

GAME SESSION FORTY FIVE: TO DARKON AND BEYOND -3

(played March 13th, 2011. Varadan played by JF)

March 10th, 748 – 1 pm

On the *Black Pelican* bridge, they discuss with Hazan while Captain Howe and his men prepare for arrival at the Martira Bay port. Hazan tells them about some strange features of Darkon, the “gravelights”: some kind of mysterious light over cemeteries, and other places where bodies are interred, that often precede rain storms by a few hours. There are also fresh water springs that suddenly turn poisonous, a gutted ruin that cast the shadow of an intact manor, and a hamlet where mirrors stopped casting reflections for a full day.

There is also the Darkest Night: in the winter solstice, the moon is *never* visible, whatever the moon phase that day. Darkonians fear this night, and light as many candles there are in their home, as it is believed the light will keep the Gray Realm (where the dead people go) at bay.

Martira Bay is located on the Jagged Coast: there, the rock is porous and unstable, so large chunks continuously break off and collapse into sea. For this reason, few homes or roads are built close to shore. According to rumor, the coastline is being deliberately undermined by a race of underwater creatures that are jealous of land dwellers. There are frequent inland collapses of land giving way to murky pits where the land used to stand. In the hamlet of Varithne once, a house fell into such hole. While the survivors tried to climb for safety, the other villagers saw “eely” shapes in the water, and the survivors disappeared under water...

Another rumor has it that the entire region is breaking up and someday the living inhabitants shall be drowned in the sea to make way for the dead rising.

Thus, there are numerous caverns and island on the coast, said to be used by smugglers.

Necropolis is a place where nobody can go, unless they are dead. Everything that comes within a certain limit dies, and becomes undead! *Nothing* survives in the Slain City. It is called the Slain City because there was a magic ritual there in 746 (*note: date changed for my campaign*) that went horribly wrong: suddenly, 25 000 people were dead!

It should also be known that King Azalin is also believed to have died in the destruction of Il Aluk, as he was conducting the ritual himself. He was never seen since. The ritual was about some kind of magical device, now called appropriately the Doomsday Device.

However, the powerful magical defenses that guards Darkon's borders are still in place. (When an army from Falkovnia attempted to invade two months after the disaster, it was repelled.)

So the fate of Azalin is unknown. Many think King Azalin has joined the ranks of the dead. In fact, some believe the enigmatic ruler of what was Il Aluk, who is simply called Death, is Azalin risen from the grave.

At 3pm, the boat is at the port. Hazan says yesterday was Rose Day, a holiday where man give gifts or flowers to women they like. And tonight, there are many dances organized in town for this celebration (*from Book of*

Secrets, A Year in Ravenloft. I used this fête to add an encounter I needed to add the Harrowstone adventure (Pathfinder) smoothly to my campaign).

Howe says he will stay in Martira Bay for a few days, so the heroes can leave their cages on board.

The druid inquires about special Darkon plants and Hazan tells him about the Spuma Vitae, a plant which juice is put into water. To drink this tainted water gives the drinker natural healing for one day! There is also the Necropolitan Amaranth, a plant that grows in Necropolis (the only thing growing there, in fact). When you graft a bloom of this plant to your skin, you are protected from the killing shroud in Necropolis. But first you have to get one inside the shroud! They fetch very high price on the black market.

They go to the Yawning Eddy Inn and get three rooms there (2 gp / day / room).

At 4h30, they are in the Inn's tavern and start gathering information on Iesha (*they came to Martira Bay to bring back her corpse to her family – session 41*). Virevan finds in the tavern someone who knew Iesha before she left to Borca to marry with Aldern Fordstone! He finds Iesha's family name is Milhausen, and her family is wealthy. The family lives in the East District of Martira Bay.



They meet the young woman, Kendra and Petros Lorrimer, her father. Kendra knew Iesha as they studied together about 5 years ago, and then Iesha left for Borca to pursue her art study. They exchanged a few letters in the beginning, and Kendra knows she was in love with a young Borcan noble, Aldern Forstone, but she had not heard from Iesha in a few years.

Petrak has heard of Petros's name before. Petros is a well known archeologist. Petros Lorrimer, retired archeology teacher at the Martira Bay's university, is about 70 years old, and in good physical shape. It is obvious he loves his daughter and is very proud of her. They find that he knows Van Richten well, and the heroes quickly befriend the father and daughter.



The heroes tell them of the fate of Iesha, and why they are in Martira Bay. They are shocked, especially Kendra.

Kendra and her father live in the town of Harrowstone, a town about a day north east of Martira Bay. They lived in Martira Bay for a while but went back to Harrowstone when her father retired from teaching. They are in Martira Bay for a few days, for an important exam Kendra has at the University. As her father, she studies archeology. « She already knows more than her teachers », says her father, proudly. Of course, when your father is a celebrity in the field, it is easy to learn fast, but Kendra seems like a bright woman.

The name of Harrowstone also rings a bell to all heroes. There was an old prison there, a very famous one for its high security. (*DM note: I compared it to Alcatraz in our world*)

They ask Kendra about Viktor Hazan. She has met him once. He teaches in philosophy, and his field of interest is the perception versus reality, and how different light screens could give us a new perception on reality. He often wears tinted glasses, as he says colors only distract us from what is really behind the things we see. An odd one.

They go to the Milhausen manor, with Kendra and Petros. They meet Ilesha's father, the stern Liggar Milhausen, Ilesha's sister : Solaila, and Ilesha's mother, Aldea.

The Milhausen (Liggar, Solaila, Aldea):



The heroes tell the family that Ilesha had a bad adventure in Mordent, and they tell what they know about her murder by Aldern Forstone, and of Aldern's insanity and death.

The family is very sad, but still they say they had a doubt something bad did happen. Ilesha didn't answer their letters for months, nor this "little pretentious Aldern". Liggar was set to leave for Fordstone Manor in Mordent in a few days to find out.

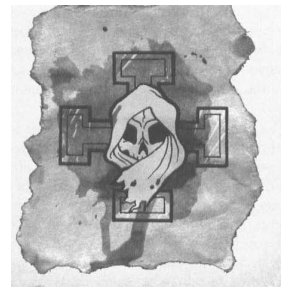
Liggar says the private ceremony will be held on March 12th.

During this encounter at the Milhausen manor, Virevan feels tired, and somewhat far from the events in the room. But he finds Solaila to be very charming. Even in these circumstances, it seems Solaila is finding Virevan charming too.

After they left, Kendra says the mother is half black elf, and half human, thus her vistani-like look. The beautiful Ilesha had some of that exotic look too.

Petrak look for an Ezra church, but he sees only one, that of the Eternal Order. Somewhat sinister, but its goal is the respect of eternal peace after death. He finds a small Ezra church, but it is closed.

Back at the Inn around diner time, they share a meal with Kendra and Petros. Kendra wants to go to the dance, but Petros isn't looking to go. The heroes offer to go with her.



The heroes and Kendra walk to a nearby town square where one of the multiple Martira Bay dances will be held. The square is full of locals. Many oil torches light the place. Just after they heard a few notes of violin, and they knew vistani were providing music!



The atmosphere is fun, and everybody dances with everybody. They see a young vistani teen girl playing violin while people around her dance a particularly crazy circling dance, while her vistani parents watch proudly.

Kendra enters the dance and the heroes go talk with the vistani. His name is Mladevonac, and she is Loznica (*DM note: I have a map of the Balkans I keep nearby for using town names as vistani names 😊*). The young violinist is Palenka.

Petrak identifies himself as a *giorgoto* by showing the scar in his hand. Petrak say they have two tarokka decks they were supposed to give back to vistani. The first is Rozaleen's (surprise in the vistani's eyes! – *session 12*) and the other one is Gabrielle Aderre's (even greater surprise! – *session 10*).

Gabrielle Aderre is a lost child, they say. But they watch her from a distance as she is their blood. They would prefer her following another path, of course. They know she is feverishly looking for her lost tarokka deck, which is in fact her mother's deck. They will bring it to her.

Rozaleen's deck is to be used only by an experienced tribe leader, a raunie, as there are many things to be found "between the cards".

Petrak gives them both tarokka decks. He asks them about Godefroy's cane, but they do not know anything about it, even never heard of it. But the heroes should ask Madame Eva about this (*the heroes have met her already – session 11*). When asked about the whereabouts of Madame Eva, they say "you do not find Madame Eva, it's her that finds you. We will pass her the message".

Meanwhile, Palenka is very good with her violin. MacRazbunare recognize that an enchantment is taking place through the music, but it is a positive emotion-based spell he doesn't know. It comes from her playing and not from her violin. Tips flow in her hat.

And then someone says "hey, it's been a good 15 minutes we haven't seen Kendra?"

They do not see her anywhere in the square! They describe her to a few people and one answers "oh, that girl in the purple long dress? She left a few minutes ago with her lover"

"Lover?", they ask. "Oh they were quite close!", the man answers.

They run in the direction he points, which is the inn's. Petrak runs at the inn and comes back with Petros. Meanwhile, the other heroes look in each dark lanes from the square to the inn.

After being guided by a cry in the night, Varadan finds Kendra in a lane lighted with a dying torch. She is in the embrace of a tall gaunt man, who seems to be kissing her throat! (*I put to use the cool [Reaper mini # 2856](#) I bought a while ago*).

Running closer, he sees the creature's teeth sinking in Kendra's throat! A vampire!

Seeing the heroes entering the lane, the creature let Kendra fall on the floor and it cast a protective spell (*fire shield*). Its voice is horrible, like the noise of multitude of vermin crawling on a humid cavern wall.

On the floor, Kendra gets a wand. Petros throws a *magic missile* at the man from a wand. MacRazbunare and Varadan throws *magic missiles* too.



The creature starts moving upward on the wall, crawling disgustingly like a spider, and he partially hides on the roof. Exigu throws a grappling hook on the house. Kendra fires a *magic missile* at the creature.

The creature is thin, pale and sick looking. It has two long vampire-like teeth. Petrak knows it's a nospheratu. (*Ramoska Arminos, Nospheratu wiz8, from Pathfinder*)

It viciously cast a *lightning bolt* aimed at Kendra, but Varadan is hit too! Kendra falls on the ground.

Petros runs to his daughter. MacRazbunare summons black bears. Varadan casts more magic missiles. The creature replies by casting a successful *hold person* on MacRazbunare from the roof.

Exigu climbs on the roof but is greeted by the creature's yellow eyes and is *dominated*! Exigu says to his friends "he is running to the other way", which misleads a few of his friends to the wrong direction.

Then Exigu attacks Petrak with a full round action of arrows! Petrak heals Kendra and she opens her eyes. MacRazbunare shakes off the *hold person* and cast more magic missiles at the monster.

Varadan and Virevan are now climbing to the roof and the creature vanishes in a spell the heroes recognize as *dimension door*... They watch from the roof, expecting another attack shortly, but nothing else happens, the creature has vanished in the night!



Exigu comes back to his senses. Petrak heals himself.

They wonder if the creature was there to assassinate Kendra? Petros is extremely grateful to the heroes for saving her daughter. Her story is that she was dancing with a handsome young man and then their eyes locked and she doesn't remember a thing until when the heroes arrived in the lane.

Petros brings his daughter back to the inn, but comes back a few times to the heroes' room to express his gratefulness. Meanwhile, in the inn, the heroes expect the creature to come back and they set a turn of duty to guard the rooms.

They *detect poison* and magic on everybody: negative. Kendra has been drained of constitution. Exigu will use his healing skills on her.

During their sleep, they dream of a creature reaching to their heart through their chest with its cold claws... MacRazbunare also dreams of Ilesha walking in the cemetery. She smiles at him and vanishes...

March 11th, 748 – 2 am

(DM note: what will happen next is the following: Viktor Hazan has drugged Virevan on the last day on the boat. Now he will cast induce lycanthropy at him from the staircase. His goal is to put the heroes in trouble so he can manipulate them the next day with a "cure" for lycanthropy. But things will turn really bad, much worse than Viktor ever expected... Virevan turned Chaotic Evil with this encounter. Designed with the player, who didn't really like his PC to be lycanthropic and was ready for a change. But the player doesn't know the cause of this transformation, i.e. Hazan's actions)

Exigu is watching Kendra for the night (*healing*). It is all quiet.

But shortly after 2 am, he sees Virevan walking in the inn corridor... in lycanthrope hybrid shape! He tries to speak to him but Virevan doesn't answer and goes downstairs in the inn. He hears the front door open! Exigu awoke the group, and also Petros and Kendra. They wonder what to do with this situation. They get MacRazbunare's wolf in the barn. Thinking it might somehow be a trap to leave Petros and Kendra alone, they go back to the inn and drag them outside with them.

They chase Virevan with the wolf's scent help, but Virevan has a few minutes in advance...

They hear a horror cry in front and Exigu runs in this direction, to find a drunken man, recoiling behind a bench. "I saw a monster", he says.

After a moment, they realize Virevan is going toward Milhausen's manor! They run in this direction, but Varadan the monk is much faster and arrives before the others. Varadan hears broken glass noises! He see Virevan in a room, through a broken window, slashing with his claws at something unseen on the ground, and slashing and slashing ... There is a lot of blood flowing on the white walls... His yellow eyes are crazy.

Elsewhere in the manor, candles are being lighted and shouts of surprise and fear erupt.

Varadan cast a *magic missile* at Virevan, who stops his slashing motions, looks confusedly toward Varadan while turning back to human shape... Now, there are knocking noises at the locked room, and people are calling Solaila's name!

Virevan is full of blood. He looks at the carnage and his first thought is to suicide. Varadan waves at him to come and leave. Virevan jumps the window and runs toward Varadan. They leave the manor's ground while in the room, the door is finally knocked open and cries of horror cuts the silence in the street... "Solaila, nooooooooo!" (*second loss for this family in 12 hours!*)

Back to the group, Varadan says Virevan killed Solaila! Virevan says he heard casting from the inn's staircase just before his transformation to wolf horror. Then he doesn't remember a thing until he got the *magic missile* and turned back to human form...

He feels cheap this mess happened and that he couldn't resist being controlled. But he doesn't feel guilty at all about the killing, since he was controlled to do this...

GAME SESSION FORTY SIX: TO DARKON AND BEYOND -4

(played April 10th, 2011)

Before the game, by email, there was a fun email discussion about what to do with this PC, without Yvon (Virevan's player) participating in the discussion. Here's part of the discussion, unannotated by me.

JF (MacRazbunare) : these are unacceptable actions. Strong inner compulsions, but what kind of alignment would create these compulsions? Would a CN character would pervert the "let's feed" compulsion to "let's eat this girl we met in the afternoon?" Not sure. It seems evil to me.

A CN character would have eaten a horse in a bard, or someone in the street like the drunken guy, instead of a woman located half a mile from there. I believe Virevan is now CE.

PS: cool role playing scenario ;-)

Martin (Petrak) : I think saying he heard someone cast is a lie to make things look better. Why did the caster disappear after casting, instead of continuing the attack? And how a spell can turn him into a lycanthrope? We could interrogate him about this while making sense motive, zone of truth and similar. I think we should give Virevan as the murderer to local authorities, but we should prepare for battle with him.

JF (MacRazbunare): If we give him to the police, they will make him talk and, feeling betrayed, he will try to get us into the murder too, perhaps say that Varadan is a lycanthrope too. If Virevan became evil, I think we should kill him ourselves instead of giving him to the police.

And the more we interrogate him, the more wary he will become and it will be more difficult.

Also, we are two days from the Full Moon.

May be he was attacked; remember we had strange dreams that night. What I think is that something made him change, and he missed his alignment change check. The beast side won and he went to kill her.

Yvon (Virevan), between me and him: being CE now, there is no way I will enter a cage for the full moon. I prefer to run away and live what happens this night freely.

The whole messy situation led to a cool role playing session!

March 11th, 748 – 3 am

Walking back toward the inn, the heroes discuss with Virevan.

Virevan – Please do not give me to the police, we have to think about this, you have to let me think about this.

Petros – You have saved my daughter tonight, I owe you eternal gratitude. Me and my daughter never saw anything if that can help you.

Back in the inn, Exigu resumes his healing on Kendra.

