

# CONSPIRACY

A Scenario (Part One of Three) by Alfred Nuñez Jr.

## GM Notes

Conspiracy is designed for characters in their second or third career (total EP of 1,200 - 1,600). Minimally, one or two characters should be able to read. Though not required, *Marienburg: Sold down the River* would be invaluable. Some skills and spells can be found in *Apocrypha 2* or *Realms of Sorcery*.

Edward van Rugkil was a gifted merchant whose business instincts and acumen were so honed that he raised his family fortune from the modest inheritance to a level so high that his appointment to the Directorate of Marienburg was all but assured. Then four years ago, Edward and his wife Anna were brutally murdered in their mansion. While the City Watch (commonly called the "Black Caps") investigated the murders, tragedy fell upon the two younger van Rugkil children. Willem was murdered in his own home and Elisabeth vanished without trace. Only Alfons and Caroline remained of the van Rugkils. Within days, the Watch arrested Caroline and her husband, Herman Bokherder, for the murders.

At the trial, eyewitnesses placed Caroline and Herman in the van Rugkil mansion during the night of the murder. Evidence was also gathered at their townhouse implicating both. Though they proclaimed their innocence, the magistrate found them guilty and sentenced the two to be executed within the week on Rijkers' Isle.

Although enraged at the murder of his family, Alfons van Rugkil used some of the fortune he inherited to persuade the magistrate to reduce his sister's sentence to life. It was the least he could do for his only remaining flesh and blood. No such pity did Alfons have for Herman and he was dragged from his cell to the hangman's scaffold. He continued to shriek his innocence to all who

were there and the gods that weren't as the trapdoor opened beneath his feet.

## The Plot

The reality of the van Rugkil tragedy is very different. Lacking his father's abilities, while nursing a lust for wealth and power, Alfons planned the murder of his parents and the undoing of his siblings. Through intermediaries, now dead, Alfons was able to contact the Skaven Warlord Skweech of the Clan Scruten and arrangements were made for Skaven assassins to slay three of the van Rugkils. He would then frame Caroline and her husband. Alfons' plan for his younger sister was far different. Harboring strong incestuous feelings towards Elisabeth, Alfons could not bring himself to have her murdered. He did know that leaving her alive in Marienburg was not in his best interest. Thus, he arranged for her kidnapping by a slaver who would subsequently sell her in Araby.

talented employees left Alfons' employ. The Directorate position fell out of Alfons' grasp as his fortune dwindled. Alfons believed that the Directorate was behind his misfortune, conspiring to deny his rightful seat of power.

One night, Alfons van Rugkil met with Skweech to outline his new plan. A plan, Alfons held, that was brilliant in its simplicity. First, Skaven assassins would murder members of Marienburg's various gangs while leaving evidence implicating their rivals. This would lead to gang war that (with additional Skaven help) would escalate to fever pitch. Eventually, the Watch would be sucked into this maelstrom of violence. With the Black Caps overwhelmed the Directorate would be left vulnerable, even with their own private armies. When all looked bleak, Alfons would then lead his own army (which he has been building outside Marienburg for months) to re-establish order. In this way he expects to be proclaimed Staadtholder by a grateful

**"AS FORETOLD BY THE PROPHET  
URLAN HEARTRENDER, LET THE TIME  
OF MURDERS BEGIN."**

Alfons soon demonstrated all too clearly the numerous differences between him and his late father. At first, the momentum of the businesses that his father created continued to be profitable and covered Alfons' lack of knowledge and foresight. Opportunity after opportunity was squandered and many

populace (remember, only Alfons thinks this plan is a sound one). As compensation for their services, the Skaven would be welcome to enslave any of the surviving Directors and their households - as well as any unfortunates who happened along. The calculating Skaven Warlord readily agreed.

## The Best Laid Plans of Mice and Men...

Although unconvinced that the greedy Human's plan will work, the Skaven Warlord sees a golden opportunity to pay back his immense debts to Clan Skryre (which always seems to demand a large number of subjects for its experiments). He will be of little use to the Skaven afterwards and the Warlord is certain that van Rugkil would never honour any agreement. Perhaps the Horned Rat will have use for him as a sacrifice.

In the midst of all this plotting, there are two other groups for whom the breakdown of order will be seen as a sign their time has come. Unknown to van Rugkil and the Skaven, the first of these is the Cult of the Scorpion. Led by Bram Scherplemmet, High Priest and Chief Assassin of Kháine, the cult is awaiting a special shipment that will enable them to institute a reign of murder. The anarchy in the streets will be considered a sign that the "Time of Murders", foretold in the *Prophecies of Urian Heartrender*, is about to dawn.

The second group consists of a number of idealistic students and agitators - the Orde Democratisch Samenleving or ORDESA. They are led by Walewijn Droomer, a gifted orator whose radical views regarding the election of government leaders by the common people is considered by many to be extreme. Droomer will take the view that the disintegration of order in the streets is indicative of the corruption and impurity of the current establishment. Only through his vision, Walewijn believes, can the common people rise up and overthrow the yoke of oppression. Further, he embraces the idea that purging the current system can only be achieved if its leaders are removed.

Through his spy, Reiner Derschakal, Alfons van Rugkil became aware of ORDESA. He saw the radical group as another potential ally in creating the chaos in the streets he needed to see his plans through. Through Reiner, Alfons began covertly providing funds to help Droomer realise his dreams of rebellion.

## Spinning out of Control

Just to add more complexity to this little drama, dear Elisabeth van Rugkil secretly returned to Marienburg six months ago. It is been over four years since her brother turned Elisabeth over to the slavers. In that time, the youngest of the van Rugkil siblings found mentors who have taught her the skills necessary to avenge the deaths of her family.

She also learned that her brother's bid to win a seat on the Directorate failed. Knowing how her brother reacts to setbacks, Elisabeth is determined to end his schemes and extract a measure of revenge.

Such grand plans take time to unveil themselves; Elisabeth knew that she wasn't quite ready to reveal her presence and she

adopted several aliases in order to cover her tracks. One of her disguises - as the courtesan Sara - allowed her to roam about the streets of the better neighbourhoods of Marienburg observing the nocturnal activities of a number of households. In fact, her brief dalliance with the elderly widower, Johann van der Groot, allowed Elisabeth to observe

## Rumours & News

Initially, rumours of the impending doom will be sketchy and inaccurate. As time moves forward, things become (unfortunately) increasingly clear. Samples of the initial rumours are listed below by career class. Note that some of the following information is based on fact. These are marked by an asterisk (\*).

### Academics

1. "In my day, students respected authority and hard work. Now, they look for the easy way out and claim hard workers are exploiters of the downtrodden. What hogwash!"
2. "If something isn't done, the rich will get richer and us all poorer. I tell you, it's the merchants who are running the city and writing the laws. Naturally the ones they like are those that line their pockets. They're no better than the nobles we got rid of. Trouble is, people are afraid of the sacrifice needed to change things."
3. "There's an exhibit of ancient artefacts at the University. I heard that the artefacts are from an ancient kingdom of Araby. I heard that something was stolen about four nights ago. They say the object is cursed and no-one wants to talk about it."\* **The Stolen Artefact**

### Rangers

1. "Check at Elfgate Bridge. They usually post a notice for a guide there whenever a group of Elves from overseas wishes to tour The Empire's forests. Pay's good but you have to put up with those snobs and oddballs."
2. "A friend of mine in the garrison told me that several strangers who entered through the Oostenpoort Gate last week were Imperial Witch Hunters from around Middenheim. He didn't know why they had come to Marienburg. Personally, I don't trust their kind. They're too paranoid."
3. "Year after year those pesky Marsh Flies swarm over everything travelling through

the marshes. Except this season. There's hardly any of them. Almost like they're waiting for something to happen. Kind of creepy, really."

### Rogues

1. "I knows yuv felt the tension. I tells ya that even a dull knife can cut through it. Sumpthin's gonna happen and then all hell's gonna break loose."
2. "Did ya 'ear that two o' the Guild's boys got whacked last night? Some say that it was the work of those flea-bitten Bretonnians."\* **Murder in the Streets**
3. "Something strange is going on hereabouts. Hear tell that there are more strangers lurking about in the shadows than normal."\* **Streets of Suiddock**
4. "I hear tell that some secret shipment is due to arrive in Riddra from one of the far off Imperial Provinces some time soon. They say no one boards that ship without its owners say so. Otherwise, a long stay on Rijker's is guaranteed."\* **The Mysterious Shipment**

### Warriors

1. "If they were recruiting seamen for fighting, I'd say that pirates and wreckers were active again. Why would anybody be recruiting mercs? Who's the enemy? I heard that The Empire has its own problems. Bretonnia? Not a chance. Those pompous dandies would rather strut than fight. Bloody peacocks!"
2. "Sure the rich merchants have their own private army. Used in other lands fighting for their master's business interests. Dangerous work, but it pays well I hear, and you get to see the world. I'd rather stay here."
3. "There's gonna be a tournament at Monniker's this Festag. 'Ear tell it's winner take all. I was gonna enter. Probably would've won if not fer this kink I 'ave in me neck."



## PART ONE TIMELINE

Adv. Day Previous to adventure start	Week Day	Event	Section
		Artefact from ancient Araby stolen from Baron Hendryk's College of Navigation and Sea Magicks	Stolen Artefact
1	Bezahlttag	Adventure begins. PCs approached by Thijs Bockarts. Gang War heats up. Either this night or following two nights, PCs witness a murder. Antiquarian Kaspar Gibberig killed. Witch Hunter Rutger Nachtrabe arrives from Middenheim.	Rumours/News A Day in the Life Murder in the Streets Streets of the Suiddock  Stolen Artefact The Witch Hunter Cometh
2	Guilstag (Konistag)	A ship from Sylvania arrives. Berths in Riddra until the afternoon of Angestag. Either this night or the following, the PCs witness an unusual kidnapping.	Mysterious Shipment / Dark Warehouse Streets of the Suiddock
3	Angestag	Body of Kaspar Gibberig discovered and Exotic Curios boarded up.	Stolen Artefact
4	Festag	Distribution of radical pamphlets in the Suiddock. Celebration / sacrifice at Crimson Claw cabaret.	Enter the Crimson Claw

the neighbouring estate of her brother without fear of discovery.

It was during this time that Elisabeth was able to learn of Alfons' continuing meetings with the Skaven by spying on the Warlock Engineer. Besides, Elisabeth's objective was more important than killing the Skaven and alerting others that they have been uncovered.

Elisabeth was fairly certain that time was running out. As fate would have it, Johann had passed away in his sleep that night. Elisabeth could not risk losing this "safehouse". With some sorrow, she buried the old man in his garden and prayed to the God of Death to allow Johann to join his late wife in Mórr's realm. She promised that when her brother was dead, she would arrange a proper burial with the Temple of Mórr.

Another alias – as Nadine Zomer – allowed Elisabeth to roam the Suiddock looking for someone of minor importance, whom she could coerce into doing her bidding. Thijs Boekarts (see below) was one of her father's bookkeepers who had found like employment with the League of Gentlemen

Entrepreneurs. The vain little man with a cowardly streak was easily seduced and, thus, the perfect patsy for Elisabeth. One of Thijs' tasks was to be Elisabeth's go-between with a group of so-called "adventurers" who would have no conceivable association with the van Rugkil family and could be counted on to do her dirty work.

### Starting the Adventure

#### Hook, Line, and Sinker

The manner in which the PCs become involved in the unfolding drama will depend upon their respective backgrounds. If they are outsiders (any place outside the Suiddock), then they will depend upon overhearing rumours and news (see pg. 30). Natives of Suiddock will hear the same information from their contacts or friends. A good source of information are the various taverns about the Suiddock. One such source is described under **Shipwrecked Tavern**. In any case, PCs with initiative will follow-up on some of the more promising rumours and news.

Finally, the adventure begins on Bezahlttag.

#### Old Man Houser's Boarding House

The PCs will need somewhere to reside in Marienburg and Old Man Houser's is just the place. Reasonably priced at 1 Gu per room per week, it is a clean establishment located on Luydenhoek Isle in Suiddock near the Draaienbrug Swing Bridge. Excluding his private quarters in the back of the ground floor, there are eight rooms available for guests on the top two floors. Each room has a single door with a simple lock and is kept clean by Old Man Houser and his daughter Ingrid.

