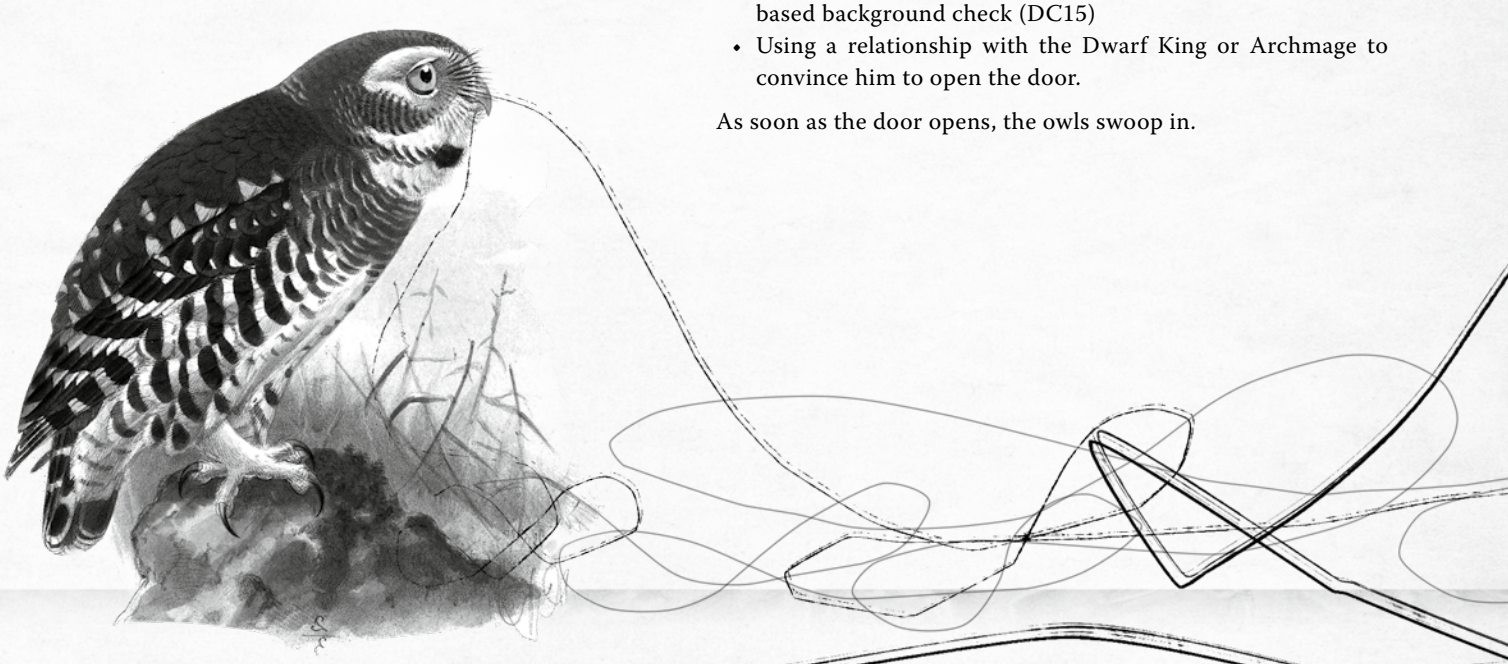
The owls hoot threateningly when the adventurers approach, but won't attack. Not yet.

The Front Door

If the adventurers knock, Ogroad shouts at them from behind the barred door. He's been stuck in the tower for weeks, unable to leave and unable to prepare new spells. He won't let them in unless they prove they're not mind-controlled, but he has no idea how they'd prove that. Possible options for the players:

- Ignoring the crazy blue wizard and leaving
- Forcing the door open (DC20 to push it open, and the owls will rush in and attack as soon as there's a gap)
- Attacking Owlbeard's pets to prove they're not mind-controlled
- Persuading Ogroad to trust them with a suitable Charisma-based background check (DC15)
- Using a relationship with the Dwarf King or Archmage to convince him to open the door.

As soon as the door opens, the owls swoop in.



Owl Attack

If the door's opened, or if the PCs attack the owls, it's a fight scene. The owls' primary objective is to drop a strand of hair onto Ogroad's head, turning him into Ogroad the Thrall (see sidebar). The PCs can intercept incoming owl attacks if they're willing to take the attack from the owl.

There are twice as many owls as player character – 1d4-1 owls (minimum 1) join the fight each round until all the owls are in battle.

Owl Familiar

How do so many giant owls nest in a dwarf's beard?

3rd level spoiler [Beast]
Initiative: +8

Stooping Claw +8 vs. AC – 8 damage

Natural even miss: The owl pops free and may move away

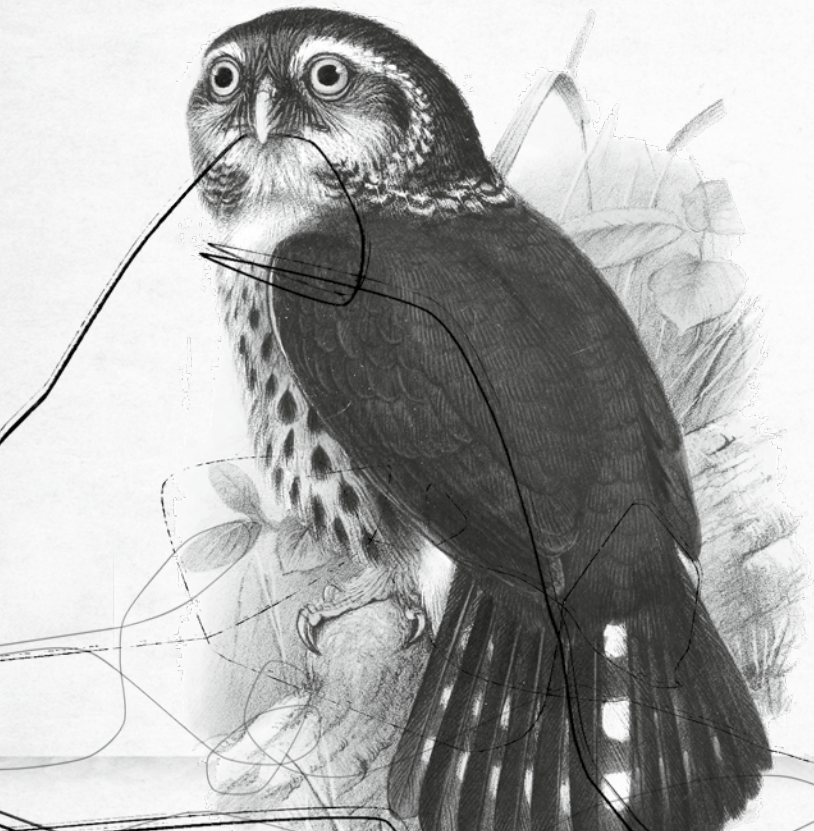
Natural even hit: The owl rips some hair from the PC's head or beard. Next round, the owl attempts to flee with its prize. Note which, if any, player characters have some of their hair stolen by the owls – it'll be important in the final scene.

Flight: Naturally.

Drop Hair: Instead of attacking, an owl engaged with Ogroad can try to drop hair on his head. Doing so requires a hard save (16+), but add the value of the escalation die to the roll.

Silent Strike: If the target isn't aware of the owl's approach, add 1d6 sneak attack damage.

AC 20
PD 17 **HP 35**
MD 13



Inside the Tower

Ogroad's been trapped in the lowest two levels of the tower for weeks, and the place smells accordingly. He's barricaded the windows and the stairwell with bookcases and whatever other junk he could salvage. There are plenty of weird relics, alchemical potions, things in jars, books of lore and other wizardly paraphernalia, but little of immediate utility.

A thorough search – or Ogroad's aid – turns up two things of use:

- A cache of three *healing potions*, each of which allows the use of one recovery – and gives an extra d8 hit points on top.
- Some of Owlbeard's notes, where he rambles about the shame of being exiled from his family and talks about how he's determined to show them the error of their ways. He also rants about the evils of his clan's traditional foes.
- Other notes from Owlbeard talk about his mastery of beard magic. He started off with growth spells so he could grow his beard longer on command, then mastered animation-spells that let him use it as extra limbs. His final notes speculate about reversing such a spell, commanding people through their hair like puppets…

Ogroad the Thrall

If Ogroad's enthralled, he attacks the player characters. Without his spells, Ogroad's not a significant threat.

3rd level caster [Humanoid]
Initiative: +6

Blue Fist +7 vs. AC – 10 damage

AC 17
PD 13 **HP 20**
MD 15

Ogroad's Tale

If alive and un-Thralled, Ogroad explains the following:

- He is Ogroad the Cerulean, a master wizard. Well, a wizard, anyway.
- He and Owlbeard were friends and research partners – both magical renegades, playing by their own rules!
- Owlbeard was obsessed with proving himself to his old clan, by winning their respect and showing his magic was useful.
- The two wizards travelled into the underworld in search of potent magical resources. They searched the ruins of the dwarven clan's ancestral enemy for treasures.
- This collapsible folding tower was a relic they looted from the ruins of some lost city in the depths. They found two such towers, and kept one each. The tower can be collapsed by turning a key in a lock on the top floor.

- Owlbeard...
  - **Diabolist/Elf Queen:** ...encountered a band of malicious drow, and they tricked him into turning on his clan, merging twisted dark elf magic with his beard-wizardry.
  - **Lich King:** ...and Ogroad found the long-lost crypt of Owlbeard's clan. But when they opened the crypt, evil spirits bewitched Owlbeard.
  - **The Three/Orc Lord**: ...was approached by kobold alchemists, who offered him a way to prove how powerful his magic is. Ogroad suspects the alchemists are backed by a villainous icon, intent on using Owlbeard to weaken the dwarves.
- The mind-control spell has two components – Owlbeard's own spell, and some added ingredient provided by his allies. Even now, the allies are readying for more attacks on the dwarves.
- The spell works best on the hirsute – bearded dwarves are especially vulnerable, which is why Owlbeard was able to take over so many of his kinfolk.
- Owlbeard's able to focus the spell if he has a sample of a target's hair.
- When Ogroad raised doubts about working with the evil allies, Owlbeard turned on him. He stole the key to Ogroad's tower and trapped him here.
- Ogroad's convinced that his former friend is being used as a pawn by his supposed allies – he thinks Owlbeard can be saved.

Ogroad's Spellbook

Ogroad's spellbook is upstairs in the remains of the library. The owls broke into the upper room, forcing Ogroad to flee. If the player characters are willing to try retrieving the spellbook, he'll be very grateful.

Getting the spellbook back means fighting any remaining owls.

If the characters are able to recover the book, then Ogroad sits down to study and prepare his spells – he won't accompany them further. He promises to pay back his debt to the adventurers as soon as he can. Possible options:

- Ogroad might add up to three Strength of the dwarves dice by joining the final battle on the surface
- He could give the player characters a magical benefit in the final fight, giving a bonus recovery, boosting the escalation die, or allowing a character to automatically save against one of Owlbeard's spells.

4. The Camp of the Enemy

Again, run an underworld travel montage as the player characters travel to this location.

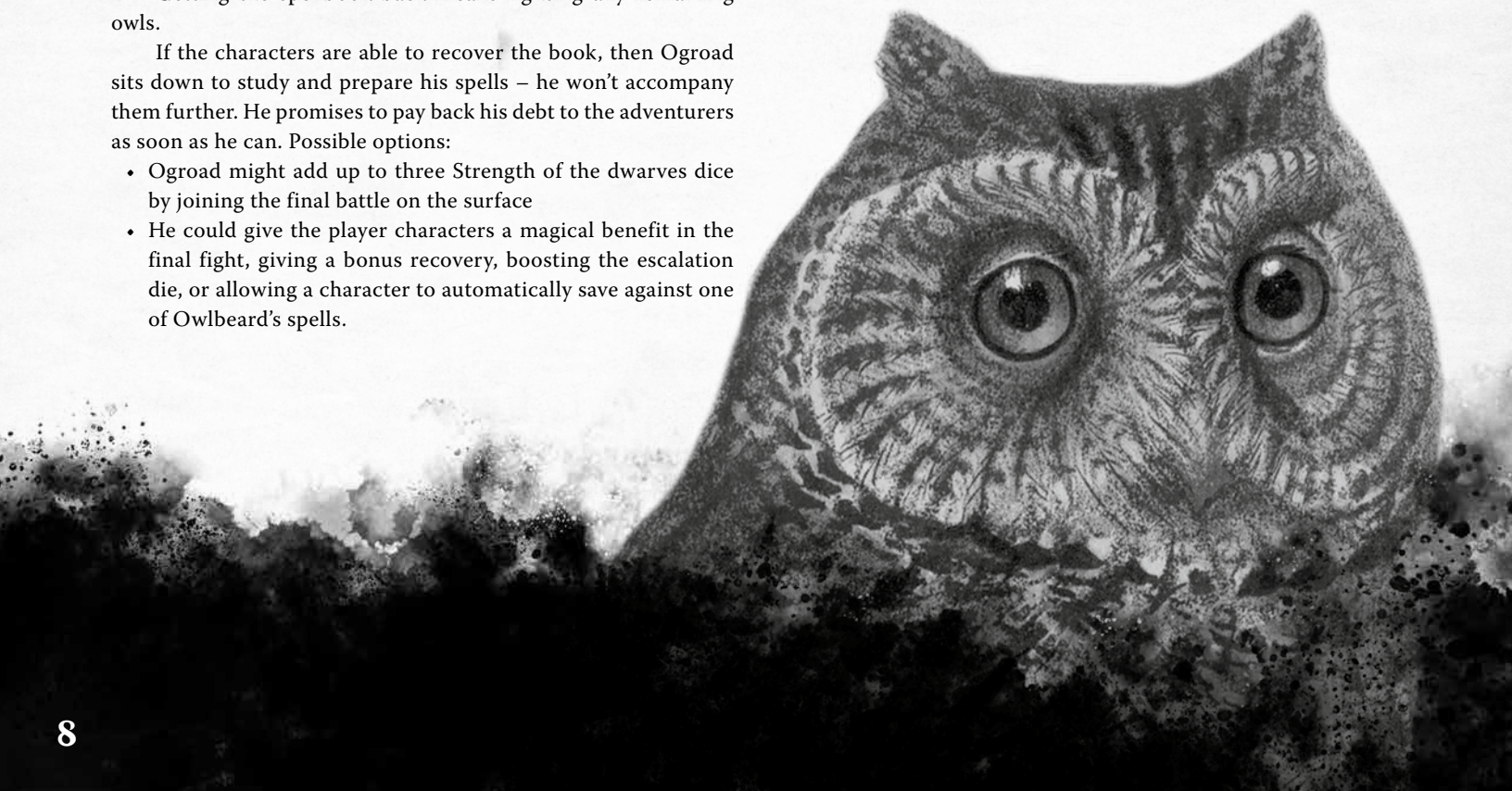
- The Camp of the Enemy is where some of Owlbeard's evil allies are preparing more supplies for the final battle with the dwarven clan. It's a chance for the player characters to gather vital information about their foes.
- If the player characters lost any of their hair in a fight with one of Owlbeard's owls, the hair is on its way here.
- The Camp's located in the ruins of an old dwarven crypt that once belonged to Owlbeard's clan. Notably, there are several monuments and statues depicting the clan's old enemies.

The Sentry Owl

Lurking in the darkness of the Writhing Caves as the adventurers approach the camp is one of Owlbeard's giant owls (see p. 7 for the stats). Give one of the player characters a chance to spot this sentry (DC20). If spotted, the owl attempts to flit ahead of the company and warn the bad guys of the approaching intruders. If the characters don't spot the owl, it first glides down and makes a surprise attack on one of the player characters, automatically ripping a hank of hair from the victim's head and *then* flying off.