Virevan is tired and realize he feels that way since he awoke last morning on the boat. He goes to sleep while the other heroes talk about the case...

Macrazbunare: if he is CE, we have to kill him. He is dangerous for us and for the population.

Petrak: I doubt the spell part just before the transformation; I would have said the same to cover my actions.

Exigu: I don't want him to stay with us. He is dangerous and we never know when it will start another time.

Exigu: may be the spell was fear? And that is why he left?

Macrazbunare: how much time before we have to act? How many deaths?

Exigu: we kill him? We give him to police? We ask him to leave?

All: we do not trust him anymore.

All: one thing sure is that he will never have a guard duty alone again.

Petros – for this crime, here in Martira Bay, the sentence is death (the guillotine then has a line of silver on the cutter)

Exigu: we are accomplice if we hide him.

Macrazbunare: he is now sleeping. Five coup de grace and he's dead. Petrak and Varadan are not warm to this idea.

Vote to keep him with us: Petrak – no; Macrazbunare – no; Exigu – no; Varadan – no.

Petrak : we give him to local authorities

Macrazbunare: if we give him to the police, we follow the law. If we kill him and they find out, they may think we have something to hide, and that will give us trouble.

Petros : it's never a good idea to be a fugitive here in Darkon, the kargat have eyes everywhere.

So the heroes jump on Virevan and pass handcuffs on his his arms and legs!

While they are bringing him to the next police station:

Exigu: we will bring you to the police

Virevan: You are not giving me any chance!

Macrazbunare: You will have a trial

Virevan: I won't have a chance there. It's not my fault, you are making a mistake, you can't do that to me!

To Varadan: you should help me, you are like me, you could be the one in my seat!

Virevan: when Macrazbunare went cucumber (DM note: *possessed by the doppelganger plant – session 26*), we didn't kill him, we tried to help him!

Virevan: I am not a menace to you! The proof is that I left when the crisis started. If you bring me to the authorities, I have no chance. Help me, I've always been cooperative!

Virevan: why is Varadan (the other lycanthrope) not in handcuffs? He is sick like me!

Varadan: I have never killed anybody or had that compulsion.

Virevan: I know I am dangerous but there is surely a solution, help me!

(DM note: I found Virevan to be extremely brilliant in this last chance plea to his friends)

Varadan now seriously has a doubt, but they are now in front of the police station, and Exigu says they are delivering the killer of Solaila Milhausen! One of the guards enters inside, while the others watch the heroes and Virevan.

A few minutes later, a woman exits the police station, accompanied by four more guards. She is dressed in black and red velvet, and she wears a eye patch.

She interrogates the heroes, who answers truthfully – who are you? What are your name? Where are you from? You, you are a priest? From which god? Are you mercenaries? “No, adventurers”, they reply. Why are you in Martira Bay? “We brought back Isha's Milhausen corpse from Mordent to



her family". What do you know of the murder? "He did it while under lycanthropy" What kind of lycanthropy? "werewolf".

She asks the guards to take Virevan inside. And to the heroes: "You are to stay in Martira Bay until further advice from me personally", she says. "If you need to add anything to your deposition, ask for Lady Kazandra".

And she enters the police station. Exigu then realize they left Petros and Kendra alone at the Inn! They run back but nothing happened there.

4 am – back to sleep.

(DM note – in prison, cell number 6, Virevan got a talk with Lady Kazandra. She recruited him to be an agent of the kargat in Barovia. "Your other choice is guillotine, for the cold blooded murder of the daughter of a well known, respected, wealthy man...". Being CE, he said yes.)

6 am – morning, spells learning and all.

They enquire about Lady Kazandra. She is the head of the Martira Bay police force, she is bright, and extremely competent. Some of the cities have seen chaos when it was found that Azalin was dead, but not Martira Bay. She always have many guards with her for her protection.

They cast *protection from curse* on Varadan, to make sure the same won't happen to him, and then *lesser restoration* on Kendra for her constitution.

This morning, a shaky Kendra has her archeology exam at the University. After, her father says, we take the first coach to get back to Harrowstone. During the exam, Petros said he will go to the police station to make his deposition, to confirm the heroes' saying, to make sure they do not get any trouble.

But the heroes, first, they need to buy a pig for Varadan's lycanthropic appetite, with a *gentle repose* cast on it.

They go to the police station to get back the handcuffs. They are given back extremely bloody. They are told that Virevan tried to get way and had to be killed as he was transforming. His body was cremated (there is indeed a chimney with sinister black smoke flowing in the back of the police station). But the heroes are doubtful.

Then they go to the University. They see Petros, who informs them that he was told at the police station that they didn't need his deposition. The heroes tell him what they were told about Virevan's end. He is shocked.

Then Kendra exits the exam room, followed by her teachers, who chat with Petros as they seem to be friends. "It was easy", she said about the exam. She learns about Virevan's end and she can't repress a tear. "I'm sorry for you", she said, "he was your friend".

After a request from the casters, Petros introduces them to the librarian of the arcane vault. Normally, you need to be an arcane university student and darkonese to have hope of access to this vault. Because this vault is said to contain nearly all the spells possible, but it is most probably an exaggeration. The keeper of the vault is Gloriana de Beauchamps. Petros says he knew her father very well.

When they all enter her office, she is stern and cold. She hears Petros's polite request for a spell named "scorching rays" then ask the heroes to leave, to speak to Petros alone. Then they hear shouts of joyous talk and they understand Petros is very friendly with her, and from a long time it seems. Then Petros exits her office. And she follows. She says to MacRazbunare "a book will be left for you tomorrow at the main public library".

Back in the public library, they do a research on Godefroy and his cane (*for Petrak has lost wisdom points when hit by it – session 30 - and is looking for a cure*). Petrak learns that the cane was in the house when Godefroy has taken possession on the manor around year 550.

Also, they find that 30 years ago, adventurers fought Godefroy in Gryphon Hills, but they had to retreat. One of the adventurers was hit by the cane and they tried many things to heal him, and nothing worked.

(major DM hint if there is one)

Then Petrak stopped at the Ezra church, where he met local priest Walter Zantorian. He is friendly and greets Petrak with care and reverence (Petrak is higher level).

Learning that Petrak is an adventurer, he asks Petrak if he has time to investigate a strange case. "Probably a crazy story by young teens, but you never know".

(Next story was borrowed from the cool Supernatural TV serie and VRGttMists. I needed to buy time until the start of Haunting of Harrowstone)

They meet young Nathalie Nysend, 15 years old, who is mourning and praying for her father's soul. She has a strange tale to tell. Her father died recently at work (wood lumberyard), but not of a work related accident it seems.

Nathalie says "I've heard the story a thousand times. And we played with it a thousand more, without anything happening. Bloody Mary is supposed to be the ghost of a girl who died while looking at a mirror. To see her, they say you have to go in your bathroom and turn out your candle. Then, when everything is totally quiet, you spin around thirteen times. You have to chant the words "Bloody Mary" each time you spin. When you open your eyes, Bloody Mary will be standing there in the mirror. We didn't think anything was going to happen! But she was there! We were so afraid! We tried to talk to her but she vanished. She was horrible. She looked at us then disappeared! The next day, my father was dead, and nobody can explain what happened to him! I know it's her!"

Nathalie brings them to her house, where the body of her father is. Nathalie's aunt is there to take care of the house. Nathalie's friends, Mirianda and Margaret, confirm exactly what happened, as Nathalie told them. One thing they add, in the mirror, Bloody Mary looked like her clothes were torn.



The dead body is strange. It is like the man's eyes burned or exploded, or something similar?

At the lumberyard, they ask about the dead man, Rodriguo Nysend. One of his coworker said he looked sad recently, and he was often talking about his wife who died 6 years ago. He felt guilty as she died because he made a mistake in the drugs and gave her a strong dose of a calming product. This mistake killed her and he was felt very bad about it.

They investigate the room where he was found dead, the room for fine and exotic wood. There are traces of blood on the ground, where the body was found. With his scent, Varadan finds a bloody handprint, that of a girl, on a piece of wood ten feet in the air.

It is late and they go back to the inn. They find a note by Petros, thanking them again for saving her daughter. Kendra added a note: "have faith".

They meet Viktor in the inn's restaurant. They tell him the death of Virevan. He said he heard the guards talk of a prisoner that nearly went away from the prison but got killed when trying. He is quite surprised of this news, understanding that the prisoner is Virevan! He is genuinely shocked! *(DM note: realizing what happened!)*

Asked about her later, he says he knows who Gloriana de Beauchamps is, but not much more. She has the reputation of keeping her vault's access with an iron fist.

They tell him about the Rodriguo Nysend case. "The eyes?", he said, "then it must be ghosts. When it's freaky, it's often ghosts. Or something that eats the eyes."

They share Virevan's equipment, and Petrak makes a ceremony for Virevan's soul.

March 12th, 748 – morning

At 8 am, they are in the lumberyard again, to cast *Insight*. They think the eyes have exploded while he was still standing, possibly when still alive. Austizel cast *Identify Spoor* and he sees a girl in an old dark robe. She is pale and look sad. She is 17-18 years old. She doesn't look like Nathalie or one of her friends.

They then cast *Ethereal resonance* in the lumberyard. They see a dresser with two drawers. One contains a bottle of pills, and the other contains a bottle of poison. The bottle of poison flies and gets into the first drawer...

At 9, they are at the University. At the public library, MacRazbunare asks for a book left for him. The librarian search then hands him a book called the Ecology of Field Mice. MacRazbunare takes the book and gets into a

quiet corner. Inside the book are inserted sheets of paper: the *Scorching Ray* spell, and a note “Good working, G.B.” He starts copying the spell.

The other search the historic crime book and similar historic books, trying to find a death in Rodrigo’s house (*hypothesis of a ghost in the house*). Nothing. They look at a book on important and well known people in the past history of Martira Bay, but nothing match the description of Bloody Mary.

They go back to Rodrigo’s house. Nathalie is with her aunt, Rebecca Westminster. They look at the mirror itself. It has an old frame, and is about 3’ x 3’.

Rebecca tells them that Avina found it in the garbage a long time ago, just before she married with Rodrigo. Behind the mirror, a bloody handprint! About the same size as the one they found in the lumberyard! But this one is very old, may be ten or fifteen years, or more.



Detect magic on the mirror: nothing. The aunt is impressed and uneasy by their magic use. “The day you see magic is the day you die”, she said.

They find the same furniture as the one seen in *Ethereal resonance*, but it contains only combs and linen.

The heroes ask Nathalie about something odd about her mother’s death. Nathalie is sad but has nothing worthwhile to say about it. They notice Rebecca becoming stern and they talk to her about it while Nathalie is in another room. “The death of my sister”, she tells, “was bizarre to us. She had a lung sickness, but was then recovering from it. But within three days, her health went downhill and she died. We also heard a rumor that Rodrigo was seeing another woman, but that has never been proven.”

Back to the library, they search for mirror tales and Bloody Mary’s. They find that Bloody Mary is typically described as a killed girl (or a child-murderer) who lived in the local city where the legend has taken root years ago. The avenging spirit goes by many names, but the most common is Bloody Mary. Other “real name” of the spirit includes Bloody Bones, Hell Mary, Mary Worth, Mary Worthington, Mary Lou, Mary Jane, Sally, Kathy, Agnes, Aggie.

There are at least 50 versions of this tale. Saying her names three times, while turning or not, or a hundred times, at midnight or in the darkness with a candle, rubbing one’s eyes. The summoner must say “Bloody Mary, I killed your baby” or more often just simply “Bloody Mary”.

Bloody Mary is often believed to be the spirit of a young mother whose baby was stolen from her, making her mad in grief, eventually committing suicide. Or there are stories where Mary is supposed to have been wrongly accused of killing her children. Or she is a witch, or a young married woman killed on her wedding day, or that she drowned, or that she drowned her children!

Other versions tell that she will appear and the summoner can talk to a deceased person the summoner knew. Other variations say that she will answer truthfully any divination question about the summoner’s future.

Their research has another finding: the same story happened 18 years ago, to Jekuthiel Romana, a baker. People in the library say the shop is still opened and the heroes get the direction to this bakery.

There, they find Jekuthiel but he doesn't want to talk about these events. Petrak persuades him by saying it happened again last week and that they are investigating to make it stop. Jekuthiel says he made the ritual in front of a mirror when he was 13, and his mother was found dead and eyeless the next day. "My poor mother, she always felt guilty that she did not save her sister from drowning from jealousy over a doll. She was only 9! When she realized she was drowning, it was too late. She often talked about it and would have liked to go back in time to change the events of that day. She was very sad about it."

When asked about it, he says he then threw the mirror to garbage. They also ask him if he made any kind of wish in front of the mirror, and he answers negatively. "I just saw her in the mirror. She looked at me then vanished. My mother didn't deserve that".

They go back to the inn, where they talk to MacRazbunare (back from University) and Viktor Hazan about the day's findings.

March 13th, 748 – morning

At the University, the book for MacRazbunare is *The Ecology of Lemmings*, containing the same sheets for the *scorching ray* spell.

The others check for mirrors and superstitions. Mirrors reveal secrets and reflects the soul. You can't lie to yourself in front of a mirror. That is why it is bad luck to break them.

Another superstition: when someone dies in a house, they cover the mirrors so the spirit doesn't stay trapped in the mirror.

But they find an historic bit of trivia that can explain a lot: Mary Worthington, was killed in Martira Bay and had her eyes removed by the killer (year 725), who then made drawings with her blood on a mirror. The crazy killer was Ragnan Glandias, that escaped prison in 726 and was never seen again.

The group feels that breaking the mirror might end this curse. At dawn, around 6 pm, they get outside the city and gather some wood. Then they set the mirror to burn... but something exits the mirror!

The heroes suddenly face a young woman, looking pale and sad. She is in part incorporeal. The heroes gather their weapon but curiously, she just look at them one after the other, with a sad look.



Macrazbunare tells her that they want to give her eternal peace. Exigu asks her what does she wants, and Varadan asks her what they can do to help her.

After nearly a minute of staring, her face suddenly turns hateful and she snarls at MacRazbnare “It’s your fault that she died!”. The other notices that Macrazbunare’s eyes are starting to bleed!

He cast magic missiles, but it has no effect at all. But Austizel’s do work a second later.

Petrak is fascinated by Bloody Mary and can’t do anything but stare at her. *Disrupt undead* by Austizel has no effect.

She accuses Mac Razbunare again! « Machiavel! You let your father deliver an innocent young woman to the bloodthirsty Duke Gundar! You could have made her flee but this young woman refused your love! » and Macrazbunare’s eyes start to bleed more profusely. He looks confused.

More spells are thrown at her, but she keeps staring at Macrazbunare with hate in her eyes.

After a while, Macrazbunare falls to the ground, unconscious! She moves toward Macrazbunare.

Austizel breaks the glass of the mirror and her eyes starts to bleed too! She seems to be suffering.

Then Petrak hits her successfully with his sword and this is the final blow. She vanishes.



Bloody Mary is a unique incorporeal mist creature based on a rank three ghost (but she isn’t undead), with the mist subtype added (resistance to cold and electricity), with fascination (Su), and SR 20. 89 hps.

Her main attack (Will DC 22) is to accuse someone of a past crime: it causes D4+2 wisdom point each round. The eyes of the victim start to bleed. At wisdom 0, the character is withdrawn into a deep sleep filled with nightmares, helpless. Then Bloody Mary’s attack remove d4 constitution points each round, as she tries to empty from air the lungs of its victim. At Constitution 0, the victim is dead and his/her eyes explode. She leaves after killing one victim. She was a lot of fun!

One of the other tricks to kill her is to show her the mirror as one would do when turning undead: she would accuse herself of all these murders (eyes bleed, explodes and she vanish forever).

The heroes are back at the inn around 9 pm.

GAME SESSION FORTY SEVEN: TO DARKON AND BEYOND -5

(played August 14th, 2011)

March 13th, 748 – 9 pm

In the Inn, they see Hazan in discussion with a man. Having to carry Macrazbunare in a deep sleep like trance, they go to their room.

Exigu explore the possibility that Varadan (the other lycanthrope in the group) might be dangerous too. Should we keep him? Since there are no signs of Varadan turning evil, they decide he's OK.

