

Jennifer's second Ravenloft Campaign

Introduction

In 2006 (so long ago) I started a new Ravenloft campaign, my second serious campaign in this setting. The campaign is still running and we have gamed together for a very long time. Unfortunately I don't have as much time for this campaign as I would like. My son was born in January 2007, I started working full-time in October 2007 and my daughter was born in August 2009. This all eats into my spare time, so regrettably I can't put as much time into this campaign as I did in the previous one. So for this campaign I opted to use more published adventures and information about NPC's in the worlds of Ravenloft, in the hope that this would save me some time.

This is a second edition campaign, mainly because I am too lazy and cheap to invest time and money in learning and buying the rules for the 3rd ed., 3.5th ed. or the 4th ed. (it is true what they say about the Dutch).

This campaign is set in 735 BC and further. I wanted to experiment with running the players through the adventures leading up to the Grand Conjunction. I had two reasons for this, I liked to get to know some more about the early history of Ravenloft and I also heard many good things of these adventures on the Fraternity site.

The campaign starts in Martira Bay in Darkon. This is to contrast it with my earlier campaign, which started in the backwater of Potter's Field in Mordent. Darkon is a much larger domain, a grand player in the political scheme of things and Martira Bay is a large, modern city with many peoples from different backgrounds. The memory-problems of Darkon gave me some trouble, but I think I managed to work around them.

Characters

Not all the players had extensive experience with Ravenloft, so I took some time to explain the nature of the setting to them and encouraged them to write an extensive background for their character. I even used the "Champions of the Mists" to give them an extra kit next to their character class.

Herman Superior – played by Daniël

Herman Superior (30) is a wild-mage/pistoleer. He is a son of the middle-class Superior family with delusions of his own coolness. He would like to be a powerful mage, but lacks the discipline for the hard study this requires. He has made a career of cutting corners by becoming a wild-mage. This allows him to cast powerful spells, but with unpredictable results. Since he wants to protect himself if one of these results comes back to bite him, he has also invested some of his money in his two guns, he named them Rachel and Vera.

Herman's delusions of coolness make him think he is quite a ladies' man and he spends a lot of money on women of negotiable affection. He likes to hang with a rough crowd and goes drinking in the seedier bars of Martira Bay, much to the grief and worry of his parents. They wonder if he will ever grow up to become a responsible pater familias.

I interpreted Darkon as a sort of Roman Empire gone horribly wrong. This would explain the different peoples living in Darkon and the arrogance and belief in their own superiority by the Darkonese. This is why natives from Darkon have Latin-sounding names. I also scoured the boards of the Fraternity for a better Wild Surge Table, since I felt that the original Wild Surge Table was too light-hearted for the Ravenloft Setting.

Clemens Superior – played by Sander

Clemens Superior (25) is a Paladin/ Monster Hunter. He is the cousin of Herman Superior, their fathers were brothers. As Herman is the black sheep of the family, Clemens is supposed to keep an eye on him. Clemens is a Paladin in service of the Eternal Order. At this point in time the Eternal Order is not yet the organization of powerful crowd control it would be in later years, although those first are to be seen for the careful observer. For several reasons Clemens is not a very careful observer.

Clemens is attracted to the obsession of the Eternal Order with the dead and the proper rites surrounding the burial and remembrance of the dead. As a paladin he helps out the priests of his local church with those tasks the priests cannot handle themselves. Usually these are more martial in nature.

Secret information – Sander was not aware of this.

Clemens Superior is actually an immigrant into Darkon. Originally he came from Har'akir as a paladin in the worship of Osiris. His real name is Oded Fay¹. He came into Darkon hot on the heels of a man who robbed some graves in Har'Akir. As this was a very severe crime, he was followed by the mentor of Oded and Oded himself. In Martira Bay the thief managed to kill the mentor, wound Oded and get away.

In due time Oded fell in with the Superior family, was adopted as a son and heir and forgot all about where he really came from. His new relatives, including Herman, of course still remembered the adoption ceremony, but this is not something that is brought up every day (people don't KEEP greeting each other with "hello, adopted cousin"). He became a paladin for the Eternal Order, because the worship of Osiris also had a lot to do with the burial of the dead and the proper procedures surrounding the dead.

Incidentally, in the Roman Empire it was quite normal to adopt a young man as a son into a family, if that family lacked sons/ heirs.

Angus of Tepest – played by Joost

Angus of Tepest (22) is a psionist/coalburner. He was born and raised in Tepest and he inherited the psionic powers of his mother. In due time he joined the guild of coal burners in Tepest. In reality this is a secret society of psionists who cultivate their powers under the guise of guild meetings.

The powers of his mother caused her to be burned as a witch. Angus and his father left Tepest, afraid that the hysterical mob would go after them as well in due time. After some travels they ended up in Darkon. Due to the loss of his wife and the hardships of life on the road, Angus' father soon died as well.

Angus made his way to Martira Bay and managed to garner some income with his coal burning skills. He is still looking for other members of his guild, to start training his mental powers again.

Secret information

Angus has been in Darkon for about a month now. Soon he too will start to forget where he came from.

¹ [named after the actor from the Mummy](#)

Floortje – Played by Rian

Floortje (12) is a Thief/ Ghostwatcher. She is a young girl and an orphan. She is taken in by the Sisters of the Eternal Order (at this point in time they still perform charitable works). The Sisters take care of several orphans and street children. They see to it that these children are fed and clothed and in time learn a job.

Floortje turned out to be a particular wild street urchin and the Sisters had some trouble with keeping her in check. Recently they have made her a squire to Clemens Superior, who is a paladin of the Eternal Order. Perhaps he will be able to direct her energies towards a more suitable goal.

Secret information

Floortje is actually Lady Velouria of Ravenstein and Avezaath², a low-ranking noble with a small estate. Her parents were brutally murdered by her ambitious uncle and aunt. They think Velouria is dead as well and that they can now rule the estate in peace. Velouria got away in the attack and made her way to nearby Martira Bay. In Martira Bay the trauma of the attack and the loss of her parents caused her to forget much of her past and fall in with the street urchins of Martira Bay. In time she was taken in by the Sisters.

Because she is a ghostwatcher, she still sees the ghosts of her father and mother around her. They are watching her and trying to keep her safe. She is reluctant to put them to rest, since that would mean missing their company.

² These are the names of actual towns in the Netherlands.

Chapter 1: Introductions

A short self-made adventure to get the characters into contact with each other.

Session I: 17 November 2006

3 April 735 Barovian Calendar, Martira Bay, Darkon

In the early morning Clemens Superior is called tot the office of the most senior priest of his Temple of the Eternal Order. This is a smallish temple, taking care of the spiritual needs of the people living in the neighbourhood. This neighbourhood consists of well to do middle class people. They still have to work for a living and are not nobles, but they are rather well of, pretty influential within their own social sphere and things like hunger, poverty and homelessness are not really a problem.

The senior priest informs Clemens that there is some sort of problem at the gravesite connected to the temple and that he should look into it. Perhaps there is some sort of grave robbing or vandalism going on, and this should be stopped immediately. Clemens is shocked that someone would desecrate graves and disturb the dead, as everyone knows how powerful they are. He takes his young squire Floortje with him and they go the graveyard immediately.

