



By Eddy "Lost Wiccan" Brennan

*A file originally hosted on Midway Haven
2016 Revision edited by the Fraternity of Shadows*

Introduction

Invidia is a nation in violent transition, a patch of land torn apart by war, famine and political turmoil. Here in this landlocked conclave, the fate of thousands of fragile lives rests on the whims of a dynastic feud that has raged for decades. The Aderres, heirs to this lush land watered by the mighty Musarde, now wage a constant battle against, ironically, themselves for supremacy. Center to all of this is Castle Hunadora, where loyalties shift back and forth from the ruler Malocchio Aderre to his mother, the beautiful Gabrielle Aderre. The two have been on neutral terms in the past, but all that has changed.

In December of 755, the Dukkar's army finally surrounded the stronghold of Castle Hunadora, and Gabrielle was pulled through the bitter point of a siege. The nations surrounding Invidia had all rights to be concerned over such a small family feud; the vision of the Dukkar, the bane of the Vistani, comes with the added knowledge that he would be the only ruler to cross between the Misty Borders, and therefore dissolve the land as we know it.

War had to be averted, and Midway Haven was there as the events unfolded. Through the eyes and pen of its most prolific correspondent, the Lost Wiccan, the events at Castle Hunadora are kept in this journal for the rest of the world to read, as much as for posterity. *For we must always remember that acts against ourselves are the worst of all the evils that plague us today.*

*-Maegan Rumwall
Overseer, The Midway Haven Demiplanar*

Dear readers, for some months now, my dear late friend, Bernard, and I have done our utmost in keeping the recent events around Hunadora in the public eye. This is a task that has had me see more bloodshed and evil than I had since I first arrived in this world several years ago, in a place now called Necropolis. In my coverage of the siege, I have found it impossible to give an unbiased approach to these events. The Dukkar is a cruel, savage beast of a man; even that latter statement of his humanity has become doubt in my mind after being in his presence for so long.

I heard about the collected publication of my field reports and thought that it was necessary to say a few things before I depart Hunadora; my wounds, as well as others belonging to the many here, are now healed to the best of my ability. The letter from the Midway Haven Observatory was lucky to have arrived as it did; I was about to depart when it reached me. I felt it best to stay here to write this final testimony as an introduction to the work you now hold in your hands.

Life continues here and the last of the dead were buried some weeks back now, but still, evil lurks in this dark forested land. If I look out my window, it is all I see now.

Now, I cannot wait much longer. I plan to be outside this land before nightfall and the morning grows older as I sit here. My return to Vallaki, where my friends and new family live, is a welcome gift to me.

There were many times I thought I would never be able to raise an ale with them again.

Now my gentle readers, take warning that the texts within this book are not for the weak of heart. Take them as a warning also and always strive to avoid war at any cost.

Blessings.

*-Megan Llewelyn
Priestess in Service to Kerridwenn, Cernunoss and the MHAO
Castle Hunadora, August 30th, 765BC*

News reports from the Midway Haven Demiplanar.

Invidia Torn in Coup-like Conflict

VALLAKI, Barovia (MHD)--News reached Vallaki today about Malocchio Aderre waging a siege against his mother, Gabrielle Aderre. Rivalry between the mother and son have continued for some time, but now this feuding has grown into a small war, splitting Invidia in half, as the people flood to either one side or another.

Though this siege may be short due to the time of year, only Curriculo seems to be benefiting from it at this time, by staying neutral and marking the East-West border.

Coup Army Encamped Around Castle Stronghold

VALLAKI, Barovia (MHD)--News reached Vallaki that at this time, there are still no developments coming from around Castle Hunadora. However, it is known that Lord Aderre's mercenaries have set up camp about the castle, maybe hoping to starve Lady Aderre and her followers out of hiding. Several of Lord Aderre's mercenaries have been questioned about their thoughts on the siege so far, many of them claiming it to be one of the easiest jobs they have been hired for in some time. Lord Aderre has yet to be seen about the siege area and no casualties have so far been recorded. However, a number of travelling merchants have taken the opportunity to set up shop in the area for the hungry mercenaries after the last report was made.

"... Lord Aderre's mercenaries have set up camp about the castle, maybe hoping to starve Lady Aderre..."

Hunadora Under Siege

HUNADORA, Invidia (MHD)--With the siege completing its first week, we have seen plenty of activity around Hunadora in the past two days. Firstly, the siege force of Lord Aderre's mercenaries have set up a more permanent camp about the castle and the small village that exists within its walls. The encampment is rather large now, as more troops following Lord Aderre arrive and swell its numbers. At the present count, it is estimated that over a thousand now encircle the Invidian capital.

In addition to this, the mercenaries have set up small competitions among their ranks, mainly those that involve blood being spilt and training to keep their skills and wits keen. These started when several commanders that follow Lord Aderre arrived and noticed the sloppy way that the troops were acting, so they enstated these as a way to relieve boredom.

Finally, there are now reports coming in that Lord Aderre himself will be arriving at the siege area in the coming week or so. However, this is yet to be confirmed by the

mercenary commanders, as they are busy trying to find several refugees that are said to have fled Hunadora in the cover of darkness last night. Though they are not yet caught, the mercenaries are combing the forests on strict instructions of bringing them back alive.

*-Bernard Hedgeworth of Curriculo,
translated by The Lost Wiccan into Balok*

Hunadora Refugees Caught!

HUNADORA, Invidia (MHD Hunadora Bureau)--It is now confirmed that a small group did flee into the eastern woods, probably to warn others of the siege or flee the land entirely.

Three of the refugees were found in the forests southeast of the capital in the early morning and are now undergoing interrogation by the recently arrived mercenary commanders. One of the refugees suffered minor injuries in the capture.

The siege has also suffered its first fatality this morning when a training exercise went awry and led to the death of one Carlos Eplong of Falkovnia. Currently, the others are rounding up what they can to send onto the late mercenary's family in Falkovnia.

Finally in today's report, Lord Aderre has been reported to approach Hunadora, arriving sometime tomorrow evening after attending to some business elsewhere.

Aderre Arrives in Hunadora

HUNADORA, Invidia (MHD Hunadora Bureau)--Invidian chief Lord Aderre has reached Hunadora bringing with him another force of mercenaries.

Also, the refugees that fled Hunadora have now all been caught and taken in for questioning over how they got past the mercenary forces. Though none have given up any information, they are now presumed dead, as nothing has been seen of them since Lord Aderre himself took upon the act of questioning them.

Also, there have been a growing number of accidents in the training activities among the mercenaries as they grow increasingly restless. Lady Aderre has yet to make a proper appearance but someone fitting her description has been seen wandering the battlements of castle Hunadora last evening, though this is still speculation and was only seen by a few.

*-Bernard Hedgeworth
Invidia Balok correspondent*

Aderre Attacks Hunadora Capital

HUNADORA, Invidia (MHD Hunadora Bureau)--It has finally begun. Lord Aderre staged his first attack on the capital of Hunadora last night. Although the plan to starve out his mother Lady Aderre and her followers seemed to remain in place, the dramatic events of the past few hours have showed that the plan has apparently been modified. His presence has boosted the morale of the mercenaries and also raised the injuries taken in training, as he does so almost continuously.

The first attack had little effect, though, as his men were either slaughtered by missile fire or forced to retreat. It seems that Lady Aderre and her followers are fairly competent at war if need be and are set to wait out the siege forces.

-Bernard Hedgeworth of Curriculo,

translated by The Lost Wiccan into Balok

Turning point: February 2, 756.

One of our correspondents covering the ongoing crisis in Hunadora, Bernard Hedgeworth, was killed in a crossfire last week. Our Invidian correspondent, the Lost Wiccan, had these kind words to say about him:

After the death of my late informant and employee at the Hunadora siege area, I have taken it upon myself to travel there and pick up where he left off. I cannot afford to let others die so that I can share the latest gossip and news from this disastrous event and instead take it upon myself to do so. This decision was also aided by the fact that my information has been limited in the past few days, except for updates on Bernard and the creature that murdered him. It is now said that his body is being transported to his family for a proper burial by the local Ezrites. May the Goddess he worshipped bless him always, and his family.

Since I will be spending the next few days traveling, I shall record this journey within a small notebook that I carry. Here is my first entry that I shall send along to the Midway Haven Observatory in the morning, or when I pass the next person heading that way.

February 5th

I left Vallaki before dawn this morning, just as the horizon started to brighten in the east. Whatever travels in the night doesn't worry me, as I am often one of them myself. I soon found myself following the Luna River, west of the mountainous village, later leaving it when the time came to head onward to Zeidenburg, which I was told was once part of a lost land named Gundarak.