After an hour, Macrazbunare is still in a deep sleep, filled with nightmares as he moves often on his couch, and it doesn't seem pleasant. But he murmurs a name from time to time: "Dominika..."

Exigu does healing on Macrazbunare. Petrak cast *Lesser Restoration* on MacRazbunare

Around 5 pm, the heroes fetch the dog cage on the boat. Captain Howe says he plans to leave on March 16th or the 17th.

March 14th, 748 – am

They learn spells, and Macrazbunare is back to consciousness. MacRazbunare explains that Bloody Mary (see last session) somewhat warped this "avenger of hidden crimes" side, as he could not have done much to save that girl (Dominika) from Duke Gundar. He was only 14 at the time! Still when he was young, he felt very bad about it, but when older, he realized he could not have done much to help her without getting killed himself. Strange case, that Bloody Mary!

They see Hazan is still discussing with the same person as yesterday night. Hazan seems on the defensive, and the other person, a young man with dark hairs and grey eyes, has an air of contempt. The heroes spy on the conversation but they can't follow the conversation: they are talking in draconic, so they are not understood by the other people! Watching Hazan, they see he is pale and seems to be in fear of this young man.



They try to hear what's being said, but they speak too low. At one point, Hazan slam his fist on the table and says, in common "It won't happen that way!"

Then, two curious persons enter the room, one is an albino with long hairs, dressed in colorful garbs. The other seems slow witted even at first sight, and has a very sad expression on her face, and she has a very small head for her size. The man calls to the crowd and says they need help, could someone help them?

People laugh at them. The man talking with Hazan is an air of disgust.



The players agree to help them and they exit the tavern with the strange duo. They are Kaleb Hesse and Lettie. Kaleb explains that his troupe (The Crooked Kin) are performers who have lost one of their own. He begs the heroes for aid, and promises to reward them with a magical dagger if they can find the missing Aleece.

Kaleb explain their group stopped by the roadside near Martira Bay to rest earlier in the day, but one of their members, the pinhead Aleece, sister to Lettie, heard some strange noises off the trail, went off to investigate, and hasn't returned. The Kin, worried that she has now been gone for several hours in a strange and dangerous place, are desperately trying to decide what to do.

They arrive to their camp. The Crooked Kin are a troupe of performers and sideshow freaks who travel entertaining. The entire show travels in a caravan of nine covered wagons. Just one look at that motley crew tells the heroes that there are no fighters in this group. It is obvious to the heroes that the Kin are ill-prepared to go venturing into the fens, and that any rescue party they mount would likely deteriorate into a disaster.

Kaleb takes the heroes apart and tells them this traveling show is collecting simpletons to offer them a new life away from the society that made them suffer or treated them as animals. I try to help them this way, and we are a happy bunch. Nobody is mistreated and they feel they belong to a tightly knit family.

They ask for a piece of clothing that belonged to Aleece to help tracking by scent. Lettie runs in her wagon and exits with a shawl.

They enter the marsh. The high reeds are between 6 and 8 feet high so the heroes do not see ten feet farther. After half a mile, they hear a faint "help me" twice. The heroes shout "Aleece, if you can hear us, shout so we can find you". The voice replies "Quick, I'm drowning!", and then become silent...

The traces go inside a small clearing in the high reeds, with a foot high of murky water in it. In the clearing, Petrak finds a magnifying glass that seems to be stuck there for awhile. Its handle is golden. They cast *detect magic*, and one spot is magic in the clearing, and it's not the magnifying glass.

While they are surrounding the clearing and watching for more objects in the water, Varadan suddenly feels a vicious bite in his back! (17 hp!) He turns and sees nothing! Next round, he feels weaker (-1 Co). Exigu cast *delay poison*. Then Austizel is bitten too! (-11 hp) But they still see nothing! The only thing Austizel saw is a dark shape disappearing...

They enter the clearing and watch the area all around them. Exigu spot a wooden box, immersed, and Varadan finds a flask made of glass.

Austizel finds a leather traveling case. Austizel also feels weaker from the poison.

Then another voice, that of Lettie "Have you found her?" The voice is about a hundred feet only. Alarmed, the heroes tell her to remain there. No answer!

Around the clearing, the heroes find Aleece's body. She is dead, and she has a deep wound in the back!

Having found what they were in the fens for, the heroes walk back to the wagon camp. Then Exigu is attacked, but the attack misses! They see a large (8 feet) and ugly black spider, with a human like head! But it doesn't disappear this time and continues attacking!



Austizel cast *mirror image*. The spider bites Macrazbunare (a critical, -27 hp!). He feels weak from the loss of constitution, but still he cast *faerie fire* over the monster, to prevent it from hiding again.

Then they start running to exit the fens and its high weeds.

Then another spider appears out of thin air, near Petrak! But her attack doesn't do any damage (Petrak has his *shield of Ezra*). He replies with his smite power but misses.

She bites him again, but this time also, it doesn't cause any damage.

Exigu launches arrows on the female spider. It bites Varadan but he fights the poison and do not feel weak. He hits the female spider and kills it.



While they run for drier ground, they hear a man's voice casting behind them (they identify it as a healing spell)!

Back to the Kin, they are devastated when the heroes show them Aleece's body. But they are grateful for the heroes' assistance, especially after they tell of the giant spider. The heroes tell the Kin they should move their wagons elsewhere!

Back to the inn, where Hazan is still discussing with the young man.

They check the things they found in the clearing – no poison, and not magical, except for the flask. The wooden box has weights for a balance. There is a sliding panel with 80 gp. The potion is *Fox Cunning*. The magnifying glass is worth 100 gp. The leather traveling case contained letters, but water erased them.

March 15th, 748

In the morning they do healing to recover the many constitution points lost.

In the morning, Kaleb is there and he thanks the heroes again for their help. He gives them a dagger, as promised. The dagger is in its scabbard and the pommel is a sculpted howling wolf. Kaleb thinks the dagger is magical, and he says it was found on a dead body.

Petrak offers a ceremony to bury Aleece.

Hazan is talking with the dark young man. It seems that their discussion is over and the young man walks to his room, upstairs. While he walks Hazan tells him “I should correct you, young man, as when you were not listening in my class!”. The man continues walking while saying “Anytime! Anywhere!”

Hazan goes to the heroes and they have breakfast together. They tell him about the dangerous spiders they fought the day before. Hazan tells them they met The Feasters in Watery Shadows, a pair of very intelligent and dangerous phase spider that haunted the marches a while ago. But they are back, it seems... The local force drove them away ten years ago.

They ask him about that young man Hazan was talking to. His name is Aurélien Vrood, and he was once a student of Hazan at the Martira Bay University. But Vrood turned his magic focus on necromancy, something Hazan hates. Vrood wanted Hazan’s help on something, but Hazan refused... even if Vrood menaced him. Vrood seems to be a member of some evil organization, Hazan suspects.

It is full moon day, and they escort Varadan outside of Martira Bay, and put him in a cage as usual. But while the first rays of the moon appears, Varadan resists his transformation into a beast and stays human.

This night, Petrak hears a few wolves in the night, from the forest surrounding the city... but then at least three howlings answered ... from inside the city!

March 16th, 748

They go to the police station to ask if they can leave. The man answers that Lady Kazandra hasn’t cleared them yet to allow departure from Martira Bay (session 46). They also inform the police of the return in the area of the Feasters in Watery Shadows.

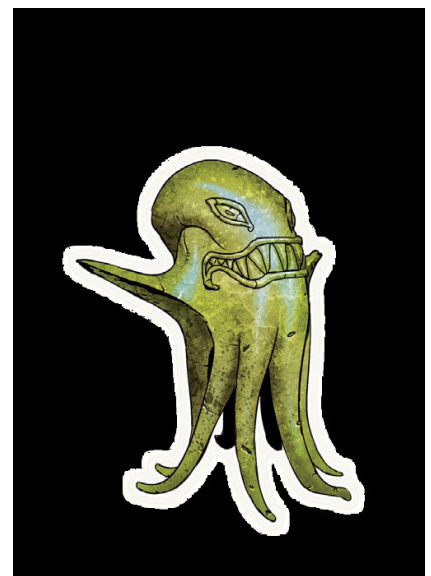
The Black Pelican hasn’t left.

Back to the inn, they check the magical dagger Kaleb gave them: Bane (shapechangers) +1. Varadan takes it.

Hazan informs them a statue has been stolen at the university last night. But Vrood told him about that very statue just the day before! Surely he is linked in this. It’s called the Souragne effigy.

They go to the University to investigate this theft. It seems the statue was very old and very strange in that nobody ever identified from which place it came from. Even Petros Lorrimer studied it once and couldn’t find anything. In a book they see an image of it, some kind of disgusting looking greenish statue...

It was on display in the curiosity alcove of the Antiquities Department since it was found about 40 years ago on the island of Souragne.



A security guard explains the back door was locked with a superior lock, but it is clear that the door was recently damaged. The heroes find acid corrosion damage.

Paneled in oak, the curiosity alcove of the auditorium is a sunken, 5-foot-deep central area lined with books, tribal fetishes, and weird dusty curiosities.

The pedestal that once held the Souragne Effigy once had a glass dome but this is now in pieces. Nothing else in the crowded alcove has been moved. The effigy was about a foot high.

They speak to an old woman, Madame Fogzi, janitor in this part of the University. Yesterday she spied two men talking in front of the effigy. The heroes describe Aurélien Vrood, and the woman says one of them looked like him. The other one is a red haired gnome, Mr Grine, from the chemical industry...

At 3pm, they meet the Kin in a cemetery to bury Aleece. Petrak conduct the ceremony and the Kin are grateful. Kaleb tells them they are set in a town square and would stay in the area for about a week.

After the ceremony, they go investigate this Mr Grine. They quickly locate his industrial building: a tall, iron chimney belches yellow clouds into the sky from this small brick factory. A large gate opens onto a small inner courtyard beneath a sign proudly proclaiming "Vorkstag and Grine, Chymic Works." The building has two floors and a tower, topped by a lightning rod. The gate is the only door to get inside. A large mastiff is sleeping in the courtyard.

The heroes can identify the smell of the acrid fumes coming from the chimney as being vapors of acid production.

They ring the bell. No answer. They ring it again. From the second floor, a bright red haired gnome face is seen a moment from a window. He yells "We do not need new customers. Good day", then closes the window.

The heroes ring again and the red head appears again at the window, looking angry. The heroes say "We are not new customers" then the gnome answers "Not interested in new friends or acquaintance either!". The heroes say "We come here on behalf of the police" and the gnome answers "then send them our salutations!" and he closes the window...

At 5 pm, they go to the police station, but they are told Lady Kazandra isn't free to meet them.

They go to the Crimson Wench Alehouse, located very close to the Chymic Works. They watch the building, and talk with the tavern's owner. They learn that Vorkstag and Grine are well-respected merchants. They are both quite elusive and eccentric in a way. No workers are ever seen going on shift at the chymic works, but the smoke from the chimney never stops... But the tavern's owner whispers that Master Vorkstag has a great many friends in high places, and whenever any minor trouble comes his way, someone is always ready to speak up on his behalf...

Around 6 pm, a dwarf enters the gate. He looks like a brute.

At 9h15 pm, a tall noble man, dressed as to go to a chic party, exits the building. At 10h pm, the dog's muzzle is removed and it starts barking at anyone passing on the street...

They also notice the tavern is a place of many shadowy trades...

At 11 pm, they are back at the police station, but again, Lady Kazandra is said to be busy inside.

Back to the inn...

March 17th, 748

When they go down to the main room, the inn's owner tells them a tall blond man, dressed as a baker, came this morning asking questions about you! That is, who are you, where are you from and to whom to you speak to. "Since he was very nice, I told him everything I knew..."

Thinking they might be spied upon, they go walk in the city, while Exigu trails them in hiding. Exigu finds they are not followed.

They go near the chymic shop and cast *locate object* on the effigy: no. They walk back to their inn while maintaining the scan, without such a luck.

They go talk to the Kin. Anybody came to ask questions about us? No.

They talk with Hazan again about Vrood and the effigy, but they learn nothing more. It seems the effigy was important for Vrood, but Hazan do not know why.

GAME SESSION FORTY EIGHT: TO DARKON AND BEYOND -6

(played September 25th, 2011. We have a new player for Austizel, welcome Philippe!)

March 17th, 748 – 11 am

Macrazbunare thinks they should tell the gnome he is framed in the effigy theft, to see his reaction?

Vrood left the inn in the morning of the 15th, but hasn't left an address where to reach him, or said where he was going.

They go back to the tavern near Grine's industry. They gather information with the tavern's owner and ask about places where to meet Halflings? They are said that Halfling are most often "damn thieves", and that they have their own places for them, *in the ghetto*. The heroes describe Vrood and the owner recognize him "yes, he came here a few days ago to eat, with Grine". But Grine rarely come to the tavern, and the owner says he never saw his associate, this Vorkstag.

They also ask if a tall blond baker came this morning to ask questions about them. "Yes, he did, early this morning, and asked if you all came here and to whom you talked to".

They heroes thank him and leave. They check at another tavern nearby, and yes again, the tall blond baker came here too to inquire about the heroes...

They walk to the Halfling ghetto. Going there, they see that one Halfling is wanted by the law (there are many signs about him). Exigu, Varadan and Petrak enters a halfling tavern ("Chez Rufus") and Exigu goes to the bar and talk with the cute lady Halfling there.



Talking with her, he learns that the Halfling searched by the police is named Kloggin, and that he is the leader of a thief guild operating mainly in the roads around Martira Bay, especially the one between Martira Bay and Rivalis. Merchants hate him. They even once attacked a convoy bringing taxes to Castle Avernus! They are quite sanguinary too, usually leaving only one witness to tell about them...

Exigu tells her he just arrived in town and he is investigating about Grine and Vorkstag chymic shops, and that he knows somebody is asking questions about them, and would like to find out who that person is.



At the mention of Grine, she has a slight disgust expression. She tells Exigu that he needs to talk to Porto, at Shortwick tavern, and, in his ear "but there, don't bring these two tall nitwits", while waving at Varadan and Petrak...

And she adds, smiling, "my name is Euphemia... what's your name? Come back to chat soon..."

Meanwhile, Macrazbunare and Austizel are at the university library. They find that a very competent alchemist can make an acid that dissolves metal in a few minutes. There is very few information available about Grine and Vorkstag. They are industrial specialized in acids and bleaches. Their high quality bleach is sought after in the clothing industry. But before bleaches, they tried selling many types of highly effective acids, but bleaches proved to be more lucrative...

On the effigy, nothing. Nothing about an octopus-like god, or statue, or whatever. There is nothing important about octopuses in Souragne, where the effigy was found. Souragne is an island that is mostly covered by a marsh delta choked with dark bayous. Despite its dangerous feel, many Souragniens go there to fish and hunt as well as pray their local gods, some kind of spirits called loas. Most settlements are in the east, where it is drier.

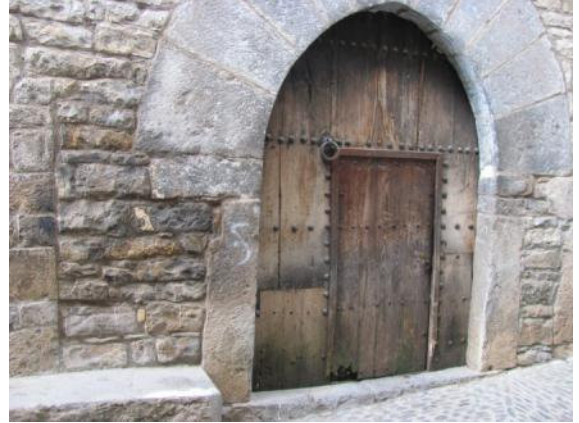
On Vrood, very few things either. They do not find anything about Vrood himself. But a book "Dark secrets of the magick trade" has a few pages that were recently torn out of the book... but it was about an organization that was active around 250 years ago, judging by where the pages were in the book.

The heroes meet at the inn and share the information they found. They decide to eat at another tavern to avoid being spied upon, and they go to the "Bookworm Tavern". They also ask a few questions around, but nobody know who Vrood is, or anything about a tall blond baker...

