

Survey on the Souragne expedition

Some precisions and new material

By: Joël of the Fraternity

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A Web Enhancement by the FoS !

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More on the magic ban by Anton

Dear Fraternity members,

There have been discussions among our ranks on the statement that the Lord of the Dead is forbidding arcane magic. Some of you reasonably wanted to know what was allowed and what wasn't. This note is an addendum to our Souragne report.

But before I write more on this matter, I feel important for the safety of the whole Fraternity in Souragne to repeat the Fo S edict about arcane magic:

"All members are to refrain from the use of magic when one's goals may be achieved through mundane means. Furthermore, no member may at any time cast magic in front of witnesses (excepting when one then permanently silences said audience)." In short, for us: do not cast spells in public, since you are not known as belonging to the voodan sect. This can cause you (and the whole Fraternity) significant problems we would like to avoid.

I have discussed in length this ban on arcane magic by the Lord of the Dead with a benevolent voodan some of you might have heard of, Majenka from Port d'Elheur. I know a few of you have already met her, and I take this opportunity to recommend her mosquito bite paste. It's smelly, but after a time your nostrils are accustomed to it, and the most amazing is that it keeps these nasty flying tiny vampiric insect at bay.

It is important to know that Anton Misrci shows a deep distrust of arcane magic. We only can speculate on the reason of his ban, but the only thing he allows is healing magic, and its dread reverse in the balance, necromantic magic.

I can't guess if it's distrust of other types of magic (which I doubt, since his personal powers are rumored to be amazing, making him an exceptionally dangerous opponent. He should not really be concerned by most wizards wandering his realm), or if Anton impose on his island a more defined, old fashion, more simple atmosphere as far as magic is concerned.

What is generally allowed?

What I mean here is what the population will look at with benevolent eyes, or will even seek for themselves or their families.

Those known as voodans can cast about anything they wish, or brew any kind of potions the imagination can dream - even incantations with an unambiguous arcane component, be it turned toward good or evil uses. They simply seem to have the blessing of the "Lord of the Dead", and possibly of the other loas of this land.

The same blessing goes to anchorites, and other priests clearly wearing their church colours or holy symbol, as well as the rare paladins or ranger with divine casting abilities. So divine magic, be it clerical or druidic, is allowed, except perhaps the eventual spells with spectacular effects that would put fear in this backward population.

Bardic magic is generally allowed, but usually not fully trusted as it is seen as manipulative. Again, bardic spells dealing with illusions or other spectacular visual effects are not permitted - see the "what is not allowed?" part below for more guidelines.

Most spell-like abilities, such as racial cantrips, or supernatural abilities acquired from noble training are generally allowed, since these spells are mostly for divination or self protection. However, any of these abilities that would "look" too spectacular in the public eye, thus appearing as forbidden arcane, should be shunned - again see the "what is not allowed?" part for more guidelines. For example, my dear Ambrose, gnomes should not flash their dancing lights in the cities. Monk abilities are rarely seen and usually self protective anyway, so they should not cause trouble.

Psionic powers are generally unobserved by the population, or cannot be backtracked to a specific person, so are not often reported. However, a psion messing around with spectacular powers in the open will probably get into alarming trouble after a time.

What is not allowed?

These "forbidden" incantations will put you in trouble, so they should be avoided in public. We can cast these in private, whether in the isolated swamp or behind the Fraternity plantation walls, without getting unwanted attention.

But we have heard of careless spell casters, often freshly arrived in Scouragne, showing off their powers in public and ignoring the advices on stopping their reckless ways. Their end fate wasn't pretty.

The only exception to this discretion rule is: never, under any circumstance, cast any divination spells that target the swamp or its habitants. See the

special notes in the Souragne report on page 16. Casting these spells in Maison d' Sablet could attract Misroi's attention on you, and you really don't want that, trust me: respect his privacy.

If you are known as a "forbidden magic" practitioner, whether after studying arcane magic or as a sorcerer, you will be eyed suspiciously* and then given the "advice" to refrain from doing so as long as you are in Souragne, "as the Lord of the Dead sees all and hears all, and His law is that no magic but healing and necromantic is allowed under penalty of death, or worse."