This terrain is rather rugged and the cart I have taken with me is mostly filled with medical supplies for those who need them and provisions for my journey. The day dragged on uneventfully and it appeared that several groups of refugees from smaller hamlets in east Invidia have crossed the border to my new homeland. If this continues much longer, I wonder how far our already stretched food stores will go? I ended today's leg upon reaching a small river hamlet that I do not know the name of. Tonight I sleep under a roof, but tomorrow I may not, though that has never bothered me before. I plan to leave at first light, or sooner if I am able to.

February 6th

I left the small hamlet this morning, after purchasing a few more needed supplies for my journey. I have also been joined by Johan Smelvig, who is also traveling to Zeidenburg in the east. He is a talkative fellow and seems to love the great outdoors, almost as much as myself.

The journey has been getting a little easier, with the ground slowly leveling off as we begin to depart the Balinoks, but we still follow the Luna River at the end of the day. Tomorrow I plan to make up for the time I lost this morning with the purchases and Johan deciding to accompany me. Tonight, we camp outdoors; the wolves can be heard far off, baying at the almost full moon. I hope I can get some privacy tomorrow night when the moon is full, so I can practice my religion alone. Johan is a nice enough fellow, but you never know who you can trust when it comes to your religious beliefs in Barovia, especially for those who practice my religion. It has been frowned upon for many years. I hope to open people's minds to it one day so that they understand it.

Johan has volunteered the first watch and I will take the second. Maybe no trouble will come of us, though both of us seem competent and able, if drawn into fighting for our lives. We set off at dawn, when it comes.

February 7th

Myself and Johan traveled wearily today, after being attacked by the walking dead in the last hours before dawn. I hear rumors that Count von Zarovich can control such beasts, but how can a man control that which doesn't live and still walks this world?

The wagon meant we could rest our legs, but the journey still tires the soul. We left the Luna River shortly before dark; this means we will arrive in Zeidenburg tomorrow. If we make it alive and without further attack, that is. Johan was quiet today, maybe the attack last night tired him more than he lets on, or else he has ran out of things to say.

Johan has left to do some hunting. Whilst he is gone, I will honor the Goddess and God below the fat moon that fills the sky.

February 8th

Last night was quiet, no attack befell us, nor any other mishap that may occur. Johan was back in fine spirit, maybe he just had an off day?

We rolled into Zeidenburg this afternoon; the place seems so different that my home of Vallaki, or my adopted home, as it should be. It was once part of the land called Gundarak, as I mentioned in an earlier entry. The people here are downtrodden and crime is high. We keep safe lock on the wagon and the supplies in the stable, along with the horses. Tomorrow I must trade them in for fresh ones; a tired horse is useless to everyone.

Tomorrow I should enter Invidia, another day's travel should take me to Hunadora if things go well. Johan and I will eat together as friends tonight, even though we may never see each other again when I leave for the siege area west of here.

February 9th

Some light drizzle made the roads a little heavy as I set off this morning, the sky still crimson with the rising sun in the east. It felt strange traveling alone once more; the past few days with Johan were enjoyable. It was also today that I encountered the first of the refugees fleeing Invidia.

I stopped to talk to several, helping them if I could. It appears that another attack occurred on the castle yesterday morning and that the heavy walls about the capital have suffered damage in some areas. The extent of this damage is unknown at this time, but I

shall discover more when I arrive tomorrow or the day after, depending on whether my traveling will be slowed once more by the need for aiding the unfortunate, homeless folk from the west.

When I stopped for the night, it was once again in the company of others; a group of refugees happened upon my camp and we ate together. They depart, as I do, at first light... the difference being that I am going where they recently fled.

How terrible can it be for so many to abandon all they hold dear other than the lives of those they love? Tomorrow, I hope to find this answer. After entering Invidia, I can claim that it is not unlike western Barovia. This is my first visit to this land; I just hope it won't be the last time I go anywhere.

February 10th

My travels today have led to the passing of many refugees heading east to the Barovian border. Maybe some will head south to Kartakass; who knows? All I know is that the food stores of Barovia will be depleted before the winter ends, if the refugees keep coming.

I ended today's journey a few miles east of Hunadora. The signs of the conflict are already present: cut forestry and the distant sounds of several thousand voices rising over the thick canopy above our heads, filling the sky with a faint murmur of shouts and screams.

"I will strive to do my best to comfort and heal these people."

The late evening was filled with a sound I never thought I would hear in the land of Invidia, the sound of *smokepowder* weapons being fired. I dread the damage they can do, the suffering they inflict, and the lives they take. May they disappear from this world before they cause more ill upon the innocents.

February 11th

I have finally arrived at Hunadora, and it is far worse than I expected. Many are wounded and others are dead, many of which lay unburied in the soft mud around the castle. Crows and other birds that feed off carrion peck at their rotting corpses and no one seems to care about the stench and sound. I care though; I must do my best to do all I can to help the wounded, ease the last moments of the dying, and spread the word of this futile war.

No matter who wins, they will still be a loser; war is only a legal way to kill someone. Maybe someone else will realize this and then, maybe, it will end before too many more lives are wasted.

Also, another attack on Hunadora was waged two days ago, just as the rumors told me. I will send this report to the Midway Haven Observatory; hopefully it will arrive in less time than it took me to travel here.

February 12th

My first whole day at Hunadora was not one I would care to remember. The atmosphere is thick with the smell of burning bodies, freshly recovered this morning after

they were left to rot in the wet mud for the past few days. Some have been taken back to their homes to be buried if they were close enough, but only a vast minority.

I personally met with Lord Malocchio Aderre this afternoon. He is a cold man, callous even. None would say it to his face and fear seems to run amok when he is about. Many seem terrified of his presence rather than relieved. It seems that he is unwilling to stop the siege until his mother surrenders to him, something I doubt will happen after the rumors and stories I hear of their past feuds.

I pray that none will die tomorrow, as none died today. If only the smell of burning flesh would stop plaguing my nose. It enflames the.... **(rest of the passage is scribbled out)**.

February 15th

This is my second report from the Hunadora siege area and things seem to become more grave for Lord Aderre's forces by the day, despite being the invading force. Morale throughout the camp is getting low with the lack of success in the previous attacks and the harsh temperatures and heavy frosts at night are causing some to become sickly with high fevers. I spent yesterday tending to many of these cases and now dozens have fallen ill. Some have been taken to Curriculo and Karina to be seen by herbalists and other specialists in the field of battling sickness and none of those ill have grown any worse yet.

Also, early this morning, Lord Aderre left the siege area with a tall priest belonging to a sect I have not heard of; his great head-dress of a jackal is a sight to behold. Where they have gone is not known to anyone at this time, but Lord Aderre is said to be returning before the week is out.

I hear of another fallen sick now. That makes over 3 score more fallen to this plague this afternoon alone. I have requested more medical help from the surrounding area. Whether they will come or not is beyond me, but until they do, as I hope they will, I will strive to do my best to comfort and heal these people.

February 19th

After several days of the plague sweeping through the siege camp, more than three hundred have now started to show symptoms and are bedridden from its effects. I have spent a few days working hard on developing a cure or vaccine to the mysterious influenza-like ailment and have started to have some success with it. It appears that the contagion is airborne. This makes it harder to control, but easier for me to quarantine the victims in one part of the camp. Lord Aderre has shown interest in my work and seems willing to fund my research and work to help the sick and wounded. After speaking with this man on several occasions over these several days, Lord Aderre seems a cold, almost heartless man, similar to his mother in several ways, but unable to feel anything but utter contempt for others. If he wins this siege, I am beginning to truly fear for Invidia.

As said earlier, I have had some success in fighting the ailment. If I am able to catch it in its earlier symptoms, mainly a sore throat and heavy cough, a small herbal concoction can stop it completely. Those who have progressed further are, thus far, out of reach of my current achievements. Another shipment of herbal supplies is due to arrive in the next couple of days; hopefully I can create a complete cure or vaccine from them.

March 3rd

After the recovery of those suffering from the recent outbreak of disease among Lord Aderre's men, word did reach me of several cases of the disease striking within Hunadora's walls, though these cases were mild and easily treated. In wake of this, the first conflict outside the walls took place late yesterday evening. A small group left Hunadora by unknown means under the cover of darkness and attacked outlying tents and food supplies belonging to Lord Aderre. Many were injured or killed in this, what Lord Aderre described as a minor skirmish; today I am still treating the wounded.

Those sent by Lady Aderre that didn't escape were arrested and taken by Lord Aderre to be questioned. Also, Lord Aderre's methods of questioning these poor fellows are torturing my mind as I listen to their distant screams this night. Someone approaches now. I shall finish this report later...