At the graveyard there are already some panicky people from the neighbourhood, watching, talking and spreading gossip like wild. Among them are Herman Superior, returning home from a night of drinking and Angus, the coal burner, who supplies local businesses and homes with coal for their fires. Herman and Angus are the only unafraid people in the small crowd. Everybody else is afraid that the dead will rise. Either they are already doing so, or they will in retribution for the desecration of the graves.

Then Clemens, Floortje, Herman and Angus step into the graveyard. They can see what is going on; a skeletal arm is growing from one of the graves. The group becomes rather afraid as well when they see this³. After some time they manage to get a hold of themselves and perform some real research into this strange phenomenon.

At the grave of Adrianus Maximus a skeletal arm grows from the grave, clawing at an ominous grey sky. Herman remarks that this is a traditional punishment for children who hit or in other ways disrespected their parents⁴. From the dates on the gravestone the group can see that Adrianus died earlier this same year and lived to be 20. He was the only son of Vincent and Theodora Maximus, a family of tailors from the neighbourhood.

Floortje remarks that the arm of Adrianus has turned to nothing but dry bones remarkably quickly for someone who has been dead for less than six months. Angus pushes against the skeletal arm with his staff. The arm falls apart in small bones without much resistance.

Clemens proposes to open the grave and cremate the body. He knows the Eternal Order has tried to rebury the body without much effect. Herman feels that the group should investigate the life and death of Adrianus first. Perhaps there is some sort of sinister curse at work, which causes these problems.

Clemens ignores the remarks of Herman and starts digging up the grave with Angus. Soon they have discovered the grave. It is not buried deep enough, nowhere near the required six feet. The group wonders if the family knows their son lies in a shallow grave. Clemens then opens the coffin. Only the arm has turned skeletal. The rest of the body is in a state of decay consistent with a body buried for a few months. How is this possible?

Clemens asks Angus to fetch wood and lamp oil. With it they will burn the body. While the body burns, Clemens intones some prayers and blessings over the dead body and the grave.

³ Fear checks all round.

⁴ [Actually a real Dutch/ German legend.](#)

As the fire dies, Clemens closes the grave again over the remains. Herman still doubts that this solved the problems, but Clemens is certain and reports success to the priests. The priests are very grateful and reward all with a gold piece.

Herman rather likes the warm feeling brought on by a day's honest work, although he still feels that this is not over yet. He decides to ask around for a bit. He knew Adrianus as a part of his social circle.

Adrianus was the only child of Vincent and Theodora Maximus and he was about to take over the tailor shop of his parents. But in a tragic accident he was run over by a beer cart. The horses were spooked somehow and bolted, dragging the cart with them. They hit Adrianus and he was crushed by the enormous kegs full of beer. His mother was so upset by his sudden death that she was unable to be present at his burial. His father too was absent, as he had to take care of Theodora.

So only the drinking buddies of Adrianus and the priest and undertaker were present at the burial. Herman decides to talk to the priest and undertaker as well. He soon realizes that these two prefer to be lazy rather than tired and that they have been cutting corners with the burial ceremonies.

4 April 735 BC, Martira Bay, Darkon

In the early morning Clemens and Floortje are woken up and summoned to the temple. There he hears that the arm of Adrianus has clawed its way up out of the grave again. Clemens realizes that his cousin Herman was right and he goes to wake him up immediately. A groggy Herman fills Clemens in on what he learned the day before. Angus is woken up as well and all are very upset about what has gone on.

Clemens decides to inform the temple priests of the laxity of the priest and the undertaker. Floortje wants to talk to the parents of Adrianus. The group decides to pay a visit to the tailor shop.

Session II: 1 December 2006

4 April 735 BC, Martira Bay, Darkon

The group is paying a visit to the Maximus family. Clemens talks to a sniffing Theodora, an older woman with grey hair. She talks about her son, to hear her talk; he was a paragon of virtue, led astray by bad friends and impossible demands from a harsh father. His death as a result of a hit by a runaway beer cart crushed her completely. Clemens thinks this is very suspicious, for a young man to be so suddenly killed.

Angus starts to ask all sorts of painful questions and Theodora quickly becomes too upset to talk. Herman intervenes and directs Floortje and Angus towards the seamstresses in the shop, to pick out a new dress for Floortje.

Clemens continues to talk to Vincent, the father of Adrianus. He wants to know why both parents were unable to attend the funeral of their only child. He finds that highly suspicious, no matter how upset they both were at the death of their son.

In the mean time Angus is talking to the seamstresses, who like to gossip with the red-headed stranger. They tell him that Adrianus drank way too much beer, it would kill him eventually. Everyone was very surprised when it turned out to be so quick. His parents were very worried about his beer consumption and this led to a lot of tension and fights between the parents and their son. Especially Vincent was very upset about the behaviour of his son and heir. The last time Adrianus was fighting with his mother. His father intervened and sent Adrianus away

from the house with the words: “Beer led you to mischief; it will lead you to grief!” And then he was hit by the beer cart.

The group wonders if this curse is the cause of all the problems they now have with the body of Adrianus. Angus wants to confront the parents with this new information. Floortje thinks that the remains of Adrianus must be presented with a beer. Herman will admit the curse probably caused the death of Adrianus, but why is his arm growing above his grave, causing all this unrest. Angus and Herman wonder if someone must come to accept the final death of Adrianus. Herman also wants to talk to the lax priests again. Their disrespectful treatment of Adrianus must also play a role in the fact that he cannot rest in peace. Clemens makes a decision and decides to talk to the lax priest once again.

Herman and Angus intimidate the young priest Berend and he confesses that he and the undertaker were very lazy indeed and buried many recently deceased people in shallow graves with insufficient rites. In the case of Adrianus, he was buried without his parents attending. So only his drinking buddies were present. They were not too bothered with the specifics of the burial. But never before were there any problems afterwards.

Clemens concludes that failing clerical service, in combination with the emotional situation surrounding the sudden death of Adrianus caused all the problems. Possibly the only way to stop these problems is to make the parents face the reality of the death of their son and their own part in his death.

Clemens shares his insights with the rest of the party. Angus suggests that the parents make a visit to the grave of their son. In all this time, they have never visited his grave. Floortje adds that especially the mother should know that her son is not in a better place, but is still suffering. Clemens manages to convince the parents to visit the grave of their son and to make their peace with him⁵.

At the graveyard the skeletal arm still claws at a gloomy sky. It is a subdued group that visits the grave of Adrianus Maximus. Father Vincent tries to make peace with his son and forgive him for his sins towards his family. But he also tries to acknowledge his own mistakes in demanding too much from a son who had other ideals than his father and he regrets his angry last words to his son. Theodora has more trouble letting go. She insists on clinging to an ideal version of her son and their suffocatingly close relationship.

Clemens admonishes Theodora sternly, Adrianus was no angel and he disrespected his father and mother. Finally, sobbing she admits that her son was on occasion a bad boy and abused her love for him to indulge his own vices. Finally she gives vent to her anger and disappointment in a son who abused her love so.

And then a miracle happens. The skeletal arm retreats into the ground and the sun finally breaks through the clouds.

⁵ All that paladin charisma counts for something.