Even kids in Port d' Elhour streets can tell you that.

First advice: discretion! Do not show off as an arcane disciple.

Let's quickly pass in review the different schools of magic. Abjuration (mostly protective spells), Conjuration (Calling, Healing, Summoning, but not the Creation and Teleportation subtype spells), Divination (but never in the swamp, as discussed above), Enchantment (Charm and Compulsion) are generally trusted by the population as beneficial magic and aren't included in the ban, as are of course these awful necromantic spells.

However, Evocation (ex: fireball and lightning bolt), Illusion (most of the Time, I'd say - so do not take chances), Conjuration (Creation and Teleportation spells only) and Transmutation (ex: polymorph, etc.) are definitively to be avoided in public.

* Outcast rating +2 while in Souragne

And finally, think twice before you believe you are alone, especially in the open: I found these Souragniens people often have business in the weirdest place, at the weirdest hours.

Be extremely prudent is my last advice for you now,

Yours in Shadow,

Viktor Hazan

DM info:

Bluff checks to get out of trouble?

As seen in Viktor's letter, as long as the spell is perceived as beneficial, the caster should not get into problems. In other cases, use this optional check: the *Identify Forbidden Magic* base DC check for a Souragnien to be convinced something is "wrong" about the caster is 8 (Will), plus the bluff skill ranks of the caster *if* the caster is trying to hide his magic (before casting or in the round afterward) or trying to pass as a benevolent caster.

This disinformation attempt from the caster is a full round action. The check is made for each spell. Note that the average Souragnien has a Will bonus of +1.

The arcane caster is casting "allowed" magic: Abjuration, Conjunction (except teleportation spells), Divination, Enchantment spells. There is still a small chance someone will believe him to be an arcane practitioner and report him as "suspicious": Identify Forbidden Magic check is DC 8, + 8 penalty modifier (for "allowed" arcane magic), + bluff ranks of the caster.

The caster is casting "forbidden" schools of magic, but there is no important visual effect to the spell, or any spectacular immediate effect seen by onlookers (or other sensory effects, depending on the spell, ex: Stinking Cloud; or spells with sonic-damage): Identify Forbidden Magic check is DC 8, + 4 penalty modifier (for arcane magic without visible effect), + bluff ranks of the caster.

The caster is casting "forbidden" schools of magic, *with* visual effect to the spell (or other sensorial component), or spectacular immediate effect seen by onlookers, but afterward the caster tries to explain that *somehow* it isn't breaching Anton's law: Identify Forbidden Magic base check is DC 8, + 0 modifier, + bluff ranks of the caster. Unless the caster is very good at bluffing, there is a good chance someone in the audience will not believe the caster and identify him or her as breaching the ban.

Spells without verbal components add a +2 modifier to this check, as are spells without material components (cumulative, i.e + 4 modifier if the spell is somatic only).

In some cases, the DM should also apply circumstance modifiers, based on the situation in which a spell is cast. For example, casting a *Lightning Bolt* outdoors in the middle of a huge thunderstorm is safer than casting the same spell indoors or on a sunny day, as witnesses could mistake its effects for a natural lightning-strike (suggested modifier to the check: + 6).

Reporting a ban guidelines

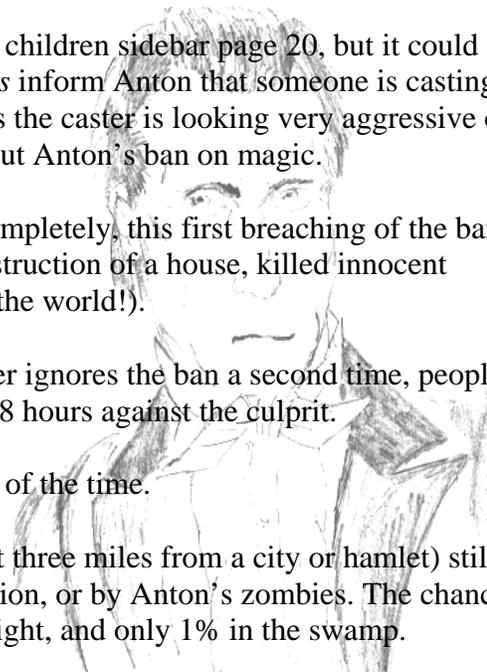
Through the usual means of communication (see Nanaea's children sidebar page 20, but it could be through some voodans too), the Souragniens will *always* inform Anton that someone is casting these "forbidden" spells in a city or hamlet. Usually, unless the caster is looking very aggressive or doesn't want to talk to native, he / she will first be told about Anton's ban on magic.