To his neighbours, Houser is a kindly, bespectacled grandfather who is a little hard of hearing and near-sighted. He is protective of his daughter and boarders, doting on them as if they were innocent children. Fact is, Houser is a cagey old bird who misses absolutely nothing. Moreover, Houser is one of the more important and accurate gossips in this part of the Suiddock as well as an informant to the League of Gentlemen Entrepreneurs. Unless the PCs act like boorish braggarts, he will not initially be concerned with their activities. As the PCs get deeper into their investigations, Houser

(and the League) will become more interested.

There are two other boarders residing at Old Man Houder's. One of these is Jean-Paul Mainsoyeux, a handsome, struggling artist from the Bretonnian city of Couronne. Very shy, Jean-Paul is not one to socialise with the PCs, preferring to stay in his room. Once a week, however, Jean-Paul will slip out for the night and quietly returns in the pre-dawn hours exhausted. The second boarder is Ernst Erzähler, an Imperial émigré who is (at least on the social level) the opposite of Jean-Paul. There is nothing Ernst loves more than an audience (especially a captive one) to whom he can tell stories of his adventuring youth. If asked, Ernst will be unable to support any of his tales with evidence. Not that it matters as Ernst sincerely believes that his recollections of what occurred are accurate. Even given his exaggerated view of himself, Ernst is a fairly reliable source of rumours and news.

### Shipwrecked Tavern

Located three buildings away from the Boarding House, the Shipwrecked Tavern is not quite a dive but it is far from the plush taverns one can find on Hightower Isle across the Niederbrug Bridge. Its ale and wine are passable (especially if one is drunk) and its whisky is akin to rotgut. The Shipwrecked Tavern is just the place for the occasional brawl and frequent gossip. Even with its low ceiling, the common room is large enough to accommodate fifty patrons. It is poorly lit and the booths next to the far wall are enshrouded in gloom; just the place for informants to meet their employers. The upper floor is the residence of Olaf Blodhaand, the owner and bouncer.

Olaf is a brute of a man, quick to laughter and slow to anger. When he does lose his temper, he is violently difficult to handle. Rumour says that wolf's blood courses through his veins while others see him as embodying the battle madness of the fabled Norse Berserker. In any event, most of the patrons clear out until Olaf's anger abates (usually determined by sending an outsider in to order a pint and watching Olaf's reactions).

To work for a man like Olaf Blodhaand, one must keep their wits about them as well as their courage. This description fits the Estalian barkeep, Manuel Hernandez y Martinez Durango de Magritta, well. He is a wiry little man who fancies himself a

### Giving Chase in WFRP (Optional Rules)

There are occasions, especially in urban settings like this scenario, where player characters find that an individual with information that is needed attempts to run away from them. At times, the GM weighs whether allowing the PCs to catch the informant advances the plot line or not and decides the outcome after due consideration. While this approach keeps the game moving, it can be frustrating for some if their characters do not get a chance to run down the fleeing individual.

If you wish to run a chase, I suggest using a series of **I** tests with proper modifiers. The **M** score of both pursuer and quarry should also be considered. If the pursuer has the higher **M**, then she has a reasonably good chance of catching her quarry assuming that nothing untoward happens to her (like a bad slip resulting in a twisted ankle). If the quarry has the higher **M**, then he has the better chance of escaping. When the **M** scores are the same, the **I** tests become so much more important.

Assuming the same **M** rate for illustration purposes, if both pursuer and quarry succeed passing their respective **I** test (with whatever modifiers the GM deems appropriate), then the chase continues with no ground lost or gained. If both fail, then the relative positions should be judged on how badly they failed. A failure of 30 or less should mean that the character lost some speed by bumping into other people, being knocked slightly off-balance by a lamppost or bench, etc. Failures of more than 30 should be indicative of getting knocked down by an obstacle or losing one's footing and falling down with an injury (no more than 1D2 **W**, irrespective of armour or Toughness is recommended). If one succeeds and the other fails an **I** test, then the one who failed loses ground.

GMs could add the element of the pursuer having to pass an **Observe** test to spot her quarry should the former fail the **I** test while the quarry succeeds.

The GM will need to decide how long to run the chase before the quarry is either captured or escapes.

swashbuckler and ladies man. To fellow Estalians, Manuel's a filthy little rat whose sliminess is offensive. Thus, they bestowed upon him the nickname, "El Cochino" ("The Dirty One").

Olaf employs Sergei Stoilensky of Praag, barkeep and bouncer. Though not quite Olaf's size, he is still a man to be respected as anyone who frequents Monniker's Pit Fighting School can tell.

Buying drinks is one way to get information, but can get very expensive. Another method that innovative adventurers can use is to trade information. Though a whole lot cheaper than buying drinks or bribery, the PCs will usually get information less worthy than they provide. Don't give away anything valuable at little cost. Make the PCs earn the information they desire. The accuracy of the information will depend upon whom they ask. A downtrodden drunkard is hardly going to have anything worthwhile.

Olaf or Sergei will refer anyone looking for accurate information to Pieter Vluogoog, known as a very reliable source of information. Pieter's price is relatively high for a gossip: either a pricey three-course meal with Norse mead or highly reliable information. Pieter is very good at

differentiating good information from bad so the PCs need to be prepared to make a good exchange.

In contrast to Pieter, Anton Loslippen, a local ratcatcher, is a gossip whose information is dubious but cheap. A tankard or two of ale is all he asks. Most of the locals know Anton for his wild stories and conspiracy theories. With absolute certainty, Anton knows that there are large frog-like beings who are behind all of Marienburg's troubles.

### Act One Blood Ties

As the scenario begins Alfons van Rugkil's plan is reaching the final stages. The Skaven are continuing to murder various gangmembers and planting evidence to the guilt of their rivals. Meanwhile, mercenaries are arriving at his compound in Goudberg.

Across town one of van Rugkil's loyal servants, Reiner Derschakal, is about to put an end to Thijs Boekarts, an old employee of the van Rugkils. Boekarts has been poking his nose around recently and Reiner is making sure there are no loose ends. However, Boekarts is working for Elisabeth



van Rugkil and she has ordered him to hire a group of adventurers to look into the gang killings, and other matters, to see if they are related to her brother's activities.

In distant tunnels Skaven forces are approaching the city under the leadership of Warlord Skweech. Little does he know that his second in command, Rantok, wants the mission to fail for his own ends.

Meanwhile, the Khainite group, the Cult of the Scorpion, is planning its own trouble. The remains of the long dead Klara von Teufelheim are on their way to Marienburg for the Cult have discovered a way to return her to (un)life. This, they believe, will herald the long prophesied Time of Murders. To ensure they can complete their ceremony they steal the Al-Qantram Shalem Fetish of Khaine from the University. The ceremony to raise von Teufelheim is to take place at the Crimson Claw, a club now under ownership of the Cult. They also murder

Kaspar Glibberig, the only non-cult person who knows its full powers.

In a small room in Tempelwijk, Walewijn Droomer is putting the last touches to the manifesto of his revolutionary group ORDESA. He is being funded by Alfons van Rugkil and his sponsor wants action soon.

Against this approaching maelstrom, a few forces of good are gathering. Rutger Nachtrabe, a witch-hunter of Mórr, has arrived led by an omen from his god. Sergeant Kuilstier of the Black Caps is investigating the gang murders and beginning to realise things are not as they seem. Last but not least, the PCs are given the chance to save Marienburg.

### A Day in the Life

As the PCs are enjoying a meal or drinks at the Shipwrecked Tavern (or another local tavern), a moderately well dressed man approaches them. "Good day. I apologise for

the interruption, but may I have a word with you?" He sits down before the PCs can reply or ask questions. He continues, "I am Thijs Boekarts and I have need of your services." He looks around nervously and then says in a low voice, "I understand you have considerable talents and skills that are useful in discretionary matters. I am prepared to pay you very well to handle a rather delicate task. Unfortunately, this is not a place where I can speak freely. If you're interested, and I pray you are, please meet me at my flat in two hours. It's at 39 Natsteen Straat, room 6. Now I must go." With that, Thijs jumps up and hurries off before the PCs are able to reply.

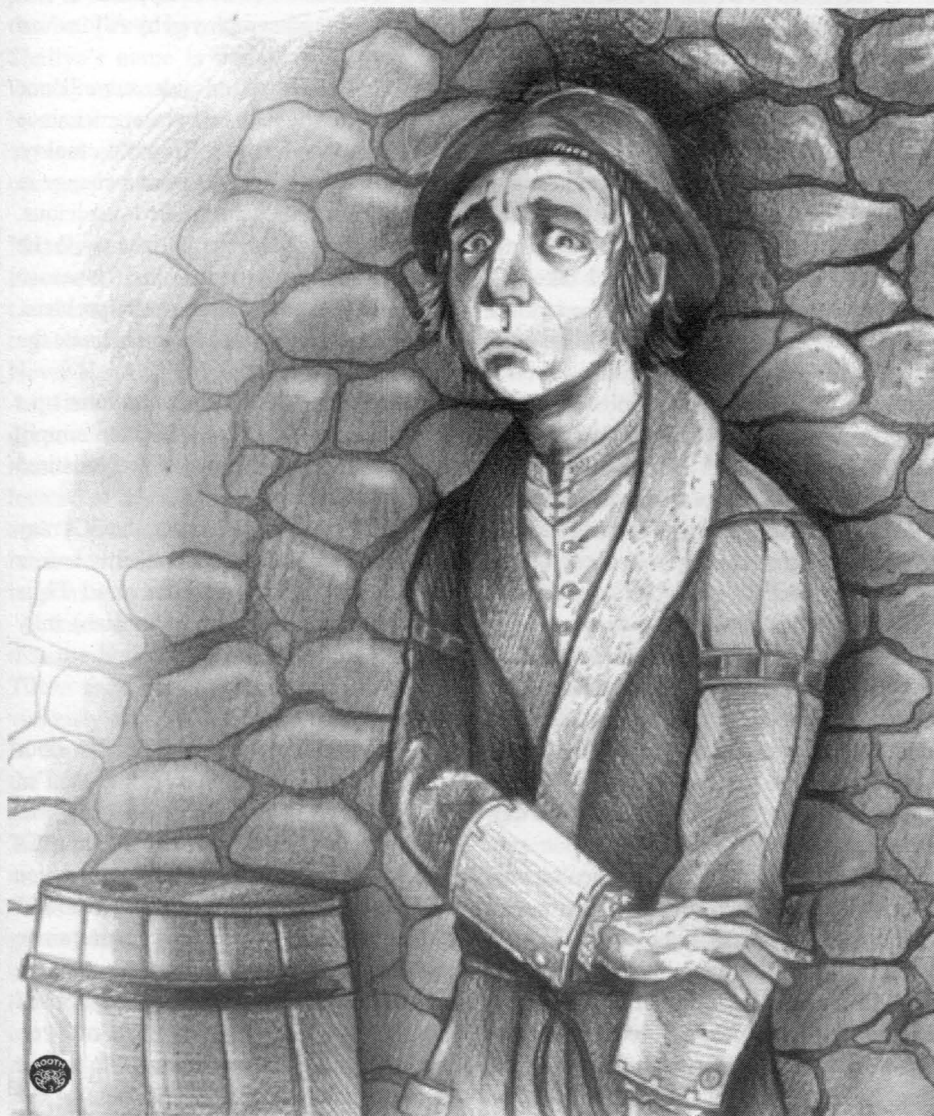
Being what they are, the PCs may decide to scramble after Thijs in the hopes of following him. PCs moving quickly should pass an **I** test to avoid falling over their chairs or one another in their haste. The only opportunity any PC has to spot Thijs before he disappears down an alley requires the PC to pass an **Observe** test once they get outside the tavern.

Should the PCs decide to chase Thijs, the GM may decide to use the Chase Rules provided (see **Giving Chase** sidebar). Thijs has **M** 4 and **I** 43.