At 9 pm, Exigu go meet Porto at the Shortwick tavern, while the other heroes wait at the door. There is a door in the door, halfling sized.

The tavern is a lively place, with music, halflings laughing, singing and drinking huge mugs of ale. There are only halflings in the room.

Exigu sits at a table and get himself a mug. He asks the barmaid about Porto, but she answers "I do not know him, but I can ask around".



She continues working in the busy tavern. After about ten minutes, a very large halfling sits in front of Exigu. He is massive for halfling standards. He watches Exigu a moment. "What do you want?", he then asks. "I'm looking for information on some people", answers Exigu. The halfling watches Exigu again without talking. Then, after a moment, he says "stay here" and he leaves the table, to walk to a shadier area of the tavern.

Another ten minutes passes, and an old halfling, with white hairs, come and sit in front of Exigu. "What can we do to help you, my son?"

"I need information for an investigation, something evil. Do you know anything about Aurélien Vrood?"

"A necromancer, very ambitious, but we do not know what his current dealings are"

"About Grine, of the acid shop?"

"next question"

"About a tall blond baker man, asking questions about me and my team?"

"Very visible! Odd, that. We do not know who he is but we know he is asking questions about barovians that just arrived Martira Bay"

The old halfling watches Exigu intensively, then asks "Grine, what do you plan to do with him?"

"He is implied in the theft, we think, and we know he spoke with Vrood the day before it was stolen"

"And if he is implied in this trade, what will you do?"

"I don't know. We wish to recover the statue, not killing him. He seems to have friends in high places"

"And ...", the old halfling whispers, "if you knew Grine was a criminal, and of the most despicable way, what would you do?"

"..."

"We were able to sneak in it a month ago. Grine has chained children in his shop, and he makes them work all day, barely without sleeping."

“And Vorkstag?”

“We do not know him, we have no information about him. Very secretive.”

“That children are working there isn’t known by the police. That should blow their protection from high places if that was known...”

“Can you help us against Grine?”

“No way, we won’t get into this thing deeper. Come back tomorrow for more information”, and the old man gets up and walk away.

Back to the inn, they find a letter releasing them from town custody.

To Anstrigel Nailo , Mac Rayburnare Kassen, Exigu, Petrak, Varadan Kilucru

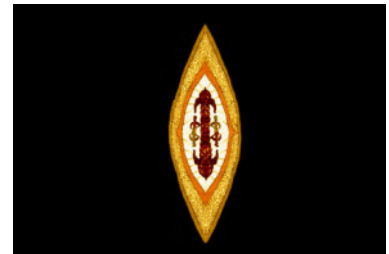
Your release from town custody has been given by Lady Cassandra, Chief Extraordinary, without conditions for you to meet.

Also, you may reclaim the ashes of your deceased friend. We will keep them for a week.

All hail our King,

Alfred Sigfway,

Martira Bay Police Dept



And there is someone waiting for them since this morning!

They meet Tora Vimus. He is a friend of Petros Lorremor, who told him they recently lost a member of their team. He is specialized against undead. His vocation was inspired Van Richten, who hired him in 740. He follows Ezra, from the Mordentshire philosophy.

DM note: a new PC by Yvon, to replace Virevan (session 46). Welcome!

March 18th, 748 – 11 am

They spend the day resting, and around 8 pm, Exigu go back to the Shortwick tavern. A few minutes after his arrival, the old Halfling seats with him. He knows nothing more about Aurélien Vrood.

“The baker man was seen in a few areas only, that is near your inn, and near the chemical shop. Here’s more about Vorkstag and Grine: they are body snatchers, trafficking in body and body parts all over the world. There is most probably an underground access to this building.” He gives Exigu a basic map of the first floor, and warns him that there is a trap on the trap door on the top of the chimney. Then, without another word, he leaves Exigu.

Exigu exits and meet the others. They decide to investigate the sewers around the building. The first sewer trap they try, very close to the building, is shut there, welded by some acid... The second one opens easily, on well oiled hinges, but has a trap! They open it with a rope from afar, and see a volley of needles fly around the sewer trap. They try a second time, to see another volley of needles, as the trap has reloaded! They keep it opened.

Exigu and Tora gets inside and begin their descent in the tube through the metal ladder. But then Tora puts his foot inside a gelatinous cube! He is paralysed! But before the thing can move and engulf him (and dissolve him!) Exigu ties a rope on Tora and the heroes are able to pull him out with a rope.

They destroy the ooze, and get down in the sewer... to find it closed in both directions by a brick wall! Austizel *detects secret door* and finds one!

A small corridor leads them to another secret door, and they find themselves in a storage room. It contains several dozen crates, a few coffins, lots of straw, and several huge bell jars.

They investigate the room, and find only straw in the coffins. In a crate, 15 bottles, non magical.

There are two doors, one they figure to be in the building’s underground. They hear fire burner noises from this room. The other door has no noise coming out of it.

A poorly concealed secret door leads them to another storage room. There is the smell of crooked water, they are not far from the sewers.

This room contains grisly things in glass jars, three coffins, and a handcart. A wand sits on the hand cart. The jars contain various preserved specimens waiting to be shipped, including a preserved elf head, a pickled pair of ogre eyes, the half-changed head and spine of a wererat, and a trio of tentacles.

The first coffin contains a skeleton with a name on it (Mathew Nash, which the heroes remember as the corpse that was stolen in Mordentshire’s cemetery! (*session 23*)). The second one has a fresh body, named Jakob Terrell. But then, surprise! Tora Vimus is in horror of seeing this dead body! It takes a while to calm him.

There is a wand on a crate. The bodies and the wand radiates magic, with a faint necromantic aura (gentle respose).

The third coffin holds a skeleton with a stake in the heart!

A narrow corridor to the east ends at a locked iron grille. The sewer smell is stronger in this area. They open the gate to find a corridor leading to a secret door, opening indeed on the sewers.

They open the second door from the first storage room. There are staircases going down, and the faint noise of water is heard. The room is a pool filled with dozen cadaverers! Again, Tora shrieks in horror! Petrak grapples Tora to prevent him from going elsewhere.

(Yvon wasn't lucky. First check was DC 8, Second DC 10... But rolled a one first time, and a very low roll next time too! For a paladin specialized against undead!)

But then two cadavers start moving and one attacks Petrak! Austizel has a critical attack on the zombie. Another zombie misses Tora. Petrak attacks the zombies. MacRazbunare throws a *scorching ray*, but no effect! These are no ordinary shamblers! Austizel falls from an attack and a zombie grapples him and walk away in the pool with him! Macrazbunare has a *magical missile* on a zombie, killing it. Petrak turns the other, and they are able to retrieve Austizel...

Detect magic? No. Macrazbunare kills the second zombie with a *magical missile*. They calm Tora, and exit the place through the sewer trap, having closed all secret doors and even replaced the magic wand where it was.

They also leave a few hairs on the door cracks to see if the secret doors will be opened before they come back.

Back to the inn...

GAME SESSION FORTY NINE: TO DARKON AND BEYOND -7

(played December 4th, 2011.)

March 18th, 748 – 11 pm

Back in the inn, they think the gelatinous cube is a great way for Grine and Vrokstag to get rid of bodies.

March 19th, 748

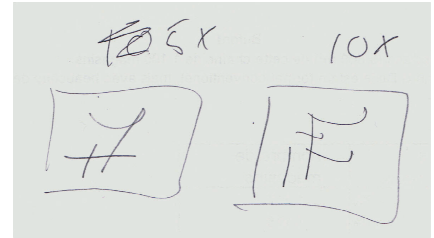
They cast *Epiphany* (VRA) on Tora (to relieve him of the horror checks), and he feels better.

Back to the library. They find information of Jakob Terrel – a grain merchant from Lekar, which disappeared a month ago while in Martira Bay for business. Exigu and Tora try to find a sewer map – nothing. Tora finds that the sewers are very old, and most of the network is not connected to each other anymore. Their use is to collect the overflow of water during autumn. Very few sewer tunnels do reach the sea.

At 10 pm, back to the sewer trap, where they cast spells (*mage armor*, *resist energy*, etc.). They check the secret door, and it hasn't moved since their last visit. They even get down the druid's wolf and even Exigu's dog.

They start investigating the sewers, and they find a crate was hauled through it a few days ago. They follow the trail and find themselves in a wooden tool shed, where they disrupt the sleep of two drunkards.

Back to the underground storage rooms. They take the wand and the 15 non magical bottles. The symbol on the bottles is different, five of a kind, then 10 others.



Detect poison on the bottles: no. They try to identify the bottles: no idea for the first (5), but the second is bloodblock (10).

Bloodblock: This gooey, pinkish substance helps treat wounds. Using a dose gives you a +5 alchemical bonus on Heal checks for providing first aid, treating wounds made by caltrops or similar objects, or treating deadly wounds.

A dose of bloodblock ends a bleed effect as if you had made a DC 15 Heal check. When treating deadly wounds, using a dose of bloodblock counts as one use of a healer's kit (and grants the +5 bonus stated above).

They split the bloodblock between themselves.

But they also learn from the *detect poison* spell that Jakob Terrel was poisoned.

They enter the room where the fire burner noises come from... This very large and very tall (40 feet) room occupies the whole underground of the building, from the cellar level below up to the roof high above. Seven iron vats, each ten feet across, occupy the majority of the room. Furnaces fuel the vats at cellar level, while at the ground floor level a series of planks have been laid across the vats to allow passage to a ladder that leads to an iron walkway on the level above. Ladders also allow access from the planks to the floor below. The air in the chamber is cloying and acidic.

Eight chained children wearing cloth breathing masks attend the vats in this chamber. Heavily scarred by acid, they are horrid in appearance. The dwarf brute they once saw entering the building is doing discipline with a whip.

Macrazbunare throws him a magic missile, and the dwarf let go his whip on the floor, while saying "spare me, I was forced to do this." Exigu enters the room but is nauseated by the acrid smell. The other one put a piece of cloth on their mouth and nose before entering next.

Then, from a footbridge over it all, an alchemical fire bomb is thrown at Varadan (9 hp). He sees a tall blond man, wearing baker suit! While the others enter the room and wonder how to get up there to fight the bomb thrower, two disgusting zombies exit barrels and attack!

Then the treacherous dwarf that surrendered gets a dagger and attack Varadan in the back! The dagger is poisoned!

At this moment, the red haired gnome is seen on the footbridge too! He cast *hold person* on Varadan but the hero resists the effect.



Austizel kills the dwarf. The children who remained frozen in fear since the heroes' arrival rejoice!

Another firebomb is thrown at Petrak. Tora finds a ladder and begins climbing it, but he is followed by a zombie. The other zombie attack Varadan (3 hp).

Austizel throws two arrows at a zombie. At the top of the ladder, Tora finds a locked door! The zombie reaches him and attack.

Varadan has *magic missile* on a zombie, then Macrazbunare makes sure a summoned bat swarm will engulf the baker man! Then Grine moves and makes a *mirror image* of himself (free action), then cast *hold person* on Macrazbunare, who resist the effect. Austizel cast a *knock* on the door in front of Tora. Another firebomb thrown by the mysterious baker man.

Macrazbunare summons a bear to attack Grine. Petrak uses smite power on these tough zombie. Tora kills the zombie following him. Exigu throws arrows at Grine, and destroys an image.

But Grine cast *darkness*, and nobody can see what is going on up there anymore! (*Grine uses spider climb and gets on a wall, while the baker man gets up in the chimney tower*)

The battle continues with the last zombie, while other heroes throw a rope to move up and reach the footbridge. Then from the border of the darkness, on the platform where Tora was standing, an axe attack Tora! The axe drips with poison ...

Tora replies with a bulrush in the darkness and pushes Grine off the small platform. They hear the gnome swearing and his axe falls on the ground (*Grine had to get back on spider climb to avoid falling down, but had to let go his axe!*).

They finish the second zombie, while trying to guess where Grine will go next in the darkness. Austizel and Petrak start unchaining the children. Grine throws another axe at Macrazbunare but misses. Macrazbunare replies by sending his summoned bats in this direction, with their echolocation. They hear swearing again "f... tree huggers". Grine rushes at Macrazbunare and attacks, but Varadan is able to finish him, with the help of the summoned bats.

They search Grine's body to find eight flasks (two being empty), one magical one and five that are most probably poisoned. There is also a holy symbol of Set, a death dealing god worshipped on an island in the mists. Macrazbunare cut Grine's head and throws Grine's body in a vat. They gather all the children in safety in the barn.

They gather and get up the ladder inside the chimney tower. They enter a room that appears to be the small study of a scholar. A roll-top desk with a leather chair stands against one wall, holding a variety of alchemical equipment and surrounded by hundreds of books piled on every available surface. A narrow cot is crushed into one corner behind a wall of books. A door stands in the north wall.

There is a children chained near the bed. When he sees the heroes he says “Don’t hurt me! The man white went up the ladder!” They unchain him and tell him to reach the others downstairs.

(DM note: me being evil. Vorkstag is a shape changer, and switched to child to escape under the heroes’ eyes!)

Up the ladder, another cramped room: as much an abattoir as a bedchamber, this room contains not only a four-poster bed, but also numerous workbenches and alchemical gear. The walls are lined with shelves and strange looking objects in jars of liquid. Bits of rags litter the floor, and the air is heavy with the stench of spoiled food mixed with acrid chemicals. A ladder leads to a trapdoor in the ceiling.

Up another room, filled with strange art and masks.

Up the ladder, they touch nothing and gets up, to the trap door, where they find an empty option on the floor.

(DM note: they think exactly what Vorkstag wanted them to think, i.e. he escaped with a fly potion or clim wall or similar...)

They watch the sky but they do not see the baker man fleeing.

GAME SESSION FIFTY: TO DARKON AND BEYOND -8

(played January 15th, 2012)

March 19th, 748 – 11 pm

They go down one level, to the art and masks room. This is a collection of curios from around the world. Appraise? Nothing of value.

Down under a level. Nothing magic here either. The room has many jars, and one bell jar is full of liquid and it contains a small gold key at the bottom. The heroes guess correctly the liquid is acid.

They plan to keep some of the acid and start washing jars to keep it. They collect three liters of strong acid.

Meanwhile, Petrak and Varadan go downstairs to watch for the children... to find them all dead! There are bottles of orange juice that was poisoned! One of them dies by a dagger wound. And the child they “saved” from the tower room isn’t there anymore...

(DM note: yeah, I’m evil, Vorkstag wanted to eliminate all witnesses and accuse the heroes)

Meanwhile, in the tower room, the other heroes take the golden key and open a chest: 200 gold pieces, four potions, and a small purple velvet purse. Then, while they were examining the chest, a puff of gas exits out of it! (3 rounds after chest is opened). Exigu fails first save but succeeds the second.

In addition, a secret compartment in the chest also contains a ledger detailing customers who have purchased stolen cadavers and anatomical parts from Vorkstag and Grine. Many of the names are local doctors and scholars, but two names stand out: "A.V" and "Dr. M." The other names are "Dr Mordenheim" (is it the same as "Dr M"?), "B.S", B.Z." and "O.S."

They guess "A.V." is probably Aurélien Vrood.

There are also two letters, unsigned. The first ask them to steal the green effigy at the University. The second letter is more vindictive: "Do I need to ask the Red Vardo Traders? Do you really want them to stick their nose in your stuff?"

Meanwhile, Petrak and Varadan go outside, to find the main entrance opened. They find traces, then a piece of bloody skin? It looks like an ear?

They see the traces climbing a wall.

They gather the others and they throw a hook to climb on the roof. Austizel finds the remains of flesh, enough to cover a body. Some kind of skin? The odor is both of dead flesh and fresh blood? What kind of creature is this baker man?



There are no traces of him leaving the roof...

They go back inside the chemical shop's tower. They inspect the books in one of the room: mainly anatomy and surgery book (the whole collection worth 50 gp, but it weight 100 pounds).

They open a large cabinet in this room to find ... more skins, hanging on pins! Petrak has to exit the room, while Exigu has nausea. There are one child (boy), three men (two wear noble clothes) and two women (one of them look like a harlot!). Eeeeew...