To bring down the owl, the player characters need to slay the creature in one round with ranged attacks before it can flee the battlefield.

- If the owl escapes, then the bad guys have advance warning of the adventurers; increase the number of bad guys by one row (so, if you have four players, use the number of bad guys for the five-player row).



Observing the Camp

If the player characters are able to sneak into the camp, they see…

Diabolist/Elf Queen: A demonic workshop. Hanging on the walls are several large wooden frames, like looms, strung with stolen dwarven beard-hairs. Dark-elf thieves work at the looms, adding more hairs to the devices. When a hair is plucked like a string, a faint image of a dwarf appears in the air for a moment – these hair-looms must be demonic tools for influencing the dwarves whose hair was used to make them.

- The player characters recognize some of the dwarves whose images are conjured – and they're *not* the ones who've already been enthralled by Owlbeard. It looks like the drow thieves are planning to take control of the clan's loyal defenders, sabotaging the dwarves from within!

Lich King: Undead zombies under the command of a skeletal figure work with crowbars to smash open ancient tombs. When they break open a coffin, they search through the remains and find a few wisps of bone-dry, brittle hair and bring it to the skeletal figure.

- Looking at the carvings on the tombs they've defiled, it looks like they're targeting the ancestors of the dwarven clan. Maybe the combination of Owlbeard's beard spells and the necromancy of the Lich King means that he can control the descendants of anyone whose beard he holds.
- If the zombies keep going, they'll reach the tomb of Lord Stonefell, one of the great leaders of the clan. Half the warriors are direct descendants of his!

The Three/Orc Lord: Kobold alchemists guarded by orc mercenaries scurry around a huge cauldron that brims with some vile brew. A Sargasso Sea of beard hair swirls around the bubbling stew, and every so often, a kobold fills a flask with the fluid and runs off. The steam from the cauldron is thick and heady – inhaling it would doubtless weaken one's resistance to mind-control spells.

- It looks like the kobolds need to constantly supply Owlbeard with the potion.
- There's no way that these few kobolds could have dragged that huge cauldron through the caves. It's more likely that these are the rear guard of a much larger force – maybe they're using Owlbeard's thralls to weaken the dwarves before the orcs and kobold forces attack openly.

The adventurers also see a caravan of bad guys (1-2 drow thieves or orcs, 1d6 zombies) leaving the camp, en route to the Flint Chasm. The PCs can either wait for this caravan to leave (costing a die of dwarven Strength), get ahead of it or ambush it en route (requiring a clever plan) or just fight the added foes here. If the caravan isn't stopped, Owlbeard's tougher in the final fight.

Fighting the Bad Guys

If the adventurers choose to storm the camp, then it's a fight scene. The battle takes place in an abandoned dwarven tomb; let each player come up with one architecture feature or unusual aspect of the battlefield.

	Dark Elves		Undead		Orcs & Kobolds	
Number of PCs	Drow Thieves	Drow Harpists	Zombies	Lich	Orc Mercs	Kobold Alchemists
3	2	1	0	1	2	1
4	3	1	6	1	3	1
5	3	2	8	1	3	2
6	4	2	10	1	4	2
7*	4	3	12	1	4	3

*: if the bad guys have advance warning

Drow Thief

They'll snip themselves out of your vision with hellforged blades.

3rd level Spoiler [Humanoid]
Initiative: +8

Hellforged Dagger +8 vs. AC – 8 damage
Natural 16+: The thief may make a free *hellforged scissors* attack on one enemy it's engaged with.

Backstab: If the thief is invisible when it attacks, it deals an extra 4 damage with this attack.

[special trigger] Hellforged Scissors +8 vs. MD – 4 damage, and if the target is the only foe the thief is engaged with, the thief pops free and becomes invisible.

Invisible: While invisible, attacks on the thief have a 50% mis chance.

AC 20
PD 18 **HP 40**
MD 14

Drow Harpist

Sweet is the song played on dwarf-beard harps.

3rd level caster [Humanoid]
Initiative: +8

Lute to the Face +8 vs. AC – 8 damage

C: Song of Despair +7 vs. MD (up to three nearby enemies) – 5 thunder damage
Natural 16+ The target loses the bonus from the escalation die (save ends)

C: Song of Discord +7 vs. MD (up to three nearby enemies) – 13 thunder damage. The target may reduce this damage by 10 by choosing to pop free from all engagements.

R: Song of Disruption +7 vs MD (one nearby or far away target) – 1 thunder damage, and 2 ongoing thunder damage (save ends). Each failed save increases the ongoing damage by 1.

I Know Your Song: Targets who have had their hair stolen are vulnerable to the elf's songs.

AC 20
PD 14 **HP 40**
MD 18

Lich

Death sent him from the pale court.

4th level double-strength caster [Undead]
Initiative: +6
Vulnerability: holy

Deathly Touch +9 vs. AC – 25 cold damage
Critical hit: The target is dazed (save ends)

C: Clawing Hands + 9 vs. PD (up to three nearby enemies) – 14 damage
Natural even hit: The target pops free of the lich and is stuck until the end of their next turn
Critical: Add another zombie to the battlefield

R: Word of Command +9 vs. MD (one nearby or far away enemy) – 20 psychic damage, and the target is confused (makes a basic or at-will attack at a nearby ally).
Limited Use: Each enemy can only be targeted with this spell once, unless the lich has hair stolen from the target.

I Drink Your Death Save: If the lich scores a critical hit, the target loses a death save until the end of the battle. In addition, the crit range of attacks by the lich against the target expands by the escalation die.

AC 20
PD 14 **HP 101**
MD 18

Zombie

Beeeeaaaards...

2nd level mook [Undead]
Initiative: +1
Vulnerability: holy

Rotting Fist +7 vs. AC – 5 damage
Natural 16-19+: The target takes another 5 damage, and the zombie is destroyed

Headshot: A critical hit against a zombie reduces it to 0 hp.

AC 15
PD 13 **HP 9 (mook)**
MD 9

Mook: Destroy one zombie mook for every 9 damage dealt to the mob

Orc Mercenary

Surly, mean, giant axes. You know the drill.

3rd level troop [Humanoid]
Initiative: +6

Giant Axe +8 vs. AC – 13 damage

Dangerous: The crit range of attacks by orcs expands by 3 unless they are staggered.

Take Advantage: If the orc makes a critical hit on a foe, that foe loses the benefit of the escalation die and the orc gains the benefit instead (save ends).

AC 18
PD 16 **HP 45**
MD 12

Kobold Alchemist

Hubble, Bubble, Toil and Trouble

3rd level Caster [Humanoid]
Initiative: +8
Kobold Bite +9 vs. AC – 8 damage

R: Noxious Brew +8 vs. MD (one nearby target) – 3 damage, plus one of the following effects (roll a d6).

1-2: 5 ongoing acid damage (save ends)
3: 5 ongoing fire damage (save ends)
4: Target becomes vulnerable to physical damage (save ends)
5: Target is stunned until the end of their next turn
6: Target is confused until the end of their next turn (or save ends for targets who have had their hair stolen

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks

AC 19
PD 14 **HP 40**
MD 18

After The Battle

Searching the camp turns up more clues about the bad guys' plans – they're clearly plotting a fuller invasion of the surface world, and are just using Owlbeard to soften up dwarven defences. The characters can also loot some magic items (two per evil ally).

Drow:
Hellforged Spear: +1 to attacks and damage. *Recharge 16*+Once per battle, when you hit an enemy, they vanish from the battlefield in a puff of smoke and miss their next turn. When they return, they reappear in a spot nearby of their choosing and take 1d6 fire damage. *Quirk:* Hears the voices of demons calling from hell.

Heart-Stopped Harp: Recharge 16+. When an ally falls unconscious or dies, you may start playing the harp as a standard action. That ally springs back to life and continues to fight regardless of their current hit points. They die again if you move or stop playing the harp. The ally is destroyed if reduced to a negative hit point score equal to half their starting hit points – and if you stop playing, they vanish in a puff of smoke and never return. *Quirk:* Hums funereal marches.

Undead:
Bone Shield: +4 hit points; your miss damage from melee attacks increases by 2, and becomes cold damage. *Quirk:* Morbid

Ring of the Un-Dead (recharge 6+): When you reduce a foe to 0 hit points, heal using a recovery. *Quirk:* Allergic to bright lights, garlic, holiness.

Orcs and Kobolds:
Frenzy Axe: +1 to attacks and damage. *Recharge 6+:* If you miss, roll 2d20 for your next attack and take the best result. *Quirk:* Impatient

Gem of Congealed Fire: Explodes for 3d10 fire damage when crushed. Can be thrown, dropped, attached to an arrow etc.

5. The Flint Chasm

If the player characters didn't come straight here from the Writhing Caves, and instead took a detour to Ogroad's tower or the Camp of the Enemy, call for another underworld travel montage.

The Flint Chasm is a vast gulf in the underworld – a steep-sided gap that plunges down into the depths, and rises almost to the surface. Fortunately for the folk of the surface, it's impossible for an army to climb the chasm. A few extremely lucky or suicidally brave mountaineers could maybe scale the walls of the chasm, and flying demons or other creatures can use the pit as a short cut from the depths, but by and large the Flint Chasm is not a viable route into or out of the underworld.

Not unless you want to go straight down and go splat in some lightless netherworld, never to be seen again.

A few bridges wrought by the dwarves of yore cross the Flint Chasm, but any attempts to cut stairs or even handholds in the cliffs have failed. The flint is treacherous – sharp enough to slice hands and feet, soft enough that you can't trust your weight to it.

The Edge of the Chasm

When the characters arrive at the Flint Chasm, they immediately a spot a light far above, about two-thirds of the way up the cliff. It's hard to tell in the darkness, but it looks like some sort of structure up there, lodged in a crack in the cliffside. It's another collapsible metal tower, like the one Ogroad's trapped in (p. 7). That must be Owlbeard's laboratory.

Exploring, the characters spot some other clues:

- There are more owls circling around the chasm.
- There are signs that numbers of the evil allies have passed this way (stained rocks from spilled kobold alchemy, the remains of some zombies that slipped off the bridge and got stuck on the flinty slopes below, discarded dark elf mushroom wine bottles). How were they able to climb the flinty cliffs?

Searching around, the characters find the route the bad guys used. Spilling down the otherwise sheer cliffs, snaking across the jagged stone, clinging like spiderweb, is a vast and living beard.

We Go Up The Beard

So, do the adventurers climb up the easy route of the beard, risking detection by Owlbeard, or do they try scaling the cliff themselves to maximize their chances of going unnoticed?

Climbing the Beard: Climbing the beard is easy and doesn't require a skill check. The beard, in fact, is disconcertingly helpful and even courteous, sprouting easy handholds, wrapping securely around the climbers' feet, pointing out safe spots to rest. The downside is that half-way along, the beard attempts to grab the climbers.

- Those who want to avoid being grabbed must disengage from the beard (a normal save, 11+). Anyone grabbed by the beard is stuck and weakened (hard save, 16+, ends both).
- A moment after the beard grabs its victims, owls (one owl per stuck character, see page 7 for owl stats) swoop down and attack, trying to pluck hair from the stuck characters' heads. Once an owl gets a hank of hair, it flaps away to Owlbeard's lair. Keep track of any characters whose hair has been stolen by Owlbeard.
- The beard relaxes after the owls have claimed their prizes.

Climbing the Cliffs: Scaling the Flint Cliffs requires a Dexterity skill check (DC20); failure has the same consequences as failing an underworld travel montage, but without the option for everyone to lose a recovery – either each character loses three recoveries, or lose a Strength of the dwarves die. (Remember, if you spend beyond your limit of recoveries, you get a -1 penalty to attacks and defences for every recovery overdrawn).

The Battle Begins

As the characters approach Owlbeard's tower, they hear the sounds of mass battle from within. Owlbeard's got a *crystal ball* and is watching the battle between his mind-controlled thralls and the free dwarves as it rages on the surface. Now's the time to introduce the surface battle rules.

The Surface Battle

While the player characters fight Owlbears, the dwarves on the surface battle his thralls.

Here's how this works. Owlbeard has a pool of 8d6. Each round of battle with Owlbeard (or every few minutes, if you're not in combat rounds), roll a d6 from this pool. This represents the assault by Owlbeard's thralls. The player characters then roll as many d6s as they wish from their Strength of the dwarves pool to get the assault score back down to 0. If they're unable to do so, the dwarves are overrun by Owlbeard's thralls.

Therefore, the players need to defeat Owlbeard before they run out of Strength of the dwarves.

A kind GM might rule that the dwarves can hold out a little longer – maybe an uncountered assault of 1 or 2 means that the thralls have broken through the dwarves' defences, but haven't killed everyone yet, giving the players one more round to save the day.

For example, the players have made it to the final battle with 4d6 in their Strength of the dwarves pool. Owlbeard has 8d6 worth of thralls.

The GM rolls a d6 from this pool, and gets a 5. That's an assault Strength of 5; the players need to reduce that to 0 to stop the dwarves being overrun. They roll one of their dice – and get a 4. The assault's reduced to 1, but that's not enough – they have to roll a second die. This time, they roll a 5, but the extra points are wasted.

- Players can get bonus Strength of the dwarves rolls by spending icon relationships, calling in help from Ogroad, or whatever else amuses the GM.

6. Swords Against Beards

Owlbeard's laboratory is a collapsible three-level metal tower, identical to Ogroad's. His beard flows out all the windows, tumbling like a hairy waterfall down the Flint Cliffs. The beard blocks all the windows, but the door is open, and mostly free of beard.

Owlbeard himself is in the lowest level of the tower, staring into a crystal ball.

Using the ball, he's watching the battle on the surface, commanding his beard-controlled thralls and muttering about his clan's ancestral enemies. It's clear that Owlbeard is not in his right mind – he thinks he's leading an attack on those ancestral enemies, not on his own kinfolk. He's been bewitched by his own spells. Between Owlbeard and the player characters are some of his evil allies, his owls… and his beard.

The Final Fight

This final battle is a tough one. If the players just charge in and attack Owlbeard, they've got a chance of slaying him, but they'll need to be really lucky – the fight's roughly twice as tough as a regular battle, and the player characters are up against a time limit *and* are already low on spells and recoveries.

If the characters haven't visited The Camp of the Enemy (p. 8) and interrupted their caravan of supplies, then increase the number of bad guys by one row (so, if you have four players, use the number of bad guys for the five-player row).

At the start of each round, roll for the surface battle. The player characters can see the progress of the battle through the crystal ball, so they know what's going on. They know if the dwarves are holding out, or if they need to stop Owlbeard *now.*

There are several ways to defeat Owlbeard that don't involve killing him:

- **Convincing Him:** If the players can get through to Owlbeard with emotional appeals, there's a chance he'll relent. Here's how it works: first, the player needs a solid emotional hook (convincing Owlbeard he's being manipulated; forcing him to realize he's attacking his kinfolk, not his clan's ancestral enemies; reminding him of his friendship with Ogroad). Second, the player must make a successful Charisma check (DC15). Finally, roll a d6; if the result is less than or equal to the escalation die, Owlbeard cracks and surrenders.
- **Freeing Him:** Cutting off his beard frees Owlbeard from the mind-control spell. To slice off the beard, a character needs to make a critical hit with an edged weapon and choose to attack the beard instead. Again, roll a d6 and try to get under the value of the escalation die to sever the beard.
- **Collapsing the Tower:** Clever players who paid attention to Ogroad's tower know that if you turn a key in the topmost room, the tower collapses – and as Owlbeard's beard is really entwined with his tower, he'll be crushed. To collapse the tower, a character needs to get past Owlbeard and make their way upstairs, battling the beard all the way.
- **Smashing the Crystal Ball:** Smashing the ball won't stop Owlbeard, but it'll prevent him from coordinating the attacks of the thralls – for the rest of the surface battle, use d3s for the thrall dice instead of d6s.