After this first (and only) advice, if the caster then stops completely, this first breaching of the ban will usually go unpunished (unless the spell has caused destruction of a house, killed innocent people, or similar act that would be punished anywhere in the world!).

But he / she will be on watch by the population: if the caster ignores the ban a second time, people of the cities will again tell Anton, who will act within 12-48 hours against the culprit.

At night, in a city the caster will be seen and reported 30% of the time.

Forbidden arcane spells cast in the wilderness (well at least three miles from a city or hamlet) still have a chance to be witnessed and reported, by the population, or by Anton's zombies. The chance is 5% in the dry lands of Souragne during the day, 2% at night, and only 1% in the swamp.



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Souragne mundane sights and sounds

We often say that in Ravenloft atmosphere is a main ingredient of play. When bringing my players to a new place, I often add small tidbits of ordinary citizens' daily life, here and there for this purpose. These “mundane sight and sounds” are used mainly for atmosphere, but sometimes to introduce something more meaningful in the campaign. I found some of these events are often remembered by the players for a long time.

So here's a few ordinary sight and sounds of Souragne. Do not reuse some of them as they should probably be unique events (you can check the ones you already used).

- A dog barks in the distance, followed by several replies.
- A little girl is looking for her pet (cat / dog). She is poor / rich and she cries.
- A man passes quickly in the street, followed by woman screaming at him. Apparently, he was unfaithful / has spent all the household money in the slums.
- A group of fisherman pulling a large fish toward the market (tuna from the sea or giant catfish from the swamp).
- A swarm of mosquitoes suddenly surrounds the heroes, for a minute or two.
- A loa worshiper on a soap box, praising his favourite loa (choose any from the list in DT&DL).
- A dead body hanging from a tree (outskirt of a city / hamlet).
- A man falls on the ground. He apparently suffers from exhaustion. People help him getting back to his feet.
- Signs of a recent battle: tracks and blood drops in the dirt.
- A sudden gust of wind passes in the area, a short relief from the heat and bugs.
- A silver coin lies in the street.
- A poor woman and her young son sells refreshing beverage made from pressed fruits.
- A lost bag lies in the street or on a bench (full of dried fruits, or whatever).
- Large ravens sit on trees (or whatever). They watch the heroes.
- A group of field workers escort one of them to his home. His/her leg is broken.
- In the market place, the town crier announces an impending marriage, the birth of a child, or another important news.
- A drunken man is taking a nap under a tree.
- A merchant boat arrives in the port. Men hurry there to be hired as dockers.
- A man / woman appear very sick (swamp disease – see annex of the Souragne report).
- Flowers (or food or other) has been nicely disposed on a rock or on a tree (offering to a loa)
- A group of children torment a dog / cat by tying things to its tail.
- A group of young men crouch around a bone dice game.
- An old woman walks through the street, carrying a bundle of wood over her shoulder.
- An old woman / young children is apparently very afraid of one of the PCs.
- A bard / musician is performing / practicing songs beside the road on his instrument.
- An abandoned home. The windows have been boarded shut, but the door is opened.
- A small patch of humid fog passes slowly around your feet.
- A known voodan priest passes in the street, getting respect and reverence from the population.
- Eggs have been dropped in the street, broken.
- Frogs from a nearby pond croak at the same moment.
- Sounds of thunder in the distance.
- A man cries of rage. His back shows whip marks.