A sliding pannel shows 500 gp and a silver plate with obsidians (50 gp). Nothing is magical.

Then they hear the police gathering in front of the building! They will soon enter! Quickly, they put Grine's head in a sack, throw the skins in an acid vat et flee from the sewers.

March 20th, 748 – midnight and 15 minutes

They reach the Halfling ghetto. Exigu meets Porto and shows him Grine's head. Porto looks at it and says, "he's no gnome! He's a dark creeper! What bout Vorkstag?"

"Gone, he fled", and Exigu explains the weird skin shifting ability.

"The children?"

"They do not suffer anymore. Killed by Vorkstag"

“Who were the six skins? Are they known people?”

“We don’t know. But they were thrown in acid”

The heroes leave and go to sleep with the Crooked Kins. In the morning, they bury Grine’s head in the park.

At 10 am, they hear a town herald shouting “The police finds a criminal operation hiding behind a well known company. More details tonight at 9 pm at the police station, for Lady Kazendra’s press conference!”

At 1 pm, the casters finish their sleep, and they identify potions and poisons. Resting for the whole afternoon.

At Lady Kazendra’s conference, they learn that “following an intuition by our police force, we made an inspection at Vorkstag and Grine chemical shop, and what we discovered a criminal body snatching operation that was dismantled. Grines has resisted arrest, and his funerals will soon be announced. But beware, Vorkstag has disappeared, any information on his whereabouts is paid well. The property will be ceded to their descendants.”

While the crowd was clearing after the conference, they meet Porto. “Do you like our spin? The police was called for theft, but we *told* them to go underground. By the way, we learned that Borgo Znojmo, a recluse merchant, is missing. This man was also a well respected councilor at the town hall. We believe that it’s one of the skins you found...”

Back at the inn, they are told they got a message:

My new friends,

I trust you have met my old friend, Cora Dimus? Know that he can be relied upon in your team.

I have something to discuss with you about Harrowstone.

I think something sinister is unfolding here and you could help.

Please come this way when you can at your convenience.

Petros

Petrak gets an *Epiphany* spell, and feels better.

March 21th, 748

They talk with Hazan. He thinks the effigy was indeed stolen by Grine for Aurélien Vrood. The effigy wasn't found. Hazan doesn't know the other names on the body snatching client list. A creature that changes skin like this? No idea. Set? A god of death and trickery, those worshipping it are extremely sinister since they do not respect life.

Tora summons a warhorse (Paladin's mount), and the other buys 5 light warhorses (550 gp). They leave the inn and make sure their mail follows them to Harrowstone.

They take the Northern border Road, that often leans with a mist wall on the northern side, after leaving the forest north of Martira Bay.

At one point, there is a scroll on a tree near the side of the road. They pick it and it says "Barovians, this is a final warning. Stop putting your nose in everything that isn't your concern and return now to your mud hole."

At 2 pm, they see a forgotten cemetery on the side of the road. However, from it emerges a mountainous form of earth, coffins and tombstones! It takes a gross humanoid shape and attacks the heroes!

They move toward it and the thing moves toward them. Varadan cast *magic missile*, and Petrak his shield of faith. Exigu tries arrows but there is no apparent damage. It strikes Tora twice with monstrous blows and Tora falls on the ground! Petrak cast *prayer*. Austizel throws a *melf acid arrow* while Macrazbunare gets Tora a *cure light wound*. Petrak then hits it with smite power while Tora takes his lay on hand healing. Austizel has another *magic missile* at it, and Macrazbunare tries *scorching ray*. The monster gets two blows on XXX? who falls on the ground, and then cleave on Exigu. Petrak gets his chance and hit the thing, who falls on the ground...

At 7h30 pm, they are in view of Harrowstone.

GAME SESSION FIFTY ONE: TO DARKON AND BEYOND -9

(played April 22th, 2012)

DM note: this is the real start of the great Pathfinder's adventure # 43, The Haunting of Harrowstone, the first of the Carrion Crown adventure path. Don't read this journal if you plan to play it! Those who know of this adventure will see I changed a few things and took liberty with some of the NPCs:

- No trust mechanics (didn't see it as working well, I roleplayed it instead).
- Thugs in the cemetery event: made them throw mud at Kendra, to have Kendra a more sympathetic and "person you want to protect" NPC.
- Gibs Hephenuus gets a bigger role in the adventure (he knows a lot, since he was a guard at the prison 50 years ago), as well as in the background of the prison fire story.

- Vesorianna's story was changed a bit. Removed the hysterics and made her more heroic. But her effort was spoiled by coward guards (Gibs, I'm looking at you).
- I didn't use the items that were belongings of the 5 BBGs. The HH is low level, the PCs are 8th so I removed the items.
- Vesorianna's name is spelled one letter per day (and not once every d4 days). I used the possibility that her family name (Hawkran) would have to be spelled too if PCs really needed time.
- Added a few creepy effects that were caused by the 5 BBGs.
- Boosted the 5 BBGs hps and the DCs to resist their effects.
- Changed the 5 BBGs background to make them fit into Ravenloft's domains.

March 21th, 748 – 7hpm

They are in front of the village of Harrowstone. It is a small village nested in a valley between woody hills. There are about 30-35 buildings, and a core of houses is surrounded by farms. On the other side, on a hill, stands the ruin of the famous Harrowstone prison.

All the other towns people stop doing whatever they are doing to watch the heroes pass on the streets...

They enter the village and ask the first person they see about the location of Petros Lorremor's house. The person looks perplexed and unfriendly. He answers briefly and ignores other attempts at conversation. On a posting pole, they see a dozen messages, one family looking for the cat, a wedding announcement (Councilwoman Shenda Faravan announces the wedding of her son with a noble lady from Martira Bay), and the others are all farms asking for work help.

At Petros Lorremor's house, a woman answers and asks them what they want. The heroes tells her they are here to meet Petros Lorremor, at his request (he sent them a message – see last session). She looks very surprised, and announces the heroes that tomorrow is Petros's funerals! She is Jominda Fallenbridge, a friend of the Lorremor family.



Music switch here, from the great CD [The 99 darkest pieces of classical music](#) (a must for RL DMs!):

The Carnival Of The Animals: Aquarium (St. Petersburg Radio Symphony Orchestra and Stanislav Gorkovenko);

Petite Messe Solennelle For Choir, Piano And Organ: I. Kyrie Elesion Moscow Chamber Choir Nuages Gris (Gray Clouds), S. 199 Andreas Mühlen

Requiem Mass In D Minor, K. 626: VIII. Lacrimosa, London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Philharmonic Choir and David Parry

Kendra appears and is happy to see the heroes. Her eyes are red from crying her father's death. She is dressed in conservative clothing. She waves off most questions about his death, saying that a sheep keeper found him near the old prison, on the morning of March 18th. A stone from a high fence had fallen on him, killing him instantly.



Tora, who knew well Petros, is extremely saddened by this news. The funerals are tomorrow, at 10am, and she says to Tora that there is something for him.

The coffin is in the salon, closed because the body is badly bruised. All the mirrors have drapes over them, for the superstition that a confused and lost newly created spirit might get trapped in the mirror.

Kendra doesn't speak much, and announce she will retire to her room for the night.

Before she leaves for the night, the heroes ask him if they can take a look at the body. Since Petros asked for their help, they are sure something bad happened to him, and it wasn't an accident. Kendra agrees, and she leaves. Jominda ask them if they would like anything to eat, and the heroes politely refuse. She tells them good night and leaves the house.

The heroes open the coffin and are aghast at the head, which was crushed by a large stone. They plan to use the *speak with the dead* spell but the jaw is broken. And the neck is broken too. They check for poison (no), traces under the nails that could suggest he was fighting (no) or other marks on the body (no).

DM note: he was in fact killed by a phantasmal killer, then a heavy statue was thrown on the face to prevent any try at speak with the dead.

March 22nd, 748 – am

Very early in the morning, Kendra is awake, if she slept at all.

It is raining. It will be a bleak day.

At 9h30, Jominda is at the house, with a cart to carry the coffin to the cemetery. Exigu, Petrak, Tora and Austizel put the coffin to the cart. The cart leaves, slowly, followed by Kendra and the heroes. No one else came for the procession, but the townpeoples remove their hat and salute Kendra when the cart passes near them.

Music switch here, to a gloomy funeral marsh, sinister church bells and Nuages Gris (Gray Clouds), S. 199 Andreas Mühlen; and Missa De Angelis - E Canti Dell'Anno Liturgico: Ego Sum Alpha Et O Collana Diretta da Bonifacio G. Baroffio and Enrico de Capitani. I usually choose many pieces for a mood (so the same piece isn't played over and over - boring), then put the mp3 selections on repeat and then random.

They are followed for a time by a dog. Jominda explain them this is Old River, a dog without an owner, which takes care of the kids in the village, bringing them back when they are too far from the village. It gets the heroes suspicious.

Arrived at the cemetery, Kendra and Jominda bow in reverence at the gate (and to the buried people). There are three more people that were waiting there, and they are presented to the heroes: the mayor, Councilman Vashian Hearthmount, Councilman Gharen Muricar, and the tavernkeeper Zokar Elkarid:



Exigu, Petrak, Tora and Austizel agree to be pallbearers, and they are joined by Zokar Elkarid.

The procession resumes in the cemetery, but at one intersection, a dozen of people with hammers and pitchfork appear. They look like uneducated low paid farm workers, dirty and all. They are led by an old man, grinning and toothless.

“Stop there”, the old man says “That’s far enough. We been talking yesterday, and we don’t want Lorrिमor buried in the cemetery. You can take him upriver and bury him there if you want, but he ain’t goin’ in the ground here with our families! He will not be buried where my wife is”



My most sincere apologies to this man should he be real

The thugs shout and approve. But Kendra is swift to respond, her sadness swiftly transforming into anger. “What are you talking about?” she cries out. “I arranged it with Father Grimburrow. He’s waiting for us! The grave’s already been prepared!”

The pallbearers lower the coffin to the ground, preparing to do something.

“You don’t get it, stupid woman”, the old man says, “We won’t have a dirty necromancer buried in the same place as our kin. I suggest you move out while you still can. The entire village is unhappy about this.”

DM note: last sentence is false, these hillbillies are deluded all the way ;)

“Necromancy!?”, Kendra answers, “Are you really that ignorant?”

Six of the thugs move forward to the cart, and wave their farm tools menacingly. Three of them throw mud pellets, and two of them touch Kendra. “Go away!”, they say. But the heroes interpose and the thugs drop their mud pellets and leave the cemetery.

Austizel remarked that during the event, Kendra nearly drew a wand, but Jominda calmed her to peace.

Through the whole incident, the councilmen and the tavern owner stayed safely behind the heroes.

Varadan escorts them outside and gives them one silver piece “to buy beer” (and peace).

They continue the procession toward the grave. There, one old cleric is waiting for them, with two younger acolytes. He is Father Grimburow, a priest of the Eternal Order. He is told about what just happened and Grimburow is satisfied the story went without real violence (“these are nearly animals”, he adds, disdainful).



Grimburow starts his sermon by a praise of the Eternal Order, which made the heroes raise an eyebrow (“... Dear Azalin, be praised for establishing this great eternal order... May the dead take back the land that was stolen to them by the living one day ... May the Hour of the Ascension by just and fair ...”)

The councilmen say how well they liked this great scholar. Then Jominda opens a book, and recite an Ezra psalm: “Ezra spoke, saying, “We are the guides and guardians of mortals. Such is our role in the grand scheme.” “And during his life”, she adds, “Petros was on the side of light, he was really a pure at heart as Ezra meant it”.

Tora adds his appreciation of the fallen man.

Kendra speaks a little. “People knew my father from his archeological work, and some by his fight against darkness. He wasn’t telling me all of his occupations, most probably to protect me. But my father believed that one should fight for justice with the means of his possibilities. Fight darkness, that is may be what caused his disappearance...”, and she frowns.

The coffin is put in the grave hole, and Kendra cries softly. She is the first to throw a handful of dirt over the coffin, and then leave.

She is silent on the way back home.

The heroes leave Kendra for an hour or two and they go to the Laughing Demon Inn. They talk with Zokar Elkarid, but they do not learn much “Nothing happened here since the prison burned!” But they learn from him that there is a municipal edit forbidding people to enter the prison wall, for their safety (it is a ruin, with many holes to the underground level. It is dangerous. They see Zokar to be a friendly tavern owner, having fun with all of his guests.

When townspeople hear of the heroes’ actions at the cemetery, they act a bit friendlier toward the heroes.

At one o’clock, they are back to Kendra for the reading of the will by councilman Hearthenmount. Kendra isn’t sure what’s contained in the will, but on the envelope its is requested that Tora Vimus be present for its reading. *Music: Concerto No. 10 In D Minor For Organ And Orchestra, HWV 309, Op. 7: I. Adagio Harald Feller, Capella Istropolitana and Paul Kantschieder*

Councilman Vashian Hearthmount arrives and it is quite clear he doesn’t agree to have these foreigners (the heroes) mingling with local affairs. He checks the wax seal and declares “seal is valid and conform. It is dated

March the seventeen". He opens this envelope and a few letters fall from it, and a key. Heartmount look at the name, and declares "those people not here will be sent a message and this will". One of these is none other than Van Richten!

He starts reading the main will:

I, Petros Lorremor, being of sound mind, do hereby commit to this parchment my last will and testament. Let it be known that, with the exception of the specific details below, I leave my home and personal belongings entire to my daughter Kendra. Use them or sell them as you see fit, my child.

Yet beyond the bequeathing of my personal effects, this document must serve other needs, for I have more than mere inheritance to apportion. I have two final favors to ask to my friend Tora Vimus.

Tora, I hate to impose upon you, but there are few others who are capable of appreciating the true significance of what it is I have to ask. As some of you know, I have devoted many of my studies to all manner of evil, that I might know the enemy and inform those better positioned to stand against it. For knowledge of one's enemy is the surest path to victory over its plans.

And so, over the course of my lifetime, I have seen fit to acquire a significant collection of valuable but dangerous tomes, any one of which in the wrong circumstances could have led to an awkward legal situation. I fear that a few remain in a trunk in my Harrowstone home. While invaluable for my work in life, in death, I would prefer not to burden my daughter with the darker side of my profession, or worse still, the danger of possessing these tomes herself. As such, I am entrusting my chest of tomes to you, posthumously, should something happens to me. I ask that you please deliver the collection to my colleague Van Richten, who will put them to good use for the betterment of the cause.

Yet before you leave for Mordent, there is the matter of another favor—please delay your journey one month and spend that period of time here in Harrowstone to ensure that my daughter is safe and sound. She has no one to count on now that I am gone, and if you would aid her in setting things in order for whatever she desires over the course of this month, you would have my eternal gratitude. From my savings, I have also willed to each of you a sum of fifty gold coins in the chest.

I, Petros Lorremor, hereby sign this will in Harrowstone on March 17th, in the year 748

Then Heartmount finishes taking note of a few things on the will in his notebook, and he leaves.

Kendra is as surprised as the heroes. She says the key is her father's chest, and she goes upstairs to bring it to the salon. There are six bags of coins, with the heroes' name on it, and a few books. *Detect magic* is negative.

There is one book that Kendra recognizes as her late father's private journal. There is a rope around it, with a piece of paper. They open it and it says "the important things are circled."

The two other books are roped together, and a paper on it claims "For Van Richten only". Their titles are *Serving Your Hunger* and *The Umbral Leaves*.

They open the journal and find a few entries are circled in red...

Music: Pictures At An Exhibition: II. Gnomus Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra and Leif Segerstam; and Cantus In Memoriam Benjamin Britten For Strings And Bell (1977) Tapiola Sinfonietta and Jean-Jacques Kantorow

Entries in the Professor's Journal :

November 26th, 738

The Whispering Way is more than just a cabal of necromancers. I see that now. Undeath is their fountain of youth. Uncovering their motivation does not place me at ease as I thought it might. Their desire to be eternal simply makes them more dangerous.

January 20th, 748

It is as I had feared! My sources tell me the Way is interested in something here in Harrowstone. But what could it be?