Chapter 2: Ravenstein and Avezaath

After the last session the game went on hiatus, as my son was born in January 2007 and I needed some time to recover and get some new energy for gaming late into the night (kids really take it out of you).

In this chapter the group investigates the background of Floortje the orphan some more. This is also a self-made adventure and meant for the group to gain some more experience in working together.

Session III: 18 may 2007

5 April 735 BC, Martira Bay, Darkon

The group was rewarded by the Eternal Order for laying the spirit of Adrianus Maximus to rest. For the first time in his life Herman puts some money aside, he wants to save it to be able to buy a bigger gun. Floortje spends a part of her reward money on candy.

Clemens feels it is time to take the education of Floortje more firmly in hand. He starts to instruct her in the tenets of the Eternal Order. He also wants to research her background; perhaps some of her relatives are still alive. In the books of the temple he tries to find some more information about her. As she had lived for some time in the orphanage, they must know where and when she was found and admitted. As he searches through the books, a sudden gusts of wind rifles the pages of the books and they fall open on the page that describes Floortje.

Clemens learns that Floortje was found near the village of Ravenstein, a small hamlet a days travel from Martira Bay. He then goes to question the two priests who found her and admitted her to the orphanage. Then he goes to talk to Floortje herself. She remembers little from her time before the orphanage. She knows her parents are dead and that something horrible happened. She does not seem to know about any living family members.

Clemens wants to travel to Ravenstein with Floortje to find out more about her background. As he prepares himself for the journey, Herman joins him. Herman's mother is very much taken with her nephew Clemens and his career within the Eternal Order. She wants her son to do the same and join the Eternal Order, so Herman wants to be elsewhere for a while. Clemens asks Angus to come along with his cart as well, as Floortje cannot travel on horseback all the way to Ravenstein.

On the way to Ravenstein the group encounters some bandits, but they are easily dispatched. The group travels on.

Session IV: 1 June 2007

7 April 735 BC, Martira Bay, Darkon

The group arrives in Ravenstein, a small village north of Martira Bay, there are about 100 inhabitants. The village is surrounded by a dry moat and a low earthen hill. So close to Martira Bay all is quiet and safe.

To enter the village the group must pass a large graveyard, lying on the southwest side of the village. Out of curiosity the group enters the graveyard to take a look. As soon as they enter, Floortje faints⁶. A worried Clemens puts Floortje in the cart and covers her with a blanket. Then they search the graveyard, was there something there to scare her?

The group finds nothing out of the ordinary. It is a graveyard for the villagers; all the graves are neatly maintained. There is a larger mausoleum for the local noble family, the Ravenstein

⁶ A failed horror check, although the rest don't know that.

and Avezaath family. There they see that less than a years ago Octavius, Cornelia and Velouria Ravenstein and Avezaath all died on the same day. They were husband and wife and their young daughter. Velouria was eleven years old at the time. Herman becomes instantly worried as he sees this⁷. These dates correspond with the time that Floortje was found. Had Velouria lived, she would now be Floortjes age. Are Velouria and Floortje twins? Or are they one and the same person? Is there something more sinister going on? Who is buried there?

Hurriedly the group goes on to find an inn, so Floortje can be put to bed. She still will not wake up. The small village only has a very small inn, more of a local pub, with some rooms where the owner and his family and the occasional traveller can sleep. Clemens sits up with the still sleeping Floortje and worries. He feels some sort of presence in the room, but he sees no one.

After some time his cousin Herman comes to relieve him, so Clemens can get a bite to eat. Clemens asks the innkeeper's wife about the deaths of Octavius, Cornelia and Velouria. She tells him the family died suddenly in an accident with their coach about a year ago. They were the local nobles of this estate, which encompasses the villages of Ravenstein and Avezaath. She thinks that Floortje looks a bit like Velouria, a bit older and skinnier though.

That night Floortje starts to sleepwalk, mumbling "I am coming." She is quickly found and returned to bed.

8 April 735 BC, Ravenstein, Darkon

The next morning Clemens shares his worries about Floortje with Herman. They also find out a bit more about the local situation.

After the death of Lord Octavius and his family, the estate of Ravenstein and Avezaath fell to Lord Herod and his wife Agatha. Lady Agatha was the younger sister of Lady Cornelia. The new lord and lady are not universally popular, but neither were Lord Octavius and his family. Herman immediately suspects that Floortje is in reality the daughter of Lord Octavius. Clemens immediately wants to reunite Floortje with her living relatives. Herman warns him against that. Lord Herod has profited from the death of his brother-in-law. He might not be pleased to meet someone who has a better claim to his title and estate. He might even have a hand in the death of his family members. If that is true, Floortje is not safe here at all. Clemens admits he had not thought of that⁸.

Clemens and Herman take a still unconscious Floortje to the local priest of the Eternal Order. Father Julius hears the story of Clemens and Herman. He thinks that Floortje looks a bit like the young Velouria, but all small girls look alike. Since they were badly mangled after the accident with the cart, Father Julius has never seen the bodies of the family after their death. Clemens and Herman state they want to open the grave of Octavius, Cornelia and Velouria, to check if there really is a body there. If it is true and there is no body of Velouria in her grave, then there might something to their suspicions and they must inform someone else of their suspicions as well. And the claim of Lord Herod to the estate of Ravenstein and Avezaath becomes much shakier.

Father Julius is shocked when he thinks of all the implications. He proposes to open the mausoleum and open the graves together with Clemens and only with Clemens. As members of the Eternal Order they have a duty to check if the dead have been buried with all proper rites. He does not want to upset the townspeople by disturbing the peace of the dead and he does not want to tip off the current Lord and Lady. So he proposes to open the graves at midnight. Clemens agrees with this plan.

⁷ His INT score is a lot higher than Clemens's.

⁸ See what I mean about the INT scores?

Clemens asks his cousin Herman to keep an eye on the still sleeping Floortje that night, while he goes with Father Julius to the graveyard. Herman agrees to do so; he thinks that Floortje might sleepwalk again. But he is also worried that Clemens might meet all sorts of trouble, digging around in a graveyard at midnight. So Herman leaves the village and starts casting his spells in private. Knowing that his unique approach to spell casting comes with a price, he likes to have some privacy while he does it.

Herman tries to cast a spell to offer himself some more protection. Unfortunately he does not pay as much attention as he should and he is suddenly surrounded by a melting wall of ice. It melts in due time and he is able to leave, feeling somewhat foolish.

9 April (midnight) 735 BC, Ravenstein, Darkon

Clemens set out for the graveyard, leaving Herman in charge of Floortje. Herman does not want Clemens to go alone, so he asks Angus to keep an eye on Floortje, while he goes after Clemens. He does not notice Herman following him.

Clemens makes his way to the home of Father Julius and together they go to the graveyard. There Father Julius opens the mausoleum of the Ravenstein and Avezaath Family. Inside the cold, dark and damp mausoleum, they hesitate before opening the grave of Velouria. They are deeply shocked when there are only rocks lying in the coffin. There is no sign of a body. Clemens feels very bitter and Father Julius is angry. Here too people do not take the burial of the dead seriously and disrespect both the living and the dead. That the dead have not already risen up to punish this horrible travesty is only a matter of luck.