- A cart driven by an old woman hauling cages with chickens to the market.
- A rat passes across the road and hides in a hole or a pile of debris.
- A small inquisitive dog runs up to the party, and sniffs around for a couple of minutes.
- A young man is painting a v^év^é on the wall.
- A man in butcher apron runs after a street urchin for a bite of food he's stolen from him.
- One / two women suddenly kneel in the street, praying their favourite loa for guidance.
- A bag hangs from a tree branch (it contains teeth or hairs, or whatever voodoo inspired material)
- A house takes fire in Past-the-Port.
- A young noble, on a horse, passes.
- You pass in front of bloody sacrificial remains on an altar or a rock: gutted chicken, snake, frog, etc.
- The smelly carcass of a fish rots in the sun.
- Violent, gut-wrenching coughs echo through an alley.
- A shackled prisoner is escorted through the street by the militia. Other people might be following them, crying or pleading the prisoner's case.
- A dead dog, covered in flies, with a large bite in the flank.
- The party catches a quick sight of a foppish dandy checking himself over just before knocking at a door.
- A man / woman is dead and relatives are mourning the person.
- A horse pulled noble carriage passes nearby, more or less ignored by the populace.
- A small boy / girl passes by with a large smile and his fist held closed on his chest. If stopped, he will explain how proud his mother will be that he traded their last chicken for the two magic beans that he holds in his hand.
- A man (artisan) struggles with replacing the wheel on his wagon, as his wife and three young daughters look on.
- Crows feeds on the carcass of a dog or cat.
- Just then, it begins to rain lightly.
- A boy and girl in straw hats are carrying cane poles and a basket of small pond fish (or frogs).
- A pair of unsavoury looking characters tosses daggers at a human target roughly painted on a tree.
- An old beggar with milky unseeing eyes holds up a cup (within a few coppers can be seen).
- A ball strikes one of the PCs. A child runs up and demands they give it back.
- A friendly dog follows the party for a short while.
- A flock of sheep move into the street and block the party's path.
- A loose cobblestone shifts under the party's feet (city only; REF DC 12 or fall on the ground).
- You pass near a very aged man standing in front of a temple. He smiles at you.
- A group of small children, hidden behind a tree, putting the hat on the ground with a hidden cord trick.
- While talking, a PC swallows a bug.

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NPC's basic game stats

One poster on our message boards astutely suggested we provided the stats for all NPCs in the Gaz (gender, race, class(es), level(s), alignment), something we overlooked (*mea culpa!*). Here's the list of all NPCs from part one of the report, with the basic game stats.

Page	NPC name	basic game stats
20	Jessica de Nanaea	female, human, Rog6, LE
20	Antoine de Nanaea	male, human, Ftr6/Rog4, NE (option: Pistoleer - VRA)
20	Madame Larouche	female, human, Com1, LN
21	Bernard Foquelaine	male, human, Ari4, LN
21	Madame Dreyfuss	female, human, Ari1, LE
21	Père Antoine Lefebvre	male, human, Clr7, LN
22	Jacque Faisique	male, human with Fir blood, Exp4, NG
22	Majenka	female, human, Voodan10, CG
24	Adam Desjardins	male, human, Ari3/Ftr1, CN
24	Eve Desjardins	female, human, Ari2/Rog2, N
24	all daughters	female, human, Ari1, N(G)
25	Élie Belenfant	male, human, Ari2/Clr5, LN
25	Bercine Belenfant	female, human, Ari2, N
25	Bernard Mathurine	male, human, Ari4, NG
26	Charles Hallie-Bourbonne	male, human, Ari3/Wiz7, NE
26	Etienne Lefebvre	male, human, Exp4, NG
26	Jean Dessalines	male, human, Ari3/Ftr3, LN (option: Pistoleer - VRA)
26	Paula Dessalines	female, human, Ari2/Courtier2 (LotB, under Boritsi), LE
26	Laura Dessalines	female, human, Ari1, CG
26	Paul Mont Mirebalais	male, human, Ari3/Voodan4, NE
27	Iolanthe Van Schelm	female, human, Ari2, NG
27	Guy Larouche	male, human, Ari2/Bard2, LN
27	Jeanne Van Schelm	female, human, Ari1/Voodan3, CG
27	Archibald Van Schelm	male, human, Exp4/Ari3, LN
27	Alfred Van Schelm	male, human, Exp2/Ari2, LN
27	Balthasaer Van Schelm	male, human, Exp4, N
27	Gerard Van Schelm	male, human, Ari1/Ftr3, NG (option: Pistoleer - VRA)
27	Josje Van Schelm	female, human, Exp2, NG
27	Chris Van Schelm	male, human, Ari1/Exp1, LN
27	Willem Van Schelm	male, human, Exp1/Ari1, NG
28	Mordu	male, human, Exp3, LN (option: Scholar or Guardian Seeker - VRA)
29	Vardain Durand	male, human, Ari3, NE