PCs who succeed in following Thijs are not alone. Those with the *Sixth Sense* skill realise this at once. Unfortunately, they will not be able to discern who is following them. Fearing that he is being pursued, Thijs hurries down the dark alleys and narrow streets that characterise this part of Marienburg. Shaken by his fears, Thijs hopes to lose his pursuer.

If the PCs went directly to his flat, they will wait for over an hour before the fearful Thijs appears. Looking around nervously, he invites them to accompany him upstairs. He hurries ahead of them and fumbles with the keys before finally managing to unlock the door.

"Please be seated," Thijs tells the PCs as he motions to some chairs around a table. "I need a drink. Just to calm my nerves before I can put forth my proposal to you." Thijs walks to another table where a decanter of dark brownish-red liquid sits by a small glass. Quickly, Thijs pours then drinks the beverage, "Ahhhh, that's better. Good brandy is the elixir of the gods, I tell you. Now to business. My life is endang...". Thijs swiftly grabs his throat and gives off a choking sound. His eyes widen as he realises that he has been poisoned. Dropping the glass and bottle (which shatters), Thijs looks at the PCs with pleading eyes. He then convulses before



collapsing on the floor dead. PCs with *Brewing*, *Cook*, or *Prepare Poison* skills may detect the scent (or taste) of something foreign to the remnants of brandy on a successful **Int** test. A second successful **Int**+10 test by a character with *Prepare Poison* can determine the poison as Nightshade.

As the amount of poison used is equal to two doses, the PCs will be unable to do anything to save Thijs unless they have access to a *Cure Poison* spell. If cast straight away, Thijs will be drowsy for a time.

Should the PCs try to stop Thijs from rapidly downing the brandy, allow them an **I** test to succeed. Should they fail, they are unable to save Thijs from his fate. Should they succeed and the poison is detected, Thijs will thank them profusely.

**If they save Thijs:** Once he has gathered his wits, Thijs will quickly come to the conclusion that things are worse than he assumed and immediate flight from Marienburg necessary. Somebody wants him dead and he's not sticking around to find out who. "I'll talk as I pack, if you don't mind. A war is brewing between factions in the city, which is bad for business. I've had a recent meeting with a few of my... contacts about the situation. We suspect that some other party is involved in inciting this unpleasantness. While I'm not in a position to actually do something about it officially, I have to do something. That's where you come in, if you're willing. I can advance you each fifteen Guilders and pay you an additional sixty-five each upon you gathering enough evidence to identify and expose these culprits. I need to get out quickly but you can send word upriver to Kalkaat. The innkeeper at the Hog and the Weasel Tavern will know where to find me."

Finishing his packing, Thijs turns to the PCs and says, "There are two rumours that might be related. The first has to do with a shipment that's expected to arrive within a day or so from The Empire. You might have to nose about the dock area. The second thing is the theft of some artefact from Hendryk's a few nights ago. I can't really give you any further information as to do so would needlessly compromise my employers. That is not a wise thing. It would be safer for you to remain ignorant of them. Still, I suspect there will be some danger. Right. Are you willing to do this for me? If so, I need your signature or mark on this." Thijs hands the

PCs a contract. PCs with the *Read/Write* skill can read the following (Player Handout One):

*We, the undersigned, have agreed to undertake the task as laid forth by Mijnheer Thijs Boekarts of uncovering the party responsible for commencing the conflict that is disrupting the business of the major Suiddock interests. Evidence of their identity and involvement will be collected and represented to Mijnheer Thijs Boekarts so that he can take further action with his employer. In compensation, we, the undersigned, will receive an advancement of fifteen Guilders each with an additional sixty-five to be paid to each upon completion of this task.*

Once the PCs have signed or fixed their mark, Thijs places the contract in his bag. He then walks over to his desk in the far corner and unlocks it (CR 5) with one of the keys he carries on a chain. From the top drawer, Thijs pulls out another key and tells the PCs to wait a moment. Thijs then walks over to another room in the flat where he slides the rug from the middle of the room. Thijs then lifts a loose floorboard to reveal a locked strong box. Opening it, he doles out the promised advance. The remaining guilders he stuffs in his purse. "I take my leave of you now, so if you would be so kind to close the door as you depart."

He will not reveal his employer nor know much more than he is telling. Moreover, Thijs is rather anxious to get out of town quickly and quietly. Should the PCs be reluctant to take the job, Thijs looks somewhat dejected and says simply, "I guess I misjudged you, my apologies for wasting your time. I trust you can see your way out." If he gave them the money, Thijs demands its return. If the PCs refuse, then Thijs lets them leave with it. There should be time in the near future when he can inform his employer of the PCs' theft of the League's funds (Suiddock natives will know The League of Gentlemen Entrepreneurs by other names, see **Murder in the Streets**).

**If Thijs dies:** Should Thijs die a search will yield a key chain with several keys (one of which opens the desk) and a pouch with 12 Gu and 20 shillings. Searching the room the PCs will find nothing of interest unless they check in the drawers of the desk. On top of the stack of paper, is a sheet of paper signed by a N. Zomer noting "Unique cargo due to

arrive from eastern Stirland and Artefact stolen from University. Are they related to the troubles plaguing Suiddock?" In addition, there is a card with the words, "Change in ownership of Crimson Claw Cabaret. Is the new owner on the League's payroll yet?" PCs with the *Read/Write* skill must pass an **Int** (+10 for *Forgery*) to notice that the card is written in the same handwriting as the note. Most of the rest of the materials are of a mundane nature.

A rather unusual medallion can also be found jutting out from beneath the desk on a successful **Search** test. It is in the shape of a tulip with the letters "AvR" etched upon its centre. Unless the PCs are well versed in the more obscure heraldry of the minor merchant houses of Marienburg (if native to city then allow a -20 modifier to a *Heraldry* test) they will not recognize the symbolism as belonging to the House of van Rugkils. The medallion was accidentally dropped by Reiner Derschakal (who re-appears in Act Three), an assassin employed by Alfons van Rugkil.

Reiner has had Boekarts under surveillance off and on for the past two years, ever since the bookkeeper left van Rugkil's employ. Only recently did Reiner notice a change in behaviour and habits that looked suspicious. Though Reiner did note a dalliance with (he assumed) a prostitute, the assassin discounted her as a source of the problem. So, the decision was made to assassinate the bookkeeper.

A second successful **Search** test turns up a screwed up bit of paper. The note simply states in a small block print, "Have you hired them yet? NZ."

Having done all they can here, the PCs may decide to depart quickly and silently before they are discovered near the dead Thijs Boekarts. Some (the more foolish) may decide to seek out the Watch.

### Leaving Thijs

As they leave, an old lady opens her door down the hall from Thijs' flat. "Oh, I'm terribly sorry," says the woman, who will introduce herself as Greta should the PCs politely ask. "I was hoping you were that nice young lady friend of Mijnheer Boekarts. I wanted to ask her if they had plans since Mijnheer Boekarts is a shy young man. Do you know if they have? Really, I'm surprised that he hasn't even introduced me yet. Goodness, these young people are so private about their affairs, especially those of the



heart. Ah, I can see in your eyes that you're curious about the lady. Young men, you're so easy to read. I can see why. Such beautiful dark hair and a fine figure. Good for at least four, maybe five children. She does need to get on with her life I daresay, as she's not getting any younger. But she has good breeding - such pride and confidence. You know, she reminded me of myself when I was her age. By the way, how is Mijnheer Boekarts? He seems so nervous these days."

This may be the PCs' opportunity to escape. Greta is a lonely old lady and gossip who will continue to talk to the PCs. After she's finished prying about Thijs, she'll turn her attention to the PCs. If the PCs engage her in conversation, she will work her way into asking them very personal and embarrassing (and perhaps cruel) questions. For example, Greta asks a female PC, "So, you've been travelling around with these men for sometime, eh dearie? Which of them do you plan to settle down with? None? How can that be? [Turning to the male PCs] What in Shallya's name is wrong with you men? Don't you see that this lovely lady's life will be meaningless without a good husband and several children? Or, do you prefer the company of small boys?"

### Murder in the Streets

Known affectionately as "The League of Gentlemen Entrepreneurs", this Suiddock organization is also called the "Guild We've Never Heard Of" or simply, "The League." As the adventure opens, the locals have discovered the bodies of two brutally murdered members of The League. Evidence located at the scene implicated Bretonnian and Tilean gangs in perpetrating these heinous crimes. Word of the connection is beginning to spread.

Unknown to most Suiddockers is the fact that the bodies of several Bretonnian and Tilean gang members have also turned up viciously slain in their respective quarters. In the Bretonnian case, evidence points to the involvement of the League and a Tilean gang in the murders. With respect to the Tileans, both the Bretonnians and the League are implicated.

PCs following up on the murders will not get much more than rumours of a potential move by either the Bretonnians or Tileans (or both) to encroach upon The League's territory. Wild speculation on the reasons for this sudden move runs the spectrum.

Should the PC approach a Watchman on

the streets, they must make a **Fel** test. Failure results in the Watch informing them to "move along" and "mind your own business". If successful, then the PCs are referred to Watch Sergeant Reinbert Kuilstier at the Suiddock Watch Barracks near the Draaienbrug Swing Bridge on Sikkeleiland Isle. Finding the Barracks is relatively easy. All Suiddockers know its location and will provide directions for a small fee (a couple of shillings are typical). Getting into the Barracks is also relatively easy. Seeing Sergeant Kuilstier is not.

The Duty Watchman will ask that the PCs identify themselves and state their business. If the PCs are willing to wait about a week or so, they can schedule an appointment with the Duty Watchman. The only way they will get to see Kuilstier without an appointment is by greasing the palm of the Duty Watchman and successfully passing a **Bribe** test. Any bribe less than a Guilder will result in a -10 modifier to **Fel** (-25 modifier if offered less than 10/-). Likewise, offering more than 5 GU will result in a modifier of -10 (too much money arouses suspicion). If the **Bribe** test is failed, the Duty Watchman will strongly suggest that the PCs leave. As this is the main Watch Barracks in the Suiddock, there is more than enough Watch available to ensure that any trouble caused by the PCs is brutally quashed. To add further insult, troublemakers may find themselves fined up to 10 GU or jailed for the night in a cold, dank holding cell.

Should the PCs successfully bribe their way in, the Duty Watchman will point them to Kuilstier's office. There they will find Sergeant Kuilstier at his desk reviewing some papers. These papers are sketches of dead men with slashes and other bodily wounds. After a brief moment, Kuilstier will place the pictures down and inquire after the PCs' name and business. Should the PCs (foolishly) reveal themselves as adventurers, Kuilstier will tell them, "Your kind is not needed here. I'll assume that since you found your way into my office, you can find your way out." PCs wanting to help will have to convince Sergeant Kuilstier of their sincerity and ability. Test vs. **Fel-10** (+10 if past or current career of Watchman or Mercenary) to determine whether Kuilstier accepts their offer.

If successful, the Watch Sergeant will share what he knows. Kuilstier is well aware that members of the Bretonnian and Tilean gangs were killed the same night as the ones

belonging to the League. Additionally, he knows that each was killed in a different manner. Those in the League had a thin line about the neck (suggesting a garrotte) and stab wounds in the back. The stab wounds were not as clean as one would expect from a straight-edged dagger. Rather, the wounds were ragged indicating that the edge of the blade was irregular. The throats of the dead Tileans were slashed. Again the cuts were not as clean as one normally finds. The Bretonnians were killed in a third, more gruesome manner. In both cases, some edged object thrust upward into the abdomen killed the men. If asked how he knows so much about wounds, Kuilstier comments that he spent some years in the eastern Imperial provinces and has seen wounds of all kinds. Furthermore, the evidence found near the bodies seems to be deliberately placed.

While he believes that there is an obvious connection, Kuilstier will not volunteer his view that a heretofore unknown gang committed these murders, especially since Kuilstier refuses to speculate without further evidence. If the PCs offer up their views of conspiracy Kuilstier will dismiss the more outrageous but will listen to any that are reasonable. If the PCs obtained any clues from Thijs Boekarts' flat, they may present these to Kuilstier. The mysterious medallion will certainly stir his curiosity. Kuilstier will also be mildly interested in N. Zomer, but since there is no other clue to the identity of that person, he will not pursue it at this time. Kuilstier then interrogates the PCs about the Boekarts affair, sometimes repeating his questions to ensure consistency. Once he is assured of their tale, Kuilstier informs the PCs that he will keep the medallion as it may help his investigations.