In the graves of Octavius and Cornelia lie two bodies, presumably they are the bodies of Octavius and Cornelia.

Clemens and Father Julius return to the village. They are still very disturbed about what they have found and want to discuss all the implications in the morning.

On his way back to the small inn, Clemens runs into Angus, who is holding Floortje in his arms. Clemens helps him to bring Floortje inside and asks him where Herman is, since he left Herman in charge of Floortje. Angus tells him Herman went after him. Clemens is unsurprised, he expected Herman to be unable to stick to his agreement with Clemens. Clemens asks Angus to keep an eye on Floortje and goes out again to find Herman. He finds him and together they keep watch over the home of Father Julius throughout the night, worried that harm may come to him, now that they know more is going on in this peaceful little village.

Just before sunrise the village is woken up by a loud crack. After some hurried searching, it turns out that the millstone in the village mill has cracked in two peaces, which is very odd, since it was brand new, a gift from the new lord. Clemens and Herman overhear the villagers gossiping. Last week all the pigs in the village died of old age, and they were a gift from the new lord as well.

In the inn the group has some breakfast consisting of bread, eggs, cheese, honey, goat's milk, porridge and bacon pancakes. Clemens and Herman discuss the adventures of the previous night.

Some sort of dishonesty is being committed. Velouria, heir to the estate has been declared dead, but there is no body. Lord Herod and Lady Agatha have profited from her disappearance, they now claim the estate illegitimately. But did they cause the body of Velouria to disappear, or are they innocent? And what about the accident of the coach of Lord Octavius and his family, was it really an accident, or was it some sort of an attack?

Clemens wants to draw the attention of some higher noble to this case. And he is also very worried about Floortje, who still sleeps. She must wake up soon and if she really is Velouria, she might be in grave danger by remaining here.

Later that morning they speak with Father Julius. He agrees with them that Lord Herod and Lady Agatha have committed several crimes. First of all declaring Velouria dead, while there was no body. Secondly they lied to the Eternal Order about her death. Lastly they claim the estate of Ravenstein and Avezaath without any legal basis. They might even be responsible for the deaths of Octavius and Cornelia.

Father Julius will write letters to his superior within the Eternal Order and to the Baron of Martira Bay, detailing the events in Ravenstein and Avezaath and their suspicions concerning the deaths of Octavius and Cornelia, the disappearance of Velouria and the role of Herod and Agatha.

Session V: 15 June 2007

9 April 735 BC, Ravenstein, Darkon

The group leaves Ravenstein for Martira Bay. Clemens carries two letters, one for Baron Antonius of Martira Bay and another for Bishop Gregorius of Martira Bay. Floortje is still unconscious and wrapped in blankets she is placed in the cart of Angus. She looks terrible now that she has not eaten for two days.

As soon as the village of Ravenstein disappears from view, Floortje slowly wakes up. She remembers nothing from the last few days. She still thinks it is the 7th of April and that the group is still heading towards Ravenstein. Clemens and Herman pay a lot of concerned attention to her. They also fill her in with the latest news, but do not tell her about the grave of Velouria, which was filled with stones. They feel it might be too shocking for her.

Then the group hears excited barking ahead of them. Clemens rushes forward to investigate and sees a troupe of large and vicious wolves. They are eating the bodies of the bandits the group met here a few days ago. Clemens manages to keep his horse under control. He then charges into the wolves, wounding one. Floortje then dispatches it with a stone from her sling. The remaining wolves attack Clemens. One manages to drag him from his horse and the horrified group sees how Clemens is shaken like a rag doll by the monstrous wolf. He seems dead.

The group bursts into action. With a spell Herman manages to disintegrate the wolf savaging Clemens. It disappears with a small thunderclap. No one is more shocked than Herman, he never thought it would work. Still Angus and Floortje are pretty shocked and have a new respect for Herman.

Angus uses his powers to save Clemens, because he is still uneasy about letting others know about his powers, he tries to make it seem as if he is using herbs. Floortje and Herman see through his ruse, Clemens was severely injured and no amount of garlic compresses would cure that. Clemens regains consciousness and does not remember anything after being dragged off his horse. He does not realise he was nearly dead and made a miraculous recovery.

The group decides to rest and recover for a day before going on towards Martira Bay.

10 April 735 BC, Martira Bay, Darkon

The group returns to their homes. Clemens and his squire Floortje pay a visit to Baron Antonius and Bishop Gregorius and inform them of their findings in Ravenstein. Both men are disturbed and promise to investigate the matter.

Chapter 3: The Vistani

In this chapter the group has their first encounter with the mysterious Vistani, which will set in motion quite a bit of the plot for the coming sessions. As I said before, I wanted to use a bit more of the published material for this setting to save myself some time, but since I do not have everything, I must improvise on occasion. For example, I have no idea how the party meets Hyxosa for the first time, so I made something up.

Session VI: 29 June 2007

9 may 735 BC, Ravenstein, Darkon

A month has passed and a lot has happened. Baron Antonius of Martira Bay has investigated the suspicions of Father Julius and Clemens Superior concerning the deaths of Octavius, Lord of Ravenstein and Avezaath and his family and the role of Herod and Agatha. Herod and Agatha were arrested, tried and convicted of several crimes, among which conspiracy to murder, murder and crimes concerning the burial of Velouria. Floortje was recognized to be Velouria, legitimate daughter of Octavius and Cornelia. She was installed as Lady Velouria of Ravenstein and Avezaath. Since she was clearly too young (only eleven and a half) to rule the small but profitable estate, Clemens Superior, Paladin of the Eternal Order, was appointed as her Guardian. He has the duty to rule the estate in her stead and see to it that she has the education befitting a Lady of the realm. When Velouria reaches her majority at the age of sixteen, she may rule the estate in her own name.

The group has undergone changes as well. They now all live in Ravenstein. Floortje lives as Lady Velouria in the castle (more of a large country house really) in Ravenstein, together with Clemens Superior as her regent and Herman Superior as her court-mage. Herman tries to get away from his mother, who still sees a career in the clergy of the Eternal Order for her son. Angus too has relocated to Ravenstein, since he could not get used to the pressures of the big city life of Martira Bay after growing up in Tepest.

Clemens wants to inspect the entire estate belonging to Velouria. He has a responsibility to manage the estate profitably for his ward, he must educate her in the management of the estate and the people should get to know their new Lady. During the inspection Clemens gets to know the people of Ravenstein and Avezaath, who are very happy to have Velouria as their Lady. The adoration of the people also caters to Clemens's vanity. Clemens sees to it that Velouria gets a small pony, which she names Killer and tracks down her old nursemaid.

10 may 735 BC, Ravenstein, Darkon

Clemens has installed the practice of holding daily audiences in which the people can approach him and Velouria with requests and complaints. This way the people can express their troubles and worries and Clemens and Velouria can get to know the people better. Today a messenger from Baron Antonius presents himself to Clemens and Velouria. He tells them that Herod has managed to escape the prison while awaiting his execution. The life of Velouria might be in danger as he seeks revenge.