Number of PCs*	Owlbeard (3)	Owls	Zombies**	Orc Mercs**	Drow Thieves**
3	1	1	6	1	1
4	1	2	6	1	1
5	1	3	6	1	1
6	1	3	12	2	2
7	1	3	18	3	3

*: +1 row if the PCs haven't interrupted the aid of the evil allies
**Obviously, only use one of the three Evil Ally columns.

Owlbeard

Behold the Pogonomancer!

4th level Double-strength Caster [Humanoid]
Initiative: +8

Thumping Fist +9 vs. AC – 25 damage

C: Animated Beard Tendril +9 vs. AC – 7 damage
Attack roll higher than target's Dexterity: The target pops free and is stuck until the end of their next turn

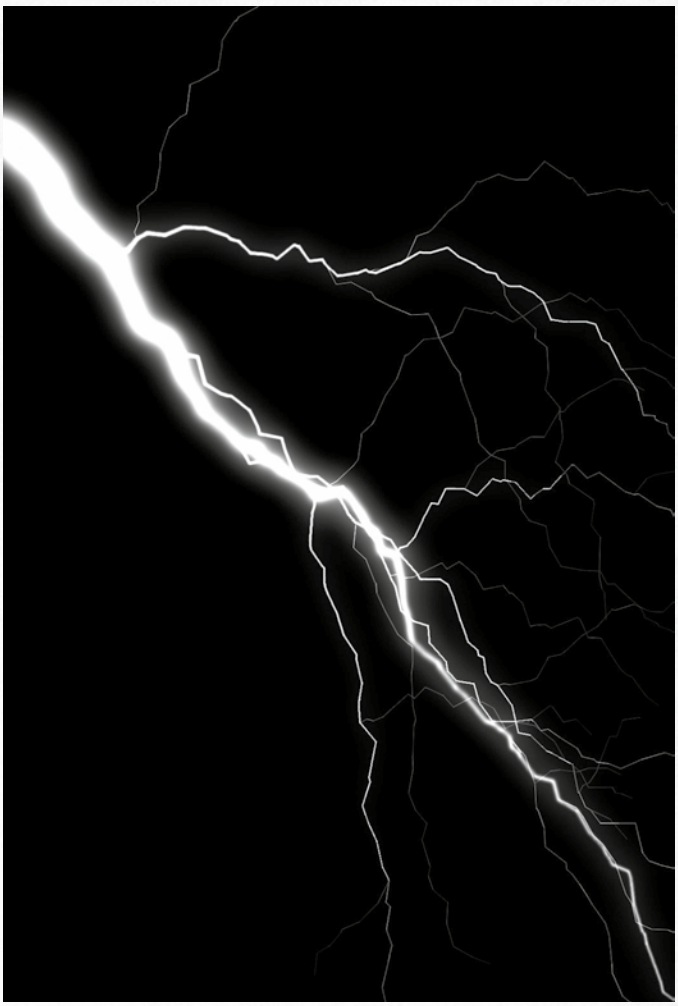
R: Mind Control +9 vs. MD – 15 psychic damage.
Target's hair has been stolen: Target is also confused (hard save 16+ ends)
Limited Use: 1/target per battle

R: Old Fashioned Lightning Bolt +9 vs. PD – 20 electrical damage
Natural even hit: The bolt arcs to another nearby player character. Make another *old fashioned lightning bolt* attack on that target, reducing the damage by 5.

Writhing Beard: Each round, Owlbeard may make d3 free *animated beard tendril* attacks. Each *animated beard tendril* attack must be used on a different target.

AC 20
PD 14 **HP 100**
MD 18

If Owlbeard's defeated, his mind-control spell breaks, freeing the thralls and saving the day!



Name

Race Dwarf

Class Fighter

Level 3

STR	CON	DEX	INT	WIS	CHA
20	16	12	8	10	8
+5	+3	+1	-1	+0	-1
+8	+6	+4	+2	+3	+2

Armor Class	Physical Defense	Mental Defense
20	**16**	**12**

Hit Points	Recoveries	Recovery Roll
55	**9**	**3d10 +3**

One Unique Thing

Icon Relationships

Backgrounds

Class Features

Threatening: When an enemy tries to disengage from you, they take a -3 penalty.

Maneuvers

Carve an Opening: On a natural odd roll, expand your crit range with melee attacks by a cumulative +1. Reset your crit range if you crit.

Deadly assault: On a natural even hit, reroll 1s or 2s on your damage roll.

Hack and Slash: On a natural even roll, if the escalation die is 2+, make another melee attack. Usable 1/round.

Strong Guard: On a miss, one ally next to you gets a +2 bonus to AC until the start of your next turn or until you're no longer next to them.

Racial Power

That's Your Best Shot?: Once per battle as a free action after you're hit, heal using a recovery. If the escalation die is less than 2, you get only half the healing. You can't use this ability if you're reduced to 0 hp or below.

Powers & Spells

Feats

Comeback Strike
Deadly Assault
Skilled Intercept

Talents

Cleave: once per battle, make another attack when you drop an enemy to 0hp.

Comeback Strike: once per battle, if you miss, make another attack.

Skilled Intercept: once per round, roll a normal save (11+) to intercept an enemy moving to attack a nearby ally. You pop free from up to two enemies to move and intercept. If you're hit, you take half damage.

Initiative +4

Basic Melee Attack

Attack	Hit	Miss
+8 vs. AC	**3d8 +5**	**3**

Basic Ranged Attack

Attack	Hit	Miss
+4 vs. AC	**3d6 +1**	**—**

Equipment

Heavy Armour
Shield
Axe
Throwing Axe
More Axes

Magic Items

Name

Race Dwarf

Class Cleric

Level 3

STR	CON	DEX	INT	WIS	CHA
12	16	10	10	18	12
+1	+3	+0	+0	+4	+1
+4	+6	+3	+3	+7	+4

Armor Class	Physical Defense	Mental Defense
21	15	15

Hit Points	Recoveries	Recovery Roll
50	8	3d8+3

One Unique Thing

Icon Relationships

Backgrounds

Spells

Heal (usable 2/battle, 1/round): As a quick action, one nearby ally heals for recovery +6 hp.

Bless (1/day): Either one nearby ally gets a +2 bonus to hit for the battle, or 3 allies gain a +1 bonus to hit. You can include yourself if you cast for broad effect.

Cure Wounds (1/day, ranged): As a quick action, you or nearby ally heal for recovery +6.

Javelin of Faith (at-will, ranged): +7 vs. PD, deals 3d6+4 damage on a hit, 3 on a miss

Mighty Healing (1/day, ranged): Either one nearby ally heals with a recovery and gains twice the usual number of hit points, or three nearby allies (including you) can heal with a recovery.

Combat Boon (at-will): Make a basic melee attack. If you hit, you or one conscious ally can roll a save against a save ends attack.

Racial Power

That's Your Best Shot? Once per battle as a free action after you're hit, heal using a recovery. If the escalation die is less than 2, you get only half the healing. You can't use this ability if you're reduced to 0 hp or below.

Feats

Strength Domain
Healing Domain
Healing Spell

Talents

Healing Domain: When you cast a spell that lets you or an ally heal using a recovery, add 6 hp to the amount recovered. Your allies can draw on your recoveries instead of using their own. 1/day, invoke this domain for an extra use of the *heal* spell. The target of this bonus *heal* heals using a free recovery.

Strength Domain: Wield martial weapons without penalty (already factored in). 1/battle, add d4 damage to an attack. 1/day, invoke to allow you and your allies to deal triple damage on critical hits for the rest of the battle.

War Domain: Once per turn, when you make a melee attack on an enemy, your allies gain a +1 bonus to attacks on that enemy until the start of your next turn. 1/day, invoke to increase the escalation die by 1.

Initiative +3

Basic Melee Attack

Attack	Hit	Miss
+4 vs. AC	3d8 +1	3

Basic Ranged Attack

Attack	Hit	Miss
+3 vs. AC	3d6	—

Equipment

Heavy Armour
Shield
Warhammer
Throwing Axes

Magic Items

Name

Race Dwarf

Class Commander

Level 3

STR	CON	DEX	INT	WIS	CHA
16	14	8	10	14	16
+3	+2	-1	+0	+2	+3
+6	+5	+2	+3	+5	+6

Armor Class	Physical Defense	Mental Defense
20	15	17

Hit Points	Recoveries	Recovery Roll
45	8	3d8+2

One Unique Thing

Icon Relationships

Backgrounds

Racial Power

That's Your Best Shot? Once per battle as a free action after you're hit, heal using a recovery. If the escalation die is less than 2, you get only half the healing. You can't use this ability if you're reduced to 0 hp or below.

Powers & Spells

Class Features

Fight from the Front: When you hit with a melee attack, gain 1d3 Command Points.

Weigh the Odds: As a standard action, gain 1d4 Command Points.

Commands

Hit Harder! (Costs 1 command point): When a nearby ally hits with an attack, reroll any of the damage die.

Save Now (Costs 1 command point): On the ally's turn, one nearby ally can roll a save against a save ends attack.

Try Again (Costs 2 command points): One nearby ally can reroll an attack they just made.

Charge (Costs 1 command point): One nearby ally can move and make a melee attack as a standard action.

Feats

Moment of Glory

Forceful Command (Start each battle with 2 command points)

Charge

Talents

Armour Skills

Moment of Glory: When you roll initiative, also roll a d4. As a free action, add the result of this d4 to one attack roll or saving throw made by you or an ally in the battle. Add the d4 *after* you see the roll.

Forceful Command: When you give a command that lets an ally roll a d20, you can spend additional points equal to the value of the escalation die to give a +2 bonus to the roll for each point spent. (If the escalation die is 0, you can still spend 1 point).

Initiative +2

Basic Melee Attack

Attack	Hit	Miss
+6 vs. AC	3d6 + 3	3

Basic Ranged Attack

Attack	Hit	Miss
+3 vs. AC	3d6	—

Equipment

Heavy Armour
Shield
Mace
Javelins
Warhorn

Magic Items

13th Age

Name

Race Gnome

Class Sorcerer

Level 3

STR	CON	DEX	INT	WIS	CHA
10	12	12	10	10	20
+0	+1	+2	+0	+0	+5
+3	+4	+5	+3	+3	+8

Armor Class	Physical Defense	Mental Defense
14	15	13

Hit Points	Recoveries	Recovery Roll
38	8	3d6+1

One Unique Thing

Icon Relationships

Backgrounds

Class Features

Dancing Lights at will

Gather Power: Spend one round gathering energy to deal double damage with a spell.

Racial Power

Small: +2 AC bonus against opportunity attacks

Confounding: Once per battle, when you roll a natural 16+, you can daze the target until the end of your next turn

Minor illusions: As a standard action, create the illusion of a smell or sound.

Feats

Ritual Casting
Improved Initiative
Toughness

Initiative +9

Basic Melee Attack

Attack	Hit	Miss
+3 vs. AC	3d4	3

Basic Ranged Attack

Attack	Hit	Miss
+5 vs. AC	3d4 +2	—

Equipment

Daggers

Spells

Resist Energy (1/battle, recharge 16+): You or a nearby ally gains resistance 12+ against one of the following: cold, fire, lightning, thunder

Lightning Fork (1/battle, recharge 16+): +8 vs. PD, 3d6+5 lightning damage. If you make a natural even attack roll, you can attack a different enemy with the spell.

Breath of the White (daily): +8 vs. PD, targeting 1-2 enemies in group. 3d6+5 cold damage. For the rest of the battle, roll a d20 at the start of your turn. On a 16+, you can use this spell again that turn.

Echoing Thunder (at/will): +8 vs. PD, 3d6 thunder damage, and the first enemy to hit you with a melee attack takes 2d6 thunder damage. On a miss, 3 damage.

Dragon's Leap (1/day): As a quick action, you can fly until the end of your turn. For the rest of the battle, roll a d20 at the start of your turn. On a 16+, you can use this spell again that turn.

Shield (recharge 11+): As a free action, when an attack hits your AC, force the enemy to reroll it. Gain a +2 AC bonus against the rerolled attack.

Talents

Arcane Heritage: +2 to one arcane background

Infernal Heritage: Once per day, when the escalation die is 1+, enter a spell frenzy. Roll 2d20 for spell attacks, but take damage equal to target's level x2 for each die that misses.

Familiar: You've a talkative squirrel that gives you a +2 bonus to Dexterity skill checks.

Magic Items

Name

Race Twygzog

Class Ranger

Level 3

STR	CON	DEX	INT	WIS	CHA
16	14	16	8	14	10
+3	+2	+3	-1	+2	+0
+6	+5	+6	+2	+5	+3

Armor Class	Physical Defense	Mental Defense
19	17	13

Hit Points	Recoveries	Recovery Roll
45	8	3d8+2

One Unique Thing

Racial Power
Once per battle, when you fail a saving throw, reroll.

Icon Relationships

Powers & Spells

Backgrounds

Feats
Lethal Hunter
Archery
Precise Shot (ranged attacks won't hit allies)

Talents
Archery: 1/battle, reroll a missed ranged attack. Your reroll has a +2 bonus to hit and increases the crit range by +1.

Lethal Hunter: Once per battle, choose an enemy (or a mob of mooks). The crit range of your attacks against that foe increase by 3

Tracker: You have a bonus Tracker-themed background at +5. At the start of each battle, roll a d6. When the escalation die reaches that level, you can perform a terrain stunt as a quick action. The effects of this stunt are up to you and the GM, but assume 3d4 damage, dazes, hampering, stuck and other conditions are plausible.

Initiative +6

Basic Melee Attack

Attack	Hit	Miss
+6 vs. AC	3d8+3	3

Basic Ranged Attack

Attack	Hit	Miss
+6 vs. AC	3d8+3	3

Equipment
Fungal Swords
Fungal Rifle (counts as a longbow)

Magic Items

Name

Race Dark Elf

Class Paladin

Level 3

STR	CON	DEX	INT	WIS	CHA
14	10	16	10	16	14
+2	+0	+3	+0	+3	+2
+5	+3	+6	+3	+6	+5

Armor Class	Physical Defense	Mental Defense
22	15	17

Hit Points	Recoveries	Recovery Roll
40	8	3d10

One Unique Thing

Icon Relationships

Backgrounds

Class Features

Smite Evil: 1/battle, plus 2 extra uses per day. Before you attack, declare you're smiting to gain +4 bonus to hit and +d12 damage. Deal half damage on a miss.

Racial Power

Cruel: Once per battle, deal 15 ongoing damage to a target you hit with a natural even attack roll as a free action.

Powers & Spells

Feats

Smite

Reach Tricks: before attacking, roll a 6+ on a d20 to do something reach-y, like hitting a foe you're not engaged with.

Way of Evil Bastards

Talents

Divine Domain: Trickery. Once per battle when in combat, roll a d20. As a free action before the start of your next turn, swap that d20 result for a nearby ally or enemy's attack roll. 1/day, for the rest of the battle, any enemies who move to engage you miss their attacks on natural odd rolls.

Paladin's Challenge: When you hit an enemy with a melee attack, you can challenge them. Until the end of the battle, you and your challenged foe have a -4 penalty to attacks on other targets, and a -4 penalty to attempts to disengage with each other. (See *13th Age* p. 115 for details.)

Way of Evil Bastards: If you drop a non-mook with a Smite, the Smite is not expended. 1/day, reroll your relationship dice with a villainous or ambiguous icon.