Should the PCs enquire about a more "official" position with which to provide assistance, Sergeant Kuilstier will consider their request for several moments. "I can only offer to pay you each eight shillings per day. You won't be official Black Caps, although you will be paid almost as well. Still, you will be able to go about this investigation without too much hassle. Come by my office in a day and I've the proper warrant for you. Until then, you will report your progress to me."

Should the PCs return the next day to see Kuilstier, the Watch Sergeant will not be available. The Duty Watchman will have the dated warrant and four days advance for the PCs. The warrant states:



The following individuals have been deputised to act as agents for the Suiddock Black Caps as authorised by Sergeant Reinbert Kuilstier for the duration of one week from the date of this warrant.

The individual PCs' names are listed on the warrant.

### Streets of Suiddock

This section is mostly for background noise, red herrings, and other distractions that give atmosphere to the adventure unless otherwise noted. As the adventure progresses, there will be a need to amend (in some way) the descriptions in this section.

The streets of the Suiddock are normally full of life and character, but are a very dangerous place at night. During the day and early evening hours, businesses and markets are active. The streets are full of people cutting deals, struggling to get ahead, and taking advantage of the unwary. The PCs may well come across drunken sailors, prostitutes, an unlucky gambler considering whether to throw himself in the water, slumming nobles or members of the Directorate households, urchins, buskers, a bounty hunter close to a capture, pie sellers, or any one of the individuals that make up life here.

Anyone walking the streets at night will rarely (5% chance every twenty minutes) run into a Black Cap patrol (composed of 2d3 Watchmen). Shops are generally closed and the action moves to the numerous taverns, gambling halls, drug dens, and brothels that litter the Suiddock. Those remaining on the streets tend to engage in some of the illegal and unwholesome activities that give the Suiddock its unsavoury reputation.

These are not, however, normal times in the Suiddock. The killings have begun a ripple effect that threatens the fragile peace established between gangs. A GM can convey the changes simply by describing a scene where the PCs come across a blind beggar and his small dog at the same corner the first few days of the scenario. Then one day they come across the whimpering dog with no sign of its master.

The PCs may well, in the first two days, roam the Suiddock streets at night looking for trouble (sure, they'll sugar coat their intentions if they run into a Black Cap patrol, but the tendencies of self-styled adventurers to cause trouble are legendary). PCs taking to the streets in the late afternoon will notice that various businesses (except taverns,

### Cultists of the Scorpion

#### Footpads

Alignment: Evil (Kháine)

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
4	33	35	3	3	6	32
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
1	31	28	26	34	29	28

**Skills:** Silent Move Rural, Silent Move Urban, Strike to Stun

**Possessions:** Leather Jack, Sword, Club, Crossbow and Ammunition, Black Hooded Cloak with Red Trim, Black Mask with Red Scorpion on Forehead and Signet Ring with Scorpion Motif.



gambling halls, and brothels) are unusually closing their shops tightly well before sunset. If the PCs approach any shopkeeper to inquire about their closing time, most will reply that business has been dropping off late in the day and that there's no good reason to stay open longer. While that may sound plausible, allow any persistent PC a **Fel** test to persuade the shopkeeper to divulge the real reason for the early closures: fear of the fallout resulting from gang reprisals. No one is sure when or where these reprisals will occur, but the certainty that they will is beyond question.

As the days progress, lawlessness increases in the Suiddock as the Black Caps find themselves drawn deeper into spiralling events. The following list details some of the situations GMs could use to convey this atmosphere of disorder. The likelihood of such events occurring increases on each succeeding night.

**Arson** - One or two people can be spotted sneaking about in the shadows. Closer inspection reveals that the would-be perpetrators are in possession of flammable materials (lamp oil, rags, flint and steel, etc.). Arsonists are: (1) either hired by someone

or acting on their own to extract revenge on the owner of the establishment; (2) hired by a landlord to "burn out" pesky (or undesirable) tenants; or (3) pyromaniacs. Once the fire is set, all but the pyros quickly vacate the area to avoid possible capture. Arsonists prefer to find the right vantage point from where they can appreciate the splendour of their work. PCs who intervene before the fire is set will always chase away arsonists from the scene. Once the fire starts the PCs can bring the arsonists to justice or vacate the area before they are mistakenly implicated. Mobs have a tendency to do unspeakable things to anyone they believe to be an arsonist.

**Assault** - A band of thugs (d6+2) can be seen roaming the narrow streets and dark alleys looking for a victim to beat into a bloody pulp. These street roughs will attack anyone that they outnumber just for the fun of it. They will also attack anyone suspected of being a member of a rival gang to "teach 'em a lesson." PCs may, of course, intervene. Well-armed PCs will probably chase away the thugs and rescue a grateful victim. In contrast, a more cautious approach may find the thugs reacting aggressively.



**Break-in** - An individual is spotted attempting to enter a building through a window or locked door. In most instances, it will be a thief or else a prelude to some other crime. This is a perfect situation for imaginative GMs to add some red herrings to the adventure.

**Kidnapping** - Most of the time, the aim is to make money. In some cases, it is a press gang looking for a few good hands to man a merchant ship bound for faraway lands. More rarely the kidnapper sells his victim to the slavers who frequent Suiddock's seedier areas. Kidnapping also occurs whenever powerful people want to "talk" to certain individuals in private. Many of these are never seen again. Not expecting much trouble from elsewhere, kidnappers will scatter should armed individuals intervene. The chances of catching a kidnapper aren't very high, as they know the streets of Suiddock intimately. Those captured will not talk for fear that their employer will silence them once their loose tongue becomes known. Rescued victims will likewise keep their mouth shut in the vain hope that their silence will save them. It rarely does.

Some kidnap victims taken by the various gangs may tell the PCs that the war between the League, Bretonnians, and Tileans is escalating (among other bits of information).

**Looting** - There are many Suiddockers looking for the right opportunity to enrich themselves, especially in times this unsettled. Looting usually begins when a group of (d6+4) individuals with seemingly nothing to do congregate. All it takes is one action (e.g., shattering a store front window with a rock) to get them whipped up into a mob. Once looting begins, d6 individuals join in every three rounds until the Watch shows up en masse. The looters then scatter quickly. Sometimes looters will attack the Watch to defend their "right" to steal. PCs acting quickly may disperse the crowd before any looting actually takes place. Once it begins, however, the PCs must act decisively or leave quickly. Otherwise, they may find themselves involved in a minor riot.

**Murder** - Most murders involve family and some result from criminal activity that doesn't quite work as planned. A few murders are planned hits by a professional. After the first day, the frequency of killings increases. PCs are more likely to come across the body of a murder victim than encounter a murder in progress.

**Street Robbery** - Most robbers are pickpockets who slyly relieve their victims of their burdensome purses; others are more aggressive. PCs capturing or otherwise overcoming robbers have a reasonable chance of recovering money or other valuables from previous victims.

**Surveillance** - Lurking in the shadows and other less than obvious places are those who are paid for their eyes. The targets of these "shadows" may include other shadows, rival gang members, innocents, Watch patrols, or even the PCs. Detecting surveillance is more difficult than running into other nocturnal activities due to its indirectness. PCs must pass an **Observe-20** test (+10 for *Sixth Sense*, +10 for *Night Vision*) to detect the shadow who has them under surveillance. If the shadow is watching someone other than the PCs, then the PCs' base chance of detecting them is **Observe-30** (+10 if any PC has the career of Bounty Hunter or Spy). Most will retreat immediately if discovered. Clever PCs will come up with creative schemes to trail, entrap, or otherwise engage a shadow. The information that PCs can obtain from a captured shadow will depend on who was being observed and why. GMs can use captured shadows as a means to communicate critical bits of information (or help) to the PCs. Moreover, the more involved the PCs become, the greater the chances that someone wants them followed.

### Two Certain Encounters

Two critical events need to take place, the first occurring sometime during the first or second night of the adventure. Its location is any narrow street in the Suiddock (except Hightower Isle) several blocks from any waterfront.

**Killer in the Shadows:** As the PCs walk the streets they notice a person watching them. Before any PC can react, a second shadowy cloaked figure appears behind the first. The first figure will bend backward and emit a choking, gurgly noise before collapsing. The second figure flees.

Checking the fallen figure, they find a dead man lying in an expanding pool of blood. The man had been stabbed in the back while being strangled. The latter can easily be determined by the thin wire cutting into the neck. If the PCs haven't reached the conclusion that there is no way any one person can both strangle someone with a

garrotte while stabbing them, allow them an **Int** test to reach that deduction. The killer was a Skaven assassin, but no need to let the PCs in on that revelation at this time.

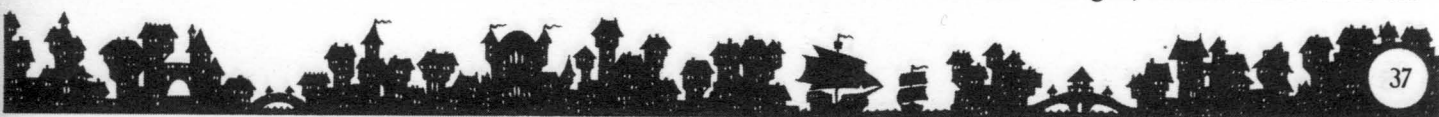
Should PCs give chase to the killer, they will not be able to catch them. Any Wizard will find it impossible to cast a spell while on the run as the killer is never in sight long enough. After turning the third corner, the PCs will see the cloaked figure drop down a manhole to the sewers below. Next to the metal grate that covered the manhole, the PCs see a large bloody dagger with a serrated edge. At this point, the PCs will have to decide whether to follow the killer into the malodorous sewers or let him go. Moreover, the PCs will hear the whistle of a Watch patrol.

Even if they went straight down, the killer will escape the PCs. Naturally, they may wish to slop around the sewers in the vain hope of capturing the killer. Let them for as long as they're willing. Feel free to further entice them with any odd noise you wish to describe. The constant dripping of water and occasional rush of effluence is more than enough to confuse the trail.

**First sign of the Claw:** The next critical event takes place either on Guilstag (Konistag) or Angestag. By this time, the PCs should be well aware of the increase in killings resulting from the escalating gang war. If they met Sergeant Kuilstier, and are talking with him regularly, they will know that the method of killing varies from one body to the next. Additionally, none of these recent killings seem to match the methods detailed by Sergeant Kuilstier. The difference in methodology has to do with the gangs killing one another rather than the Skaven.

As the PCs patrol the streets late that night, they spy two suspicious individuals in the shadows. They are dressed in long black hooded cloaks trimmed with red. Their attention seems to be focused on a slightly built man in tattered clothes. As the two watch, another two, similarly attired, leap out of the shadows and quickly subdue him. Should the PCs be content to watch, the two observing individuals turn towards the PCs and watch them while the others drag their captive away. Once the abduction is safely completed, the two retreat.

If the PCs intercede, the four armed cultists draw their weapons. These cultists of the Scorpion are fanatical followers of the murderous god, Khâine. Since there are



plenty of potential sacrifices in this city, the cultists will opt to flee if the PCs prove to be too powerful. This could entail another chase scene. Should the PCs capture a cultist alive, they will be unable to extract one ounce of information.

As soon as their task is completed, the cultists will try to scatter. PCs may opt to let these cultists go in the hope of following one of them. That would be a bad idea. Being members of a proscribed cult has sharpened the abilities of these individuals to lose any pursuit on the narrow and winding streets and alleys of the Suiddock. If the PCs successfully get within reach, the cultist will turn on them to prevent the PCs from any further pursuit.

If the PCs search the body of any cultist they have slain, they find a signet ring on each bearing a scorpion motif that matches the figure scarred onto their chests. On one of the bodies, the PCs will find a note that states:

*Crimson Claw Cabaret*  
*11:00 P.M. Festag*

### **The Mysterious Shipment**

As the largest port in the Old World, substantial numbers of ships arrive and depart Marienburg daily. The particular ship for which the PCs are looking will arrive in the Suiddock on Guilstag (Konistag). The ship is unique in that it is the only ship to arrive from the barony of Langwald in eastern Stirland in recent memory. As such, nearly all Marienburgers (even those with the Heraldry skill who must test with a -20 modifier to their Int) are unfamiliar with its colour and coat of arms. Except for rumour, the PCs will be unable to substantiate anything until the ship's arrival. They can proceed with the information they obtained through rumour in one of two ways. They can either start at the Lord Harbourmaster's or the Brotherhood of Seamen and Pilots.