February 7th, 748

Whatever the Way seeks, I am now convinced their goal is connected to Harrowstone. In retrospect, I suppose it all makes sense—the stories they tell about the ruins in town are certainly chilling enough.

It may be time to investigate the ruins, but with everyone in town already being so worked up about them, I'd rather not let the others know about my curiosity—there's plenty of folks hereabouts who already think I'm a demonologist or a witch or something. Ignorant fools!

March 14th 748

Back from Martira Bay. It is confirmed. The Way seems quite interested in something someone who was held in Harrowstone prison???. But who, specifically, is the Way after?

I need a list of everyone who died the night of the fire. Everyone. There were so many famous criminals held there in its end, I recall. The Temple of Ezra must have such a list?

March 16th 748

I see now just how ill prepared I was when I last set out for the Harrowstone prison. I am lucky to have returned at all. The ghosts, if indeed they were ghosts (for I did not find it prudent to investigate further) prevented me from transcribing the strange symbols I found recently etched along the foundation—hopefully on my next visit I will be more prepared.

Thankfully, the necessary tools to defend against spirits are already here in Harrowstone. I know that the church of Ezra used to store them in a false crypt in the Restlands at the intersection between Eversleep and the Black Path. I am not certain if the current clergy even know of what their predecessors have hidden down below. If my luck holds, I should be able to slip in and out with a few borrowed items?

I will also ask for help to Tora and the Barovian adventurers who saved my daughter. They are VR's friends after all, so they will be interested in this new mystery.

March 17th 748

Tonight I return to the prison. It is imperative the Way does not finish. My caution has already cost me too much time. I am not sure what will happen if I am too late, but if my theory is right, the entire town could be at risk.

Music : From Hell Soundtrack - 03 - Royal Connections, From Hell Soundtrack - 08 - The Compass And The Ruler, Sin City Soundtrack – Marv, One hour photo soundtrack – Diner, One hour photo -Discovery / Following Nina; Princess Mononoke OST - Requiem.

Looking for the list of names, they think of look at Ezra's archive but the anchorite in Harrowstone is a traveling priest and he will there only in 4 days.

Kendra tells them about the fire memorial, an old statue for remembrance of the guards who died in the prison and they go to see it. On the way, they pass in front a shack where they see the thugs they chased off the cemetery the same morning. They are quite inebriated and they salute the heroes.

This landmark is a 15-foot-tall, moss-covered stone statue that overlooks the river. The statue depicts a proud, muscular human man dressed in leathers and wielding a truncheon (a depiction of Warden Hawkran). A total of 25 names—the guards who died in the fire of 696, as well as the warden's wife, Vesorianna Hawkran — are chiseled into the statue's stone base.

But there is something very odd: the letter "V" had been painted on the pedestal ?! All the traces around it have been erased by the rain. They wonder what it is about, and they erase it with water.

They go to the cemetery to find Petros Lorremor's tomb buried. On the corner of his eyes, Macrazbunare see a monument with Vimus's name on it. When he checks again, it is another name...

DM note: made with <http://www.tombstonebuilder.com/index.php>

They remember that 696 is the year of the prison fire...

They find the crypt that was mentioned in Petros's papers. But Petrak is suddenly taken by a feeling there should be some kind of password to safely enter this sacred place. They decide to check Petros's papers before investigating this crypt.



Back to Kendra's house. While Tora reads Petros's private journal, the others start investigating the many books found in the house, with the help of Kendra. One hero finds a copy of "Dark secrets of the magick trade" (a book they saw in the Martira By University library, but with pages missing – see session 48). But this time it is complete! They read about the Whispering Way:

The Whispering Way is a sinister organization of necromancers that has been active in the region for thousands of years. Agents of the Whispering Way often seek alliances with undead creatures, or are themselves undead. The Whispering Way's most notorious member was Tar-Baphon, the Whispering Tyrant, although the society itself has existed much longer than even that mighty necromancer.

The Whispering Way itself is a series of philosophies that can only be transferred via whispers— the philosophies are never written or spoken of loudly, making the exact goals and nature of the secretive philosophy difficult for outsiders to learn much about.

Exact details on the society are difficult to discern, but chief among the Whispering Way's goals are discovering formulae for creating liches and engineering the release of the Whispering Tyrant. Agents often travel to remote sites or areas plagued by notorious haunts or undead menaces to perform field research or even to capture unique monsters. Their symbol is a gagged skull, and those who learn too many of the Way's secrets are often murdered, and their mouths mutilated to prevent their bodies from divulging secrets via speak with dead.

They reveal this to Kendra, and she says she knew somehow her father's death wasn't an accident. They all wonder who the Whispering Way was looking in Harrowstone prison?

They try *ethereal resonance* in front of the memorial – nothing...

They try *speak with animals* with Old River, the town's dog. The dog reveal that a few nights ago (he doesn't know how many) two men crossed the village during the night. It made the dog afraid, but it was because the horses smelled of death...

March 23rd, 748 – am

It is raining, again.

Early morning, Exigu and Macrazbunare see Petrak grabbing his anchorite holy symbol during the night. He is holding it so tight his hand starts to bleed! Later, when he prays in the morning, for a moment he can't remember his goddess's name! He is troubled.

They learn and cast *protection from curses* on everybody.

DM note: OK, I think I need to explain a few things, for those who haven't read the adventure. There are ghosts in the prison, and they are somehow close to be able to get out of it. The Whispering Way sucked the warden's soul for a large scale necromantic project. Then, the ghosts were suddenly more free, but there is the warden's wife who now acts as the warden and she is able to keep the ghosts inside the prison, but her control is fading ... The ghosts first actions was to control a few people in town (one of them is painting the letters on the memorial's pedestal) and are they able to manifest a few supernatural effects. I wanted the town to suddenly become spooky. Some of the effects are taken from Heroes of Horrors.

Another day at reading books.

In the journal, Tora finds an entry:

"With those words did Eyra sacrifice her mortal life to become our guardian in the mists"
(crypt)

Is it the crypt password?

Meanwhile, Austizel finds more information about Harrowstone's prison:

Harrowstone is a ruined prison— partially destroyed by a fire in 696, the building has stood vacant ever since. The locals suspect that it's haunted.

Harrowstone was built in 669. The village was founded at the same time as a place where guards and their families could live and that would produce food and other supplies used by the prison. The fire that killed all of the prisoners and most of the guards destroyed a large portion of the prison's underground eastern wing, but left most of the stone structure above relatively intact. The prison's warden perished in the fire, along with his wife, although no one knows why she was in the prison when the fire occurred. A statue commemorating the warden and the guards who lost their lives was built in the months after the tragedy—that statue still stands on the riverbank just outside of town.

Most of the hardened criminals sent to Harrowstone spent only a few months imprisoned, for it was here that most of Darkon's executions during that era were carried out. The fire that caused the tragedy was, in fact, a blessing in disguise, for the prisoners had rioted and gained control of the prison's dungeons immediately prior to the conflagration. It was only through the self-sacrifice of Warden Hawkran and 23 of his guards that the prisoners were prevented from escaping—the guards gave their lives to save the town of Harrowstone.

At the time Harrowstone burned, five particularly notorious criminals had recently arrived at the prison. While the commonly held belief is that the tragic fire began accidentally after the riot began, in fact the prisoners had already seized control of the dungeon and had been in command of the lower level for several hours before the fire. Warden Hawkran triggered a deadfall to seal the rioting prisoners in the lower level, but in so doing trapped himself and nearly two dozen guards. The prisoners were in the process of escaping when the panicked guards accidentally started the fire in a desperate attempt to end the riot.

They go at the inn for supper, with Kendra. The heroes wonder if there is a guard that is still alive these days (it is about 52 years since the fire). Kendra says there were two, and one of them moved to Martira Bay a decade ago. She thinks this one is still alive. And the other one is ... Gibs Hephenu, the old man that started the trouble at the cemetery!

On the poles, they find a new message: Mira Straelock has lost her dog yesterday.

A bit after reading this, they see two people in the shadows, that walk like drunken. They think these might be two of the thugs they met at the cemetery, but when they are closer, they smell decay!

These are two zombies and they move to fight the heroes. They throw arrows and spells at the zombies. Even Kendra sends a *magic missile*. The creatures fight like horribly hungry creatures, putting in their mouth whatever they can scrape off the heroes' body when they hit them and licking the blood!

At one point, Kendra recognizes one of the dead as mister Karavan, who died two weeks ago...

When the fight is over, they do tracking on the zombies, and the tracks leans toward the cemetery. Not wanting to visit this place after dark, they go back at Kendra's house...

DM note: spooked, heh heh... Nothing like cannibal zombies to make them afraid!

March 24th, 748

They resume looking at Petros's books.

Macrazbunare and Austizel trade *touch of idiocy* and *levitate* from Kendra's spellbook, while she learns *mirror image*.

At noon, Jominda is at Kendra's house with the news that a cow was killed by blade last night...

DM note: Gibs is possessed at night, and he is killing animals to get fresh blood to paint the letters of Vesorianna's name on the memorial. Stay tuned, you'll learn why later! And that is the reason of all these pets disappearing or the cow being slashed. I made it rain so they could not follow his tracks.

They go talk with Gibs, bringing him beer. He is friendly with the heroes, after seeing the beer! They ask him who were the five prisoners held at Harrowstone when the fire happened. His memory is sketchy, but he remembers a Father Charlatan, an axe murderer (forgot his name), a dwarf by the name of Tempe Falls Marauder, the Piper, and the most terrible was nicknamed the Splatter Man. "Highest security this one, I never even saw him".

But he reveals there is another guard still alive in town! But the other one, "she" doesn't want to be talking about it, so he will hammer Gibs on the head if he speaks. Gibs can't be persuaded to give her name, even for one gold piece.

One the way back to Kendra's house, they pass on a bridge where children were fishing, but they are packing because is will be dark soon. The children have nothing special to say.

March 25th, 748

Second day of spell trading for Macrazbunare, Austizel and Kendra.

They cast *speak with animals* again on Old River, but he doesn't know anything about a blooded cow. But about blood, he says there is more and more blood on the rock near the water.

They go check the memorial, and there are four letters on the pedestal! “ V E S O”. They guess it is Vesorianna’s name that someone (or something) is spelling.

They go talk another time with Gibs. He tells them what happened the night of the fire:

The five prisoners started a riot on the underground level and they freed most of the other prisoners. But then Hawkran, a good man, hear me, sacrificed himself and the other guards by triggering an emergency deadfall that sealed the dungeon by destroying the only staircase. This trapped everyone in the underground level. I could have been down there too, you know. And my name could have been on the memorial too for everybody to remember...

Anyway, the only other way was a supply lift that could only be activated from the main floor to the underground level. It was via this lift that the Warden and other trapped guards initially thought to escape, but before they could make it to safety, they were overpowered by the rioting prisoners and taken hostage. The prisoners began executing the hostages to force us, the few guards who remained on the floor above to lower the lift, but we were too well trained, heh.

We were in panic but we managed to contain the riot downstairs. But the warden’s wife, this Vesorianna Hawkran, suddenly came inside the prison, I guess we forgot to shut the front door. You know how women are, she went into hysterics when she learned her man was down there with the bad guys. She pleaded with us to lower the lift with her so she could bring back the guards and her man. But what could she do? Stupid woman. We refused and while we were talking, she lowered the lift and cried for her husband to get on it! Of course, the lift instead filled up with prisoners!

Two guards restrained her and locked her in a stock room, but we forgot about her when the fire started so ... she died there. Stupid woman, anyway.

There were prisoners trying to climb the chains so we had the idea to oil the chains to prevent them from climbing on them. A few barrels of lamp oil made it work.

Then we heard magic casting and then the fire started! The huge oil fire did spread throughout all the lower cellblock. We had to get out, but no prisoners ever came out of it. A dozen hours later, the most famous prison in Darkon was no more... The prisoners, they were all dead.

The heroes think it is Vesorianna killing to spell her name on the memorial...

March 26th, 748

In the morning, Macrazbunare opens his spellbook to find it covered by rambling in another language, in his own handwriting. It seems to be written in blood! After a minute, it fades and he has his regular spellbook in front of him...

The heroes think it might be the tell tale affect of Darkon’s memory changes?

DM note: nope, the ghosts are messing again.

They go at Ezra's chapel, to find it open. They meet Ardios Garmand, traveling anchorite. He agrees to check on the local log book, for the year 696. At this time, there was an anchorite on location all the time, and one of their duty was to note what important was happening.

What they learn is disturbing:

Father Charlatan (real name Sefick Corvin): Of the five notorious prisoners, only Father Charlatan was not technically a murderer, yet his crimes were so blasphemous that several churches demanded he be punished to the full extent of the law. He was active in Nova Vaasa, Darkon and Barovia. Although he claimed to be an ordained priest of any number of faiths, Father Corvin was in fact a traveling con artist who used faith as a mask and a means to bilk the faithful out of money in payment for false miracles or cures. He became known as Father Charlatan after his scheme was exposed and his nova vaasan accomplices murdered a half-dozen city guards in an attempt to make good the group's escape from Maykle (in Darkon), and he was caught in Nova Vaasa.

The Lopper (Vance Saetressle): Falkovnian sergent, chief torturer, became somewhat unstable and disappeared. Accused of murders in Falkovnia, Invidia, and Darkon. He was captured in Invidia. When the Lopper stalked prey, he would hide in the most unlikely of places, sometimes for days upon end with only a few supplies to keep him going while he waited for the exact right moment to strike. Once his target was alone, the Lopper would emerge to savagely behead his victim with a hand axe.

The Tempe Falls Marauder (Torgan Onyxcudgel): Torgan Onyxcudgel was a well-liked artisan and a doting husband. When he discovered his wife's infidelity, he flew into a jealous rage and struck her dead with his hammer, shattering her skull and his sanity with one murderous blow. Wracked with shame and guilt, Torgan became convinced that if he could rebuild his wife's skull she would come back to life—but unfortunately, he could not find the last blade-shaped fragment from the murder site. So instead, Torgan became the Tempe Falls Marauder. Over the course of several weeks, the cunning dwarf stalked and murdered nearly 20 people while searching for just the right skull fragment. He was captured just before murdering the daughter of a visiting nobleman from Martira Bay, and was carted off to Harrowstone that same night.

The Piper of Illmarsh. His real name is unknown, he was said to have saved a town from rats in Invidia by playing his pipe and sending the rats to drown, but after they refused paying him. It is said he drowned all the children in retaliation. Before he snatched his victims, the Piper taunted his targets with a mournful dirge on his flute. He preferred to paralyze lone victims and then allowed his pet stirges to drink the victims dry of blood. Captured in Borca.

The leader of the 5 - The Splatter Man (real name Hean Feramin): Professor Feramin was a celebrated scholar of Anthroponomastics (the study of personal names and their origins) at the Port a Lucine University. Yet something twisted and warped his study, turning it into an obsession. Feramin became obsessed with the power of a name and how he could use it to terrify and control. Soon enough, his reputation was ruined, he'd lost his tenure, and he'd developed an uncontrollable obsession with an imaginary link between a person's name and what happens to that name when the person dies. Every few days, he would secretly arrange for his victim to find a letter from her name

written in blood, perhaps smeared on a wall or spelled out with carefully arranged entrails. Once he had spelled his victim's name, he would at last come for her, killing her. His victims were often nobles or people in power (sheriff, etc.). He was captured in Mordent by Jules Weathermay!

DM note: the Splatter Man ghost is using his "name" magic on Vesorianna to destroy her. When the name is completed, all the ghosts will be able to leave the prison and it will be the end of this village...

They go check the memorial. It now spells "V E S O R" !

While walking in the village, Tora has the sudden premonition of doom for its inhabitants...

DM note: major hint if there is one! ;)

They think it is Vesorianna that comes back to avenge herself.

They go back to the cemetery, and enter the crypt while repeating over and over the phrase from the book: "With those words did Ezra sacrifice her mortal life to become our guardian in the mists". The gargoyle do not move and Tora is able to enter the crypt. He follows Petros's traces in the dust and gets to a stone coffin. Tora moves the lid and finds a little treasure: 13 potions, 3 scrolls and 4 ghost trap bottles (see session 30). There are arrows too. Tora takes everything, thanking Ezra...