Initiative +6

Basic Melee Attack

Attack	Hit	Miss
+5 vs. AC	3d10 +2	3

Basic Ranged Attack

Attack	Hit	Miss
+6 vs. AC	3d8 + 3	—

Equipment

Heavy Armour
Two-handed Halberd
Longbow

Magic Items

THE YELLOW KING

ROLEPLAYING GAME

THE DOORS TO HEAVEN

By Sarah Saltiel

THE GUMSHOE RULES

This game uses the GUMSHOE rules, tuned for investigation and mystery-solving. In GUMSHOE, you always get the information you need to move deeper into the story.

The Yellow King Roleplaying Game debuts QuickShock GUMSHOE, a new variant that:

- simplifies certain ability rules
- speeds up combat
- represents lingering emotional and physical harm by assigning Shock and Injury cards.

At the heart of any GUMSHOE rules set lie two sorts of abilities: Investigative and General.

Investigative Abilities

Characters employ investigative abilities to gather information. Because failing to learn things is never interesting, players never make a random roll to see whether they get a key clue or piece of evidence. When they look in the right place, applying the appropriate ability, they get the info they need. Or they learn an intriguing but not essential fact that provides context, builds atmosphere, or deepens their connection to game world.

- With Demimonde, you spot the knife-wielding thief surveying the crowd for victims at the Moulin Rouge.
- With Assess Honesty, you can tell that the witness is lying about what she saw in the forest.
- With Photography, you can tell that the sinister fairies in the photo are two-dimensional drawings pinned to shrubbery.
- With History, you know that construction began on the Paris Catacombs in 1774, after a cemetery collapse.

Sometimes, the GM asks if you've got a particular ability: "That Turkish officer wears a distinctive medal. Who has Military History?"

Sometimes, players suggest the use of an ability. "What does Occultism tell me about the symbol?"

Just shouting out "I've got Ability X! What clues do I learn?" isn't enough. Players have to describe what their characters are doing in the world to get clues:

- "With my knowledge of Fashion, I can tell if the costumes in the wax museum are period originals, or more recent facsimiles."
- "Using Architecture, I look for secret compartments."
- "I glare at him, applying my Steel, until he looses his nerve and starts talking."

Pushes

Investigative abilities do not carry numerical ratings. You either have an ability, or not. Each character starts a scenario with two Pushes. Players spend these to gain special benefits, above and beyond information gathering, associated with their Investigative abilities.

- A Society Push lets you declare that the duke is an old friend of your father's, and remembers you from the summer he spent in the Adirondacks.
- An Inspiration Push lets you convince the gendarme to dutifully ensure that the rescued street urchin receives good hospital care.
- A Natural History Push allows you to stare down the wild dogs, so that they slink off without attacking.
- A Poetry Push lets you hold the soiree in thrall to your improvised verse, distracting the host as your partners search her attic.

Ability Key

The names of most investigative abilities explain themselves. Players may need help with the following:

Belle-Lettres: journalism, granting knowledge of recent Parisian events, personalities and politics

Bonhomie: gaining information through charm and personal magnetism

Demimonde: knowledge of the Parisian underworld and its dens of vice

Inspiration: gaining information by appealing to a person's best self

Intuition: understanding situations by unconscious hunch

Society: knowledge of the city's aristocratic class, its customs, and personalities

Steel: gaining information by intimidation and force of will

General Abilities

In some situations, character failure is at least as interesting as, though more horrible than, success. Determine these outcomes by using General abilities.

When testing a General Ability, you spend any number of points from your pool in that ability and roll a d6.

If the d6 result + the number of points spent equals or exceeds a Difficulty number set by the GM, you succeed. A Difficulty of 4 is average; 5 or more is hard.

For example, say you're in hiding in the forest, being hunted by a quasi-material entity that reminds you of a white sky dotted with purulent black stars. You need to make a Sneaking test to move through the underbrush without being seen. From the GM's description of the situation, you figure the Difficulty is going to be at least 5. You have a Sneaking pool of 8; you spend 3 points from that pool (so you've got 5 points left for future Sneaking tests), and roll a d6. You add the result of the roll onto the points you spent to work out your result. In this case, you roll and get a 4, for a total of 7. Is that enough to beat the Difficulty? Ask your GM.

Want to...

- Jump over that crevasse? Test Athletics.
- Palm that vial of mysterious chemicals without being spotted? Test Sneak.
- Repair that broken rifle? Test Mechanics.
- Declare that you thought to put a flask of turpentine in your pocket before leaving your garret this morning? Test Preparedness.
- Fight off the assassin who's trying to strangle you? Test Fighting.

Combat

QuickShock GUMSHOE resolves fights with one Combat test per player. As the name suggests, it's quick, with sometimes shocking results.

Combat is entirely player-facing, meaning that the GM never rolls, but rather compares results to a Difficulty determined by the foe's might, and the goal the players have chosen: Kill, Render Helpless, Gain Surrender, Beat Up, Block, Drive Away, Escape. Escape with Captive, Gain an Item, Overrun, or Topple.

Characters can't opt out of a fight they could take part in without imposing a -1 penalty for each absenting PC, applied to every one who does take part.

Small effects of attrition in combat are emulated with a Toll, a number of general pool points you must spend just for taking on a powerful Foe. You pay them in any combination from Athletics, Health and Fighting pools. From scratches to bruises to general exhaustion, battling a legendary vampire or massive gargoyle takes something out of you, even if you don't require a hospital visit.

The GM uses a fight tracker to track the simple arithmetic determining whether the group achieves its goal, or loses, allowing the foes to achieve theirs.

Shock and Injury Cards

Your character can leave play after suffering too much mental strain, or physical damage. We represent these with Shock and Injury cards, respectively. They come in pairs, one bad, the other worse. These are Minor and Major Shocks or Injuries.

Flip to the back of this scenario to see the cards characters can take in the course of this scenario.

You might gain an Injury (or in weird cases, a Shock) when you fail in combat.

You can also take an Injury when failing Athletics or Health tests caused by hazards such as explosions, fire pits, falls, or exposure to toxins or diseases. On a failure with a margin of less than 2, you take the Minor Injury; otherwise, you take the Major injury. Success means you take no card.

The same holds true with Composure tests to avoid Shocks from traumatic or emotionally challenging experiences.

When you gain an Injury or Shock, you add it to your hand. When you get rid of it, you discard it. You sometimes trade one card for another.

Text on the cards is exceptions-based, meaning that when the card text contradicts another game rule, it takes precedence over the general rules.

Most cards tell you what you have to do to get rid of them during a session. When an injury card lists a First Aid Difficulty, another character with that ability can get rid of the card for you by successfully making that test. Discard all cards at the end of each scenario, with the exception of cards marked **Continuity.**

A character dies and leaves play for good after receiving too many Injury cards.

FIGHTING QUICK REFERENCE

1. Players define objectives.
2. GM determines Difficulty.
3. GM prepares the Fight Tracker.
4. Players declare spends.
5. GM determines order of action.
6. Participating characters take -1 Fighting and +1 to Tolls for each non-participating character.
7. Next player in order:
   - **(a)** Describes what the character is trying to do.
   - **(b)** Makes a fighting test.
   - **(c)** On a success, the player:
     - i. Narrates a successful action.
     - ii. Either:
       - A. Pays the foes' Toll.
       - B. Takes a Minor Injury, which the GM narrates.
   - **(d)** On a failure:
     - i. The GM narrates the foe's successful action.
     - ii. On a margin of 0 or 1: the character takes a Minor Injury, which the GM narrates.
     - iii. On a higher margin, the character takes a Major Injury, which the GM narrates.
   - **(e)** The GM notes the player's margin, truncating margins of 4 or more to 3, and underlining them.
   - **(f)** The GM incorporates the player's margin into the group's running total and announces it.
     - i. If it is greater than 0, the players narrate a situation in which they have the upper hand.
     - ii. Otherwise, the GM narrates a situation in which the foes have the upper hand.
8. When all players have acted, consult the final margin.
   - **(a)** If more than 0:
     - i. Players whose characters scored margins of 0 or more describe the group achieving its chosen objective.
     - ii. Players whose margins were truncated choose to:
       - A. Gain a Push.
       - B. Refresh a General ability other than Fighting.
   - **(b)** If less than 0, the GM describes their failure to achieve the objective, possibly including the circumstances preventing the victorious foe from killing the surviving PCs.

Fight Trackers

Player						
Spend						
Margin						
Total						

Player						
Spend						
Margin						
Total						

A character suffers irreparable mental strain and leaves play (played by the GM if the character appears again at all) after receiving too many Shock cards.

In **Horror** mode, too many = 3. The third card in either category you take is called your Final card.

In **Occult Adventure** mode, too many = 4. The fourth card in either category you take is called your Final card.

On a Final Injury card, the GM invites you to describe a suitable death, given the circumstances that led to your gaining that fatal third card.

Likewise, when you receive a final Shock card, your character loses all grip on reality. You describe the immediate consequences. During the scenario's coda, you might follow up with a vignette describing the character's eventual fate: commitment to a sanitarium, becoming a shut-in kept in the family attic back in Westchester, loping off into the woods to live as a hermit or the like.

The Art Students

The players portray a group of friends, all Americans from prominent families valiantly enduring temporary poverty to study the arts in glorious Paris.

- Ainsley Stansfield, budding architect.
- Beverley Hayes, novice journalist.
- Leigh Barnett, landscape painter.
- Dorian Pearl, poet.
- Lesley Gibson, portraitist.
- Sandy van Steen, sculptor.

When running for less than six players, reassign Investigative abilities of unused characters among the group.

INTRODUCING THE GAME AND ITS PREMISE TO YOUR PLAYERS

In *The Yellow King Roleplaying Game*, players take on the roles of young artists studying abroad in Paris in 1895. When the publication of a play called *The King in Yellow* begins to overwrite the city with the supernatural reality of an alien world called Carcosa, they plunge into weird mystery.

And they play European soldiers fighting in the murky Continental War of 1947. They come to realize that their endless, inexplicable struggle occurs at the behest of Carcosa's Yellow King, and plunge into weird mystery.

And they play former resistance fighters in the present day, after the overthrow of the tyrannical Castaigne regime, which has held America in its icy grip since the 1920s. They want to rebuild their nation, but that requires—you're seeing a pattern now—a plunge into weird mystery.

And finally they also play contemporary people in the world as we mostly know it—but what is that strange masked creature lurking behind that dumpster over there? Could it be a harbinger of...weird mystery?

Something links these characters across time and alternate realities—a grim destiny that may enable them to unravel the king's ultimate scheme.

The Yellow King Roleplaying Game (or YKRPG when only an acronym will do) can be played using this overarching, interwoven structure, or in a simpler, episodic mode featuring shorter incidents of subjective reality horror in any one of its four settings.

In this scenario for the first of the four *Yellow King RPG* settings, the players portray American art students on the loose in Belle Époque Paris.

As you offer them their choice of pregenerated characters (see p. 51), tell them that they've already stumbled onto a bizarre supernatural conspiracy they have only begun to understand:

Recently they discovered the existence of a play, *The King in Yellow*, already banned by local authorities.

- Set in the alien kingdom of Carcosa, and written in the fashionable Symbolist style, it depicts royal intrigue between an inhuman, unnamed king and his two daughters, Camilla and Cassilda.
- The play has never been produced but exists in book form. It is hard to imagine anyone staging it. That makes it a piece of closet drama, a play written to be read.
- The first half of the play is certainly peculiar. But after the startling conclusion of act one, when the king reveals that the mask he apparently wears is in fact his pallid, skull-like face, the action becomes so shocking and perverse that it shatters the mind.
- The play doesn't just break the personalities and perceptions of those who read it. It appears to alter reality itself, making the impossible possible.
- Those under its influence respond to, and sometimes themselves display, the king's sigil—the Yellow Sign. The sign itself also changes people's behavior. (Hold up Handout #1: the Yellow Sign.)
- For example, soon after the group first learned of the play, ghosts of the brutally repressed 1870 revolution manifested and started setting fire to expensive homes, burning to death the people inside.
- In the course of their investigations to date, the group arrived at a sickening suspicion. Although they have no memory of anything like this, they somehow took a role in the play's publication here in France.
- Together they have resolved to hunt down and destroy copies of the play, before its reality-warping effect spreads any further.
- ***[In a smaller group where players have not selected the painters, sculptor or architect]*** You are joined in your investigations by other young American bohemians. Unlike you, some or all of them attend the École des Beaux-Arts. You spend so much time in their company that everyone in your circle thinks of you as art students. They expect you to attend events like the annual art students' ball, even chipping in with volunteer labor from time to time.

THE DOORS TO HEAVEN

In this scenario for *The Yellow King Roleplaying Game: Paris*, the art students investigate an attempt to open a gate to Carcosa through the doors of Notre-Dame Cathedral. The doors are renowned for their intricate ironwork. Urban legends surround them, claiming that Biscornet– the ironsmith responsible for the doors– sold his soul to the devil to complete them. Now a strange, shiny black rock slowly replaces the iron.

In **Missing Student** they see Calvin Leath, a previously missing artist, flit through the crowd and have a breakdown, yelling about doors hiding black stars and the Last Judgment. Going through his apartment or picking up rumors **Through the Grapevine** tells them Leath spent a lot of time in front of Notre-Dame before he disappeared. They might go **Snooping Around the Church** and meet Baptiste Cabot, an organ player with a strong sense of the divine, or notice alterations made in the doors of the church. Asking around yields rumors that Biscornet's ghost returns every night to work on the doors. In a **Stake Out**, they might see a hooded figure approach the doors in the middle of the night. The figure flees when approached, dropping a bag. In his bag, the group might find a clue that leads them to his home, where they find a captive Carcosan creature whose power he's been harvesting and the final confrontation takes place.

The Alien Truth

While the supernatural has a hand in replacing the doors of Notre-Dame, there are no ghosts involved. One of the eccentric employees of Notre-Dame, Baptiste Cabot, came across an injured micar-- a Carcosan creature resembling an obsidian gargoyle. A bite or scratch from a micar crystallizes its victims' skin, a condition that spreads through the body unless treated with an ointment made from micar blood. The crystallized skin is fragile and prone to shattering if struck. Extended contact with the micar or parts of its body causes strange and horrific visions, of Carcosa and of this realm.

Micars are rare, so some Carcosan power orchestrated Cabot's finding of the beast to manipulate him. Depending on your plans for the series, you might decide that a lower Carcosan power– under the

command of the Yellow King– acted as a handler, bringing the micar into this world, and now lurking just out of sight in all scenes. Otherwise, Cabot is directed by the orders of the Yellow King or one of his daughters from beyond this world. Having a Carcosan handler gives players an adversary to interact with, while saving the main Carcosan powers for later in the series. The latter choice is useful for developing a relationship between the art students and the main powers of Carcosa, or for building up to their appearance in your series.

Cabot believes the micar to be a vanquished demon sent from above, and he works tirelessly to harvest the micar's blood and bone. Piece by piece, he replaces the original ironwork with carved micar bone, polished with blood. He firmly believes that he is working according to divine intent and is building a gate to let humanity back into the garden of Eden. Of course, the gateway is more demonic than divine. It causes strange and horrible visions for those who pass by and is a focal point of Carcosan energy. As the organ player at Notre-Dame, Cabot gets orders from Carcosa through strange frequencies in the organ. He prepares for a service when he will let loose alien energy from the organ, flooding the church with it and opening up the gates to that other

world. If the art students don't stop him, exposure to Carcosa permanently transforms unlucky bystanders inside the church, sending vibrations of Hali surging forth into the world.