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The Souragnien Hero

Races: Nearly all habitants of Souragne are humans, with a few calibans living near or within the swamp. For humans, the skin colour varies from light skin (with dark shades of hair ranging from reds to browns) and dark brown skin (with black hair). The light skin people tend more to be aristocrats, and the brown skin to be labourers, but many exceptions to this guideline exists, where people have climbed or came down the social ladder. There are also a fairly large number of inhabitants sharing both racial characteristics.

Classes: Fighters and Rogues are the most common PC classes in Souragne. Fighters and rogues can be found in all corners of the domain, with rogues being especially common in the cities. NPCs mostly use Commoners, but also Experts classes.

In Souragne, the clerics are less numerous than voodan (DT&DL), and they are mostly devoted to Ezra. Voodans receive the highest degree of respect and deference, but anchorites are looked at favourably too most of the time. Due to the ban on arcane magic, sorcerers and wizards are very rarely encountered and they keep their skills hidden. Barbarians and monks are virtually unknown.

Rangers and druids are uncommon, but their skills in the swamp are highly valued as skilled hunters and fishermen. Bards are uncommon in Souragne since the class is believed to be parasitic; most artists and musicians in the domain are experts, with more down to earth profession skills as well.

Noble born often have a few levels in Aristocrat, as well as another class, often Fighter (Pistoleer) or Expert.

Recommended Skills: Appraise, Balance, Craft (shipmaking, weaving), Gather Information, Handle Animal, Heal, Intimidate, Knowledge (religion), Perform (dance, percussion instruments, paint, sing), Profession (fisherman, hunter, herdsman, tanner), Sleight of Hand, Spot, Survival, Swim, Use Rope.

Recommended Feats: Animal Affinity, Back to the Wall, Brawler, Endurance, Iron Will, Jaded, Skill Focus (hunting, fishing), Self-Sufficient, Toughness, Unseen, Warding Gesture.

Souragnien Male Names (common*): Abdias, Alcimé, Antoine, Angelot, Berthony, Cédieu, Charlson, Courtois, Dieucibon, Dieulange, Egalité, Elméus, Franceau, Fresnel, Georgy, Gustinvil, Isidore, Jacquelain, Jean, Jean-Louis, Jean-Loumith, Kaleb, Kamonslay, Léon, Macelis, Mathieu, Mercurieu, Nazaire, Onas, Petitfort, Pipo, Ricardeau, Roboam, Rochenel, Rogelet, Samiel, Ti Boudo, Tiga, Walno, Wibain, Wilbonheur, Wilfrid.

Souragnien Female Names (common*): Abigaël; Accilia, Atalie, Berthude, Blandine, Caline, Christelle, Cléanne, Danalove, Doudelidie, Douveline, Edmagdalena, Edmine, Emanie, Erlande, Exilia, Féncia, Georgelaine, Herlande, Iodelande, Janina, Jeandeline, Jezila, Laurantette, Lorisena, Maguilene, Marie, Mona, Nanaea, Nefthalie, Norélia, Osimène, Quetteline, Rosemène, Rose-Michelle, Sendia, Stephigraph, Tamara, Vanicile, Velande, Waldine, Wandaline, Wistoune, Yolette, Zoé.

* For noble names, use the Dementlieuse list.