In the mean time, Angus is burning coals in the woods surrounding Ravenstein and practicing his powers. He then sees two very tired-looking Vistani, a young man and a woman. They introduce themselves as Hyxosa and Valana. They are fleeing persecution from their kinsmen. Hyxosa gives Angus a piece of paper and tells him it must not be lost at any cost. He then

faints. Angus feels pity for the tired couple and lets them rest in his hut. Later he takes them to a room in the village inn, where they can regain their strength.

While this is happening, Clemens receives someone else during audience. It is an older Vistana man, Alexi Zarovan. He asks Clemens' permission to raise a camp outside Ravenstein. He and his kinsmen are in pursuit of two Vistani criminals and they were last seen in the vicinity of Ravenstein. Their crimes were severe and they must be put to death for their sins. The fugitives are a brother and sister.

Clemens becomes extremely worried. He has many prejudices about the wife-seducing, child-stealing, coach-chopping and knife-fighting Vistani, but on the other hand he does not want to anger them by refusing their request. So he gives Alexi permission to make camp near the Castle Ravenstein, so he can keep a closer eye on them. He does not want to give them permission to kill the criminals, since only the worldly authority of Baron Antonius may pronounce such a judgement in this vicinity. Herman agrees with Clemens.

Alexi tries to explain the nature of the crimes of this couple. The man is some sort of mage and foretells the future, a grave crime. The man should have been put to death as a baby. His sister has helped him escape his punishment repeatedly and should die for that as well. Since Herman is also a mage, the group does not really understand the problem. After some time it becomes clear that there is some sort of cultural problem going on, the man was not supposed to be able to do foretelling at all. He is committing some sort of gender transgression crime. Clemens and Herman understand it less and less and are becoming more and more worried. Clemens informs the messenger from Baron Antonius of the arrival of the Vistani and their hunt for a criminal.

In the mean time, Angus goes to the small library of Castle Ravenstein to study the scroll and find out a bit more about Vistani. The scroll has a short poem on it with six signs foretelling some sort of trouble. The library is not very large and deals mostly with the history of Ravenstein and Darkon.

The Vistani are a group of wandering peoples who have the power to foretell the future. It seems that only the women of the group can foretell the future. He also finds mention of the house of Deagon.

Later that day the group shares a meal in Castle Ravenstein. The messenger from Baron Antonius joins them for the meal. Clemens informs everybody of the arrival of the Vistani and their mission. Angus mentions that he too has met Vistani and he lets the others believe that it is the same group that is making camp outside Castle Ravenstein at the moment. He does not tell anybody that he probably met the criminals the Vistana Alexi and his group are hunting. He lies to Clemens and the others about this. Angus also suspects the messenger from the Baron to be more than he seems.

Herman wants to go out that evening, to ensure that nobody is mistreating the Vistani and giving them a reason to become angry at the people of Ravenstein⁹. Velouria wants to visit the camp of the Vistani, which is expressly forbidden by Clemens¹⁰. He sends her to her room. Velouria reacts by climbing out of her window, down the wall and goes to the camp anyway¹¹. Angus also goes to the camp, he wants to have his fortune read.

⁹ Perhaps I overdid it, the group seemed to be really scared about the presence of the Vistani.

¹⁰ He really takes his responsibilities as a guardian seriously.

¹¹ This turns out to be very typical of Velouria. She is a thief, so inherently lawless and disinclined to listen to good advice. Plus she is a teenager and doubly eager to rebel.

Angus goes to the camp and has his fortune read by the elderly Madame Eva Zarovan, she lays the cards for him in the privacy of her Vardo.

	The Marionette	
The Invoker	The Esper	The dictator
	The Dark Lord	

It is very obvious that these cards profoundly shock Madame Eva. As Angus asks what this all means, she fobs him off with an obviously made up story about bad spells in the past and a glorious future lying ahead of him¹². Madame Eva is especially upset about the presence of three Grand Cards, as this means that Angus is truly destined for great things, the core will shake with his actions. Madame Eva also realised that with the presence of the Marionette and the Darklord, Angus will also be involved with her relative Hyxosa and one of the rulers of the Lands. His actions might impact the welfare of all the Vistani.

Madame Eva is overcome with fear, the world is falling apart and there is very little she can do to stop that. She tries to get rid of Angus as quickly as she can by telling him some believable lies about the cards. Then she needs some time alone to think. Angus decides not to push Madame Eva for more answers, since he is afraid she might become angry and curse him. However the fact that she lied to him, makes him all the more curious about the meaning of the cards.

As Angus returns to Castle Ravenstein, he is watched by Velouria, who managed to climb out of her window and sneak out of the castle undetected. She made her way to the camp of the Vistani and sneaked about there. She did not learn much, but decided to steal an unattended violin¹³. With the violin she sneaked back into her bed.

Herman too visits the Vistani that night and he speaks with Alexi Zarovan, who is in charge of the Vistani. Alexi is deeply worried about his kinsman Hyxosa and tries to explain the problem to Herman. Only women may foretell the future, for men to foretell the future is an abomination which will lead to ruin for everybody who comes into contact with such a man. This is why male children with the gift of foretelling are killed young. For some reason Hyxosa was allowed to live to adulthood and he started to foretell the future. As expected he foresaw something horrible.

Alexi does not think that tracking down Hyxosa and killing him as the Vistani law demands will solve anything. He has already made his predictions and others know of these predictions, so the events which will allow the predictions to come to pass have already been set in motion. The killing of Hyxosa will not stop that.

Session VII: 13 July 2007

11 May 735 BC, Ravenstein, Darkon

The next morning starts very cold and clammy. A very thick fog obscures everything, people can hardly see across the street. Herman realises that this weather is unnatural, in view of the

¹² The Esper represents Angus with his powers of the mind. The Dictator refers to the people who have burned Angus's mother for a witch. The Invoker represents Angus's future in which a lot of knowledge might be gained, but at a high cost and possible danger. The Marionette refers to Hyxosa who has become a puppet of the powers that be. Even though he is a prisoner of the machinations of the Dark Powers, he does not want to cause any harm. The Dark Lord refers to Azalin Rex, he will oppose Angus and Hyxosa, as he cannot let things lie and he wants to influence the outcome of the Grand Conjunction.

¹³ She is quite the little kleptomaniac.

weather the night before. Furthermore, these fogs are usually some sort of omen for bad things to come. During breakfast the fog clears.

Herman and Clemens discuss the presence of the Vistani. They feel that the Vistani may kick a member out of their tribe, but executing him is out of the question on land that is managed by the Darkonese nobility. Clemens also feels that men should be able to practice magic, even if they are Vistani. He wants to find the fugitives and provide them with protection against their kinsmen. Herman worries about the revenge of the angered Vistani and tells Clemens about their powers of curses, predictions, fire making and the calling of the Mists. Then a member of the local militia enters and tells Clemens that the Vistani are on the move again. They seem to be leaving.

Clemens wants to meet one last time with Alexi, to wish him farewell. He goes to the camp and meets with Madame Eva, who is overseeing the packing while she is idly playing with her cards. Clemens asks her some questions while Madame Eva is randomly laying down cards and picking them up again.