### **The Lord Harbourmaster's**

Located next to the Niederbrug Bridge on Hightower Isle, the Lord Harbourmaster's building is a large, three-storey, green-painted affair. Within these walls, the arrival and departure of all ships conducting (legitimate) business in Marienburg is recorded. The Lord Harbourmaster is responsible for collecting all duties and docking fees and enforcing Port Law. The Lord Harbourmaster doubles as the

Commandant of the Marienburg Harbour Watch and has jurisdiction over everything waterside. During the day (when the harbour is the busiest), Lord Harbourmaster Odvaal van den Huister is present with a number of Clerks, Collectors, and Harbour Watchmen. Any attempt by the PCs to see the Lord Harbourmaster will be doomed to failure. Instead, they will be directed to one of the Lord Harbourmaster's secretaries, Watze Schiptoren.

PCs wanting to see the logs of incoming ships are going to have a problem. Namely, they will have to convince Watze that they have legitimate cause. If the PCs are foolish enough to divulge their real task, Watze will scoff at their assertions and tell them to leave. Persistence on the PCs' part will result in Watze calling the Harbour Watch to escort the PCs off the premises. PCs concocting a cover story should be allowed a **Bluff** test to convince the reluctant Watze of their need. If all else fails, any PC may try a **Bribe** test. Under no circumstances will threats intimidate Watze (in fact, the Harbour Watch may find it amusing as the PCs are tossed into the brig).

Success in viewing the records presents some new problems for the PCs. For one thing, river traffic between Marienburg and The Empire is common. The vessels are usually the larger, ocean going variety, but a number of river barges also make the journey. Unless the PCs clearly state that they are looking for anything odd, this approach rapidly reaches a dead-end. PCs stating that they are looking for the unusual and passing an **Int** test (a +10 modifier for those who have experience trading merchandise or working on boats) will find that only one river barge arriving from The Empire is registered as a ship from the Barony of Langwald; The Schwarzdame. More unusual is that its cargo is listed as "One crated luxury" (a PC with experience in trading will realise that the cost of transporting one item from Altdorf - much less from an unknown location further away - is generally prohibitive). In addition, the cargo was never inspected. The log indicates that the cargo was off-loaded at Berth 31 on the eastern side of Riddra Isle.

### **Guildhall of the Brotherhood**

The crooked streets of Stoessel will have to be traversed until the PCs reach the middle of the waterfront and the guildhall of the Brotherhood of Seamen and Pilots.

Unless they are members, the PCs will have difficulty getting in to view records and two guards prevent any unauthorised entry. PCs wishing to appeal to a higher authority will be unsuccessful if they are not members. If the PCs try to overpower the guards to gain access, the two (hardly the brave, heroic types) will shout an alarm bringing a Watch Patrol within D6 rounds. Breaking into the guildhall at night is a possibility. Careful planning and execution should give a high chance of success.

PCs with some seafaring background receive a +20 modifier to **Bluff** tests and apply additional modifiers as appropriate for any cover story. If all else fails, heavy bribery may be the order of the day.

Once inside, the PCs can find the records room. An old scribe, Rolf Schrijven, can help find the correct records, though it will take some time. The information here is that a ship bearing an unknown coat of arms on its flag was piloted to Berth 31 on Riddra Isle. There is no mention of the ship's cargo or any other useful information.

Unlike the Lord Harbourmaster's, the Guildhall has large maps on the wall of the record room which details the location of each berth in the Suiddock, including those in Riddra. Should none of the PCs have the Cartography skill, they are reduced to searching the Riddra waterfront on foot. Or, for a little monetary consideration, they can ask Rolf to provide directions or services as a guide. The latter should cost the PCs at least a couple of Guilders. If Rolf so agrees, then he will only lead them to the point where he can point out Berth 31 to them.

### **The Dark Warehouse**

Many centuries ago, Riddra was the heart of the Suiddock. As the islands upriver were built (Stoessel first, then Luydenhoek), the main dockyards moved eastward. Now the docks of Riddra are mostly empty, used primarily by smugglers. None of the berths are identified in any way and only the locals who frequent the waterside can correctly identify them. PCs attempting to learn such from the locals must offer at least a Guilder as a bribe.

The Schwarzdame will remain at Berth 31 until Angestag afternoon. PCs searching for it during its stay will find the black vessel moored without any apparent guards. An orange flag with black borders and a crossed swords motif in its centre flies from its stern (the coat of arms of the Stirlander Barony of



Langwald). In the event that the PCs merely post a watch, they notice that no one comes aboard until the ship is ready to depart. At that time, Captain Erich Wassermann and his three crewmen approach from a direction opposite the PCs. The four men are anxious to leave and board the ship quickly. They will not stop to talk to the PCs unless heavily bribed (at least 10 Guilders or Imperial Crowns each). None of the four know much other than the following:

- A man named Helmut Nachtwanderer from Waldenhof, Sylvania hired them to deliver a special cargo to Marienburg.
- Herr Nachtwanderer paid them a considerable sum to carry forth their task without question.
- The flag on board was Herr Nachtwanderer's requirement.
- They were to report to a gentleman named Anders Smid upon arrival.
- Herr Smid instructed the four to stay away from the Schwarzdame until departure.

Further questioning yields no other information unless the PCs try to intimidate the foursome. A successful **Ld** or **Fel** test will yield the following information:

- Herr Smid was waiting on the docks when they arrived in the early evening.
- The tone of Smid's instruction carried an implicit threat if he were disobeyed.
- There was some shuffling movement in the shadows behind Smid.
- Each of the four felt a chill in their backs until they were away from Smid's presence.

Wassermann reluctantly agrees to any request the PCs make to examine the ship provided that the Captain and his crew are allowed to leave afterward. PCs who do not agree will find themselves in a fight, as Wassermann is extremely eager to depart.

The PCs may opt to search the ship prior to the crew's return. In either event, the PCs find nothing obvious in the hold except for provisions. A successful **Search** test indicates a fragment of bone near an area where a large crate was situated, judging by the heavy dust 'footprint'. Any PC with a suitable career is able to determine that the bone is that of a Human finger. Neither Wassermann nor his crew know anything about the bone.

Across from Berth 31 are two boarded-up warehouses with a narrow alley separating them. Both have large double doors facing the waterfront and have two-storeys. PCs

checking the entrances find that both are securely shut and the back entrances locked. The one oddity is that the locks on the left warehouse are new.

PCs searching the left warehouse will find a concealed sliding wall facing the other warehouse on a successful **I** test. Once the sliding wall is uncovered it will take just moments to find the opening mechanism.

Should they enter during the day, the warehouse is very dim (the windows have all been covered up with boards). The PCs must take a moment to allow their eyes to adjust unless they have a light source (torch or lantern). Once they are able to see, the PCs notice at the far corner of the warehouse a hooded woman in dark clothing (black with red trim) removing a small container about one cubic foot in size from a large opened crate. The woman notices the PCs if they entered the warehouse noisily or during daylight. She ignores them as she opens the trapdoor leading to the sewers below with container in hand. PCs crossing to intercept the black-clad woman (or casting spells or shooting arrows) are in for a surprise. At the start of the round that the second PC enters the warehouse six figures, Khainite Cultists, charge from the shadows and attack. Their intent is to allow the woman to make good her escape with container in hand. Once her getaway is assured, the six cultists will attempt to withdraw.

Assuming the PCs get past the cultists and go after the black-clad woman the PCs will find themselves in a narrow sewer line with no sign of the woman. Tracking her is impossible given the delay. Should the PCs search the crate above, they will find an opened coffin within. The lid of the coffin is propped up against the wall and bears a black and yellow coat of arms with a red skull and crossed swords motif. PCs with both *History* (Imperial) and *Heraldry* skills must successfully pass an *Intelligence*-10 test (due to its obscurity) to identify the ancient coat of arms (circa 1200 IC) of the Imperial province of Sylvania. PCs with only the *Heraldry* skill must pass a test at half **Int**. Should the PCs fail, they can provide a description (or take the coat of arms) to the Great Library of Verena or the Temple of Mórr to discover its significance.

### The Stolen Artefact

Befitting the largest city in the Old World, Baron Hendryk's College of Navigation and Sea Magicks (also known as the University) is one of the largest and most diverse institutes

of learning known. Baron Hendryk's is also considered by Marienburgers to be the wealthiest institute of higher learning in the Old World and houses the largest collection of artefacts from ancient civilisations (thanks, in part, to the patronage Marienburg explorers and scholars enjoy).

One such collection was obtained from the ancient tombs of eastern Araby by the late explorer and scholar Doctor Diederich Grafzoekener. He claimed that the artefacts were three thousand years old and came from an ancient kingdom. Through means he never divulged, Diederich somehow smuggled these ancient treasures from under the very noses of suspicious Arabians and brought them to the University several months ago. Unfortunately, Diederich contracted a mysterious wasting disease on the return voyage. By the time he arrived at the University, he was a shadow of his former robust self. When he died soon after, Diederich's face had taken on a reddish hue and had virtually shrunk down to the skull. Guild Physicians were unable to develop any reliable treatment for this unfamiliar disease and thanked the gods that it did not turn out to be some new plague. Suspicious sailors on board believed the disease was a curse called down upon Diederich's head for violating the ancient tombs. They remembered Diederich's fixation on one of the artefacts (a fetish).

Dismissing the crew's foolish superstitions, Baron Hendryk's College proudly exhibited its "find" with Diederich's younger brother, Lucas, assuming responsibility. Days before the scenario began, someone broke into the room where the ancient Arabian treasures were housed. Several items were damaged, but only the fetish (the Al-Qantram Shalem Fetish of Kháine, see description on page 46) was taken. In addition, the two guards were brutally murdered. Fearful of the publicity this crime would arouse, the University regents decided to deny its occurrence. Lucas Grafzoekener disagreed with that decision and began his own investigation. By the time the PCs arrive at the University, Lucas will be ready to act.

Should the PCs inquire with the Watch, they will be directed to the Tempelwijk Ward Barracks. Compared to the Suiddock Watch, the Temple Watch have better tailored uniforms, are more orderly, less busy and are also not as well armed as the Suiddockers. Furthermore, the Temple Watch are more attentive to the concerns of the upper class and their households than they are to the less influential (reflecting the political ambitions of their Captain). Unless they are of a high

social class, PCs will not even get their questions considered without passing a Fel-20 test (+10 for *Charm*, +10 for *Etiquette*). If successful, they will learn that the University reported such an incident.

If the PCs make inquiries at the University, they must do so during daylight. Neither students nor faculty know anything about the rumoured theft and will suggest that the PCs take their questions to the administration. There, the PCs will meet with a wall of silence. All University officials will deny that any such crime took place. PCs expressing an interest in seeing the exhibit must convince officials of their sincerity. They will then be directed to Doctor Lucas Grafzoekener at the Hall of Antiquities.

Lucas' office is located next to the large room where the ancient Arabian treasures are on display. The door to that room is locked (CR 10) at night, as is the one to Grafzoekener's office (CR 15). Since the murders, the number of guards has been increased to four. During the day, Lucas is in his office and the exhibit is only opened to those he admits. PCs with *Art* and *History* skills might find the exhibit rather interesting, though others will find it downright dull. The exhibit includes an ancient sarcophagus (nothing is in it), carved stone figurines of men with exotic animal heads (mutants, perhaps?) intricate jewellery, and some stones with bas-relief imagery.

Lucas is a very astute observer and will quickly see through any pretence that the PCs are interested in the ancient Arabian exhibit. With his usual directness, Lucas will ask probing questions to determine their reasons for coming to the University. PCs who try to bribe Lucas, act in a disrespectful or dishonest manner, or resort to threats will immediately be told where to find the exit. If the PCs manage to avoid any pitfalls, then allow them a **Fel** test to convince him that they can be trusted. Only then will he ask them if they are willing to undertake a task for him. Lucas will initially offer to pay the PCs twenty Guilders each to recover the stolen artefact, no questions asked. (If need be, Lucas is willing to pay more for the task so long as it does not exceed thirty Guilders to each PC.)