...Lord Aderre has requested several mild poisons from the stores that I use to tend burns and other like injuries. I pray that he doesn't use these on those he captured. Tonight I will pray for their souls. If only I was able to refuse such a request from that vile man.

March 6th

Lord Aderre seems to becoming more abrupt with those about him as the siege carries on with little to please him. Thankfully, he seems to have forgotten his threat to me, something I also wish I could forget. Hunadora seems more and more impregnable as the days pass, and I feel this is what infuriates Aderre even more - that his mother is out-waiting him in this game of patience. Life in the camp, though, has otherwise returned to normal, even after the night raid set by Lady Aderre.

March 9th

In the last three days, Lord Aderre has attempted thrice to lay siege to Hunadora, each time failing. However, I feel he is drawing closer to what he is seeking, and it is this I fear. If I could bring myself to do it, I would rid the world of this man; his spirit throws evil into the land about it. Though a terrible thing to risk saying with his loyal followers, spies, and Lord Aderre himself about, it is true nonetheless.

Maybe I can soon see a peaceful end to this conflict, though my hopes mean nothing compared to the grim reality of things.

March 12th

Today, what I had hoped would never happen, did happen. Aderre managed to breach Hunadora's defenses through a clever assault using smokepowder explosives. These weapons are devastating and cruel. How any man could devise such things I will never know, but his mind must be as dark and twisted as that of the Dukkar himself.

Though he managed to get soldiers within the heavy stone wall, the breach was over quickly and the bodies of his dead followers thrown from the wall later in the day, mutilated beyond recognition. It seems, with this event, that Lord Aderre is not the only cruel person in the area, for whoever did those things to a lifeless body must be evil in their soul also.

March 21st

As I scribble this now, the perimeter wall to Hunadora is being repaired and the stars shine down upon the camp. Spring is coming to this land and the first signs begin to show. Spring means new life, hopefully it will help people here see the worth of their own and quit this pointless mass suicide.

This evening, as the sun sets over the western forest of Invidia, I write this with the scent of scorched flesh in the air. The rebels in Hunadora finally mounted a counterstrike in the early afternoon with flammable projectiles, destroying many tents, stores of provision and lives. Many who died did so instantly, though some were not so fortunate, suffering and screaming for hours before they blissfully passed on to a better world. Those who survived with burn injuries are now resting peacefully, tranquilized through herbal remedies supplied by relief staff from Valachan.

This conflict becomes more horrifying and widespread with each passing day. For now, though it is contained in one location, many other lands are being drawn in. I hope none of these remember old enmities for one another and spread the chaos that dwells about this dismal gray fortress, which stands high above my tent.

March 24th

Since the flames that tore through parts of the siege camp, the place has been one of misery and almost silence, and Lord Aderre has staged a counterattack. Many more lives were lost to more flames that rained down from beyond the high stone walls of Hunadora. Those that did survive were fortunate if they were not injured at all, as nearly all those injured suffered wounds that were fatal, and died within a day.

This place becomes more horrific with each morning that comes and the stench of burning corpses fills the air day and night as the death toll climbs. Neither Lord Aderre nor his mother seem ready to begin thinking about halting this conflict in the days to come. Also, the more that die, the happier Lord Aderre appears to be about the civil war tearing this land apart.

New supplies have arrived from Mordentshire this afternoon; hopefully they will go towards helping fewer new injuries than the past supplies did. I pray this night that the conflict ends soon, so those that dwell here may returned to their loved ones alive, if at all.

March 27th

With the effects of the retaliation from the rebels in Hunadora, the siege has once again come to a complete halt. Happily, this has meant that no others have suffered from the war in this brief period of tranquility, and those that survived with burns and other injuries have either left for their own homes or are recovering under the care of myself and other medical specialists that have arrived to treat the wounded.

I hope that this will at last bring an end to this conflict, but knowing the perseverance of Lord Aderre, I very much doubt that will be happening yet. He is as determined as ever to defeat his mother, who has eluded him for so long. Furthermore, some of the mercenaries still hope for chances to earn more wealth on the battlefield. Somehow, despite my hopes, I feel they will earn more chances to do so yet.

The Convergence at Port-a-Lucine: April 756.

Protesters Surround Port-a-Lucine University

(as reported by Thorgar of the Brotherhood)

PORT-A-LUCINE, Dementlieu (MH-UPaL)-- Around ten thousand anti-unipolarist demonstrators gathered around the University of Port-a-Lucine yesterday as the Summit of the Core commenced, with around 250 delegates from almost every domain in the Continental region gathering for the three-day affair. The protestors were demonstrating against the ratification of the region's Free Trade Agreement, which, according to them, would finally see the destruction of the Continental middle class and the gradual paving of the way for economic segregation in the region. In the demonstrators' huge camp just outside city limits it was a festive mood as a mock opera was performed, and people from all over gathered wearing the most unusual clothing, apparently to protest the inclusion of Dementlieuse fashion in economic unipolarity. Among the important matters to be discussed is war-torn Invidia, where probably hundreds have already been killed by a long-standing feudal war. A low-level Invidian delegation has been sent by both sides of the Aderre clan to Port-a-Lucine.

Security was further tightened when officials at the Port-a-Lucine Opera House received an unmarked letter containing a smokepowder trigger threat. Although no such device was discovered around the Opera House or its neighboring buildings, City watch officials have blamed anti-unipolarists for the threat.

April 1st

News of the Summit meeting in Dementlieu reached the camp this morning with the arrival of a summons addressed to Lord Aderre. He quickly showed distaste for the ordeal but sent a messenger early this afternoon stating that his lands will be represented at the discussions for the FTAC (Free Trade Area of the Core).

The conflict about me is still silent and the inactivity about the siege camp is a welcome blessing from the Deities. As always, my blessings go out to all who follow my news reports and the families of those who suffer in this now seemingly unending and savage war. Also, my worries grow stronger for those locked away within the stone walls of Hunadora, how much longer can they last before they begin to starve or pestilence rears its head among them? Maybe we may all have peace soon if this conflict ends. Since my last report, nothing of note has happened except Lord Aderre's interest in the herbalist teams, and myself, has risen once again. Also, the steady flow of mercenaries and others seeking their fortunes here has come to an end it seems. Many of them have

"Death rained down in many forms - fire, missiles, magic and boiling acids and other liquids. "

also departed the area, probably in fear of the more and more dangerous attacks from either side.

Due to the inactivity in the siege, some of the herbalists that I work with have departed on journeys to restock on some rarer medicines and cures. Blisters are also becoming more common, as are fleabites; remedies for these are beginning to run low so these will also need replenishing in the next few days. Maybe I will depart the camp for a few days to collect them myself. I have been surrounded by death for so long, I sometimes think I am beginning to forget what the rest of the world looks like.

April 2nd

I left the encampment this morning, with the protection of several guards, for Curriculo, the only part of the domain not savaged and torn apart by the ongoing war. Once there, we hope to obtain the medicines we require; if not, I will have to scour the surrounding areas for the herbs required to create them.

Our first day of travel was uneventful yet slow due to the late start. Tonight we stay at the inn of a small village that we happened upon. The locals seem fearful of our party, but this is to be expected when being in the company of Lord Aderre's soldiers. Though their presence is not needed for the journey, I feel Lord Aderre prefers to keep me under surveillance. His reasons are unknown but he must feel that he cannot trust me.

The journey will take another full one and a half days travel to reach the town, with luck we can be back at Hunadora by the end of the week.

We arrived in Curriculo early this afternoon and quickly set about collecting the medicines required. We were successful in retrieving much of what we need but some are unavailable at this time. To save having to scour the countryside for the herbs, I have arranged for the medicines to be sent to us at the encampment in the next few days.

Tonight we stay at one of the local inns and plan to travel back tomorrow. The guards sent to accompany me have started to go about the town collecting taxes for their lord. I have reason to presume that they were sent for this purpose above all else. If Lord Aderre had the opportunity, I'm sure he'd see to have me removed in some way. If he attempted that though, I'm sure he'd find me harder to be rid of than he believes.

April 8th

We arrived back at camp this morning, after several delays along the way. Our cart threw a wheel a half days journey out of Curriculo, forcing us to go back and have it repaired. The guards merely stole another from the town, though I wasn't happy with the idea. At least I fully compensated them.

The supplies we ordered arrived shortly after we did, leaving us well stocked for the ever-increasing fleabites that are now running out of control. The guards also left to report to Lord Aderre as soon as the cart was unloaded. I am more than certain that my presence here jeopardizes something he has planned, but as long as my services are required, I am not leaving the sick or wounded to the fate he would rather they have.