The Vistani are leaving because the criminal and his sister have gone from this place. The criminal is no mage, but something much worse (The Paladin). She tells Clemens that he has predicted the future and the future looks bleak indeed (The Charlatan). He has predicted the end of the world as everybody knows it (The Bishop). And now we try to get a hold of the prophecy to find out how this all will affect the Vistani (The Necromancer). So the Vistani too will leave here, in pursuit of the criminal (The Ghost).

	The Charlatan	
The Necromancer	The Paladin	The Ghost
	The Bishop	

At that point Madame Eva realises what she is doing and she looks at the cards in shock. Then she quickly tries to gather them up and hide them from Clemens. But he stops her and asks her what the cards mean. With some reluctance she explains¹⁴.

The Paladin is the most important card and influences all the other cards. The Charlatan refers to the past of the Paladin. Someone in the past of the paladin is other than he seems, he actively tries or tried to deceive the Paladin. The Bishop refers to the future, someone in a position of high power, possibly religious power, influences the life of the Paladin. The Necromancer tries to influence the actions of the Paladin. The Ghost represents something from the past of the Paladin. Since Madame Eva was not concentrating when laying these cards, she does not want to speculate too much about possible meanings.

Herman does want to speculate though¹⁵. The Paladin stands for Clemens himself, after all, his is a paladin. The Ghost stands for the secret of Velouria, who for a time lived under another name. The Necromancer and the Bishop stand for Azalin Rex, he is both King of Darkon and ruler of the Eternal Order, therefore he is both Clemens's worldly and spiritual leader. The Charlatan can refer to a lot of people. Velouria pretended to be a street urchin for a while, Herod and Agatha pretending to be nobles, Herman being both a playboy and a court mage. Even Angus has something to hide with his "herbal compresses". Clemens does not really believe the predictions of the Vistani.

¹⁴ Not even Madame Eva can resist the charming personality of Clemens.

¹⁵ Although he is horribly wrong. The Paladin does refer to Clemens himself. The Charlatan also refers to himself; he is no Paladin for the Eternal Order, but for the God Osiris. The Ghost represents the dead mentor of Clemens, whose death is completely forgotten by Clemens and remains unpunished. The Bishop and the Necromancer both refer to Azalin, who is both the religious and secular superior of Clemens and can direct his actions as long as Clemens believes himself to be a Darkonese citizen and member of the Eternal Order.

Later that morning there is another shocking message. The orphanage of the Eternal Order in Martira Bay has burned to the ground, there are no survivors. All 32 orphans and 5 Sisters who looked after them are believed dead in the fire. Baron Antonius suspects that this drama was caused by the escaped convict Herod, for Velouria spent some time in this orphanage. Maybe he believed she still lived there.

Clemens is instantly worried and arranges for more protection for his ward. He also plans to attend the funeral of these poor victims. After all the Sisters were his colleagues. Velouria too wants to attend, as she lost friends in the fire.

12 may 735 BC, Martira Bay, Darkon

The whole group travels to Martira Bay and they arrive there late at night. Clemens manages to secure lodgings for them all in the temple of the Eternal Order, where Clemens worked until recently.

13 may 735 BC, Martira Bay, Darkon

The group goes to Sheriff Alanik Ray who was charged by Baron Antonius to find the cause of this dreadful fire. Alanik Ray turns out to be a youthful looking elf with blond wavy hair. He has a little office filled with chests, cupboards and strange stuff. This notable elf is the Sheriff of Martira Bay. He has trained his troops well and only concerns himself with the unusual, strange or political cases of crime.

Alanik can tell the group that the fire in the orphanage has had to spread incredibly fast, magically fast even, to make so many victims. However, 5 persons are missing, 4 children and one Sister. Alanik hopes that these persons were somehow able to escape the fire and are still alive somewhere, but he does not really believe so.

Clemens tells Alanik about Velouria and her uncle Herod, who conspired to the murder of her parents and tried to kill her. He has recently escaped and might be responsible for the fire.

Alanik tells the group that people regularly disappear and are probably murdered, but it always concerns sailor, tramps, prostitutes and other low-lives from the harbour area. The orphanage had nothing to do with that at all. So he is baffled by this fire.

Then a young human man comes running into the office and blurts out that five bodies were found in the harbour, 4 children and an adult woman. Probably the missing people from the orphanage. They were not burned.

Clemens: This looks like a mystery.

Herman: No, this looks like kid-napping and murder.

Chapter 4: The Rift Spanner

In this chapter the group has a run-in with Styrix the Hag and her Rift-Spanner from the Ravenloft Monstrous Compendium. This chapter firmly establishes the character of Clemens Superior as the leader of the group and its moral compass. It also sheds some more light on the Eternal Order.

Session VIII: 27-07-2007

13 may 735 BC, Martira Bay, Darkon

Everybody becomes convinced that the fire in the orphanage were a murderous attack by Herod to strike back at Velouria in revenge for surviving his first murderous attack and engineering his downfall. Herman wants to use Velouria as bait to draw Herod out into the open, where he can be defeated. The rest do not think that is a good idea.

The group goes to the harbour to inspect the bodies that have been found floating in the harbour. The bodies indeed turn out to be the bodies of the nun and the 4 children that were missing from the orphanage.

As the group inspects the bodies, Velouria looks out across the bay and sees a large mansion on the other side of the bay. It looks old and abandoned, the roof has collapsed and the windows look like dead eyes. It gives Velouria the willies and she points it out to the others.

Clemens wants to give the bodies a much closer look and asks Herman to look after Velouria¹⁶. Velouria is too young to see dead bodies.

Herman, Angus and Velouria don't feel like waiting for Clemens for the better part of a day in the Hospice of the Eternal Order. They decide to take a closer look at the abandoned building Velouria saw on the other side of the bay. Velouria is afraid of the building and does not really want to go. This leads to the following conversation.

Velouria: Explain to me again why we are going to the scary, lonely, dilapidated house?

Herman: The alternative is to grow bored.

The small group writes a letter to Clemens and they set off¹⁷.

In the mean time Clemens is taking a very close look indeed at the bodies found in the harbour. The bodies show signs of bruises and scrapes. They signify that the children and the woman have been in a fight or were roughly manhandled. None of the injuries were serious enough to result in death. It is unclear why the children and the woman died. The woman has an impression of a belt and buckle in her lower arm. She was restrained for some time and fought the restraint.

Angus as put his pony in front of his cart and the small party drives off along the bay towards the abandoned building. At first this starts out as a nice outing in the lovely spring weather. The small group meets more families walking, riding or driving on the small road along the bay. This is obviously a recreational area for the well to do people from Martira Bay, they come here to enjoy the sights and pick nick and suchlike.

As the party goes further and further it becomes quieter and soon they are all alone. By the time they are about halfway between Martira Bay and the abandoned house, they come across a small grassy clearing. There is a small hut and a particularly ugly and old woman stirring in a bubbling kettle in front of the hut.

Velouria still wants to go back, but Herman wants to pump the old woman for information about the abandoned house and the possible inhabitants. So he creates a floating globe of

¹⁶ Even though he knows this is not a good idea, only a month ago, Herman abandoned this exact responsibility.

¹⁷ Even though he does not know how to read or write, and they know this.

plum brandy and offers to share this with the old woman¹⁸. Without blinking the woman downs one gulp after another of the very alcoholic drink, without any noticeable effect. Herman has to keep up with her if he does not want to look like a wimp. She tells them that she does not know of anybody living in the abandoned mansion, as far as she knows it was always abandoned.