Once the PCs agree, Lucas will tell them that the artefact is a foot long fetish in the shape of a scorpion's tail. Three dried, real scorpion tails dangle from the barbed end with three unusually well preserved vulture tail feathers attached to the other end. Should the PCs inquire, Lucas will inform them that fetishes are generally used in rituals. He is not certain, however, just what kind of

ceremony this scorpion-tail fetish would be used in (Lucas does suspect it is used in rituals concerning the dead). If prompted, Lucas will also add that the two guards on duty the night the fetish was stolen were murdered in a ritualised fashion and their hearts and eyes taken. Naturally, University officials were worried about unwanted publicity. As they didn't trust the local City Watch, they referred the matter to the Star Chamber (from whom the University officials are still awaiting word). The PCs will probably ask Lucas for a lead to get them going. After a momentary pause, Lucas will direct them to a Suiddocker named Kaspar Glibberig, a dealer in antiquities located on Sikkeleiland Isle. On Marktag, Lucas had asked Kaspar to make some discreet inquiries about the fetish in the hope of uncovering some lead to its whereabouts.

### Exotic Curios

If the PCs hope to get anywhere, they need to pay a visit to Kaspar Glibberig before Angestag. After that date, Kaspar's shop, "Exotic Curios," will be boarded up and empty. Assuming they get there in time, the PCs find "Exotic Curios" closed. This will be clearly out of place should they visit during daylight. Glancing through the windows will only reveal that the interior is unlit and no one is in. Anyone looking more intently must pass an **I** test (+10 for *Excellent Vision*, +10 for *Night Vision*) to notice that there is a faint light behind the clutter-covered table in the back. The only way the PCs can investigate is by entering the shop through either locked door (CR 10 for the front and back doors). Once inside the shop, they will have to step carefully around the items strewn about the floor (if they are searching at night the PCs need a light source).

Behind the desk, the PCs find the corpse of Kaspar Glibberig. So hideous is the state of the corpse that anyone viewing it must make a **CI** test (failure causes the PC to lose his lunch while gaining 1 Insanity Point). Once the PCs overcome their revulsion, they will notice that there is nothing left of Kaspar other than skin and bone. All muscle and other tissues seem to have vanished from the dead husk. What's left of Kaspar's face has taken on a reddish hue that gives it the appearance of a grimacing red skull. The eyes are empty sockets with tracks of ooze running down the cheeks. PCs checking the body will find red markings on the back resembling a skeleton hand. PCs studying the murder scene will conclude that a tremendous

struggle took place between Kaspar and his assailant. PCs thoroughly searching the area must make an **I+10** test to find a crumbled piece of paper under the desk. Should the PCs unravel the paper, it reads:

*"The trail leads to the Crimson Claw."*

A second test, this time at **I-20** test, allows the PCs to find a piece of black cloth with a red trim nearby.

At this point, the PCs may be torn between reporting the murder to the Suiddock Watch or returning to Lucas Grafzoekener with the news. PCs (foolishly) considering the first course of action need to make an **Int** test (+10 if they had a career as a Militiaman or Watchman) to realise that the Watch, perhaps even if they have a warrant, will probably lock them up as prime suspects until the situation can be sorted out (anywhere from three days to three weeks).

News of Kaspar's death will not sit well with Doctor Grafzoekener as they were very good friends. Once he has regained his composure, Lucas asks the PCs how Kaspar died. He will listen dispassionately until the PCs describe Kaspar's facial appearance. At that point, Lucas will stare at them wide-eyed and inform the PCs that his brother had died from a mysterious disease that caused similar disfigurement and relates the story of his brother's fate.

If the PCs present Kaspar's note about the Crimson Claw, Lucas looks at it before handing it back. "I've not heard of 'the Crimson Claw' before this moment. Is it a tavern? Could you follow up on this note in case it's related?"

If the PCs are unsure of how to proceed, Lucas reveals his suspicion that the stolen fetish was used in rituals involving the dead and suggests that they may find answers at the Temple of Mórr in the Ostmuur district. Visibly shaken, Lucas will then ask the PCs to leave.

### The Witch-Hunter Cometh

The Temple of Mórr is easily distinguished from the other temples by its dark grey basalt walls and unique gate-like, lintel-covered entrance. It is currently severely understaffed as most of the clerics (including the entire senior staff) had departed two weeks previously to attend the cult's convocation (held once every ten years) in the Tilean city-state of Luccini. Only a skeleton staff remains. As soon as they enter the temple, an Initiate greets the PCs and asks them their

*continued on page 42*



**Lodewijck Raffleugel**

Cleric-Lvl 2, ex-Student, ex-Scholar, ex-Initiate

Height: 5 ft 8 in

Weight: 149 lbs

Hair: White

Eyes: Medium Brown

Age: 70

Alignment: Neutral (Mórr)

Trait: Charismatic eyes

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
3	43	36	3	3	9	46
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
1	35	40	62	44	62	52

**Skills:** Acute Hearing, Arcane Language-Magick, Arcane Language-Necromantic Magick, Astrology, Astronomy, Augury, Cartography, Cast Spells-Cleric 1, Cast Spells-Cleric 2, Cryptography, Divining, History, Identify Plant, Identify Undead, Linguistics, Magical Sense, Meditate, Night Vision, Numismatics, Public Speaking, Read/Write (Arabian, Breton, Estalian, Norscan, Reikspiel, and Tilean), Rune Lore, Scroll Lore, Scrying, Secret Language-Classical, Speak Additional Language (Arabian, Breton, Estalian, Norscan, and Tilean), Theology

**Magic Points:** 21

**Spells:** 1st Level: Destroy Undead, Funeral Rite, Locate Corpse, Nameless Funeral, Zone of Life

2nd Level: Control Undead, Dedicate Staff, Exorcism, Retribution (see description in *Dwarfs: Stone & Steel*, page 74)

**Possessions:** Plain, Black-Hooded Robes; Raven Medallion (under Robes), Purse (3 Gu, 7 shillings).



Lodewijck has been the chief librarian and keeper of the cult's lore for the last 40 years or so. His ability to remember details far exceeds what one would expect from someone his age. He is also a busy man, very direct, and has little patience for people who waste his time. Towards those who handle themselves in a straightforward manner, Lodewijck is quite the amiable chap. He will assist them in any matter to the extent that he is able, especially if that matter involves the eradication of Necromancers and followers of Kháine.

**Rutger Nachtrabe**

Witch-Hunter, ex-Pit Fighter, ex-Judicial Champion

Height: 6 ft 5 in

Weight: 227 lbs

Hair: Dark Brown

Eyes: Medium Brown

Age: 31

Alignment: Neutral (Mórr)

Trait: Scar on face, very tall

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
4	73	66	5	6	13	71
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
3	49	63	38	44	72	27

**Skills:** Cure Disease, Dance, Disarm, Dodge Blow, Heal Wounds, Identify Undead, Immunity to Disease, Lightning Reflexes, Marksmanship, Night Vision, Public Speaking, Resistance to Illusionist Magick, Ride-Horse, Scale Sheer Surface, Silent Move Rural, Silent Move Urban, Sixth Sense, Specialist Weapon-Crossbow Pistol, Specialist Weapon-Fencing, Specialist Weapon-Fist, Specialist Weapon-Flail,

Specialist Weapon-Lasso, Specialist Weapon-Net, Specialist Weapon-Parrying, Specialist Weapon-Throwing Knife, Specialist Weapon-Two-Handed, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun, Very Resilient, Very Strong

**Possessions:** Full Plate Armour over Mail Coat, Sword, Crossbow and Ammunition, 4 Throwing Knives, Medallion with a raven perched atop an open portal (under his Armour), Rope-10 yards, Purse.

Favouring black attire, Rutger is the archetypal Witch-Hunter of Mórr. A stern, rather humourless man, Rutger has dedicated his life to uncovering and eliminating hidden covens of Kháinite cultists, Necromancers, and nests of Undead. Like a few others in the High and Chivalric Order of Deserved Rest (a.k.a. Raven Knights - see *Apocrypha 2: Chart of Darkness* pg. 23), Rutger receives some of his information on his quarry through visions (dreams) sent directly by Mórr. Rutger usually works alone and as such prefers to surprise his quarry, especially since he is most often outnumbered.



names and business; information required for them to gain an audience. Should the PCs invent a cover story, allow them a **Bluff** to succeed. Once they succeed, the Initiate will ask them to wait for a few moments.

Minutes later, the Initiate returns with a much older cleric, whom he introduces as Lodewijck Raffleugel. Normally, Lodewijck is the chief librarian of the Temple and its expert on cult lore. At the moment, the venerable Lodewijck is in charge. PCs trying to be coy will try Lodewijck's patience. He is a busy man after all. If they persist in being evasive, Lodewijck will give the PCs two warnings before ordering them out. PCs who refuse to comply with that instruction will get an opportunity to meet Rutger Nachtrabe, a Witch Hunter of Mórr, in less than ideal circumstances.

Anyone dealing with Lodewijck in a direct manner finds him an affable, intelligent man. When the PCs ask about the information regarding the stolen fetish, Lodewijck requests that they divulge all they know of the object and its assumed purpose. At the first mention of ancient Araby, rituals involving the dead, or - if the PCs can make the leap - Kháine, Lodewijck interrupts the PCs in order to escort them to his private office in the Temple's library. Once there,

Lodewijck closes the door before asking them to continue. The description of the fetish confirms the connection to Kháine as far as Lodewijck is concerned. He informs the PCs that the scorpion and its barbed tail are symbols of the God of Murder. Moreover, Kháine was once a major deity in some ancient kingdoms of Araby whose demented civilisations were eventually crushed. With that, Lodewijck stands up and asks that the PCs give him a moment to summon an individual that they ought to meet.

In his absence, the PCs may want to explore Lodewijck's office. The drawers of the desk are easily opened and contain scraps of paper, a writing kit, and a large locked book (CR 10). Should the PCs open the untitled book, they will find that it contains references to the worship of Kháine as well as rituals dedicated to him from other lands. All are described in such lurid detail with illustrations that anyone reading the text carefully must make a **CI** test. Those who fail gain 1 Insanity Point and will be plagued by nightmares for the next d4 nights. If they continue, the PCs will come across references to suspected Kháine cults in some of the major cities in the southern Old World. Before they read those sections, however, Lodewijck returns with a large individual.

PCs making a *Listen* test for normal noises (+10 for *Acute Hearing*) will be able to close, lock, and put away the book in time. The Priest of Mórr will be most displeased if he finds that the PCs abused his hospitality.

Upon entering the office, Lodewijck introduces Rutger Nachtrabe as a follower of Mórr who specialises in handling situations involving those who violate the sanctity of Mórr's realm. Rutger had recently arrived from Middenheim where he received a vision (anyone making a wisecrack will find neither Lodewijck nor Rutger in the mood for such). Rutger then tells the PCs of his vision where he saw a large seaport crossed by many canals. Rising from the dock area was a large red scorpion whose claws would scoop up the terrified populace and snap them in two. The carnage continued until the scorpion took on a crimson hue. Then the scorpion's carapace split, emitting pinkish smoke that soon began to coalesce into some form. The vision ended before the form revealed its true nature. Rutger set forth immediately to Marienburg. Since his arrival Rutger has been unable to learn more.

Lodewijck turns to the PCs and comments that Rutger's vision, coupled with the description of the stolen fetish, clearly indicates that a secret temple to Kháine is



somewhere in the city. Lodewijck assumes that either the Doodkanaal or Suiddock are the likeliest place for the Kháinite temple because of their reputations, but he cannot rule out the Kruiersmuur district.