April 24th

I once again put my now shaking hand to write this treatise of the recent events about the siege area. My hand shakes out of horror, sleeplessness, hunger, and exhaustion

that should leave me unable to do anything but sleep, but duty carries me on to spread news of that which has happened.

It has been some time since my last report, though that hasn't meant I haven't wanted to write them. Instead, my duties as an apothecary come first in times of disaster. It has been over a week since my last report, and the next day, the first horrifying conflict began that took so many lives from this world. Lord Aderre put out a successful offensive against Hunadora until he realised the trap, realised it too late to save many of the lives of those with him. Death rained down in many forms - fire, missiles, magic and boiling acids and other liquids. Though Lord Aderre suffered a massive loss, I'm sure the rebels suffered a loss just as significant.

My time since the attack has been sleepless, spent tending the wounded that did not die horribly right away or soon after. They took my attention both night and day; all else has been oblivious to me, even holy rites that should have transpired. For some, merciful ends did come, but others still suffer now; their cries of agony echo out over the camp.

After these past days, I now pray more than ever that the conflict ends soon, taking Lord Aderre with it, if fortune is with me. This world needs less like him and if necessary, I will take him out if this world myself.

May 1st

In the few days since my last report, Lord Aderre seems to have tipped the scales of power at this place in his favour somewhat. Despite his mounting losses at almost every turn, his mother seems almost destined now to become the loser in this horrific conflict.

"I hope it to be a crushing defeat for the Dukkar, though I pray for those who follow him: his end should be one of misery that lasts a lifetime."

Most of those wounded in the battle over a week past have been sent on to those better equipped in dealing with such injuries. Those whose wounds weren't as serious continue to receive treatments here. Also, with the quieting of the infirmary, I have also been able take the time to

rest, to regain some of the energy I have spent in the service of helping others.

I must go now; I feel that Lord Aderre will need my services soon, or rather those that follow the wormlike man. A large party is being assembled outside my tent and I feel another battle coming. The siege is accelerating out of control; please let it end soon before too many more lives are lost.

May 2nd

In the fortnight since the terrible battle that saw many casualties on both sides of the war, I was hoping that the conflict was coming to an end, with many of the mercenaries leaving with the wounded. My hopes were quashed, however, with the arrival of new hirelings under Lord Aderre's control. Men lent from Falkovnia's great,

though cruel, army, far in the north of the lands that form the Core of this malicious world.

The encampment continued to be bolstered in size, as the week passed, and on Tuesday, the force amassed here outnumbered the former forces by a margin I can't begin to calculate. Before the exodus, nearly nineteen-hundred resided here. Though most of those have departed, the new number was well over two-thousand, of that I am certain.

Yesterday, the population of this land took a terrible blow, as weapons and lives locked once more. Malocchio sent his fresh followers in blindly, straight into the clever traps his mother and her rebels had laid for them. When I heard the sounds within the forest, I know the reasons for the exodus. Over a thousand charged from the shadows, a ploy played by the coward, who hid in the rear the whole time. Many fell on both sides; even I was forced to fight for survival myself when the new mercenaries grew hungrier for blood. I had heard of those that become berserk in melee, but never encountered such a thing until yesterday.

When the battle ended, I found myself safely within the walls of Hunadora. I had been struck down and lost consciousness, it appears. I am being cared for well; I will repay the favour when I can. Until then, all I can do is rest here and write this report, staving off sleep lest the visions of the battle return to haunt me once more.

I pray for the souls of those Lady Aderre lost yesterday and damn Malocchio and all who follow him now. This war will end, of that I am certain, but I will see it end with the runt's head on a pike for his betrayal of his own people. I never followed, nor liked the man, but if he wished me dead, he should have used (sic)... he should have tried it himself.

May 22nd

Some time has passed since my last update, written from my sickbed here within the fortified castle, which I am told was once home to the Vampire Duke Gundar. Also, since my last report, my health has increased steadily thanks to the expertise of the nursing staff available within the ancient castle.

Despite earlier worries about the state of events within the castle in my previous reports, the rebels have their current situation in hand it seems. Many tunnels in and out of the castle exist and trade continues almost unhampered by the Dukkar's forces outside the walls. Several more times they have attacked and been repelled, but each time they come closer to victory. This war has a high toll upon it that Malocchio seems eager to pay with the lives of others.

In my weeks of recovery, I have finally met the Lady Aderre. Though many have described her as an evil hag that casts misery upon others, I find almost the opposite to be true, in comparison to her son at least. Lady Aderre claims to be the true ruler of this land, though her son also claims that right himself. I feel this conflict will dictate who is the political leader here. If I may though, I pray for Lady Aderre's victory, for the land would be a darker place without the love her and her lover Matton share for one another.

Matton is another I am curious about; his scent is unlike that of a human, I fear him to be a werebeast of some type. If this is true and he is an evil beast, I may have to put him to death for the future mercy of others. However, as Gabrielle still holds a love for him, I hope this isn't so.

I would like to thank my readers who follow my reports on this struggle for their patience, and I truly hope to have another report on the way to you soon.

May 23rd

As I lay here, slowly recovering from my wounds, despite the magics given to me to speed the healing process. I have heard many things, including that Matton, lover of Lady Aderre, has been missing for the duration of the siege. His whereabouts are unknown to all I have spoken to as of yet.

May 24th

The Dukkar once again attempted to lay waste to the fortress of Hunadora. Once again, they have failed. After seeing the previous damage caused to the walls about the structure though, I suspect the Dukkar's success will not be far away now. May the Gods curse his soul and he fail miserably.

I hope to be up and about again within the next few days; then I will add my efforts to those of Lady Aderre and her followers.

May 26th

Once again, I have been visited by Lady Aderre and, for the first time, been able to wander the halls of Hunadora unaided. I have also succeeded in determining how the rebels have staved of starvation for so long, though for their safety I cannot divulge this information.

Lady Aderre has employed me among her nursing staff, as well as those of a more priestly persuasion on the battlefield. In her service, I will throw myself into the work put to me.

May 29th

To hamper the Dukkar's plans, a group of us granted the use of divine magicks are to be sent out beyond the walls and use our magicks to spoil the food supplies belonging to the Dukkar. As I am most familiar with the camp, I have been selected to advise the group. As I am not completely trusted as yet, I will be under observation as the mission goes ahead.

May 30th

Our sabotage against the Dukkar was partly successful, as we spoiled almost a third of the enemy's supply stores before we were detected and ran from the camp. Three of our original seven have either fallen under enemy swords or are being held captive. For their souls, I pray for the former.

May 31st

Recently, I have not been able to report as often as I would prefer; though I now hope the reports will become more frequent and reliable again. My days here will now be spent in the service of her Ladyship, Gabrielle Aderre, as a priest and herbalist to the sick and wounded. To Lady Aderre herself, I believe I am seen as more than what I have detailed, and the general proximity of her guards to myself reflects either greater

suspicion than I previously thought, or she plans something with me in mind. If she plans for me to take her son's head, though, I will be more than willing to accept.

June 9th

The entire castle and village within its boundary walls has been a place filled with the rush of life for the past week, as defenses are strengthened against the preparing forces outside the stronghold. For the last week, the Dukkar's mercenaries have been testing our fortifications, attempting to find a chink in our armour. Hopefully, there are none that we will overlook.

Outside the wall, from my perspective, the experience has been not unlike our own. It appears that both forces know that the end of this siege is rearing its bestial head for one final roar before sinking back into its own oblivion. If the end to this conflict is approaching, I hope it to be a crushing defeat for the Dukkar, though I pray for those who follow him: his end should be one of misery that lasts a lifetime.

June 11th

This morning I awoke to the sound of silence, not a thing could be heard on this side of the wall, nor the other. It seems like the world is filled with silence about me, though I know it isn't. The murmur of voices can be heard, as can some repairs being carried out on the perimeter wall. For all intents though, no preparations of war seem to be going on. The final battle I felt drawing close must have been a false intuition. Maybe now we will all live to return to our homes, and to some of us, our families.

June 14th

After all the preparations made on both sides of the wall, it seems they have all been pointless, as I look out the window and see the siege camp in furious activity. Tents are being pulled down and people leave in droves, as what may be the end of the conflict may now be happening, thankfully in a peaceful manner. Maybe now I can return home to Vallaki; so much must have happened. I sit at the window watching the Dukkar's private guard preparing for his departure; no doubt he plans his return to Castle Loupet, to the west.