DM note: I had arranged a mummy guardian if the heroes were not pious enough. So I had the idea of this password, otherwise it exits from under the stone floor and attacks. It made for a stressful event for Tora's player. I used my coffin miniature.

They identify the potions: *cure light wound* (5), *lesser restoration* (2) and 6 holy waters. The scrolls are *heal* (2 times), and *hide from undeath* (6 times). They know the ghosts traps are able to trap ghosts, as well as damage haunts such as the one they saw in Fordstone Manor (*3d6 hp damage*). Kendra identifies a set of arrow as "+1 ghost touch" (5 arrows). There are also 12 silver tipped arrows and two sets of still unidentified magic arrows (one set of two, one set of ten).

DM note: borrowed stuff. Unused will have to be back in the crypt, otherwise...

GAME SESSION FIFTY TWO: TO DARKON AND BEYOND -10

(played May 5th, 2012)

March 26th, 748 – 10 am

They finish the task of identifying the items, and realize there are three flasks which were never identified, from the ermordenung attack (*see session 42*). It is a contact poison, Royal Morel.

They think about the name Vesorianna being slowly written on the monument. Did she really die in the fire, they ask themselves...

They pass near the village children, and their song is somewhat strange in their little mouths...

*Put her body on the bed.
Take a knife and lop off her head!
Watch the blood come out the pipe.
Feeds the stirge, so nice and ripe!
Drops of red so sparkly bright.
Splatters spell her name just right!
With a hammer killed his wife.
Now he wants to claim your life!
Tricksy father tells a lie.
Listen close or you will die!*

(you have a very cool fan made version [here!](#))

The children say they dreamed about the song last night, and they have no idea where it comes from...

They walk to the prison. Harrowstone is located on a barren hill south of the city. Its sagging roof is visible through a large gap in the surrounding rock wall. Part of the wall has collapsed, and a murky pond covers part of the land within the walls.

There are two buildings within the wall, one of them being the large prison building. The two-story stone prison has ivy and moss clinging to it. The roof is in bad shape, large parts of it missing, exposing the wooden rafters of the upper structure to the sky. Many leering stone gargoyles perch on the eaves, once functioning as drainspouts and decorations but now seeming almost to serve a more ominous role of sentinels. Many of these stone decorations have crumbled away and lie in ruined piles on the soggy ground below, but a few remains intact.



Windows in the building's facade are narrow and blocked by grills of rusty iron bars.

They cast *hide from undeath* on themselves.

Petrak tries to enter through the metallic gate which is half opened. He has a sudden claustrophobic feel, and is then under the impression is skin is on fire! But it lapses a small moment, before he shakes off this impression. However, he remains shaken.

Exigu walks over the wall rubbles and sees runes written on the main building. The group approach and notice the runes were written recently, with blood. The grass and ivy has been cut in parts so the writer could set the runes on the walls. Some of the symbols they identify as necromantic but the whole text eludes them. They notice that one sentence is repeated all over the walls, and the name Lyvar Hawkran is mentioned in this repeated sentence.

They investigate a small brick manor house located within the walls, in front of the main building. It is overgrown with thick sheets of gray-green ivy. The roof sags ominously, and the front door hangs askew. They think the building is highly unstable and they check within through the opened door and the windows: the house is nearly empty. They think it could have been the prison warden's house. They cast *detect magic* through the openings: nothing.

They detect if the statues of the main building are magic: no. Petrak ceases to be shaken.

Austizel feels he is watched. Is it the gargoyles? Something at the windows?

They climb a brick stairs to reach a balcony on the north western side of the prison. A large, rectangular block of stone rests on this weather-beaten stone balcony, while ruined wooden benches line the eastern wall under a row of tiny, barred windows above. A stout wooden door sits in the wall near the northern end of the balcony.

They see a large ruined wooden block they identify as an executioner's block for decapitation.

Suddenly a ghostly set of skeletal arms wielding a rusty scythe appears out of thin air and attacks Exigu! While Petrak casts *prayer*, the other heroes come within reach and attack the execution tool. Austizel and Mac Razbunare throw *magic missiles* as well. After a while, the thing falls to the ground... The scythe isn't magical.



Tora tries his *ghostsight* ability on this balcony and sees something in the ethereal: there is an endless ballet of headless ghosts, fighting endlessly over a number of ghostly heads that is obviously smaller than the number of ghost ...

They open the door with some difficulty (a reinforced iron and wood door) and enter the building through a short hallway.

They reach a cellblock where rows upon rows of ten-foot-square prison cells line the walls, each separated from the passing hallway by a series of iron bars fitted with a narrow iron door. Skeletons slump in many of the cells, the bones scattered where they lie and coated with a mixed layer of ancient ashes and fresh mold.

Tora's *detect undead* says there are only four of them.

They enter the cellblock, and suddenly, they hear clicks such as if all the cell locked doors were unlocked! Many of the skeletons animated and exit the cells to attack.

DM note: supernatural effect of the Piper, one of the 5 BBEGs.

Austizel sends arrows, to find them near useless. Three large styrges approaches from the darkness and attack! Tora turns some of the undead, who recoils in their cells. Petrak does the same. Then a flute-like noise comes out of nowhere, and Austizel feels a hold spell taking effect! All the group is surrounded by these tough skeletons as well as the styrges. Suddenly, they see drops of blood coming out of Austizel without him being hit by a skeleton! The monsters attacks as the ghostly flute is heard once in a while, and tries to hold one of the heroes! Macrazbunare summons wolf to help. Petrak is held too by the ghostly flute! The heroes also sees Petrak bleeding even if he wasn't attacked! Macrazbunare is attacked by the styrges, who drain his constitution fast! Petrak and Austizel shakes off the hold spells. The styrges are killed.

Then Exigu gets held by the ghostly flute, but it takes a long time for him to shake off the effect, and soon he is very bloodied! Then Tora is held too! Petrak kills the last skeleton and the group decides to retreat and exit the prison quickly!

After the battle, those that were held by the flute say they were entranced by the music, and had a vision of the ghostly Piper as he slowly approached him, attended by a flock of ghostly styrges. The ghostly styrges attacked and these are the cause of the blood coming out while they were held...

They exit the building, and notice the runes were written on something that could be human skin?

1 pm- back to the village

The kids still haven't seen Old River (the village dog) ?

They cast cure on themselves.

They show Kendra the strange runes written on the prison wall. With a *comprehend langage* spell, she says the runes were written in old darkonese and that it is a magical incantations that does repeat the name Lyvar Hawkran often. They seem to have been part of a larger ritual that involved both abjuration and necromantic magic. The runes were used to capture and imprison the spirit of Lyvar Hawkran, the prison warden... Why?

DM note: Aurélien Vrood and his cabal (the Whispering Way) needed the spirit of the Warden for a cataclysmic ritual (more later on this). But what they didn't know (or cared!) was that the warden's spirit still kept the ghost of the five BBEG's ghosts within the prison. Now, with Lyvar Hawkran gone, her wife took the



job, but she is under attack by the Splatter Man, who is spelling her name on the monument through Gibs, one letter each night. If he succeeds, Vesorianna will be crushed and the ghost freed, meaning doom for the village first, then ...

Send by email with the next session reminder:

“You are hereby sentenced to live the remainder of your short life in Harrowstone, Darkon, which, I hasten to add, is a blessing compared to the extent of your crimes and the suffering of your victims. There you will reside in the misery of your thoughts for a decade until such time as you are drawn, hanged, and quartered. May the gods have no mercy on your blighted soul.”

—The final sentencing of Vance Saetressle (“The Lopper”) in year 689 by Jurisdeclaris Askendrel, in the presence of Lord Bakholis

GAME SESSION FIFTY THREE: TO DARKON AND BEYOND -11

(played Sept 9th, 2012)

Macrazbunare gets a new level, which will be Arcane Hierophant.

Austizel also gets a level, and with retraining is Wiz5/Ran2.

March 26th, 748 – 2 pm

At Petros’s house, they discuss what they will do the next day. Kendra listens to their visit of the prison story and asks them if they know what a haunt is? And more interestingly, how to exorcise these haunts? She suggests they talk to Father Grimburrow about it, because he once helped them getting rid of a minor polteirgheist.

DM note: little railroading to impart new knowledge to the players.

They meet Grimburrow and he tells them about haunts. He recently exorcised a haunt called a rapping spirit. It was some kind of poltergeist who existed to make sudden and frightening noise in the night. But it was annoying so Grimburrow destroyed it.

From Pathfinder:

Born of anguish and despair, haunts are often confused with traps. While decrepit asylums and rotting ancestral estates are the most obvious places for haunts, folklore is filled with ghostly encounters along lonely country roads and fog-shrouded moors, and even thriving inns and taverns are reliable receptacles for supernatural presences. In short, any location where unjust death, murder, and deceit have taken place is fair game for unquiet spirits.

Although haunts function like traps, they are difficult to detect since they cannot be easily observed until the round in which they manifest.

All characters in the haunt’s proximity have a chance to notice the haunt by making a notice check-DM’s roll. All haunts detect life sources and trigger as a result of the approach of or contact with living creatures, but some haunts can be tricked by effects like hide from undead or invisibility.

Positive energy applied to the haunt (via channeled energy, cure spells, and the like) can damage the haunt's hit points (attacks that require a successful attack roll to work must strike AC 10 in order to affect the haunt and not merely the physical structure it inhabits). Unless the haunt has an unusual weakness, no other form of attack can reduce its hit points. If the haunt is reduced to 0 hit points by positive energy, it is neutralized.

A neutralized haunt is not destroyed, and can manifest again after a period of time—to destroy a haunt, a specific action must be taken in the region to end the effect forever (such as burning a haunted house to the ground or burying the bones of the slaves who died on the site to create the haunt). This specific act is different for every haunt (although a number of nearby haunts often share the same destruction act).

Some haunts are persistent, and their immediate effects continue beyond the surprise round into actual full rounds. Persistent haunts continue to trigger their haunt effects once per round on their initiative rank until destroyed or they no longer have a target.

Ex: Rapping Spirit CR 1 The most common haunts are rapping spirits: unquiet dead with just enough substance to produce cacophonous knocking and loud bumps in the night. Adventurers may attempt communication with these intelligent spirits by working out codes to form cryptic messages at the rate of 1d10 words per minute with a successful Linguistics check (DC varies—see your DM ☺). Neutralized haunts of all types may revert to this residual state during their reset period, allowing communication and discovery of their means of destruction.

Alignment varies persistent haunt (5-ft. radius)

Caster Level 1st

Notice Perception DC varies (to hear faint knockings on walls, floor, and furniture)

hp 4; Weakness tricked by hide from undead; Trigger proximity; Reset: 24h

EFFECT: When triggered, a chorus of agitated raps and blows rings out from nearby hard surfaces as unquiet spirits convey their unrest to the living. All who hear the supernatural knocks suffer a cause fear effect (save DC typically 11, but can be higher).

DESTRUCTION: Depending on their alignment, rapping spirits typically ask for their mortal remains to be laid to rest or for the PCs to seek revenge for their deaths. Fulfilling these requests dismisses the haunts.

After this discussion on haunts, Father Grimburrow asks to talk to Petrak in private. Father Grimburrow seems concerned. He asks the anchorite if he noticed a change in his religion recently. Petrak says yes, and mentions that he forgot his god's name this very morning. Somewhat relieved, Grimburrow says the same thing happened to him. "Something sinister is happening!", he says before he leaves. But Petrak felt the stern priest is now a little friendlier with them.



Going back to Kendra, they hear the kids singing the same morbid song. They ask if the heroes have seen Old River, the town dog.

At Kendra's they read, and then go to sleep. MacRazbunare starts a 24 hour rest to regain constitution (4 points).

March 27th, 748 – at the exact twelfth stroke of midnight...

Exigu is on watch duty. He suddenly feels the room to be cold. And his dog Patu seems pitifully worried by something he can't see. The druid's wolf awakes, but stays quiet. Exigu wakes up Tora, who scans the room in ghostsight – nothing. Then Patu - and all the animals in town! – starts to howl in fear. They see many lamps being lighted in the village. The animals get quieter after a few minutes, and the village is silent again ...

On 9 am, all except Exigu and MacRazbunare go see Gibs, and make him drink again (DM note: to lower his wisdom from a spell to come! Is this evil? ;)) Austizel cast *Immerse Mind* on Gibs. It works. He experiences what Gibs did the day the prison burned:

Inside the prison, there is a riot. The guards are without any leader, and run in all directions. Then Vesorianna arrives and assesses the situation. "Do something!", she says, "you need to save your friends down there!". She foolishly lowers the lift and Gibs and other guards seize her and bring her to a room that they lock. Back to the lift room, the guards see some of the rioters trying to escalate the lift chains. The guards put a lot of oil on the chains and the rioters fall back. To make sure, they add even more oil. A lot. Then someone yells something that seems like magic and there is a fire!

Then Austizel "sees" the scene where they are outside, watching if any rioters escape the building on fire. But nobody escapes, to the relief of the guards. Gibs feels remorse, and thinks they could have done something. But he isn't a hero. And if prisoners had escaped the flaming building, he would have fled.

They check the memorial. Another bloody letter was added! "VESORI"

They go back to Gibs' house. They ask him if he heard the noise at midnight. He was sleeping and didn't hear anything strange.

They ask him again who is the other guard that is still alive, and still living in Harrowstone. He doesn't want to say it. He says he received a severe punch from that person twenty years ago, and doesn't want another! That person doesn't want his name associated to the prison fire. *Sense motive on his reaction, and it seems genuine.*

The heroes ask "is it Vesorianna?" "That crazy woman?", he replies, "no!"

They tell him about the trouble in the village – the animals howling at midnight, the zombies in the village's center – and try to persuade him to tell who that former guard is. Varadan tries to intimidate him. She might know something that can save the village, they say.

Gibs think for a moment and say “I will regret it. It’s Jorfa, the dwarf woman who runs the forge.”

They ask him something about the prisoner’s belonging. “When they arrived at the prison, they were searched and their stuff in a locked room on the main floor. But I know valuable items were kept in the Warden’s office.”

Back to Kendra’s house. Meanwhile, they try to find Old River’s scent with Patu (Exigu’s dog), but the search give no results.

4 pm, back to the prison. They explore the second floor. They hear the ghostly piper noise, but they resist its paralyzing effect. With Tora’s *ghostsight*, they see something like a flute floating in the ethereal plane. They cast healing spells at this area: *disrupt undead*, *healing spells*. Meanwhile, Petrak is paralysed by the haunt. But then just after a *disrupt undead*, all is quiet again... It worked! Austizel throws holy water on that spot.

They resume exploring this cell block. *Detect undead: negative*. One of the cell is much larger than the others. A skeletal body dressed in the rotting remains of a prisoner’s robe lies slumped against a wall. The skeleton is wrapped in numerous chains on which are affixed numerous weights emblazoned with several different holy symbols. There are 13 holy symbols in all, and these weights are over 75 pounds!

They recognize some of the symbols, but others are unknown to them...



DM note: Father Charlatan’s cell. Now Petrak has a new friend ... see later!

Elsewhere on the second floor, they see a small room with a wood and iron ladder. They get up there and try to open the trap door on the ceiling of this room. It is difficult to open so Tora and Petrak team to open it. It works, but the trap door was the center of a fallen chimney (thus making it difficult to open). They avoid falling bricks and other rubble that could have been deadly.

This leads to a balcony where these two heroes are attacked by a giant styrge! The creature is bloated with blood. Petrak and Tora kill this annoying flying creature.

Tora tries his *ghostsight* on the balcony, and to his surprise, he sees a ghost of something that might look like Father Charlatan, standing behind Petrak, with his hand on Petrak's shoulder!

They decide to try a *haunt siphon* on the ghost. It works in weakening it, Tora notice (3d6). But at the same time, Petrak falls to the ground, unconscious! Tora sees ghostly chains wrapped around Petrak, squeezing him!

Meanwhile, Petrak sees himself on a marble table. A young red haired Ezra priest smile at him. "I have just raised you", he says, "We are in Levkarest. I found you in Harrowstone prison. Your body was left there for a year. It seems your friends abandoned you there..."