Should the PCs offer to pass the problem of the stolen fetish or the cult of Kháine to Lodewijck and Rutger, the priest will tell them that their services are essential for eliminating this threat to Marienburg as the cult's resources are stretched too thin at the moment. Rutger then states his preference that the PCs continue their work while he continues his. Further, Rutger is willing to meet them to be briefed on any additional information they come across. If the PCs mention the note they found that suggested something would occur at the Crimson Claw Cabaret on Festag evening to Rutger (assuming they have made a connection between Rutger's dream of a red (or crimson) scorpion and the cabaret's name), he'll suggest they try to gain admittance. Rutger plans to find his own way into that "special event." Should Lodewijck hear the name of the establishment ("The Crimson Claw Cabaret"), he will recall that its previous owner, Edwin Schaap, passed away over a week ago. Lodewijck vaguely recalls that the new owner (Count somebody) is some distant relative of Schaap's from Nuln. With that, both Lodewijck and Rutger wish the PCs good luck.

**Enter the Crimson Claw**

Finding the Crimson Claw Cabaret is as easy (and costly) as obtaining directions for any other location in Marienburg. It is located at the western end of Stoessel Isle across from Riddra Isle.

The establishment is closed during the day and opens for business at dusk. Given the condition of the rundown neighbourhood, it is surprising that the patrons of the Crimson Claw tend to be fairly well to do. They include upper-middle-class merchants and artisans, as well as minor members of the great merchant families of Marienburg. The quality of the Crimson Claw is further exemplified by the fact that the majority of its patrons stay until the establishment closes around 2am. Admission is by membership only and the Crimson Claw's bouncers know most members. PCs trying to gain entrance can only do so if they force their way in. Such action will guarantee that the PCs will become involved with the Watch.

The Crimson Claw has recently

experienced a change in ownership. Having arrived from Nuln the month before, Count Stefan von Schweinfurt found his newly discovered half-brother and owner of the Crimson Claw, Erwin Schaap, dead in his sleep over a week ago. The Count assured the employees at the Crimson Claw that the establishment planned to continue providing its patrons with the service they've come to expect. Moreover, the only change that the new owner planned was to bring in additional help for the next few days in preparation for the festivities.

In reality, Count Stefan von Schweinfurt - a.k.a. Wolfgang Schwarz - assisted Erwin Schaap's passing from the world. Since the method of removal was simply a pillow held firmly over the face (thus leaving no mark), a board of inquiry was not needed. As Erwin's only "relative" in Marienburg, Count von Schweinfurt's take-over of the Crimson Claw was uncontested. This move enabled the Cult of the Scorpion (for which Wolfgang Schwarz is a high ranking member) to consecrate a new shrine to Kháine in the basement. The ritual of consecration involved the sacrifice of several drunken indigents whom no one would miss. Additionally, the Cult dedicated the ancient Arabian fetish to Kháine's foul service by the sacrifice of the two slain University guards' hearts and eyes. Thus the stage was set for Festag.

Any daylight surveillance on Festag will not detect any unusual activity outside - most of the preparation is taking place in the basement and adjoining sewers. Around noon, the PCs will notice a young man about seventeen years of age nailing a pamphlet on a nearby street lamppost. He will also pass out one or two (carefully selected) pamphlets to passing individuals reciting the same information as appears in the text. If the PCs call out or try to nab the young man, he will flee. If the PCs catch the individual (I 34 if one wants to run another chase scene), the young man simply states that he is Seth den Breems, a student from the University. He is doing nothing more than helping a friend who is

ill. Other than that, Seth claims to know nothing else.

Bored (or nosy) PCs might decide to expend some energy reading the pamphlet (Player Handout 2).

An hour or two before dusk, one of the new doormen (a Kháinite cultist) emerges from the Crimson Claw. Smartly dressed in black, he posts a sign upon its main door (Player Handout 3).

*Notice to our esteemed patrons,  
The Crimson Claw Cabaret will open its doors at 10:00 pm this Festag evening for a special celebration. Commencing promptly at 11:00 pm, the merriment is guaranteed to be a heart-stopper.*

*Sincerely,  
Count Stefan von Schweinfurt*

Overzealous PCs may try to overcome the doorman and force their way into the Crimson Claw. The door has been locked behind him and will only open for him when he knocks in a specific coded manner. He will sound an alarm at the first sign of trouble (and bring at least three patrols of the Suiddock Watch within d6 rounds). There are others within the building that will do whatever it takes to keep anyone from entering the establishment before it is opened.

Eventually, the time arrives for the Crimson Claw to open its doors. Anyone carrying

**OPPRESSED PEOPLE  
OF MARIENBURG!**

Tired of the Killing in the Streets?  
Angered by the Corruption that Allows It to  
Continue Apace?

**THE TIME FOR ACTION IS NOW!**

Join Us at 5:00 pm Aubentag, Draaienbrug Bridge.  
We Will March on the Stadtholder's Palace and  
Demand that the Directorate Step Down.  
We Want a Government Elected by and Amenable  
to the People Now!

**ORDESA**



more than a hand weapon and dagger is required to surrender the excess at the door. The bouncers escort out the door (forcibly if necessary) anyone who refuses to comply. Any individual wearing armour is considered a troublemaker and denied entrance. Any PC may make an Int test (+10 for *Etiquette*) to realise this limitation before trying to Bluff their way in. With the anticipation of the night's activities, the bouncers have been instructed to relax the normal restrictions on attendance and allow any who seem to be of the right social level admittance, even if they are not members.

From the time the doors open until the festivities commence, PCs gaining admittance are free to mingle. Unless PCs have the *Etiquette* skill or some social status, most of the patrons will look down on them as riff-raff.

The celebration begins with the curtains rising on stage to reveal female dancers in attire more revealing than concealing. The music is engaging as are the dancers themselves. In between the dance routines, other entertainers perform. During the show, von Schweinfurt makes the rounds playing the perfect host. PCs looking around will notice that the black-clad bouncers (there are six cut-throats plus any who survived the encounter at the Riddra warehouse) are taking up positions by the doors exiting the room. With the exception of the stage door, all the others are locked or barred at this time to ensure that no one escapes prematurely.

Minutes before midnight, the room is darkened as the lamps on the wall are extinguished and the curtains drop. The only light in the room emanates from the candles on each table. Soon the musicians begin to play an ominous melody and the curtain rises

again. During this time, PCs with *Acute Hearing* hear a banging on a far door if they pass a **Listen** test. At the same time, PCs with *Night Vision* need to successfully pass an **Observe** test (+10 for *Excellent Vision*) to notice that the bouncers are quietly retrieving swords and crossbows from nearby hiding places. Two of these seem to be drawn to a far door while Count von Schweinfurt places himself in front of the stage. A second *Observe* test is needed to pierce the darkness on the stage to see a cloaked figure standing next to a table or platform of some sort with what appears to the PCs as a sizable pile of rags (enough to cover a body) on its top. A second cloaked figure kneels next to the rags. Before the PCs can act, the light from numerous black candles flare into brilliance and illuminates the stage.

The PCs can now clearly see that the first figure is a man cloaked in black with red and yellow trim and wears a grotesque mask. Any PC with the *Theology* skill must successfully test vs. **Int** (+20 for clerics of Mórr) to identify the mask as representing Kháine, the god of murder and undead. In one hand, the man holds a small, open casket over which he waves his other hand while chanting. The second figure is that of a woman similarly dressed (minus the mask) who yanks up the head of the person from the pile of rags on the table by his hair. Any PC involved in the earlier encounter with the cultists (**Two Certain Encounters**) may make an **Int** test to connect the person on the table to the victim abducted some nights before (if the PCs did not prevent that crime from occurring). Another successful Int test allows the PCs to recognise the woman from the Riddra warehouse.

The casket contains the ashes of Klara von

Teufelheim, a champion of Kháine. The ritual is to restore her to life. Anyone who tries to interfere with the ritual will become a target of the bouncers. The cultists' strategy is quite simply to shoot first, then close for hand-to-hand combat. Obvious spellcasters are prime targets. Count von Schweinfurt will head off anyone rushing the stage.

The ritual continues with the woman slitting the victim's throat with an odd-shaped knife while proclaiming to all, "As foretold by the Prophet Urian Heartrender, let the Time of Murders begin." The blood flows onto a foot long object (the fetish) on the floor. As this occurs, the chanting Kháinite priest pours ash from the casket on to the fetish so it mingles with the blood. A bone-white coloured cloud rises from the mixture of blood and ash to hang in mid-air. Once all the blood and ash dissolve, the cloud begins to pulsate and glides towards one of the frightened patrons. The man screams as the cloud grasps him with reaching tendrils, lifts him high into the air, and drains him of blood and other bodily fluids. The same fate overtakes the priest that brought the cloud into being. Anyone watching this must make a **Terror** test to overcome the impulse to scream hysterically and join the maddened and panicked crowd seeking escape.

If the PCs do not act, the now pink coloured amorphous cloud will continue to grab victims to satiate its millennium-long hunger. This takes another four victims before it departs the cabaret through a narrow, open window to seek a host body. In addition, doing nothing means that Wolfgang Schwartz and the other cultists will escape to join up with the conjured being later in the scenario.

*continued on page 46*

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## The Late Bram Scherplemmet

**Possessions:** Black Robes with red and yellow trim, Elaborate Mask (depicting the horned, fang jawed face of Kháine), Sword, Staff (carved from Human bone), Al-Qantram Shalem Fetish of Kháine.

Murdering his way to the top, Bram is the ambitious High Priest of Kháine in Marienburg and leader of the Cult of the Scorpion. Bram is a cold, cruel, and ruthless killer more concerned for his grandiose (and murderous) plans than for the lives of anyone. Naturally, his long service to Kháine has taken its toll on him.

For many years, he and his followers have been preying on the weak and hopeless in the streets while coldly plotting for their day (referred to as the "Time of Murders"). Plans were put into effect in which the ashes of a long-dead cult hero were recovered from the desolate lands of Sylvania and shipped to Marienburg. Coupled with the arrival of Wolfgang Schwarz, the escalating gang warfare came at the most opportune time for Bram. It provided the cover under which the Cult of the Scorpion can now implement their designs in turning Marienburg into the ideal killing ground. One of their first objectives was to retrieve from the University and activate the ancient Al-Qantram Shalem Fetish of Kháine. Their next objectives were to find an appropriate sacrifice and dedicate a site for the coming ritual.



**Wolfgang Schwarz (alias Count Stefan von Schweinfort)**

Assassin, ex-Bounty Hunter

Height: 5 ft 10 in

Weight: 160 lbs

Hair: Ash-Blond

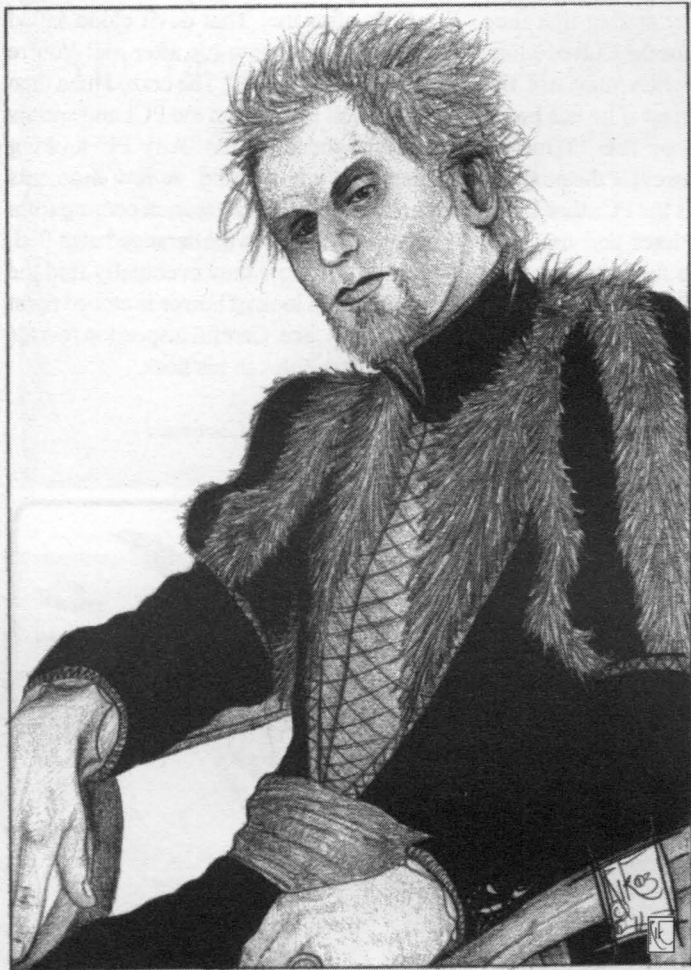
Eyes: Light Brown

Age: 37

Alignment: Evil (Kháine)

Trait: Moustache, birthmark (red on neck), very short hair

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
4	52	47	4	4	10	69
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
3	61	46	45	58	48	51



**Skills:** Charm, Concealment Rural, Concealment Urban, Disguise, Etiquette, Follow Trail, Lightning Reflexes, Marksmanship, Prepare Poisons, Scale Sheer Surface, Shadowing, Silent Move Rural, Silent Move Urban, Specialist Weapon-Blowpipe, Specialist Weapon-Fist, Specialist Weapon-Flail, Specialist Weapon-Lasso, Specialist Weapon-Net, Specialist Weapon-Parrying, Specialist Weapon-Throwing Knife, Specialist Weapon-Two-Handed, Strike Mighty Blow, Wit

**Possessions:** Mail Shirt, Sword, Garrotte, 4 Throwing Knives, 3 Doses of Blade Venom (2 Manbane, 1 Elfbane), Formal Dark Red Clothing, Black Cape with red and yellow trim, Signet Ring with scorpion motif, Purse (21 Gu 25/7).