June 16th

I now watch the final mercenaries leave the camp area that has been cleared of all signs of life, from the forest that once inhabited it. How much blood has been shed these past months? How long has it been since I left Vallaki to come here? We wait for the last of those lingering within the siege camp to leave; their instruments of war left half-built in the sodden mud. The mounds of soil that cover the dead stand as testament to those that lay beneath. Now, with the siege over, I am free to return home, once my injuries have recovered enough for a journey that great.

Despite the evidence, though, I feel this war is far from over.

June 19th

In the days following the Dukkar's departure and the exodus of his forces from the area, life in Hunadora seems to be quieting to the normal hustle of things. Lady Aderre has once more retreated from the public eye, into her private living quarters, most probably for solace after these months of tension. How a son can turn on his mother like this is horrifying, though with the stories I have heard of Lady Aderre, neither is she a force of good.

I now wander the halls of Hunadora and the village without the ancient structure; the smell of blood, burnt flesh and decay still permeates the village, though they will die over time. I am just sorry that the memories of what has happened here these past months will not fade like the stench that hangs in our nostrils.

The wounds I suffered before my taking into Hunadora are healing well now, I expect to be able to travel back to Vallaki, my home and friends within the next few weeks. When I return to them, I shall have stories that will make bards turn green with envy, and the same with hearty warriors who seek out and destroy evil in these dark lands. For now though, I rest and aid those where I can; only when I am ready, will I be able to return home.

Turning Point: The Hauntings.

June 26th

The nights at Hunadora have grown less restful of late; there are many rumours that the spirits of those that died here over the past months linger in the bloodied grounds beyond the wall. When I look out there, all I feel is sorrow; the once beautiful forests now lay much further away than they once did.

Stories of the restless spirits say that they can be heard moaning during the nights where the moons cycle matches that of the month they died. They approach the walls of Hunadora, hoping to enter and get what they failed to get in life, victory in the name of their lord.

If these stories are true, I do not know, for I have neither heard nor seen any sign of these cursed spirits. If I do though, there is only one thing I can do, and that is hope to lay them to rest. Until I find evidence one way or the other, I shall pray that their souls have crossed over to wherever they go when we die, for not even I am certain of that anymore.

*"... there are many
rumours that the spirits
of those that died here
over the past months
linger in the bloodied
grounds beyond the
wall..."*

June 29th

As I started to investigate the reports of the restless dead outside the walls of Hunadora, I was surprised to discover a face I never thought I'd see again in the area. Johan Smelvig had recently arrived at Hunadora, only a few days after the Dukkar's

forces retreated from the area. It seems he has been investigating several cases of disappearances around the Zeidenburg area since we parted several months ago. Though he didn't go into too many details, with the news I gave him of the rumours I had heard, he immediately got himself mentally prepared for an investigation that may lead to undead in the area.

We started our investigation that night. The gates to Hunadora remain locked for the entire night, but we felt it better to watch the areas outside from atop the wall itself. Being outside and among the undead, if there are any, is not a prospect I would wish to be in, even in company of others. The night was uneventful, and we planned to return the next evening to watch over the following night's proceedings.

As the sun set the following evening, we took up our posts again on the wall, again nothing seemed out of the ordinary until an hour or so before dawn. We were both at the point of sleep when a noise outside the wall brought us back to full alertness. It was then that we saw a scurrying character cross between the remains of two half constructed siege engines. The creature was too far away to make out any details in that light, but we knew now that there was something out there and we would spend the following night outside the gate, with several of Lady Aderre's guards, if she gave us the permission to have them.

After regaining our strength by sleeping half the day, Johan and I presented Lady Aderre with our findings. She seemed to take almost as much interest in the matter as we did. Agreeably, the lady loaned us the use of five of her guards and that evening, as the sun set over the forest, we made our way out and made camp under one of the siege engines abandoned by the Dukkar and his forces. We took shifts in keeping watch, two always with their eyes open to our surroundings. I was asleep when the sighting came. Waking as quickly as I could, we followed the dark figure to a large pit hidden by remnants of the Dukkar's camp. Within, we found a pack of flesh-eating creatures feasting on the dead. Johan identified them as ghouls and warned us of their powers. Without delay, we decided to set upon them.

We tore down into the pit and cut into the horrid creatures within. I myself cast a spell as the other ran down to face the surprised beasts. A blade of bright flame in my hand, I drove into one of the creatures trying to escape, cutting it down with the magical fire. The battle was too furious for me to recollect properly, but I know that all of the ghastly monsters were destroyed, though not without a price. Two of the guards lent to us were killed during the battle, and Johan almost lost an arm when one of them latched its terrible jaws on him. I did the best I could to stabilise him at the time, but there was nothing I could do for those already beyond my reach.

We reported the results of our hunt to Lady Aderre, and she has now stepped up the watch on the wall in case of other similar creatures in the area. For their sakes, our sakes, and those of the dead that rest within eyesight, I hope there aren't.

July 3rd

In the past several days, the guarding forces of Hunadora have spotted no less than five bands of Ghouls and other carrion beasts in the local area. Naturally, local forces have been dispatched to take care of the problem that is forming in the area.

July 6th

Many of Castle Hunadora's occupants were awoken last night to the sounds of battle on the muddy fields outside the walls. Though these ghostly sounds were not heard outside the castle itself, it is cause for worry that the souls of those that died in battle here are not resting soundly. Johan and I plan to take watch from the castle itself tonight; Lady Aderre has given permission for us to do so until the matter is closed.

July 11th

Myself and Johan have spent every night since my last report taking turns in watching out for the phantom battles outside the town wall. Until the night before last, we were unsuccessful.

It appears that several dozen spirits take to the field on random nights (judging from evidence gained from servants living within the castle itself) and battle one another as undead. From reading and investigating previous reports on such occurrences, we've determined that these spirits are most probably phantoms, rather than the actual souls of the restless dead - nothing more than echoes of these people's final moments.

"Two of the guards sent to us were killed during the battle, and Johan almost lost an arm when one of them latched its terrible jaws on him."

Johan and I spent the day collecting what we need for an exorcism to take place tomorrow night.

July 12th

I write this short report before leaving for the exorcism outside the town walls. The phantoms have risen again this night in lower amounts; also, their existence appears to become more fleeting with each visitation to this plane. Whatever the chances of their eventual and permanent disappearance, they must be dealt with, even if many regard them as harmless in their studies.

July 13th

The exorcism is complete and the phantoms have been drawn back to their eternal slumber. No, this assumption is too early, we will be required to wait some time yet before we will know if we were truly successful or not.

Most of the repairs to the walls and structures of Hunadora are now nearing completion, and most of my wounds healing faster than earlier expected. Johan plans to leave for Necropolis as soon as this investigation is finished, after he heard reports of walking dead growing steadily in that land. Once I have healed completely and the repairs are finished, I will return to Vallaki and to my friends there.

July 20th

I write now in the light of flames that still burn in the village about the castle. The latter being the only complete structure still standing within the confines of the town walls. Despite the sun climbing in the west, through the window beside me, the difference is hard to tell amongst the smell, smoke, and bright flames. Though the

fighting is over, its echoes still fill these halls and the bloody grounds about them. In my soul, I know Hunadora has become a cursed place and I hope never to visit it again, nor the lands about it called Invidia.

It seems that Hunadora was not as well protected as Lady Aderre first presumed, nor was the Dukkar's retreat as honest as we all expected. Last night, a terrible force led by the Dukkar stormed the castle through several of the hidden passages below it. How they discovered them is not known, nor may it ever be.

The leading forces of Malocchio Aderre cut through the guard in the basements with ease, a swath of blood paved their way further into the village and castle alike. Throughout the village, people gathered weapons as the alarm was sounded. At the time, Johan and myself were atop the walls spying out across the lands, hoping that the phantoms would not raise this night, as they hadn't since the exorcism.

We first caught wind of the attack when the first screams fell upon our ears from the streets below. The militia patrolling the narrow streets and alleys were killed quickly

*"... as much as I loath
needless bloodshed, I hate
cowardice and treachery even
greater..."*

and without mercy. Luckily, Johan and I always retain our weapons about our persons, otherwise we too may have fallen beneath enemy blades. We battled our way to the castle, recognizing the emblems upon the armour of our attackers. It was obvious that Lady Aderre was their main target; they were just storming the village for further sport. Luckily

for the villagers, the militia were well armed as well as trained and held their own once the battle was brought into their own territory. The castle itself was carnage bathed in blood and spread out on a canvas for all to see... I promise to finish this report later, I am being called to aid Lady Aderre once more...