This scenario can be used as a first or later mystery in your Paris sequence, or as standalone. good starting point for a series in Paris. In series play, the choices the PCs make in the final scene directly impact the hold the Yellow King will have over the city.

As always, if this contradicts with your chosen pacing and backstory for your series, adjust the stakes and narrative accordingly.

Notre-Dame

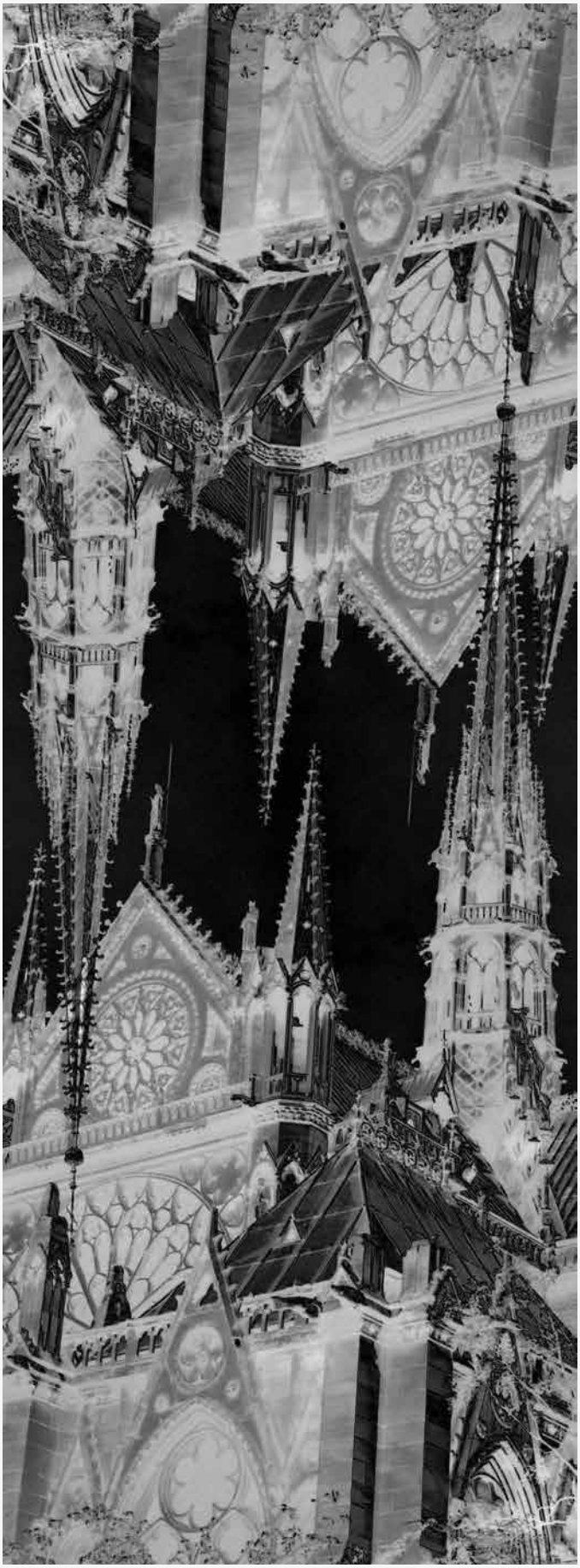
Built in 1260, Notre-Dame suffered desecration during the French Revolution, with much of the religious iconography destroyed or damaged. Victor Hugo published his novel *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* in 1831, leading to renewed interest in the cathedral and a renovation that lasted twenty-five years, from 1845 to 1870. By 1895, Notre-Dame has been restored to gothic glory and attracts tourists and worshipers alike. It is located on Île de la Cité– an island in the heart of the city– along with police headquarters, the Palais de Justice, and Sainte-Chapelle.

A Catholic cathedral, Notre-Dame serves as seat of the archdiocese of Paris. This means that the archbishop for the region has his home base at Notre-Dame, and responsibilities involving the building are relegated to him.

Society/Miscellany: The archbishop François-Marie-Benjamin Richard ascended to his position in 1886.

(A frequent traveler, he delegates responsibility to the priests and bishops working in Notre-Dame and happens to be away during the events of this scenario.)

Baptiste Cabot is fictional. In real life, a man named Eugène Sergent held the post at this from 1847-1900. In the unlikely event that a player looks this up, they might instead find his premature grave dated 1895 or hear rumors about a tragic mysterious accident involving the old organist. This might indicate to them that Carcosa is already changing history. Alternately, you might remind them that they're supposed to gain information from you via their Investigative abilities, not from Google searches.



Characters

Calvin Leath, an artist in similar social circles as the investigators. He became obsessed with Notre-Dame and fell under the influence of Carcosa before going missing for three weeks.

Martin Braith, Leath's friend who is fortunate enough to be unaware of his condition.

Jennie Silverton, Leath's friend who witnessed suspicious behavior before his disappearance.

Alix Saccard, a priest at Notre-Dame who has been covering up Cabot's alterations to the door out of fear. Aside from Cabot, he was the first victim of a micar scratch.

Maurice Frenet, a jovial, if easily swayed, gendarme patrolling the area around Notre-Dame.

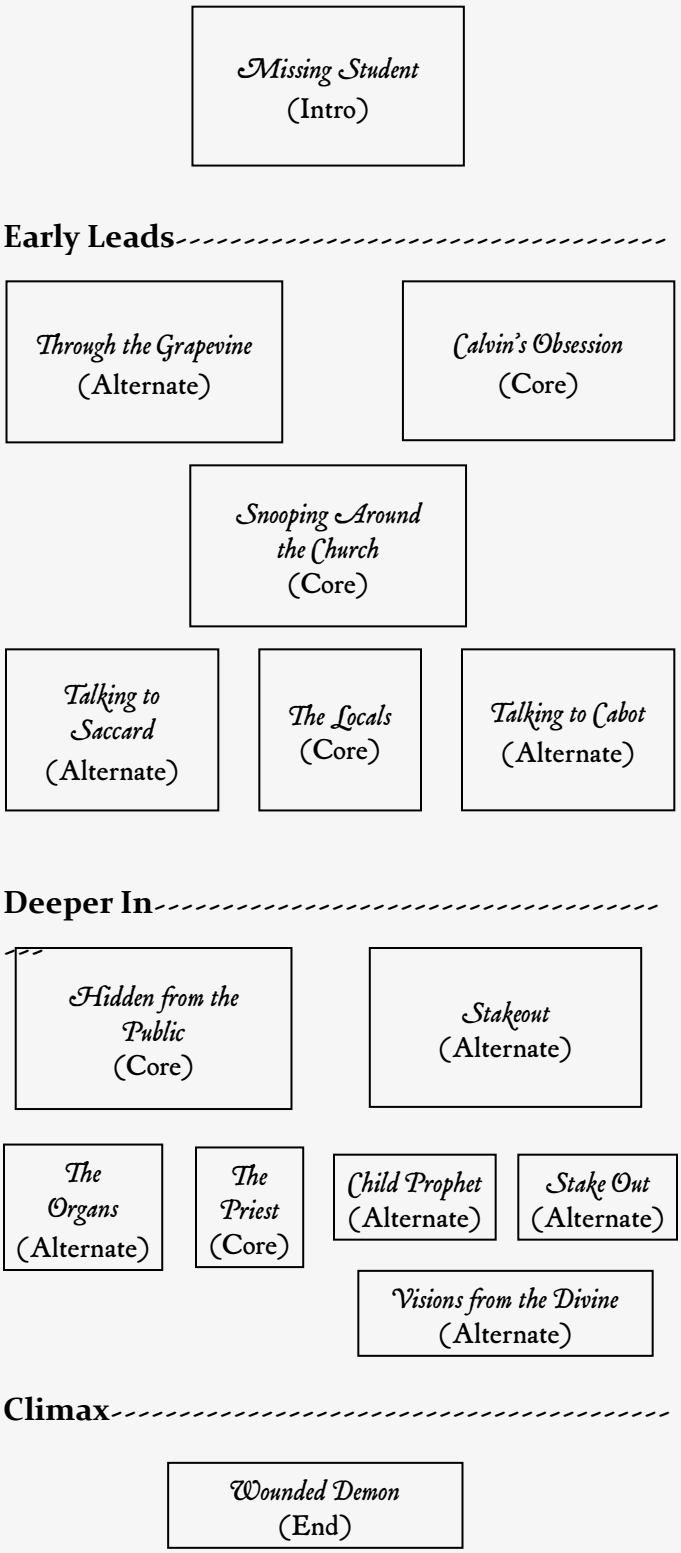
Baptiste Cabot, the devout organist at Notre-Dame who replaces the doors' ironwork with micar bone to open up a gate to Carcosa.

Sophie Patin, a socialite who frequents mass at Notre-Dame.

Ange, a child living on the streets of Paris near Île de la Cité.

Noa, her brother, cursed by horrific visions as a result of being wounded by the micar.

Scene Zone Diagram



Scenes

Missing Student

Scene Type: Introduction
Lead Outs: Calvin's Obsession, Through the Grapevine, Snooping Around the Church

The scene begins with the investigators meeting in the evening to exchange the newest gossip, or trade stories about strange and exciting things they've encountered in this foreign world. Perhaps they sit on the steps in Place de la République, or maybe they sit down for a meal at their regular spot, Le Veau Gras (The Fat Calf; *YKRPG: Paris* p. 99.) It is known for its cheap food and liberal libations. A sidewalk table is perfect for watching the daily display of Parisian fashion going on in the streets. This is the era of the *flâneur*, or practitioner of the art of public strolling, where people crowd boulevard cafés to see and be seen.

Encourage initial banter between the characters by suggesting they play out a scene reviewing and/or regretting their revels of the night before. Segue into describing the people they see passing by:

- A fashionable couple dressed in all black, arguing about their respective love affairs
- A sullen man with a thick mustache sitting alone at a table, returning his attention to his notebook every five minutes to jot down sketches of his surroundings
- A mother pulling two small children along behind her, scolding them for being *mal élevé*.

Having seen a few predictably affected Parisians, they spot Calvin Leath, a fellow artist who runs in the same social circles. He went missing a few weeks ago and for a while, the mystery was all anyone could talk about. He ducks and weaves through the crowd, seeming on edge and muttering to himself.

If one of the investigators approaches him, Leath whirls around and falls to the ground screaming about "the doors of Last Judgment" and "black stars in a white sky". His voice is hoarse, as if he's been speaking in whispers nonstop for days. To strengthen the intrigue of his hysterical ranting, drop in some words referencing a PC's Deuced Peculiar Business. If the investigators are content to watch Leath without interfering, have a stranger in the crowd approach him with the same result.

(Core, *Snooping Around the Church*) **Art History:** The most famous depiction of the Last Judgment in Paris is carved into Notre-Dame above the central door of the western facade. It shows the sinners led into hell and Christians led to heaven.

Leath is too shaken to answer any questions. Should the investigators push him, he stares beyond them, his lips moving with barely any sound emerging. He rasps out his address to whoever is helping him before slumping to the ground, drained of energy and barely conscious. (Core, *Calvin's Obsession*) He gives an address in Le Marais (4th arrondissement), not too far from the river.

Natural History: There doesn't seem to anything medically wrong with Leath, per se. His vitals are all strong, he's collapsed from what appears to be sheer exhaustion.

If players ask questions about the characters' prior knowledge of Leath, provide them with the following answers:

- None of them know him too well, though they've seen him around at social gatherings and engaged in occasional small talk.
- He's always seemed mild-mannered and never displayed this sort of erratic behavior before.
- About three weeks ago, rumors spread through the grapevine that Leath disappeared. Someone went to his apartment but no one answered the door. Some other scandal in the art community eclipsed the mystery of Leath's disappearance, and most people assumed his disapproving parents had come to collect him from his bohemian artistic lifestyle. This is Paris and American artists are constantly coming and going. It didn't seem like much cause for alarm.
- Leath studies architecture and has a particular fascination with gothic buildings– easy enough to find wandering around the streets of Paris. He sculpts models of his favorite buildings, which have once or twice been objects of admiration for the Parisian art world at large.
- Though architecture is his main interest, he takes an amateur interest in jewelry-making and sometimes designs jewelry for his chic friends to display on their nights at the cabaret.

- (Alternate, *Through the Grapevine*) Leath's main friend group enjoys hanging out at Les Deux Magots, a 6th arrondissement café.

The PCs might take Leath back to his apartment. If your players are in a passive mood, a GMC takes him back but Leath drops a bracelet on the ground. It's a black band made from shiny black rock, intricately decorated with figures and symbols.

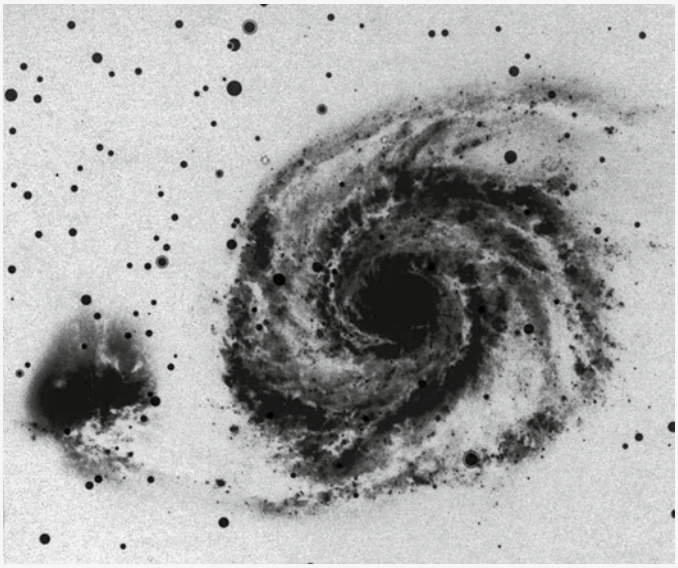
Occultism: The symbols on the bracelet don't line up with any culture you're familiar with, though the figures are definitely in scenes of worship. You don't know of any traditions that require grotesque white masks that look like that.

Painting: You've seen a few of Leath's creations, and based on the painted decorations on the band, he definitely made the bracelet, though there's a primal element to it that is different from his usual pieces.

Sculpture/Natural History: The rock isn't any stone or metal that you recognize. If you didn't know any better, you'd say that it almost looks like bone...

If anyone tries to wear the bracelet, they hear organ music as a low throbbing in the back of their head. The music has modulations in it that sound almost like human whispers. Call for a Difficulty 3 **Composure** test to avoid **Shocks— Minor and Major**: Unnerved/Agitated. Keeping the bracelet on their physical person for 2+ scenes has the same effect, even if they don't wear it.

Should the group take Leath home, they'll find the bracelet in his bag or on his wrist if they investigate either.



Through the Grapevine

Scene Type: Alternate
Lead-Ins: Missing Student
Lead-Outs: Calvin's Obsession, Snooping Around the Church

Leath's friends can be found at their usual spot in Les Deux Magots. A café in Saint-Germain-des-Prés, it takes its name from two wooden figures perched above its patrons. Play Martin Braith as a burly, anxious man, refusing to meet the investigators' eyes and answering in long roundabout sentences, and Jennie Silverton as quiet and surly, giving the investigators long measuring glances and responding in succinct sentences. Similar to Leath, they run in art circles so the PCs might have seen them around but don't know much about them beyond their reputation. **Culture** reveals that Braith doesn't do much art of his own, but enjoys hanging around the artistic crowd, and particularly enjoys hanging around the American art students that come from, and are funded by, wealthy families. Rumor has it that Silverton, a landscape painter, harbored more than friendly feelings for Leath.