Wolfgang hides his sadistic and murderous impulses behind the veneer of a caring and likeable chap. He varies his identity and appearance from one town to the next. Since escaping from Talabheim (just ahead of the Witch Hunters of Mórr), Wolfgang has assumed the identity of Count Stefan von Schweinfort of Nuln. A cunning and calculating man, Wolfgang became one of Bram's lieutenants (Helena Koel being the other) and helped solidify Bram's plans for turning Marienburg into a bloodbath. Furthermore, Wolfgang used his charm and wits to weasel himself into a position whereby he could obtain a place of high visibility for the sacrifice.

**Helena Koel**

Cleric-Lvl 1, ex-Protagonist, ex-Initiate

Height: 5 ft 2 in

Weight: 113 lbs

Hair: Dark Brown

Eyes: Light Brown

Age: 28

Alignment: Evil (Kháine)

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
3	44	27	4	4	8	42
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
2	36	29	34	54	40	31

**Skills:** Arcane Language-Magick, Arcane Language-Necromantic Magick, Cast Spells-Clerical 1, Disarm, Dodge Blow, Meditate, Public Speaking, Read/Write (Arabian, Reikspiel, and Tilean), Scroll Lore, Secret Language-Classical, Street Fighting, Strike Mighty Blow, Theology, Very Resilient

**Magic Points:** 11

**Spells:** 1st Level: (Battle) Cause Animosity, Fire Ball, Steal Mind; (Daemonology) Summon Guardian; (Necromancy) Hand of Death

**Disabilities:** Cadaverous Appearance (Stage 1)

**Insanities:** Morbidity

**Possessions:** Sword, Black Robes with Red and Yellow Trim, Purse (d6 Gu, 2d6 shillings).

Helena's beautiful appearance belies her true self: quick to lose her temper and bloodthirsty. Before joining the Cult of the Scorpion, Helena was known as a cruel individual who thought little of killing anyone who gave her the slightest insult. Convicted of killing an upper class Merchant just because he glanced in her direction, Helena was sentenced to be executed on Rijker's Isle. She broke free of her captors and disappeared. Naturally, she caught the eye of Bram who quickly took her under his wing. Helena currently serves the Cult as one of Bram's trusted lieutenants (although she is beginning to think of herself as Bram's soon-to-be successor).

Should the PCs react decisively to attack those perpetrating the foul deed, the pinkish cloud departs immediately after slaying its first two victims.

If the PCs have mentioned the Crimson Claw to the Mórrians, the far door breaks down at whatever moment the GM deems appropriate. The Witch Hunter Rutger Nachtrabe crashes the festivities and ploughs into two Kháinite cultists. The Mórrite Cleric Lodewijck Raffleugel follows him into the fight.

With the death of her master, the second Kháinite priest seeks to escape the chaos of the cabaret. The priestess hurls fireballs at different areas of the room to start a fire and cover her escape into the sewers below. The rest of the cultists, including Count von Schweinfurt, fight a rearguard action to prevent the PCs and any allies from reaching the Kháinite priestess. As soon as she is away, the rest of the cultists attempt their own escape.

#### Aftermath

No matter how the combat ends, the Crimson

Claw Cabaret should be ablaze. Alarms sound throughout the immediate area and locals begin to form lines to put out the fire. There is the possibility that several surviving patrons may mistakenly identify the PCs as being active participants in the horror that occurred within the Crimson Claw. This guarantees their arrest and incarceration until the situation can be sorted out unless they have a warrant from Sergeant Kuilstier.

Should Lodewijck Raffleugel be present he comes to the PCs' aid by stating that they were working as agents for the Cult of Mórr. If such is the case, the PCs may use the opportunity to ask the Priest if he has heard of Urian Heartrender or the "Time of Murders." Lodewijck pauses for the moment in reflection. He then tells the PCs that Urian Heartrender was a murderer and madman who lived in Sylvania in the latter years of the reign of the last von Drak (circa mid-18<sup>th</sup> century IC). He is said to have ranted what he claimed were the prophecies of Kháine before he was drawn and quartered. The "Time of Murders" was Urian's most memorable utterance. He claimed that a

plague of murders would herald the rise of a Kháinite champion who will lead the deranged on such a killing spree that would cause the mightiest of Imperial cities to fall to the Raving Dead. If asked, Lodewijck does not believe that such a time has come.

After a long harrowing night at the Crimson Claw, the PCs will probably return to their lodgings. As they move away from the Crimson Claw, a man runs at the PCs from the shadows screeching hysterically, "Run! Run! It's after me! That devil cloud killed my woman! And now it's after me! You're next! Run away! Flee!" The crazed man then pulls himself away from the PCs and sprints away into the darkness. Any PC looking around will see nothing. A few moments later, the PCs will hear a scream coming from the direction in which the deranged man fled. Should they follow they eventually find the man's body - a look of horror is etched upon his pale, cold face. Careful inspection reveals two puncture holes in his neck.

- To Be Continued -

### Al-Qantram Shalem Fetish of Kháine

At the height of their power in ancient Araby, the priests turned to the darkness and power that characterises Kháine and all things necromantic. During the centuries that followed, the High Priests were among the foremost of Pharaoh's advisors and its people suffered greatly. In time, the mob rose against this tyranny. In his last act before fleeing into the southern desert, High Priest Al-Qantram Shalem created and consecrated a number of artefacts to the service of Kháine. Many were uncovered from their hiding places and destroyed, but a number survived. One of these was a foot long fetish in the shape of a scorpion's tail. Dangling from the barb end are three dried scorpion tails, with three unusually well preserved vulture tail feathers are attached to the other end.

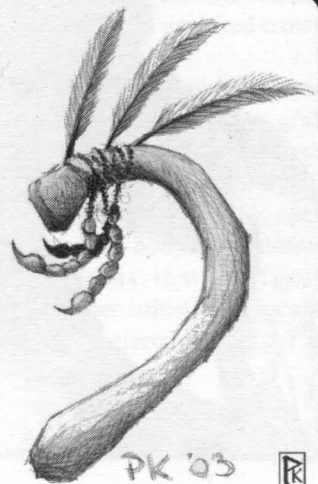
Once its magic is properly activated (by sacrificing the heart and eyes of two humans), the fetish can only be used by a cleric of Kháine for two purposes. The first activates the spell *Summon Lesser Daemon of Kháine* which arrives in the form of a giant scorpion. Its profile is as follows:

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
5	50	0	5	4	17	60	3	0	89	89	89	89	14

**Special Rules:** Causes fear, subject to instability, immune to psychological effects except those caused by Greater Daemons or gods, tail attack is venomous and victims must make a Poison test for every hit which cause Wounds (first failure results in drowsiness and a second failure results in the victim's death in 1d3 rounds), the daemon's tough exoskeleton counts as plate armour (2 AP all over).

The second purpose is as a catalyst in a ritual to resurrect a servant (usually a High Priest) of Kháine from the dead. All that's needed to complete the ritual is a mixture composed of the ash from the servant's body and freshly spilled blood from a Human sacrifice. An amorphous cloud rises from this mixture needing more nourishment that can only be obtained from a nearby Human's blood. Note that the cloud will just as likely feed on the summoner as any other. Once satiated, the cloud escapes until it can find the "right" host body. Once occupied, the body changes to take on the look that the servant of Kháine had in their previous existence, with all their skills and abilities. Naturally, the victim is killed. The cloud has the same attributes and resistance/vulnerabilities as a typical vampire.

Anyone attempting to use the fetish other than a Cleric of Kháine will suffer in the same manner as a victim of the Withering Hand of Kháine spell.





## OPPRESSED PEOPLE OF MARIENBURG!

Tired of the Killing in the Streets?  
Angered by the Corruption that Allows It to  
Continue Apace?

### THE TIME FOR ACTION IS NOW!

Join Us at 5:00 pm Aubentag, Draaienbrug Bridge.  
We Will March on the Staattholder's Palace and  
Demand that the Directorate Step Down.  
We Want a Government Elected by and Amenable to  
the People Now!

ORDESA

Player Handout 2

*We, the undersigned, have agreed to undertake the task  
as laid forth by Mijneer Thijs Boekarts of uncovering  
the party responsible for commencing the conflict that is  
disrupting the business of the major Suiddock interests.  
Evidence of their identity and involvement will be collected  
and represented to Mijneer Thijs Boekarts so that he  
can take further action with his employer. In  
compensation, we, the undersigned, will receive an  
advancement of fifteen Guilders each with an additional  
sixty-five to be paid to each upon completion of this task.*

Player Handout 1

*Notice to our esteemed patrons, The  
Crimson Claw Cabaret will open its  
doors at 10:00 pm this Festag evening for a  
special celebration. Commencing  
promptly at 11:00 pm, the merriment is  
guaranteed to be a heart-stopper.*

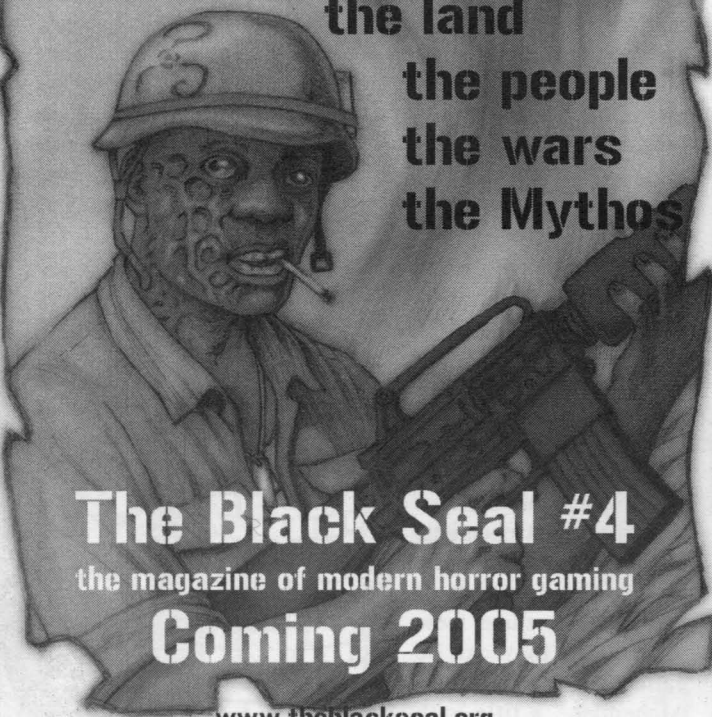
*Sincerely,  
Count Stefan von Schweinfort*

Player Handout 3

"Every minute the Great Old Ones  
squat in the bush they get stronger"

**Vietnam...**

the land  
the people  
the wars  
the Mythos



**The Black Seal #4**

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**Coming 2005**

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**The Return**

Try to survive at...

**TimCon III**

April 2005



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