... Johan and I separated within the corridors of the castle, both of us with the same goal. Thankfully, with Johan taking his own path, I was free to practice my magickal arts freely without risk of harming him in the process. As much as I loathe needless bloodshed, I hate cowardice and treachery even greater. That was what had happened in the attack and it caused me to burn with inhuman fury for those who were attacking us.

Once I reached Gabrielle's side, I was too late, however: the mercenaries had overpowered her and had tortured her severely in a very short time. They gloated that it was Malocchio himself that had dealt the blow that would finish her. Though Gabrielle lay still on the cold stone, her blood seeping out into a crimson pool, I knew she still lived. Hatred and fury took me once more and I struck out at those who had hurt the woman so terribly. Needless to say, I am still not sure how I defeated them all alone, but when my senses returned to me, it was Johan I saw, blocking my blade from harming him also.

I spent much of the night steadyng Lady Aderre's condition, though it still slips now. She was on the brink of death when my healing magicks touched her and if I had been a moment later, she would have been too far gone for my skills, humble as they may be. For now and for the foreseeable future, I have to remain in Hunadora, though I wish to be elsewhere now. I must attend to Lady Aderre's many wounds and the poisons that stop her from healing from my magicks properly. The herbalists in the village work on a cure for the latter whilst I work slowly on healing the many wounds the woman received through more conventional means...

On a final note, Johan left this morning; having the worst of his wounds healed by local priests, he packed his equipment and left. He still plans to head to Necropolis, I am certain of that. When all this is done, I may seek him out there before returning home to Vallaki. I want to know why he was so set on leaving here, without telling me why his face was such a picture of horror when I awoke to find myself fighting him.

Credits

Thanks to Eddy B. for:

- a) keeping Midway Haven alive with this awesome narrative;
- b) waiting patiently for this humble compilation to come out, even if it was three or four weeks late. 😊

THE LOST WICCAN

Megan Llewellyn

7th level Maledictive Werewolf

Gypsy/Witch, Lawful Good (Chaotic Evil)

Armour Class	8 (6)
Movement	12 (15)
Level/Hd	7d6
Hit points	30
Thac0	17 (14)
No. Attacks	1
Dmg per attack	By Weapon (2d4)
Special attacks	Lycanthropy, Spells, Knife Fighting
Special defences	+1 magical weapon or silver to hit, Spells
Special Vulnerabilities	Silver, Aconite (Wolfsbane)
Magic resistance	Standard
Morale	Champion (15)
Str	11 (19)
Dex	16 (16)
Con	14
Int	17
Wis	16
Cha	17 (7 with scarring visible)

Scores in parenthesis relate to Megan in her Manbeast form.

Spells (6/4/2)

Level 1 Reveal the Weave*, Luck*, Cure Light Wounds, Entangle, Faerie Fire, Invisibility to Animals, Invisibility to Undead, Pass Without Trace, Protection From Evil, Remove Fear, Animal Friendship, Light.

Level 2 Arcane Sight*, Love Charm*, Master Coven Magic*, Aid, Detect Charm, Flame Blade, Goodberry, Hold Person,

Silence 15' Radius, Speak With Animals.

Level 3 Lethe*, Animate Dead, Speak With Dead, Cure Blindness & Deafness, Dispel Magic, Tree, Water Breathing, Summon Insects.

*These spells are taken from Van Richten's Guide to Witches as found in Van Richten's Monster Hunters Compendium Volume 3.

BIOGRAPHY

Above and beyond what is seen by the average man, there is far more that isn't. Beneath the skin of the most harmless person, who only builds, there is a beast screaming to get out. Likewise, within the beast is a creature able to bring great good to others. Between these two is the Witch. Long thought to be good by some and evil by others, they stand on neutral ground between the light and darkness; they are true neutrality.

APPEARANCE & PERSONALITY

Megan is a small person when one first sees her, standing shy of five feet and with a body that looks far more welcome on a lithe elf than a human due to its size and build. This frail form hides the truth of her actual power and ability. Beyond the physical aspect of her body, her face is one of charm and welcome. Her deep hazel eyes and long, thick waves of jet hair that race over her shoulders and back, blowing freely in any breeze, make her appear more dark and suspicious than she actually is. Also, when she speaks, her voice comes out like the song of an angel, always positive in tone and ready to comfort others in their need.

Megan dresses in a rather offbeat way; she wears a simple linen gown, and under it an equally light vest and loose pants. These are there to hide the large pale scars that cover more than half her body. Over the gown, though, her tastes in fashion speak for themselves. She wears a robe unlike any other - the vibrant knots and curls of red, green and white are neatly woven into a pattern that resembles those knitted by the elves of Necropolis, deep in the Mountains of Misery and the Mistlands. Her similarity to them goes further, though, as she

speaks in an accent very much like theirs and can speak their language with ease. She also speaks all forms of Balok and bastardised smatterings of other languages. Many of these are insults that she tends to taunt her opponents with.

Megan is also at home among others, loving to jest and sing with friends with over a mug of warm ale on cold nights.

BACKGROUND

Wales of the 16th century was not a happy place to be by any means if you did not conform to the Christian religion. Though much of the “civilised” world at this time had mostly settled into the new religion of Christianity, there were still pockets that held to the older beliefs. Many people in parts of Britain still held these beliefs strongly; many of these held them secretly, behind closed doors and in the shadows, where none could see or find them. Yet, every now and then, there would be the screams of another poor soul being dragged off into the pitch night beyond the door.

It was during one of these screams that Megan came into the world she grew up in. Though the screams of her mothers’ long labour would have been enough, the local magistrates had swept down upon the town to claim “The Witches” in the name of Christ to be held for trial in the morrow. Though they were called trials, they were unfair and none ever survived them. Being drowned or hung was not a nice thought, especially if you are being born unto it. Megan’s family were not arrested that night, instead they stuck to the darkness of the forest where Megan spent her first few hours of life, and whilst she slept that morning, the trials were held and many good people were needlessly put to death. Megan’s family had good need to hide however; unlike those being cast down through so called Divine Justice, Megan’s family were true Witches. They healed and cared for the community and earned the respect, not fear, of their friends and neighbours, as had been the way for many centuries. For if a Witch lived next door to you, you were blessed indeed. Much of those old beliefs were passing into the growing darkness of the east now. Christianity swept westwards like a long night that would

never lift, and the old religion could not and would not fight it.

As the years passed and Megan grew into a small child, the Burning Times continued, though none were ever actually burned in Wales, England, or Ireland. There were stories from the Highlands in the north, and from across the sea in the east. Dread tales of men, women, and children lashed to within an inch of their lives before being tied to large wooden stakes atop a pyre and burned to death. Their screams filled the day and night as they slowly perished.

Still, the Witches did not worry about the material world or their own lives; theirs were lives of the purest quest, for divinity among those who lived and Megan was no exception. She grew quickly into the religion but, in the tradition, was not forced into it. Freedoms of choice and free will were as important to these people as life itself. Megan was exceptional in her rate of learning and also learned all the languages of Britain before the end of her twelfth year. This was unusual to do, but as the family travelled more and more, they got to see much of the four lands that made up Britain.

Still the family travelled and came to be known as Gypsies, though they were not Romani, they accepted anything that would take attention away from their Craft. They also used this ruse to pass amulets of protection and blessing off to those they passed, and settled in villages and small towns long enough to purchase food and other necessary commodities. Still, they always travelled north. Though they did not go directly north and covered almost every piece of dirt on the British mainland, they still went north. They arrived in the Highlands as Megan grew into an adult. Behind them was a land of growing darkness and dread, before them was pure anarchy and evil. The Church has sanctioned the immediate death of all those who failed to confess their sins, tell of the other Witches with which they were in league, and cast off their old lives to welcome Christ into their hearts. Though many did confess and welcome Christ, they secretly carried on the old ways, behind the locked door of their own homes. Those who did not accept the new faith were imprisoned, beaten and burned among the other heathens that worked in league with Lucifer. (Authors Note – This was in the eyes of

the Christian church. In truth, Lucifer has never been part of Witchcraft and perhaps didn't exist until he was created by a small group of Catholics in Cornwall in the 12th century AD). For all those who stood in the divine path of God without lowering their head in shame were all to be working against him (though God is sexless in true Christian fashion) and conspiring with the Devil.

It was in this cold and desolate country that Megan spent the final few years of her life in this world. Like many others of thousands, her family and herself were eventually caught and taken off to the magistrate. Before him, they confessed nothing and, unified with their own harmony and inner peace, they welcomed the physical death to come. For with that they would once again return to the open arms of Cernunoss and Kerridwen and pass their days until it once again came time for them to live again in this material realm.