If asked about Leath, they repeat to the group the same story that circulated around the rumor mill, that Leath went missing around three weeks ago, and no one has heard from him since. Silverton knocked on the door of his apartment in the 5th arrondissement and there was no answer. His family probably took him back home in favor of a more respectable lifestyle. *If pressed about her visit to his place*, Silverton uncomfortably shifts in her seat and admits that when she stopped by Leath's place, she did more than just knock, but in her defense, "the door opened on its own". She found the apartment stripped of his belongings, and already rented out to someone else, who knew nothing about him.

Assess Honesty shows that Braith believes everything that he's saying, but Silverton doesn't believe that Leath's family came to take him. She is withholding information out of suspicion of the group.

(Core, *Snooping Around the Church*) **Reassurance:** Showing Silverton that the group is actually concerned about Leath, and not just gossip-mongers, gets her to admit that Leath was acting strangely before he disappeared. He was studying Notre-Dame and was

overcome with passion for it. One day Silverton found him standing on the street in the 4th arrondissement, staring up at the windows of apartment buildings, and then turning back to look in the direction of Île de la Cité, as if he could see through the buildings.

(Core, *Calvin's Obsession*) If they press her on the exact location, it is on the same street as the apartment that Leath listed as his address in *Missing Student*, a distinctly different address than the one Silverton visited in the 5th arrondissement, and knew to be his home.

If the group tells Silverton or Martin about their run-in with Leath on the street, or about his new address, they might find more than one victim if they visit Leath in his apartment later on in the scenario (*Calvin's Obsession.*) If the group already visited the apartment and discovered Leath's bloody secret, mentioning it causes genuine shock and distress. Silverton becomes immediately suspicious and disbelieving of the group, demanding that they leave at once.

Calvin's Obsession

Scene Type: Core
Lead-Ins: Missing Student, Through the Grapevine
Lead-Outs: Snooping Around the Church

Gathering Information

Leath's apartment in Le Marais is on the fourth floor, up a dingy stairwell. It's the sort of place you live if you don't want to see any of your neighbors and, more importantly, you don't want any of them seeing you. Approaching the neighbors results in cracked doors with eyes peering out at them. One of them might reluctantly reveal the name of the fourth floor occupant– Laurent Metsch– but insist that they know nothing more.

Culture/Society: Leath's family back in the States lucked out with the industrial boom a few decades back, and though they disapprove of his artistic cavorting around Paris, money has never been an issue for him. He can definitely afford a better apartment. There must be a specific reason he's living here.

If the investigators go to Leath's apartment with him, he leans on them up the stairs, head lolling, but has enough presence of mind to extract his key from his bag before collapsing on the couch. If they left him with someone else and arrive afterwards, a Difficulty 3 **Sneak** test allows them to pick the flimsy lock to the building, and they find the door to his apartment unlocked– he's not immediately visible in the space. Either way, they see several letters scattered on the threshold addressed to a Mr. Laurent Metsch, as well as unaddressed hand-scrawled notes threatening eviction.

Leath's apartment is covered with papers to the point where the floor and walls look like they've been blanketed. Some of them have been sculpted off of the various surfaces in the apartment into the shape of churches. A few of the churches show decorative traces of a shiny rock.

Natural History: The rock is the same type as the bracelet, if the group found it earlier.

Sculpture: The sculptures are stylistically distinct enough to identify them as Leath's work, probably made out of papier-maché, though it's unclear what substance he used to glue the papers together because there's not much trace of traditional papier-maché glue.

Culture: Though Leath's style is unmistakable, papier-maché is not his usual medium for architectural models.

Set into the churches are candles, dripping dangerously low to the paper. The candles and a singular narrow window offer the only sources of light. Out the window is a view of Île de la Cité and a sliver of Notre-Dame is visible. Many of the papers depict drawings of Notre-Dame– the exact view visible through the window. Some of them show it closer up, focusing on one specific part of it.

(Core, *Snooping Around the Church*) **Architecture/Art History:**

- Every single sculpture and drawing in this room is a representation of Notre-Dame. Specifically the art emphasizes the western facade of the cathedral, with the doors wildly out of proportion to the rest of the church as compared to reality.
- Notre-Dame was built from 1160-1260, but faced partial destruction during the French Revolution. It recently went through a twenty-five year restoration, ending in 1870, focusing on the facade, with sculptors creating saints, gargoyles, and chimeras.

Culture: Notre-Dame contains the seat of the archbishop of Paris, the current archbishop being François-Marie-Benjamin Richard de la Vergne.

The papers without drawings are filled with text. Closer examination shows them to be pages ripped from a play. Some of the church sculptures also have traces of lettering, so the pages were likely used in the papier-maché. Reading a few of the pages requires a Difficulty 4 **Composure** test to avoid **Shocks— Minor, Major:** A Gnawing at the Back of the Mind/The Will Erodes. Collecting all the pages of the play and trying to read them increases the Difficulty by +2.

With a Difficulty 4 **Sense Trouble** test, investigators faintly smell rotting meat, though it doesn't have a singular source.

If investigators touch the cathedral sculptures, they see a brief vision of the apartment coated in decaying, stagnating blood, with blood bubbles inside each of the sculptures. A Difficulty 4 **Composure** test avoids **Shocks— Minor, Major:** Unease/Dread, with a Difficulty adjustment of -1 if they touch it indirectly. Any attempt to dismantle the sculptures catches Leath's attention. If the PCs brought him with them, he breaks out of his stupefied state. If they entered the apartment some other time without him, he emerges from under a pile of papers on the ground. Either way, he hurls himself at the investigator posing a threat to his sculptures, and must be subdued.

Numbers: 1
Difficulty: Weak (Escape 2, Other 3, Kill 3)
Toll: 0
Injuries, Minor and Major: Roughed Up/ Sucker Punched

Should investigators subdue Leath and dismantle a sculpture, they find a human organ oozing blood at the center of it. The blood provides the glue for the core of the sculpture, though more traditional papier-maché materials were used for the outside layers of paper. Each organ has shards of the same shiny black material inside it. Call for Difficulty 5 **Composure** tests to avoid **Shocks— Minor and Major:** Witness to Carnage/ Existence is a Meat-Grinder.

Intuition: The body parts probably belonged to Laurent Metsch, occupant of this apartment.

Natural History: Based on the state of the body parts, Metsch has been dead for around three weeks, matching up with the timeline of Leath's disappearance.

Questioning Leath

If the investigators don't pose a threat to the sculptures, Leath bursts up from the concealing layer of scattered papers, or comes to from his stupor after their initial superficial investigation. He doesn't volunteer information, but responds if asked questions:

- A month ago, Notre-Dame's beauty overwhelmed him and it has been his muse ever since. Gazing on it, he accesses a world only he can see. All of his art reflects that.
- Laurent Metsch was the previous tenant of the apartment. He doesn't know where Metsch is now.
- Someone else gave the rock to him-someone who recognizes the true power of Notre-Dame. The stranger also gave him the play. Leath read all of it and it revealed the truth to him.
- The truth of the play goes beyond words, only those who read it can understand.
- Leath doesn't know the stranger's name. The stranger approached him while he was reveling in the beauty of Notre-Dame and instructed him on channeling that power through his art. They only met once.
- (Only if the organs in the sculptures were uncovered) The rock whispered to him about how to feed his power and he listened. It provided him with the means to increase that power.

If pushed about the organs' origin, he stares dreamily off into space, and says that he came to this place because he saw in a dream that it would give him access to the church he loves. When he arrived, everything was ready for him.

Assess Honesty: Leath shows none of the typical signs of honesty or dishonesty. His affect is almost flat, as if repeating things that he memorized. If the investigators feign interest in also increasing the power of the church, an **Inspiration** push convinces Leath to describe the stranger who gave him the rock as having black hair, a slightly crooked nose, and a short and thin stature.

Does the group try to remove Leath from the apartment, or bring authorities to him? Leath becomes enraged and knocks over a candle, creating a wall of flame between him and the investigators. A Difficulty 5 **Health** test avoids **Injuries—Minor, Major:** Lingering Cough/ Scarred Lungs.

If the group put the candles out ahead of time or restrained Leath, he becomes desolate and uncommunicative outside the apartment, refusing to say a single word and taking any opportunity to escape back to the apartment. Should the group leave without him and return, they find the apartment burnt down and no sign of Leath, or they find him dead, having used his own body parts to build more sculptures, depending on whether he needs to make an additional appearance for an antagonist reaction (*Leath's Fate*, p. 43).

Snooping Around the Church

Scene Type: Core
Lead-Ins: Missing Student, Calvin's Obsession, Through the Grapevine
Lead-Outs: Stake Out, Church After Hours
Gathering Information

Notre-Dame during the day draws visiting tourists and worshipers. The beautiful church sits in Île de la Cité, its western facade facing a colorful and bustling square. It has three main western doors, with two towers and a large stained glass window set in the middle– the pinnacle of Gothic architecture. Its famed gargoyles lurk on the corners of the building, high above the ground. If the group asks more about the gargoyles, tell them that for a moment they think they see one move, but it must have been a trick of the eye.

Art History: The decoration on the center western doors is not in its original state. The ironwork has been partially replaced by a different stone, though in a nearly identical design.

Sculpture: The stone matches that of Leath's bracelet and his cathedral sculptures. The technique used to carve it differs from the one employed by Leath, so it was likely someone else's doing.

Architecture: A man remembered only as Biscornet crafted the original ironwork in the 13th century.

Occultism: Legend has it, Biscornet sold his soul to the devil, since he created such beautiful and intricate designs but lived in a time period where he lacked the tools to do so. In some variations of the story, he finished all of the ironwork in three days and dropped dead immediately, in others, he toiled away for months in a hidden workplace, and died shortly after. In all versions, the doors refused to open until priests sprinkled holy water on them.

(When the scenario ends, your players might enjoy learning that the Biscornet story is an actual legend of Paris, not something we made up for this scenario.)

A gendarme patrols nearby, keeping an eye on the cathedral and its sister chapel, Sainte-Chapelle.

Demimonde: Judging by the moth-eaten state of his uniform and his darting, avaricious eyes, this gendarme is not opposed to accepting bribes.

A band of young ruffians rove about the square, pickpocketing gawking tourists. Should the group visit in the evening, the church itself will be closed. The gendarme and children will still be there, but the church-goers or the church employees will be absent.

Culture: On an average day, the highest ranking official you might run into in Notre-Dame is a priest or bishop. They have some responsibilities for the building delegated to them and know the general goings-on in the church.

Assuming a remotely suitable hour, the group finds a service in progress inside. If a character wore the bracelet found in *Missing Student*, they recognize near-human whispers inside the organ music. Hearing it requires a Difficulty 4 **Composure** test to avoid **Shocks— Minor/Major**: Music of the Night/Point of No Return.

The investigators might choose to interact with any of the following:

- Maurice Frenet, the gendarme. Play him as jovial and good-willed, if somewhat more lighthearted about his duties than he should be. He has brown hair and a portly stature, not quite matching up to Leath's description. He is all too happy to talk and completely relaxes his official stance to engage in a nice, leisurely chat.
- The group of children pickpocketing the tourists. Play some of them as mischievous and the others as reticent, willing to answer the group's questions, but only if there's money in it for them.
- Alix Saccard, the priest managing church affairs that day. His physical description possibly matches the one given by Leath. Play him as a precise, no-nonsense man who seems reluctant to answer the group's questions but wants to leave a positive impression of the church.

- Baptiste Cabot, the organist. After the service, he comes down and sits in the pews. Unless something causes him to rise, he stays seated and wears a large coat, making it hard to tell how well he matches the description given by Leath. Play him as dreamy and deeply devout, always humming religious tunes and playing the air as if it was his organ. He's very willing to talk to the investigators unless they present themselves as a threat to his goal, in which case, he becomes withdrawn and excuses himself.
- The locals who chose Notre-Dame for their weekly mass. Depict them as harried and weary Parisians who might grant the meddlesome Americans a sentence before excusing themselves to go about their day.

Talking to Saccard

Scene Type: Alternate
Lead Ins: Snooping Around the Church
Lead Outs: The Locals

The group can find Saccard attending to church matters after the service. If prompted, he tells them:

- He doesn't recognize Leath's name. He gives them a scathing look if they describe Leath's mysterious stranger. Far too many people come in and out of the church for him to notice just one based on their description.
- The church doors are under official renovation and there is nothing strange about it.
- (Alternate, *The Locals*) He hasn't noticed anything bizarre recently. There's even a gendarme posted around the area at all times to ensure the safety of the cathedral.

Assess Honesty: Though he doesn't recognize Leath's name, the last two things he says are lies. A Push shows that though he doesn't know anything about a stranger giving Leath rocks, the stranger's description strikes a chord of possible recognition.

(Alternate, *The Priest*) **Demimonde**: Saccard carries a pistol under his cassock—definitely unusual for a priest.

Intuition: Saccard walks as though he is injured and can't bend his knee.

Talking to Cabot

Scene Type: Alternate
Lead Ins: Snooping Around the Church
Lead Outs: Hidden from the Public

Cabot sits in the pews after the service ends, seemingly whispering to the air, not necessarily unusual behavior in a church. His hands have large chunks of flesh gouged out of them. If asked the relevant questions, he tells them:

- There was a boy fitting Leath's description hanging around not too long ago, though he doesn't remember too clearly what happened.
- The doors have always been powerful because they grant access to the divine. If pushed to answer exactly why the doors were altered, he tells them the spirit of Biscornet returns at night to remake the doors for the purposes of Heaven, instead of Hell. (In response to a follow-up question, he explains the legend if the players didn't get it through use of Occultism earlier, p. 34.)
- He hears God's words through his organ.
- The injuries on his hand come from infected wounds inflicted by his pet.

Assess Honesty: Like Leath, Cabot is devoid of any usual markers of honesty or falsehood.

With encouragement of his fervor in his faith (**Inspiration**) or kind words about his music playing (**Bonhomie**), Baptiste tells the group that he believes art and music soon will open the gateway to Heaven and allow humankind back into Eden.

If the group comes at Baptiste with a judgmental tone or implies any attempt to cease the alterations being made on the gate, Baptiste might determine them to be a threat and send a pack of gargoyles after them (Antagonist Reaction, *Gargoyle Pack*).

(Alternate, *Hidden from the Public*) Gaining access to the organ room requires a Difficulty 5 **Sneak** test to not draw Saccard's attention. Investigating the pulpit requires a Difficulty 7 test, as it is visible to the entire room. If they try to do this before talking to him, he demands they leave the church premises and refuses to answer any questions. If they get kicked out, have Frenet or the ruffians approach them, having heard the scene and seen the opportunity to make some money.

The Locals

Scene Type: Core
Lead Ins: Snooping Around the Church
Lead Outs: Child Prophet, Stake Out

Among the churchgoers, **Culture** allows the investigators to recognize Sophie Patin, a socialite known for her ability to uncover truths that most people try to keep hidden. She is elegant and quick to assess someone, but not unkind. The rest of the congregants, if asked, say that Saccard told them that there's a restoration, so that must be true. With some name dropping and niceties (**Society**), Patin whispers to the group that there are rumors going around that Biscornet's ghost returned from the grave to continue his work.

Talking to Frenet, at first he reiterates that the church is going through restoration, and he hasn't seen anyone unusual hanging around. **Assess Honesty** says he believes the first part is true, and the second part is a lie. With bribery (**Negotiation**) or some flattery (**Bonhomie**), he tells the group that:

- Sometimes he'll allow people a closer look at the church at night for a small price. Just a sneak peak though.
- The artist renovating the ironwork is an eccentric man. He comes to the church in the middle of the night to work and pays Frenet to patrol elsewhere while he's working. Probably just wants to work in private.
- He can't describe the artist. He received the request through letter, with the archbishop's official seal so he knew that the request came through legitimate means. He's only seen the artist from a distance.
- Come to think of it, he did see the artist talking to some young man matching Leath's description the other night. Frenet thought they might be artistic collaborators.