Then, halfway through the brandy, Herman thinks he sees an eyeball floating in the bubbling soup in the kettle¹⁹. The old crone gives the soup another stir with her spoon and the eyeball disappears again. Herman decides it is time to leave right now. Angus is surprised, but does not contradict Herman.

Herman: We are going home right now! We are looking after Velouria and she wants to go home!

Angus: Who are you and what have you done with Herman?

On the way back Herman tells the rest what he saw, or thought he saw. He surmises that the old woman might have been a Hag in disguise. Angus tends to agree, he knows about Hags, coming from Tepest. He greatly (and rightly) fears them.

Back in Martira Bay Clemens is furious with Herman. He took Velouria on an outing, while he was supposed to go home with her and protect her with all his might, now that there is someone on the loose who has a grudge against her and is not afraid to kill to satisfy his need for revenge. Herman tries to defuse Clemens's anger by telling him of the Hag they met. This does not work.

Clemens: So 'take Velouria home' becomes 'take Velouria on a drinking binge with Hags'!?

Clemens doubts Herman's story. After all he has proven before to be untrustworthy and he was by his own admission at this time heavily inebriated. He decides never to trust Herman again, not even with a small mission.

Clemens sends Velouria to her room in the Superior house. Herman muses that no one in the Superior family, aside from himself and Clemens, knows how to defend themselves against a serious opponent, or monsters. He worries about his parents and the servants. Clemens agrees and sends a servant to ask Sheriff Alanik Ray if it is possible to have some more city guards in the area of his home.

Clemens tries to get a clearer picture from Angus about the powers of Hags and the kind of threat they can pose. Angus paints a grim picture indeed, of giant women with claws and huge teeth to tear and rend the meat off their human victims. And they can also use magic to lure victims to them and to appear other than they really are. All in all they are a nigh unstoppable force of evil.

Clemens decides that this threat is so serious that it should at least be checked out. Perhaps Herman was out of his mind with drink and imagined all sorts of horrors in a simple peasant meal²⁰. But perhaps there really is a Hag preying on the people of Martira Bay, after all Sheriff Alanik Ray had people missing from the harbour district regularly, a Hag must eat a lot. A short trip to check things out would not be a waste of time at all²¹. Herman insists that Velou-

¹⁸ Herman believes in the power of alcohol.

¹⁹ He can't be sure after that much brandy.

²⁰ No need to imagine things, a peasant meal can contain all sorts of things; do you know what goes in a good homemade sausage?

²¹ Clemens's paladin urges are asserting themselves. In every action he takes he tries very hard to think of the needs of the community first. He strongly feels that his first duty is to see that those entrusted to his care are at all times as safe as he can keep them. This goes for Velouria, his ward, his adopted family and all of Darkon, since they are all members of his church.

ria comes with them. After all, they are easily the most powerful force in Martira Bay and would be able to protect her. If they feel the situation is so dangerous that they cannot protect Velouria, they should turn back and gather more allies. And this would also protect the rest of the Superior family.

Herman intends to make some silver bullets for himself; these are usually effective against a lot of monsters. He also sees to it that Velouria gets some for her sling. Clemens petitions the Eternal Order to get a silver sword on loan for this quest.

14 May 735 BC

Completely prepared and very nervous, the group sets out towards the mansion. After a short time they come to the clearing. There is no sign of the old crone, her kettle or her hut. Clemens thinks that everyone was taken in by Herman's overwrought imagination. Herman sticks to his version of events. Angus thinks that someone cleverly made use of illusions and Herman thinks that the Hag has left the area.

The group continues to the abandoned mansion. The broken-down entry gate is ornamented with a graceful "H". The mansion is searched, although there is very little to search. The roof has partly collapsed some time ago, which wreaked considerable havoc on the upper floors. Only the ground floors are safe to walk on. And they are severely damaged as well.

In the large kitchen they can hear a faint scratching noise. After some searching the group finds a hatch in the floor, probably leading to a basement for provisions or coal. They go down and the scratching becomes louder, a squeaking can be heard as well. After some more searching they find a hidden door, the scratching and squeaking comes from behind the door. Clemens boldly opens the door, behind it lays a terrible horror. It is a huge stinking maggot, but to make it even more terrible, it has a human face. This abomination made the scratching and squeaking sounds as it tried to get through the door²².

Clemens puts the thing immediately out of its misery with one heroic strike of his sword. The small hallway behind the door turns into a gooey mess because of it. After that Clemens immediately wants to return. This is way too dangerous for a little girl like Velouria; she will be hurt or traumatized. She should be put somewhere safe. Understandably, Velouria will have none of this, but she is a minor and Clemens's ward²³.

Session IX: 24 august 2007

14 May 735 BC, Martira Bay, Darkon

Late in the afternoon the group attends the burial of the victims of the fire in the Orphanage. As all the 32 orphans and 5 Sisters died in the fire, this is a disaster of epic proportions for Martira Bay, so many people attend the service. All the priests and their associates of the Eternal Order are in attendance, as are the grown men and women who started life in the orphanage as well as many members of the general populace.

In the cathedral of Martira Bay Bishop Gregorius leads the service. He emphasizes again and again that it is of the utmost importance that these victims are buried with all possible ceremony and that memorial services will be held for the at very regular intervals²⁴. Because of the violent death of these young children and Sisters they will be more likely to return as the vengeful undead and punish the living. The living must protect themselves from this by observing all the ceremonies.

²² A "Larva" from the planescape setting.

²³ He really is a paladin and already very disruptive to the flow of the story. On the other hand, this is excellent role-playing.

²⁴ Nicely filling the coffers of the Eternal Order in the process.

Clemens feels a lot of righteous anger at this atrocity. He wants to take revenge of the person who committed this horrible crime. Velouria feels some very conflicting emotions. On the one hand she is shocked by the death of all these people, but on the other hand she has some trouble with feeling very strongly about it all, which worries her²⁵.

Then the services ends and members of the Eternal Order carry the coffins out to the graveyard, where they are buried in a long row of freshly dug graves. Then follows a very sober burial meal at sunset.

Clemens wants to discuss their findings of the huge maggot and the sightings of the Hag by Herman with Sheriff Alanik Ray. Velouria thinks this is a bad plan and does not want to share any information with the Sheriff. Clemens chides her: “Why would we want to keep this a secret?”²⁶

Later that night Clemens and Herman have a meeting with Alanik Ray in his office. They tell him all about the huge maggot and the Hag. Since Herman has nothing to prove his story, Alanik Ray does not believe him. But he does believe Clemens and orders him to check out the tunnels under the Estate, he suspect they run all the way to the cliffs overlooking the bay. Perhaps this tunnel is used for some sort of illegal practice, like smuggling.

The Sheriff promises to send his men to the home of the Superior family, to protect them and Velouria. Herman remains worried for her safety and feels that she would be safest near Clemens.

15 May 735 BC

During breakfast with the Superior family a watchman from Sheriff Alanik Ray comes to fetch Clemens and Herman. There have been new developments. Velouria tries to come along, but Clemens thinks it is too dangerous for her to leave the house and sends her back inside. Outside they meet up with Angus and they all go to the offices of the Sheriff.