The magistrate also had plans for this large coven that he had managed to bring under God's justice. He tortured them for some time; those nearing death were burned or hung whilst the screams of the others filled their ears as they died. Megan lost her eyes, tongue, fingers and other parts of her anatomy during the weeks of pain that passed. Never before had any of them witnessed nor heard of such cruelty, and if any of them could have wept then, they would. Eventually, when it became obvious that none of them would confess, the stakes and pyres were readied and the family was lashed to them. As the heat grew, Megan prayed to her Goddess and God to welcome her sooner and let her die now before the pain of the flames eating away at her flesh took her into the madness she had fought these weeks. This welcomed end did not come; as the heat raked her feet and legs, she felt her skin blister and melt below the ferocious heat set against her, and what clothing remained on her ignited, letting the flames climb to the remaining hair that adorned her crown.

Still, amongst the heat and pain, she prayed for a quick release, that one would take pity on her and end her misery. Still none came. Then, as the darkness opened around her and she felt reality drift away as she entered the Tyr Na Ogg (Land of the Young), the Dark Powers opened their gates and took her into their fold.

Though Megan was neither evil nor cruel in any way, the Dark Powers seem to prefer a balance between those of light and those of darkness in the world they govern from beyond imagination. When Megan awoke, she found that she could see. Though all she could see were the mists about her, she found this a blessing in itself.

Who knows how long she remained in the mists, but for all the time she did, never did she grow hungry or tired, nor did she age. As time went on, she felt more of herself return. Her tongue was next, followed by her fingers, though the burns on her head, back and legs receded though scars remained. Her hair grew back as it had before, hanging in long waves of black that swayed in breezes and shimmered in light. Then, after a time she cannot recollect, the mists parted.

About her was a land not unlike her own. Though the geography was different, the truths to it were the of same principle. She also discovered that no matter how hard she tried, she could not understand anything another person would say to her. She tried to learn the unusual tongue they spoke but failed at each attempt. For the first time in her life, Megan was alone and she did not like this loneliness. She was alienated from the entire world about her, not just by her country of origin and the loss of those she loved, but also by language.

As she travelled the land about her, she found a world filled with many lands, peoples and languages. Some folk were small, whilst others were as tall as her. Some were dark in skin whilst others were light. Though she could never communicate with them on a verbal level, body language was a skill she developed to an art form. Finally, she found some folk she could converse with, at least to the level of understanding each other. She learned the name of the world she now lived, the names of the lands within that world known to the Elves of Necropolis, and many other things. Under their guiding hand, she learned Balok, as she planned to travel south. Megan learned a great deal from the Elves and in return taught them some of her ways. Her skills with herbs were different to their own, so they marveled over the simplicity with which she worked and the perfection of the results.

So, Megan began to understand the world about her. The cultures and customs of the people fascinated her and she strived to learn other tongues native to the many regions of this land. However, she was impatient and didn't wait to learn entire languages, she learned what she needed and moved on, always heading south.

Soon enough, she found herself in the Balinok Mountains and as she went, her ears were filled with the screams of those suffering. She hurried as she followed these screams of pain and terror, so familiar to her, and found a scene of carnage. A pack of terrible beasts were preying upon a group of traveler. Though stricken with panic and terror from the screams so similar to hers, Megan found herself uttering words she had never used, though knew. She was uttering an incantation for a form of magick not cast by witches. This magick was for battle and war, not the things that Witches sought in life. But as she continued, a flame appeared before her and she reached for it beyond her will. As she touched it, the flame neither felt hot nor did it harm her, instead it continued to grow into a long shard not unlike a blade. With this in hand, she strode down, heart filled with horror, among the beasts. A few fell to the flame in her hands and others touched by it yelped in agony and screamed as it seared their flesh. Soon the beasts were fleeing or dead at her feet and the flame died in her hand.

On this day, Megan began to discover the terrible aspects to life in this world, the darkness and evil were everywhere to be seen once she opened her eyes to it. She decided that even if she were one person, that one can still do some good, if only a little.

Eventually, she found herself hired by a Meistersinger of Kartakass to remove a small problem he had been having with wolves. Being adept with animals, Megan (now nicknamed The Lost Wiccan, though not many in this world really knew what "Wiccan" meant) went out to remove them from the local area. What she found was something far more terrible: Werewolves. And all she had to protect her were her few spells and a silver knife she kept for cutting herbs.

When her spells were gone, the beasts were still at her. What had smote other foes

seemed to have little or no effect on these beasts. Cautiously, she drew her knife and thrust it out against one of them as it leaped for her. The beast seemed to scream in an almost human tone as the blade slipped into its chest and the pair collapsed to the ground. As she rose, she looked at the creature to find it gone, replaced by a small child. Feeling the pity that grew in her heart for the poor creature, she looked back at the other beasts with redoubled resolve and entered the fray...

When she stumbled into Vallaki several weeks later, Megan was no longer the human she once was. Her body was at war with the infection the Werewolves had passed onto her with their many claws and teeth, which had bitten into her flesh. Though her magicks had healed the cuts and bites upon her, she was weak from the illness invading her and needed rest. She took up residence in a small cottage just outside the village itself and began to recover her lost strength. However, each night as she slept, the same nightmare brought her screaming to consciousness. In her dream she was one of the beasts she had fought and she was the one with the teeth and claws, rending the flesh of the innocent. One night, when she awoke and stepped out into the moonlight to cool in the night air, the waxing crescent hung in the sky and she knew exactly what she had become...

CURRENT SKETCH

Today, Megan, despite her warm exterior is a very lonely person. Having watched the deaths of all that she had ever loved has left deep emotional scarring upon her. Though she enjoys the company of others, she does so only to remind herself of her loneliness in the Demiplane of Dread. She often ponders over why the Goddess Kerridwen took her to this world so steeped in vile evil. The place reeks, constantly seeming as if it is trying to seep into the very pores of her skin.

Because of the past and current standing of her life, Megan has devoted herself to what she used to be - a helper of others. Though she recently became infected with Lycanthropy, she has developed an herbal remedy that is able to help contain the beast within when it screams to be released. Even with her most careful

precautions, however, the wolf within has still escaped on nights when the moon is quarter-full in its waxing stage in the night sky. Other than the moon, she has discovered that the common Snowdrop has the same effect; whilst she searches into why this is, she is careful in the presence of nature, despite it being a great part of her religion.

Megan seems set to stay in Vallaki for some time now, journeying only small distances in her fight against darkness. Though this stops her from going on hunts that would lead her into other lands, it also helps her aid those whom she knows most and to contain the beast within when she can lock it away for the night.

COMBAT

Whilst Megan prefers to avoid fighting too close to her opponents, she is quite adept if forced into such situations. Spells such as Flame Blade, Hold Person, Silence 15' Radius, Dispel Magic and others come in useful when they are needed in this predicament. Also, even without the use of her spells, she is proficient in the use of all knives, daggers, and small weapons such as a sling and blowgun. If she does use her silver lined dagger in melee, she also gains the Gypsy benefit of Knife Fighting. This ability bestows a +1 attack and +2 damage bonuses to all melee attacks with this weapon and all other daggers and knives. Also, Megan has intently studied the Flame Blade spell and may cast the spell to produce a dagger-sized blade; this allows her to gain the +1 attack bonus with the weapon but not the bonus for additional damage.

As a Witch, Megan also has been granted several abilities that are tied to this power. Though the Dark Powers, Cernunoss and Kerridwen now grant her powers, though they seem to be struggling over what power she should be granted. She is unable to detect other witches or those with the potential to become one. This was not one of her powers on her true home and no power has seen it fit to grant it to her on this one. Like others, she is linked to the Weave, however, and she has been granted the ability to cast spells as a Gypsy in addition to those she gains from the Weave. These spells are cast and memorized in the same way, the difference being the number of spells she is now

entitled to memorize at a time. Also, her spell casting has been affected in another way due to the bickering among those trying to control her abilities. This manifests in the potency of the magic she produces.

Each time Megan attempts to cast a spell, she is forced to make an intelligence check with a -5 penalty. If this check is passed, that spell is cast as normal. If the check is failed, then the following table should be consulted to see how the spell is affected.