If **Officialdom** is used, he won't tell the group about accepting money from anyone, but he'll tell them the rest.

On a Push with either **Negotiation** or **Bonhomie**, Frenet looks the other way while the investigators sneak into the cathedral. A **Steel** Push intimidates him into promising to make sure a door is unlocked that night.

The children on the street tease the group with snippets of information:

- A man returns every night to work on the gates.
- They saw Leath and they know what drove him mad.
- They followed the mysterious man home from Notre-Dame.

Intimidating the children (**Steel**) makes them clam up and refuse to answer any more questions. If the group pays them for their information (**Negotiation**), the children tell them:

- The man changing the gates works for the church.
- (Alternate, *Wounded Demon*) He lives on the Left Bank close to the river between a boulangerie and a café.
- He keeps a demon for a pet.

If asked, they refuse to take the investigators to the man's apartment, showing fear and making the sign of the cross. If pushed on what the demon looks like, one of them points to the gargoyles decorating Notre-Dame.

(Alternate, *Child Prophet*) If investigators show kindness to the children (**Reassurance**), they receive the same information as **Negotiation**, but if they ask more about the alleged demon, a small girl introduces herself Ange and tells them that she and her brother snuck around the man's house in the middle of the night, and the demon attacked her brother and injured him. Play Ange as suspicious but desperate. On a **Reassurance** Push, she takes the investigators to see her brother.

Child Prophet

Scene Type: Alternate
Lead Ins: Snooping Around the Church
Lead Outs: The Priest

Ange and her brother Noa live down by the embankment of the Seine along with the other children. They created a makeshift living area and children peer out at the investigators from bits of rubble.

Demimonde: It would be wise to keep your valuable possessions close, but it's unlikely that these children pose a larger threat.

Noa sits under an overhang, hidden mostly by the shadows. He is a five year old boy, exceedingly thin with scratches on his body. Parts of his body are crystallizing.

Natural History:

- His skin is turning into the same black stone that the group has seen everywhere.
- The crystallization radiates out from the wounds like an infection.

Play Noa as unnervingly calm and serious for someone so young. He stares past the investigators, constantly seeing horrific visions. Seeing Noa requires a Difficulty 4 **Composure** test to avoid **Shocks— Minor and Major:** Rattled/A Diverting Indiscretion Will Put This in Perspective.

By asking the relevant questions the group learns the following:

- A few days ago, the demon scratched Noa
- Since his skin started changing, he sees visions, of this world, and of a world with black stars in a white sky and twin suns sinking into a lake.
- At first his visions were useful because the ones of this world gave the children knowledge that they used to get food, but the crystallization is spreading, and his visions cause him to have violent fits.
- (Core, *Visions from the Divine*) Anytime his blood came into contact with the crystallized skin, the visions worsened.
- They have some salve and that stopped the crystallization from spreading, but they didn't have enough of it to completely cover his wounds.

(Core, *The Priest*) With a **Reassurance** Push, Ange reveals that they got the salve from the priest, Alix Saccard. As they finish speaking, Noa has a vision and his entire body goes tense, as if so much energy was coursing through his body that his skin can barely contain it. His voice sounds like garbled whispers coming from far away. He spits out sentences about a war that will spread across Europe and soak its dirt with blood, and about faces that look like masks, and he references one or more of the characters' Deuced Peculiar Business. With a Difficulty 4 **Sense Trouble** test, the group can tell that Noa will become violent after his vision. This allows the group to restrain him before that happens. If not, Noa's face takes on a mask-like demeanor as he lunges at the investigators, trying to bite them. Any bite from Noa should be treated like one from a micar. Wounds to his crystallized body parts shatter them.

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: Evenly Matched (Escape 3, Other 4, Kill 4)

Difficulty Adjustment: -1 if the characters restrained him ahead of time.

Toll: 1

Injuries, Minor and Major: Micar Scratch/ Micar Bite

If he's restrained, his fit dies down and his face changes back to normal. Ange acknowledges that this is a regular occurrence and rolls up her sleeve to show a crystallized bite mark. With a Difficulty 3 **Preparedness** test, a PC has rope that they can use to restrain Noa until they determine the cause of his ailment.

Killing Noa calls for a Difficulty 6 **Composure** test to avoid **Shocks—Minor and Major:** Hardened/ Dead-Eyed Stare.

Hidden from the Public

Scene Type: Core
Lead-Ins: Snooping Around the Church
Lead-Outs: The Priest, Wounded Demon

Walking near the church at night does not require a test, though loitering might draw suspicion if the group didn't strike a deal with Frenet. If they did, a side door to Notre-Dame was left unlocked and Frenet conveniently patrols another area. If they intimidated him, the door is unlocked but Frenet switched shifts with another gendarme so sneaking in requires a Difficulty 3 **Sneak** test. If they made no deal with Frenet, the Difficulty goes up to 5. The investigators might examine the door and the ironwork before entering the church. If they ask questions beyond a cursory description, or if they touch the stone, it means they have prolonged contact, which leads to a Carcosan-fueled vision (Alternate, *Visions from the Divine*).

(Alternate, *The Organs*) **Architecture**: The organ in cathedrals is up a flight of stairs, close to the entrance. That landing is between the two towers visible from the outside, but based on the roof's height, there's another landing above the organ room.

Art History: The landing is the gallery, where visitors can see the gargoyles.

History: Many cathedrals have cloisters with living space for their bishops. There used to be cloisters to the north of Notre-Dame but they burned down in the 17th century.

The church during the day is bustling and grand. At night, the distance between the door and the pulpit stretches on forever, and the pews look like the ribs of some great beast rising from the ground. The pulpit is at the far end of the church past all the pews. On either side of the entrance are stairways leading up into the towers.

Architecture: Some decorative wooden engravings on the pulpit are in just the right location to be a latch for a compartment.

(Core, *The Priest*) If the art students open the compartment they find holy water, a crucifix, and a relic, as well as a bottle of black, shiny salve.

Occultism: Except for the salve, these are the items used in an exorcism.

The Organs

Scene Type: Alternate
Lead Ins: Hidden from the Public
Lead Outs: The Priest

The door to the organ room is locked and requires a Difficulty 4 **Sneak** test to enter. The organs are halfway up the flight of stairs leading to either of the towers. The room overlooks the rest of the cathedral. Behind the organ is the stained glass window overlooking the square. Twisting branches of black glittering rock sprout off the organ pipes and weave around the window, coming off the wall in web-like 3-D sculptures. Asking detailed questions about the stone or touching it induces visions from Carcosa (Alternate, *Visions from the Divine*.)

Architecture: The window is centered directly over the main door on the western facade. The threads of rock disappear behind the organ down in the direction of the door.

Playing the organ alerts Saccard to the art students' presence. At night time this allows an opportunity for further questioning (Core, *The Priest*), but during the day he just comes in and demands they leave. Whatever the time of day, the metal begins to quiver and move to twine around them. The stained glass window bends, with a translucent colorful glass arm reaching through. Seeing it requires a Difficulty 4 **Composure** test to avoid **Shocks— Minor/Major**: Haunted/ Rationality's Cruel Veil. It stops if the students stop playing the organ.

The Priest

Scene Type: Core
Lead Ins: Hidden From the Public
Lead Outs: Wounded Demon

If the group plays the organ, Saccard rushes into the organ room, firing his pistol at them. They need to physically restrain him to talk to him. Otherwise, they find him sitting in the gallery, the landing above the organ room, looking down at the plaza in front of the cathedral. His pistol rests next to his hand and his pant leg is hiked up, showing that his leg is entirely crystallized.

If the investigators approach him in the gallery, he turns the pistol on them but does not shoot. A Difficulty 4 **Athletics** test allows them to wrest the gun from him, preempting combat.

Deescalating the situation and assuring Saccard that the group means him and the church no harm (**Reassurance**) persuades him to talk. Confronted with what they know so far, he answers their questions:

- He believes evil spirits took possession of Cabot. Cabot used to be devout and dutiful– a quiet man who was content to play his organ and go to confession regularly. A month ago Cabot stopped coming to confession and when Saccard asked about it, Cabot said he discovered a more direct connection with the divine. He started talking about a gateway opening up between this world and Eden. Saccard doesn't think there's anything holy about whatever power Cabot latched onto.
- Shortly after, Saccard noticed changes in the ironwork on the door and so he waited in the gallery, only to see Cabot coming in the middle of the night to replace the iron. Whatever stone he's using has a far more sinister energy, and the atmosphere inside the church deteriorates the more work Cabot does.
- When he first noticed the doors, he went to Cabot's home to ask him to cease his actions. Cabot refused to open the door so he forced his way in and a horrific monster inside the apartment attacked him.
- His wound from the monster began to crystallize and Cabot gave him a salve to stop the process, but not before his leg completely changed. He had upsetting visions for a while, but the salve put a stop to that.
- He shared his salve with the orphans when they came to him for help.
- He was the one who sent the letter to Frenet, not wanting anyone else to get involved for fear that they would be injured.
- Every night he waits for Cabot with his pistol, willing himself into having the strength to stop Cabot, but he doesn't think that he is able.

(Core, *Wounded Demon*) He tells the investigators Cabot's address, in hopes that they can accomplish what he couldn't.

On an **Inspiration** or **Bonhomie** Push, Saccard gives the group the salve that Cabot gave him, as well as his pistol. Using the salve with a Difficulty 3 **First Aid** test stops the crystallization of a micar wound.

Stake Out

Scene Type: Alternate
Lead-Ins: Snooping Around the Church
Lead-Outs: Wounded Demon, Hidden from the Public

Should the investigators stake out Notre-Dame and wait for the man who works on the gate every night, finding a hiding place requires a Difficulty 4 **Sneak** test. The man comes past midnight, wearing a mask and carrying a large bag. If the group lets him do his work undisturbed, he carefully sections off and removes a piece of the ironwork, replacing it with nearly identical designs made out of the obsidian-like rock. He then spends a long time measuring the next chunk of ironwork and noting its exact dimensions and patterns. Before he leaves, he extracts a jar of blood from his bag and dips his fingers in it to burnish the rock with blood. To the investigators watching, it looks like his entire body seizes up when the blood touches the stone. If the group met Noa, **Intuition** says that Cabot is probably having a vision, since what's happening to his body is

similar to what happened to Noa. If they didn't meet Noa, **Natural History** says that he's not having a seizure or any other recognizable medical problem. His face appears to melt into mask form and back again, rapidly cycling between mask and face as his eyes go yellow.

If the investigators approach Cabot while he's working on the door, he drops his work and flees. Catching him requires a Difficulty 4 **Athletics** test. Difficulty goes up to 5 if the group approaches him while he's mid-vision and partially influenced by Carcosan energy. If they don't catch him, he winds his way through the streets until he loses them. In his flight he leaves behind his bag, which has the jar of blood (Alternate, *Visions from the Divine*), tools for his work on the gate, a key to Notre-Dame's side door that the group can use if they didn't already sneak in, (Core, *Hidden from the Public*) as well as a key to his apartment. Wrapped around the jar of blood is a wad of napkins, in case the jar leaks. The napkins have an insignia of a golden frog on them.

(Core, *Wounded Demon*) **Culture**: That insignia belongs to the café **La Grenouille** (The Frog) that just opened up a few months ago on the Left Bank.

If the group does not confront Cabot while he's working, he leaves safely, provided that the investigators already talked to Saccard– chasing after him still requires a Difficulty 4 **Athletics** test. As he is unaware of their presence, they can alternatively use a Difficulty 3 **Sneak** test to follow him home (Core, *Wounded Demon*). If they didn't already talk to Saccard, the priest shoots Cabot from the gallery with his pistol once Cabot finishes. The shot is not deadly and hits Cabot's shoulder, but Cabot runs off, frightened, without his bag. If he's wounded, **Athletics** to chase him and **Fighting** to restrain him take a -1 Difficulty adjustment, but **Sneak** to follow him undetected takes a +1 Difficulty adjustment.

If the group catches up to Cabot, assuring him that they mean him no harm (**Reassurance**) or physically restraining him prevents him from attacking them with a knife made from the black stone.

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: Weak (Escape 2, Other 3, Kill 3)

Toll: 0

Injuries, Minor and Major: Micar Scratch/ Micar Bite

If they intimidate Cabot (**Steel**) or persuade him that they are on his side and they believe in his connection to the divine powers (**Inspiration**), he answers questions like so:

- He was practicing the organ late into the night, when he heard a crash in the main chapel of Notre-Dame. On the floor he found a wounded demon, sent by God as a sign for Cabot to do his work.
- He took the demon home and still keeps it locked in his bedroom. A few days after the demon's appearance, his organs began whispering to him as he played them, giving him instructions on how to use the demon.
- Through the destroyed demon's blood and bone, he will create a gateway in this world that allows humankind back into Eden, as has been dictated to him by The Lord. When the time is right, his organ music will open the space between this world and next, allowing all of the chosen people to enter blissful eternity.
- Every night, as he works on the doors, he is granted visions of the other side, a strange and wondrous place.

(Core, *Wounded Demon*) He offers to take the investigators back to his apartment so they might see for themselves the divine path that he walks.

Should the group kill Cabot before he takes them to his apartment, the member who has had the most interaction with the micar bone has a vision of the wounded creature breaking its restraints and escaping. If *Visions from the Divine* has not already happened, they also see the location of Cabot's apartment in the vision.

Visions from the Divine

Scene Type: Alternate
Lead Ins: The Organs, Hidden from the Public, Wounded Demon

Prolonged contact with micar bone causes a vision induced by Carcosan energy. Characters might also experience visions if they have untreated wounds from micar-originating sources, such as Noa, or Cabot if he stabs them with his micar knife. Regardless the origin, the vision should include a scene involving the Deuced Peculiar Business of the character having the vision.

If the vision comes from extended mental focus on the micar bone, it is just a brief flash of the wounded micar in Cabot's home. (Core, *Wounded Demon*) For pacing reasons you might want to reveal the micar's location: the vision then includes a flash of the street outside, including a signpost for *La Grenouille* with the frog icon, which **Culture** recognizes. In the vision of the street, yellow goo drips out of the windows of Cabot's building. It requires a Difficulty 4 **Composure** test to avoid **Shocks— Minor, Major:** Haunted/Rationality's Cruel Veil.

If the vision comes from physical contact, they see the micar as well as a scene of Notre-Dame during a service. The sound of organs echoes through the chapel and then morphs into guttural growls and whispers, near-human words. Bowed heads pop up fearfully to look for the noise's source. The doors of Notre-Dame shine sickly yellow and the building ripples and warps, stretching out to meld into a lake that flows onto the floor of the church. The water moves of its own volition, forming tendrils that spiral around people. Every movement creates a yellow haze that fills up the room until all that's left is yellow and distorted screams. That requires a Difficulty 5 **Composure** test to avoid **Shocks— Minor, Major:** Must Have Been a Hallucination/Reality Collapse.

The first two types of visions are only visual and auditory. If a vision is caused by a micar wound or by combining blood with micar bone, it attacks all five senses. The affected PC experiences this from Cabot's point of view, feeling limbs grasp them through the yellow haze in Notre-Dame, and tasting air that makes them choke. Through Cabot's perspective, they see and feel him use a knife to cut out crystallized chunks of his skin. If they fail the Composure test, they also take **Shocks— Minor, Major:** Must Have Been a Hallucination/Reality Collapse, but the Difficulty adjustment is +1 for the added immersion in their vision. If their body suffers damage in the vision, they require a Difficulty 4 **Health** test to avoid having those injuries when they come out of the vision (i.e.--a micar injury results in **Injuries—Minor, Major:** Micar Scratch/Micar Bite whereas embodying Cabot while he cuts chunks out of his skin results in **Injuries—Minor, Major:** Laceration/Flesh Wound). This vision is the same type that Cabot and Noa have in earlier scenes so to any characters watching, it looks very similar– stiffening body, face phasing between being a white mask and being flesh.