Petrak tries to argue that his friends would never do such a thing, and the priest answers "Violent death is everywhere, but where is Ezra? Why doesn't she prevent this?" Petrak has headaches. "Ezra never manifests, but she is said to act through the men's action. Is she an illusion?"

Meanwhile, the other heroes get to the balcony. Varadan tries another *haunt siphon*, and that weakens the haunt. They throw positive energy spells at the haunt, including *lay on hands* by Tora on the chains. The chains suddenly vanish... and Petrak opens his eyes... He explains what vision he had while his friends were fighting the haunt.

DM note – eerie confrontation here – see HoH for Father Charlatan's mechanics. Petrak suffers two points of wisdom, but a successful save enabled him to weaken the haunt too.

And for the discussion with the priest, some elements of heretic and the RL Pact added.

They go back to the room where the skeleton of Father Charlatan was found. They put holy water on the skeleton. They remove the chains and put the bones in a bag. They go outside the prison, in the small cemetery, where they bury Father Charlatan, after a short anchorite ceremony.

4h30 pm. They leave the prison for today and go to the forge. They see a middle aged dwarven woman working on a metal fence. They show her the chains that wrapped Father Charlatan. Her first reaction is irritation. "Where did you get this? Didn't you know there is a municipal edict forbidding anyone to enter the prison's ruins?"

Eventually, they get her to calm down. They request she melts the chains and make bullets with the metal.

They see they got her name by magically sneaking inside Gibs's brain (a lie). They get Jorfa's version of the prison fire. She said Vesorianna's plan could have worked to save four of five guards, but the others were untrained cowards. At one point of the riot, the prisoners left the area to watch something farther on the underground level. At this point, there were hidden guards that showed themselves. But the cowards refused to lower the lift to save them. Vesorianna lowered the lift but the other guards took her away, instead of saving their friends. They didn't want to do anything but watch. Gibs was the worst of them, discouraging any guard that appeared willing to try something.

But she also adds something very interesting: when the fire appeared, and the guards went outside, Gibs was chosen to free Vesorianna from her locked room, since he was the one with the key to open it. She could have been saved! But Gibs came back and said he released her, and that she exited from another door. Later, when she was in the list of people missing, town people assumed that after being freed by Gibs, Vesorianna probably came back inside the burning prison, where she died.

Most of the surviving guards left Harrowstone in the years after the fire, because those that were not dead were thought of as cowards. "That is why I refuse that anyone reminds people that I was there too", she adds.

At the hero's request, she makes a plan of the underground level, with approximate location of the Warden's office.

Macrazbunare thinks that the spirit of the warden is maybe still there to guard the ghost of the prisoners?

They sleep at Kendra's place.

March 28th, 748

Early in the morning, they check the monument.

Another letter was added!

They go the prison, and cast *protection from evil* and *hide from undead*.

The first floor contains administrative rooms and meeting rooms.

In a laundry filled with rusty iron tubs, they are attacked by three animated leather straightjackets! One of them tries to constrict Petrak, but they are able to dispatch the animated horrors with spells.



GAME SESSION FIFTY FOUR: TO DARKON AND BEYOND -12

(played Sept 23rd, 2012)

March 28th, 748 – 7h30 am

The next room is locked. Exigu opens the door on an old workshop. Tangled mounds of moth-eaten fabric sit on several wooden tables, each surrounded by workbenches. Various sewing tools— rusted shears and needles, rolls of thread, boxes of chalk, and other objects lie scattered over the floor... while the arm of what appears to be a skeleton protrudes from a stained heap of fabric to the west!

When the heroes enter this room, a ghost manifest in front of them! It is the floating blue ghost of a beautiful young woman dressed in a tattered but lovely blue dress... Vesorianna is in front of them!

Vesorianna theme music: Sinead O'Connor - The Funeral (Veronica Guerin Soundtrack).

She looks surprised. “Are you the new guards?”, she asks. They notice that when the ghost speaks, clouds of blue smoke drift from her lips...

Most about the apparition is blue, including her hair, and the tears that run from her pale blue eyes...

“Why did you came here?”, she asks.

The heroes explain they are at Harrowstone to investigate the murder of a friend, and while doing it, investigate on a possible doom for the village that may soon come from the prison...



She nods with a sad knowing smile. She tells her version of what happened the day the prison burned...

My husband is Harrowstone’s head warden, Lyvar Hawkran. That terrible day, only a few minutes after the prisoners seized control of Harrowstone’s lower level, he courageously triggered an emergency deadfall that sealed the dungeon and trapped everyone (including himself and many of the prison guards) within the prison’s dungeon, leaving the only way out a supply lift that couldn’t be activated from the dungeon level.

It was via this lift that my husband and other trapped guards initially thought to escape, but before they could make it to safety, they were overpowered by the rioting prisoners and taken hostage. I assume they quickly found the keys and released the other prisoners.

These prisoners attempted to use their hostages to force the few guards who remained on the main floor above to lower the lift, but the guards knew it was a bad idea. Through the shaft hole, we saw guards tortured and executed in front of them! The shouts of pain, it was horrible!

I pleaded with the guards on the ground level to remove the deadfall and stage a rescue. Most refused, these cowards! Only Jorfa was willing to try something.

At one time, I saw the prisoners were attracted to another area of the underground, probably attracted to something I do not want to know! But then I saw a few guards who took this opportunity to show themselves, so the guards up there could lower the lift shaft. When they repeatedly refused, I was furious. I managed to dodge the guards, and run to the lift's winch, and throw the release, causing the heavy wooden platform to plummet into the dungeon below in the hope that the guards could leap onto it and be pulled to safety with us on the main floor.

But instead of saving their friends, the other guards managed to apprehend me and swiftly hustled me off to the prison workshop at the other end of Harrowstone, supposedly "locking me inside for my own safety".

One of them was that coward Gibs Hephenu!

Then there was the fire, you know the rest of the story, do you?

Vesorianna's face gets darker when she continues...

Yet the villagers do not realize how precarious their situation truly is, for the ghosts in Harrowstone were contained, as they were in life, not only by the prison walls but by the overwhelming presence of my husband's spirit! For the past several decades, I can't say how many, even after his own men sacrificed his life to protect themselves, my husband has continued to act as Harrowstone's jailer. His spirit ensures that the evil ghosts of the prison remained locked up tight within the ruins...

During all those long years, or decades I guess, you can tell me, I could feel my husband's proximity but I could not join him, as he could not come here and I could not leave this room...

Vesorianna appears as a desperate, grieving widow. They understand her obsession all this time was to be reunited with her husband.

And so things would have remained, were it not for the recent machinations of a cult, men and women in dark robes who spoke only in whispers. They came to Harrowstone not long ago and began to work strange magic around the building's foundations. Unable to leave this room, I was nonetheless able to observe through the walls to the northwest as these strange people inscribed runes along the ground.

I also saw them kill your friend, an old man, was he? He was slain by dark magic.

The heroes make a description of Petros and of Aurélien Vrood and she nods.

Yes, this man, he was the leader of the cultist, and he is the one that slain your friend. I also saw them bash his head and face with a fragment of gargoyle from a roof above in an attempt, I assume, to make your friend's death seem more like an accident? They made me shiver.

Later that night, the cultists finished their evil ritual. Whatever they did, they did so out of my sight... but I felt the repercussions immediately. It felt like a horrific storm, yet one with no wind that chilled my flesh. This sudden windstorm chilled my soul—it felt like as if my very being was being pulled apart. Something like my heart was ripped from me! Yet the horrific sensation passed in an instant... and when it had, the presence of my husband's spirit was gone!

I can only assume that these cultists somehow managed to abduct my husband's spirit, for since that hateful day she's felt no sign of either her husband! I never saw the black-robed cultists either.

Also, what I do know is that every day since that event, the spirits of the murderers and sadists trapped within the walls of Harrowstone have grown more and more powerful. I know now that my husband's presence kept the other haunts in line, and that with his spirit gone, they would have escaped to wreak unimaginable havoc, had I not stepped in to do the job my husband, until recently, had done so well.

Of the 80 ghosts I feel are trapped down there, I can feel among the hateful dead five distinct and powerful personalities. I also know that if you can defeat these five prisoners, I will be able to contain them and keep them from manifesting again.

I assume you are the ones that defeated the Pipper and Father Charlatan? I can keep them from coming back.

If you can defeat all five prisoners, and bring me the symbol of my husband's office over the prison, his badge of office, I will be able to banish these spirits from Harrowstone entirely and forever.

Finally, I feel one of them is slowly eating away at my resolve, I believe it is the leader of the five, the Professor. Each passing day he is getting stronger.

The heroes explain how her name is slowly being spelled out in blood on the monument, one letter each day. She nods grimly.

I know that once my name is spelled out completely, the Professor will destroy me completely, and then the evil spirits of Harrowstone will exit the prison. That would spell doom for the village. I'm not as potent a blockade as my husband was. I feel it's only a matter of days before I fail to maintain my husband's legacy ...

DM's note: During the game, Macrazbunare's player said Gibs is may be possessed and is the one writing Vesorianna's name. Wow! Has he read the adventure? ;)

After ten minutes, Vesorianna says that she has to keep her forces to keep the spirits within the prison's walls. She vanishes from their sight...

With *ghostsight*, Tora sees Vesorianna pitifully curled in a corner, weeping in silence ...

They resume exploring the main floor. In a furnace room, they see a room half flooded by the expanding lake. They see the ribbon of paper the cultist wrapped around the prison building. An enormous rusted metal and stone furnace in this room once heated Harrowstone. A soot-caked copper plaque over the furnace entrance reads “Ember Maw.”



Suddenly, they notice the furnace beginning to animate as a grinning face of metal, and they smell the sudden rising stink of burning flesh. The furnace roars, and a fiery tongue lashes out and attacks Tora! (19 hpp damage) The heroes run and exit this room for a place that was once a training room.

Tora feels compelled and attacks a training dummy. It blasts a cloud of dust and mold! They are worried this dust might be poisonous...



DM note: I asked for a save, but that was of course for nothing ;)

They are in the shaft room: they see a piece of machinery that was to haul up and down a platform. A chain from this machine drops into the lake below. They notice the expanding lake eventually dripped to the underground level, probably when the snow melt after winter. They pull the chain easily, nothing is attached to it.

They look down through the hole with a torch to see better: there is some kind of lake. With a rope, they get Tora to this underground level... With *ghostsight*, he sees vague forms, floating and moving in and out of the room.



This cavernous chamber may have once been an underground cellblock, but it has long since partially collapsed. The others use the same chain to get down to this underground level.

Four ectoplasm creatures appear and attack! Petrak turns two of them, and the heroes attack the remaining creatures. They attack with slime attacks, that gets Tora shaken. They kill the disgusting creatures.

They continue and arrive at a crossroad. With *ghostsight*, he sees again vague phantoms floating here and there.

Four dark hallways exit from this large empty chamber. Eight skeletons dressed in scorched prisoners' robes lie on the ground.

They get to a room that they think is the Warden's room, according to Jorfa's plan. It is a guard room, with a large working table near a desk. Under the table is four skeletal head. It seems three of the skeletal heads were smashed to add pieces to the fourth.

Suddenly, Exigu feels a headache... A ghostly dwarf appears, wearing a large hammer! Three ghostly skeletal heads floats around him. One of them is dwarven. Exigu exits the room.

The dwarf attacks Tora, who is staggered. From Tora's head, a ghostly pieces of his cranium floats toward the dwarven skeleton, then vanishes... The Tempe Falls Marauder is still looking to rebuild the cranium of his wife! The heroes blast the dwarf with healing spells, and *disrupt undead* but at one point, the floating cranium blow some kind of dust on the dwarf, who seems to heal from it!

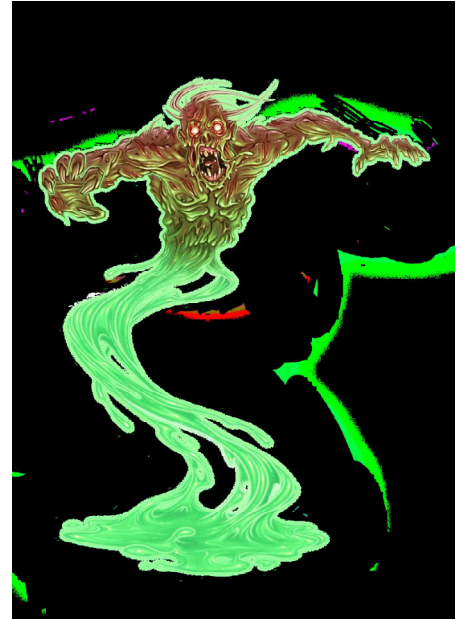
But the dwarf is eventually defeated!

Exigu finds a secret room. In it, a weapon room – there are masterwork chain mails, longswords, heavy mace and crossbows, plus some other rusted weapons.

A large trunk is in a corner. *Detect magic* shows 16 magical auras! 10 magical bolts, 4 potions (cure moderate wounds), one wand and a rope.

They distribute this loot between them.

In another guard room, they find a way to open a portcullis. A lot of cells, all opened. The walls are stained with ashes. They eventually get to a very large room, but a grisly one – a torture chamber! Numerous tools of



torment decorate the room, from cages to hanging chains along the walls to a stretching rack, a large wooden tank, and a fire pit in the middle of the room. In the farthest corner stands a grim iron maiden.

A broken and twisted skeleton dressed in a tattered guard's uniform lies upon the stretching rack in the middle of the room; the body is surrounded by several discarded knives, branding irons, and pliers. They understand that the body on the rack belongs to Warden Hawkran. The warden's last moments of life were hardly pleasant—he was tortured to death. *Ghostsight* shows many spirits turning over and over around this skeleton.

The skeleton shows broken bones, severed hands, dislocated hips and shoulders, a shattered jaw, and numerous long, thin needles that have been driven into his ears, eye sockets, elbows, hips, and knees. Tora searches the skeleton and finds a set of keys stuck in his pelvis, and a metal badge in his jaw. The warden's badge gave the prisoners an impromptu torture device—the metal disk has been wedged into his jaw, and is obviously the object that was used to shatter that part of his face.

Suddenly, Petrak runs toward the iron maiden, eyes wide with terror, and it opens and engulf him! Austizel quickly cast *knock* and release Petrak. A brazier in the room suddenly gets very hot! Petrak is still compelled to go back inside the iron maiden, They get him out and all run out of the room.

Petrak explains that he saw Kendra Lorrimer, bound within the torture device, and wanted to save her. Although the actual spikes within the iron maiden are missing, phantom spikes drained his wisdom! (*DM note: 6 points!*).

Macrazbunare cast *lesser restoration* on Petrak, and the priest also drink a potion of the same.

Going back to the main floor, in a room, they notice their breath is making smoke like if it suddenly was very cold... Petrak gets a few more hit points of damage from this cold effect.

They return to see Vesorianna. She doesn't manifest but Tora is able to see her with *ghostsight*. He shows her the badge of warden office. She tries to take it, but is unable. They try to speak to her but she doesn't answer.

They ask "is it the object that you asked?" – she nods.

They say "we eliminated another of the five, is he under your control?" – again she nods. She looks weaker then when they first encountered her.

When Tora goes toward the door to exit the door, Vesorianna appear distraught with pain and sadness, and she tries to take the badge but her hands passes through...

Tora leaves the badge of office on her skeleton, hidden under the cloathing, and he leaves.

They get back downstairs. In another guard room, Tora sees a flaming skeletal pass through the room!

They advance to another cellblock, where the porticullis is raised...

Send by email with the next game reminder (from the furnace description in HoH):

A large coal and timber fire roars within the huge furnace that dominates the room. A copper plaque over the furnace reads “Ember Maw.” Although the guards often tormented prisoners by threatening that they would one day cremate the prisoners alive inside “Old Ember Maw”, today one prisoner was really to be executed that way – an arsonist named Benjen Ereska, responsible for the deadly fire of a children hospital in Il Aluk. The blaze killed his young sister, making Benjen the only person inheriting the family fortune. The fire also took the life of twenty other children and two nurses...

Ereska stopped praying when he saw the furnace and he screamed.