D20	Effect
1	the spell does not take effect
2	the spell comes into effect as if cast by a 1 st level caster
3	the spell comes into effect as if cast at 3 caster levels lower
4	the spell comes into effect as if cast at 2 caster levels lower
5	the spell comes into effect as if cast at 1 caster level lower
6-7	the spells' duration is reduced to instantaneous
8-9	the spells' duration is 50% of normal
10	the spells' duration is 75% of normal
12	the spells' duration is 125% of normal
12-13	the spells' duration is 150% of normal
14-15	the spells' duration is 200% of normal
16	the spell comes into effect as if cast at 1 caster level higher
17	the spell comes into effect as if cast at 2 caster levels higher
18	the spell comes into effect as if cast at 3 caster levels higher
19	the spell comes into effect as if cast by a 14 th level caster
20	the spell takes on an additional effect*

*Roll on the Additional Power Table below

D8	Additional Power
1	if used to attack, the spell will inflict double the normal effect or damage
2	the caster has been infused with Weave energy and thus the spell works as

	normal, however, a second spell of the DM's choice is also activated
3	the spell attracts a lot of negative energy that flows from the caster into the target; this target is forced to make a saving throw vs. Death Magic or lose a level of Life Energy (this affects all targets, even the caster or her allies if they are the target)
4	if the spell has a more powerful version (i.e. Continual Light is an empowered Light spell) then the next more powerful variant is cast
5	the spell is cast, as well as next lower powered version (i.e. Cure Serious Wounds has Cure Light Wounds below it in power)
6	the caster is infused with Dark Planar Energy, this forces her to make a Powers Check (1% + double spell level) or have her alignment slip one step towards Evil
7	The Dark Powers' gain power over the Goddess and God for a moment and the caster is granted an ability and weakness like that of a failed Power Check (though not shifted towards being a domain lord)
8	The Goddess or God gain power for a moment and the spell cast has triple the effect on those who are Evil aligned

This altered spell ability makes Megan hard to predict in battle and also to play, though given a little preparation; she can become a very fun character to play.

Megan is also infected with Lycanthropy and is hence an Infected Werewolf. She despises this fact and sees it as a constant thorn in her side that she longs to purge from herself.

Other than her primary human form, the presence of a waxing crescent moon, a large pyre for burning, or a snowdrop flower is enough to make her lose control over her lupine side and take on the form of a wolfman hybrid. The transformation to this form takes an entire round to complete and forces Horror checks upon those who look upon it unless they roleplay sufficiently. If she has imbibed the remedy that she always strives to complete, this

transformation is delayed by d3+2 hours and will then take place immediately, regardless of what action Megan is taking or where she is. During this delay in the transformation, she does all she can to reach a safe and unpopulated area so she can take on hybrid form and minimize the risk of injury or death to innocent people.

Other than delaying her transformation, this herbal remedy does carry another side effect. It causes her to be physically ill and take on the symptoms of stomach flu for the next d3x3 days. During this period, she may not cast spells and should maintain proper bed rest. If this bed rest is disturbed for more than an hour per day or if she carries out any strenuous activity, then that day's rest is lost and another day is added in extension to those that the illness remains.

This illness also inflicts a -3 or 15% penalty to all checks, dice rolls and other effects she has to make in that duration and she may not memorize nor cast spells.

When Megan takes on her hybrid, wolfman form, she grows to about 7 feet in height and remains humanoid, with a wolf's head and fur cascading over her form. She gains a strength score of 19 and a dexterity of 16 (though this score remains unchanged) and regenerates d6x10% of all hit points lost since the transformation was due to take place. When she reverts to her human form, this regeneration takes place once more, unless she has been reduced to -10 or less hit points, in which case she is dead.

Megan's hands take on the form of claws in her wolfman form and inflict 2d4 damage per blow in melee. The suppleness of these claws allows her to cast spells with somatic components and to wield weapons as well as she normally can. If she does opt to do the latter (20% chance), then she wields them with a +7 damage bonus from her high strength score.

Though her head is misshapen, her vocal chords remain intact, allowing her to cast any spells she may have memorized with verbal components. However, they are altered somewhat and this gives each spell she casts needing this component a 30% chance of failure with the addition of another 1% per spell level. All of her spells are altered by the regular rules

enforced by the conflict between her deities and the Dark Powers' as noted above.

Finally, she is always suffers the effects of Bloodlust when she takes on her wolfman form; this makes her an almost mindless beast. She regains her mentality once she has fed on at least 15lb of raw flesh, normally an innocent forest or mountain creature.

Other than in her wolfman form, Megan tends to avoid eating meat, ingesting only 10lb of it a week. She tends to ingest all of this in one meal in the secrecy of her own lodgings as she finds the thought of consuming raw meat a revolting thing.

Also, other than the effects, abilities and weaknesses mentioned above, Megan is immune to all mundane weapons that strike her, causing them to bounce off her form harmlessly. The only weapons that may inflict damage upon her are those containing silver or are enchanted in some manner. Aconite (Wolfsbane) is poisonous to her, even though it is an ingredient to the remedy she produces for herself. Having it enter her blood supply in its undiluted form will force her to make a saving throw vs. Petrify or she will die in agony. If this herb is added to anything she is to ingest, she has a 75% chance of detecting it and avoiding all of the contaminated foods, drinks and so on. Any mundane weapon coated with this herb will not inflict harm upon her physically but will still enforce the saving throw upon her to avoid instant death.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- ◆ Megan is desperately in search of a rare and powerful herb to complete a new remedy to fight of the ever more hungry beast within her. She finally hears of it growing within the confines of Tepest. Though she is unable to make a journey of that length on her own, she is more than willing to hire others to retrieve it for her. The herb must be delivered alive and well cared for due to its fragility. However, there have been disappearances about the area in which the herb grows, possibly the work of Hags, Fey or Goblins.

- ◆ Megan has been fighting a hard and downward battle against a spirit residing in the forests about Vallaki. With no others to aid her, she enters a final battle with the spirit and is struck down, left for dead. When the heroes find her, she is close to death and does not regain consciousness for some time; even when she does, she seems to have little memory of the past. Those in Vallaki know her and she pleads to the heroes to help her restore her lost memory. Together they must follow the recent events in Megan's life; only when the spirit is defeated will her memories be freed from their prison within the spirit's form. Also, if Megan has not had her memories restored and she changes into her hybrid form, she is forced to make a Madness check upon becoming human again.
- ◆ Rumours of a wolfman attacking locals and farmers about Vallaki have been growing for some time. Naturally, Megan suspects it to be herself, somehow escaping the silver lined cage in her cellar. She hires the heroes to look over her on the nights of the next waxing crescent. Though she does not change, the killings carry on in the area. Megan has no choice but to trust those who now know her secret as they work together in tracking down and destroying the Lycanthrope responsible.
- ◆ The wolf beast within Megan is now beyond the control of her remedies, no matter how powerfully or potently she prepares them. It has also been able to escape its cage and she finds herself waking in the forests and Balinoks. She now has no choice but to find a cure for her Lycanthropy at any cost. As she has herself locked away in a local sanitarium, Megan hires a powerful group of heroes to seek this cure. Only if the Werewolf responsible for her affliction is destroyed can she be released from the dreadful curse. A scar from a wound that Megan inflicted upon him can identify the beast and, unfortunately, the Werewolf is a highly respected Meistersinger in one of the villages of Kartakass. Can this Werewolf be

revealed and destroyed before Megan forever loses her soul to darkness?

- ◆ Through her many visits to the Malodorous Goat Inn and the conversations she has had there with many travellers passing through. Megan has heard stories of a powerful magical artifact or item that will stabilize her magical abilities. Though Megan is not willing to travel alone, the heroes just happen to arrive at the inn as she starts asking for the help of others in this quest. There is one catch that Megan was never told though. The item is a creation of Hazlik himself, the Darklord of Hazlan, and he isn't willing to part with this treasure so easily - not unless the heroes and Megan perform him a small service or five. They are tasked with recovering five amulets that were stolen from him by highly skilled thieves, which are now scattered across the Core. Of course, Hazlik is most likely to betray the heroes and Megan once their work is done, but the possibilities for this mini-campaign can be amazing.
- ◆ After meeting Megan in the past, the heroes once more return to Vallaki to hear the worst of their old friend, that she went into the woods several months ago and disappeared, now feared dead. As the heroes stay in the village, they share the same dreams of Megan asking their aid. Eventually, Megan's spirit appears before them, her body has been stolen from her and she begs them to recover it and the phylactery that now imprisons her soul. If the two are brought together, she will be restored to life. However, the phylactery is in a location unknown to her; all she knows is that no light penetrates its resting-place. Also, her body is now host to a sorcerous witch that seeks to create great evil in the guise of Megan herself. This could form into a campaign of its own, with many visions of apparitions of Megan as she discovers more of her prison and slowly becomes more trapped by it, making the visions weaker and shorter. It may also involve further plots as the heroes uncover clues to those who may know the location of the sorcerous witch.

The eventual showdown should keep plenty of drama and tension as the heroes race against time while Megan begins to fade completely into the Astral Plane, forever unable to regain her body.