Wounded Demon

Scene Type: Conclusion
Lead-Ins: Church After Hours, Visions from the Divine

If the group visits Cabot's apartment during the day, he isn't there. They find him there at night, unless they confronted him at the doors and didn't catch him—in which case he might come in halfway through their visit.

Cabot lives on the top floor of a walk-up apartment. Picking the lock on the apartment building requires a Difficulty 3 **Sneak** test, though if they have Cabot's bag, picking the lock is not required. The lock is flimsy enough that regardless of the test's outcome, if they open the door, they just might invite some unwanted attention. Cockroaches scuttle in the grimy building's corners, zig-zagging under the investigators' shoes. Layers of dust cover the doors on the first few floors.

Intuition: It seems like most, if not all the tenants of the apartment building moved out. Since they're still receiving mail here, it happened recently. Cabot might have the entire building to himself, having chased away anyone else living here.

Cabot's door is unlocked, though there are wood bars placed over it on the outside, as if Cabot was more concerned about keeping something in than keeping something out.

On the main floor, rotting food covers all of the surfaces, infested with flies and maggots. Bones crunch underfoot– **Natural History** identifies them as coming from human and animal sources. Bits of flesh still cling to the bones. What blood didn't spill on the floor is collected in open jars around the apartment, putrefying. Some of it is smeared on the walls, as if Cabot tried to use blood and crushed micar bone to paint the landscape of Carcosa on the wall. Smeared handprints paint a lake of blood beneath black, glittering stars.

If the group enters with Cabot and they used **Steel** on him, he lets them into the apartment and then slams the door behind them and locks them in. If they used **Inspiration**, he continues on, seemingly oblivious to how dire the state of his apartment is. After sufficient time to soak in the apartment, describe to them a shuffling sound, and then an awful grating sound, like sharp stone sliding across the ground. The wounded micar appears at the door leading to the bedroom, with frayed rope tethers trailing behind it. It looks like a giant gargoyle– about the size of a crouching human. Its healthy skin is smooth, black, and shiny, reflecting light in ripples. The group can see its reflection in the micar's skin, their faces warping and distorting. Parts of its body were hacked away so it's missing one of its limbs and chunks of flesh along its back and face. Part of its cheek is missing, leaving the inside of its mouth visible, with glinting black fangs and beyond them, darkness. After a pause, it lunges at the investigators, reaching out with sharp talons, dragging its half-dead body across the ground.

Did the group break into the apartment in the middle of the night without Cabot after chasing him? This is when he bursts in, his scabs cracked and bleeding from the exertion of fleeing from them. He launches himself at them, attacking with his knife. If they followed him without his knowledge and broke in while he was still there, he emerges from behind the micar, clutching a wounded arm, and then attacks them alongside the creature.

Cabot will help them restrain the micar but fights against them if they're trying to kill it. Deciding to also kill Cabot, though it is the easiest solution and conclusively puts an end to his plan, comes with its own consequences, as he is still a human being, and a well-intentioned one, if sorely misguided.

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: Superior (Escape 3, Other 4, Kill 6)

Toll: 1

Difficulty Adjustments: -1 if fighting to restrain, aided by Cabot; +1 if Cabot fights to defend the creature (and another +1 if trying to kill Cabot)

Injuries, Minor and Major: Micar Scratch/Micar Bite (*if Cabot fights the group and it makes sense for him to dish out the Injury*: Knife Slash/Deep Stab)

Should Cabot stay alive, the clearest way to prevent his plan is to kill the micar and destroy its body, as well as any remnants of it in Cabot's apartment and Notre-Dame. With him alive, even if the micar is destroyed, there is enough micar bone in Notre-Dame already to make it a focal point of Carcosan energy. Though it may not send a violent wave through masses of people like in *Visions from the Divine*, Carcosa's influence will erode this

reality over time. In an ongoing series, this provides a good origin point for other Carcosa-catalyzed events. Allow determined players to find another way to stop this, placing appropriate obstacles in their path.

With the micar completely destroyed, you might use a coda sequence to have investigators heal their micar wounds and take the salve to the children on the bank of the Seine. The art students might want to deal with Leath or Cabot, if they're still alive, either on their own or by submitting them to the authorities. Play them both as hollow, shocked people whose core system of belief has been stripped away, and who were misled by a force much more powerful than either of them.

Should the investigators fail to defeat both Cabot and the micar, the scene in Notre-Dame from the vision in *Visions from the Divine* will come to pass. Cabot opens a gateway to Carcosa and some of the barriers between the two worlds dissolve, altering the landscape of this one with the Yellow King's alien energy. For dramatic effect, add descriptions to the scene that tie into any Deuced Peculiar Business already referenced in the scenario. Give them a single lasting image of Cabot, still sitting at his organ, halfway through playing, the micar tendrils piercing his skin. He smiles as his body quickly crystallizes.

Antagonist Reactions

Use only as needed.

Gargoyle Pack

Triggering Condition: Depending on your pacing needs, the cathedral's famed gargoyles might be mere sculptures, or creatures who act as red herrings and a source of additional danger. Cabot might misdirect them into attacking the art students. Or the players might expect this to be a gargoyle story and go up to the roof to poke at them.

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: Evenly Matched (Escape 3, Other 4, Kill 5)

Toll: 1

Injuries, Minor and Major: Gargoyle Strike/ Crushing Gargoyle Strike

Leath's Fate

Triggering Condition: The group returns to Leath's apartment building and finds it burned down, and him disappeared.

When returning home, or walking around the less-travelled areas of Paris, the group might find Leath's completely crystallized body. On further inspection, the body explodes, having gunpowder hidden underneath, triggered by their motion. The explosion sends micar shrapnel in every direction. Call for a Difficulty 5 Health test to avoid **Injuries— Minor, Major:** Micar Scratch/Micar Bite.

If your version includes a powerful Carcosan entity in this world pulling the strings, the group might find a clue here that, later in the series, points back to that entity. Otherwise, from the positioning of Leath's body, it appears that he himself laid the trap for the investigators.

HANDOUT #1: THE YELLOW SIGN

SHOCK CARDS

UNNERVED

Shock

Discard by using an Investigative ability to gain information.

AGITATED

Shock

-1 to Presence tests.
When you use an Investigative ability to gain information, roll a die. Even: discard.

A GNAWING AT THE BACK OF THE MIND

Shock

-1 to Composure tests.
When you take another Shock card, spend 1 Composure to discard this one.

THE WILL ERODES

Shock

+1 to Tolls of supernatural creatures.
When you take another Shock card, spend 1 Composure to discard this one.

UNEASE

Shock

Your next Presence or Focus test takes a -1 penalty. Then discard.

DREAD

Shock

-1 to Presence and Focus tests.
After any such test, roll a die. Even: trade for "Unease."

WITNESS TO CARNAGE

Shock

-1 to all tests.
Discard as recipient of a Push. Explain why that Push would help with this.

EXISTENCE IS A MEAT-GRINDER

Shock; Continuity

Tests take a penalty equal to the number of Shock cards you have in hand. Discard after participating in an event that restores your faith in humanity.

MUSIC OF THE NIGHT

Shock

When you are about to fight the scenario's main foe, roll a die. On an odd result, -1 to Fighting until end of scenario. Discard on a Fighting success against the scenario's main foe.

POINT OF NO RETURN

Shock

If you meet the scenario's main foe, -1 to Fighting until end of scenario. Discard on a Fighting success against the scenario's main foe.

RATTLED

Shock

Your next test takes a -1 penalty. Then discard.

A DIVERTING INDISCRETION WILL PUT THIS IN PERSPECTIVE

Shock

-1 to Presence tests. Discard by taking a risk to indulge a vice.

HAUNTED

Shock

Tests take a penalty equal to the number of Shock cards you have in hand. Discard on a successful test that aids the group against supernatural horror.

RATIONALITY'S CRUEL VEIL

Shock

All tests take a penalty equal to the number of Shock cards you have in hand, plus 1.

MUST HAVE BEEN A HALLUCINATION

Shock

-1 to Sense Trouble tests. Discard when you uncover a core clue.

REALITY COLLAPSE

Shock

-2 to Sense Trouble tests. Lose 1 Health each time you make a Push. Trade for "Must Have Been a Hallucination" on a success that restores normality to the world.

HARDENED

Shock; Continuity

When you make a ruthless choice that saves a life, spend 3 Composure to discard.

DEAD EYED STARE

Shock; Continuity

Once per session, you may make a free Intimidation Push. All PCs lose 2 Composure. When you make a ruthless choice that saves a life, roll a die. Even: trade for "Hardened."

INJURY CARDS

MICAR SCRATCH
Injury

-1 to Physical tests. A failure with a margin of 2 or more shatters the afflicted body part; this becomes a Continuity tag.
Discard at the end of next interval if not a Continuity card.
Discard by using micar salve, an antidote you can gain through investigation during the current scenario.

MICAR BITE
Injury

Each time you make a Physical test, roll a die. Odd: your body crystallizes and shatters, killing you.

GARGOYLE STRIKE
Injury

-1 to Physical and Focus tests.
At end of any interval, roll a die. Even: discard.

CRUSHING GARGOYLE STRIKE
Injury

-2 to Physical and Focus tests.
After two intervals, trade for "Gargoyle Strike."

ROUGHED UP
Injury

Lose 1 Composure.
Discard after any Physical success, or by spending 1 Athletics.

SUCKER PUNCHED
Injury

Lose 2 Health.
Roll a die; discard after that number of successes.

KNIFE SLASH

Injury

After a successful Physical test, pay 1 Health to discard.

DEEP STAB

Injury

Counts as 2 Injury cards. You can't make tests or spend Pushes. After an hour of world time, trade for "On the Mend," as recipient of a Difficulty 5 First Aid success.

LINGERING COUGH

Injury

Lose 1 Health point (if available) every time you test a non-Focus ability. At the end of any interval, roll a die. Even: discard.

SCARRED LUNGS

Injury

Lose 2 Health points and 1 Fighting and 1 Riding point (as available) every time you test an ability other than Preparedness. At the end of scenario, roll a die. On a 1, this becomes a Continuity card.

LINGERING COUGH

Injury

Lose 1 Health point (if available) every time you test a non-Focus ability. At the end of any interval, roll a die. Even: discard.

SCARRED LUNGS

Injury

Lose 2 Health points and 1 Fighting and 1 Riding point (as available) every time you test an ability other than Preparedness. At the end of scenario, roll a die. On a 1, this becomes a Continuity card.

LACERATION

Injury

When called on to make a Physical test, you may choose to take a -2 penalty on the test and then discard this card.

FLESH WOUND

Injury

-1 to non-Focus tests. Trade for "Laceration" after any non-Focus success.

PARIS

CHARACTER SHEET

Name Ainsley Stanfield

Player

Field Architecture Student

Drive Loathes Disorder

INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

Architecture
Art History
Officialdom
Technology

PUSHES (2):

GENERAL ABILITIES

Athletics (Physical)	3
Composure (Presence)	6
Fighting (Physical)	5
First Aid (Focus)	0
Health (Physical)	3
Mechanics (Focus)	6
Preparedness (Presence)	5
Riding (Physical)	1
Sense Trouble (Presence)	2
Sneaking (Focus)	2

I Rely On

I Seek To Protect

That Deuced Peculiar Business

Vivid, recurring dreams of the Tower of Babel. But the tower is made of masks and skulls.

THE YELLOW KING ROLEPLAYING GAME

PARIS

CHARACTER SHEET

Name Beverley Hayes

Player

Field Belle-Lettrist

Drive Literary Inspiration

INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

Belle-Lettres
Culture
History
Reassurance
Research

PUSHES (2): ○ ○

GENERAL ABILITIES

Athletics (Physical) 4
Composure (Presence) 6
Fighting (Physical) 6
First Aid (Focus) 0
Health (Physical) 3
Mechanics (Focus) 2
Preparedness (Presence) 4
Riding (Physical) 2
Sense Trouble (Presence) 4
Sneaking (Focus) 2

I Rely On

I Seek To Protect

That Deuced Peculiar Business

Can't shake the feeling that I wrote,
or will have written, the play
everyone is so fussed about.

THE YELLOW KING ROLEPLAYING GAME

PARIS

CHARACTER SHEET

Name Leigh Barnett

Player

Field Landscape Painter

Drive Favors Practical Action Over Idle Talk

INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

Art History
Inspiration
Natural History
Negotiation

I Rely On

I Seek To Protect

That Deuced Peculiar Business

Can't stop painting image of a sinister black lake below a white sky dotted with black stars.

PUSHES (2): ○ ○

GENERAL ABILITIES

Athletics (Physical)	8
Composure (Presence)	6
Fighting (Physical)	6
First Aid (Focus)	3
Health (Physical)	4
Mechanics (Focus)	0
Preparedness (Presence)	0
Riding (Physical)	2
Sense Trouble (Presence)	1
Sneaking (Focus)	3

THE YELLOW KING ROLEPLAYING GAME

PARIS

CHARACTER SHEET

Name Dorian Pearl

Player

Field Poet

Drive Protective of Others

INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

Bonhomie
Demimonde
Intuition
Occultism
Poetry

I Rely On

I Seek To Protect

That Deuced Peculiar Business

You won't look in mirrors. To often, standing behind you, you see your twin, who died saving you from drowning on your 11th birthday.

PUSHES (2): ○ ○

GENERAL ABILITIES

Athletics (Physical)	3
Composure (Presence)	7
Fighting (Physical)	5
First Aid (Focus)	6
Health (Physical)	3
Mechanics (Focus)	0
Preparedness (Presence)	1
Riding (Physical)	2
Sense Trouble (Presence)	2
Sneaking (Focus)	3

THE YELLOW KING ROLEPLAYING GAME

PARIS

CHARACTER SHEET

Name Lesley Gibson

Player

Field Portrait Painter

Drive Oblivious to Danger

INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

Assess Honesty
Fashion
Painting
Photography
Society

I Rely On

I Seek To Protect

That Deuced Peculiar Business

Someone keeps stealing your sketchbooks, then returning them later with all of the eyes of your subjects poked out.

PUSHES (2): ○ ○

GENERAL ABILITIES

Athletics (Physical)	5
Composure (Presence)	8
Fighting (Physical)	6
First Aid (Focus)	3
Health (Physical)	5
Mechanics (Focus)	0
Preparedness (Presence)	1
Riding (Physical)	4
Sense Trouble (Presence)	0
Sneaking (Focus)	0

THE YELLOW KING ROLEPLAYING GAME

PARIS

CHARACTER SHEET

Name Sandy van Steen

Player

Field Sculptor

Drive Thrill Seeker

INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

Art History
Military History
Miscellany
Sculpture
Steel

I Rely On

I Seek To Protect

That Deuced Peculiar Business

Your bronze statue of Salome had blood on its lips the other morning.

PUSHES (2): ○ ○

GENERAL ABILITIES

Athletics (Physical)	6
Composure (Presence)	6
Fighting (Physical)	7
First Aid (Focus)	2
Health (Physical)	3
Mechanics (Focus)	0
Preparedness (Presence)	2
Riding (Physical)	3
Sense Trouble (Presence)	2
Sneaking (Focus)	2

THE YELLOW KING ROLEPLAYING GAME

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