There Alanik tells the group that another body was found in the bay. A man this time and the body was partly eaten as well, perhaps by fish. Herman sticks to his theory of a Hag, as they eat the flesh of people. Clemens now feels that the underground tunnels at the Estate might also be a way of dumping bodies in the bay, a sort of refuse-chute. The group decides the need to investigate these tunnels further, immediately. They send word to the Superior family and set off to the estate.

At the estate the group quickly goes to the tunnel underneath the kitchen. Once they are there and ready to take the first steps into the tunnel, they are surprised by Velouria. She escaped the Superior home and made her way to the estate²⁷. She wants to join her foster father and uncle on their adventures. She really makes a very tearful play out of this and melts the hart of Clemens. He relents and decides to take her home, instead of just sending her back. This is not at all to her liking and she starts to argue.

At that moment the party is attacked by another maggot. It is quickly dispatched, but Clemens is bitten in his foot and wounded. Clemens wants to return now to treat his wound; Velouria again tries to protest but is told to shut up. Herman and Angus work together to heal the foot of Clemens. Everybody is rather worried the bite of such a hideous monster might be poisonous.

²⁵ I had not spotted this before, but the traumas she suffered will of course have damaged her permanently. This already shows in her disregard for rules and her kleptomania, but is she also emotionally damaged?

²⁶ Clemens being well played again. With this one sentence he not only shows he takes his responsibilities towards Velouria's upbringing seriously (he is not just keeping her alive, but he also morally educates her), but he also wants to work through established channels of authority and he thinks of the needs of his community.

²⁷ She might be disobedient, but she is brave.

Session X: 7 September 2007

16 May 735 BK, Martira Bay, Darkon

In the early morning as the group is having breakfast in the Superior home, a letter is delivered to Clemens. As he cannot read, the letter is read out loud by Herman. It is an invitation by the priestess Tavelia to come to the Cathedral of the Eternal Order; she has some information on the fire which destroyed the orphanage and the murder of the orphans. Clemens knows priestess Tavelia; she is the right-hand woman of the Bishop Gregorius. He feels there is nothing out of the ordinary about her request and as a lower ranking member of the hierarchy he must obey. He will visit the Cathedral and take the group with him. Including Velouria, it is too much trouble to leave her behind and if she is not safe inside the Cathedral, nowhere is safe for her²⁸.

Later that morning Angus drops by. After healing Clemens's foot the other day, he feels he must confess the full extent of his powers to them. The rest of the group is surprised. They assumed that his powers were the result of some sort of priestly powers, they never suspected the force of psionics, which is rare in Darkon. Clemens especially feels uncomfortable with these strange powers. Herman promises to help keep Angus's powers secret by pretending to cast spells if necessary.

Later that day

After the sun has set the group departs in the coach of the Superior family for the Cathedral of the Eternal Order. The Cathedral is big and imposing, it dominates that part of Martira Bay. It is clear that the Eternal Order watches over the people from Darkon. The Eternal Order is the last bastion defending the living from the wrath of the dead. The group can admire the architecture of the building before they are taken to Priestess Tavelia.

Priestess Tavelia is a young and attractive woman with long wavy brown hair. She sits in a small office and is looking over some paperwork as the group is led before her by a lower ranking priest. She puts aside her papers and addresses the group. Velouria, Herman and Angus are very impressed with her, her charm and her beauty²⁹. Clemens less so, he sees her as his superior in the Order, one of many.

Priestess Tavelia informs the party of the Havilland Estate they have been investigating. The Eternal Order too has had some information that strange goings-on have been taking place there. Also a dangerous object was stolen from the Cathedral and she suspects it was taken to the Havilland Estate by the people who make it their lair. She orders Clemens to gather a group of people to inspect the Havilland Estate and find and return the object. She also offers to take care of Velouria in the mean time, she is too young to enter in such dangerous adventures. Velouria and Herman are in favour of this idea and agree, Clemens finds this somewhat odd, but is too relieved to have Velouria taken off his hands by his superiors to enquire too closely. He sees no problem with leaving Velouria in the care of his superiors.

Velouria remains this night in the Cathedral, she will stay with other people living and working in the Cathedral (think choirboys and such). Later that night, when she should be sleeping in her dorm, she sneaks out and starts to investigate the Cathedral³⁰. She is soon found out by a very intimidating priest, who escorts her back to her dorm and locks her door.

²⁸ Insert sardonical DM laughter here.

²⁹ Tavelia is using her charm abilities on the party.

³⁰ She has no real reason for this, except her rebellious streak.

17 May 735 BC

The next day Clemens, Angus and Herman set out for the Havilland Estate, this time they will completely search the house and the basement without having to worry about the safety of Velouria.

Without too much trouble the party searches the underground tunnels. They find a pit crawling with hundreds of the huge maggots they found earlier in these tunnels. With some working together they manage to kill all the maggots with fire. Herman manages to create lots of oil, which Angus sets on fire and he maintains the intensity of the fire. The maggots all burn to a crisp, popping as they die.

After some searching the group also finds some sort of living space and a laboratory or research area. In here they find a log or diary, a buckle and loose parts of some sort of machine. Furthermore they find a horrible object, a chopped off human hand, with the fingers bound together with twine so that they form a sort of threefold candle, this is the object Tavelia sent them to find. They also find a seal ring with the arms of the Ravenstein and Avezaath family of it. The party presumes that the escaped Herod spent some time here.

The party leafs through the diary conclude that Herod was not the only occupant of this place, but that there was also another person, perhaps the Hag. This person was doing some sort of research into the stars and machinery manipulating the fabric of space and reality. Apparently some machines only work when the stars are right; conjunction is the word the researches used.

They party wants to leave, fearing the return of the Hag.

In the mean time Velouria has a good time with the other children living on the Cathedral premises. She hopes to see Tavelia again, but she has no such luck.

On the way back to Martira Bay Clemens's horse makes a bad step and lames one leg. The group is forced to spend the night in the open; they cannot make it back to town with the horse.

That night Velouria is alone again in the Cathedral. She tries to go out of her dorm room and finds out that it is locked. She is very shocked about this; she thought she was a guest, now she feels like a prisoner. She immediately tries to escape from the window. Looking from the window to scout a path down to the street, she sees a man climbing the walls of the Cathedral. He crawls along the walls like a fat spider, carrying a small choirboy with him. He disappears into one of the windows of the outbuildings.

Velouria is beyond shocked. The Eternal Order is infiltrated by some sort of monster, which preys on the people the Order is supposed to protect! Tavelia might be in danger! She wants to go out and warn Clemens. So she immediately escapes through the window, makes her way down to the ground and makes her way through the dark night in Martira Bay to the house of the Superior family. She hopes that Clemens is there and for some reason did not collect her when he returned. On her way there, a bandit tries to rob her, but she keeps running and soon outdistances him.

At the Superior home, she is welcomed and allowed in, but she learns that Clemens, Herman and Angus have not yet returned.

18 May 735 BC

At first light Velouria sets out for the Havilland Estate to try and find her foster father and his party³¹ on her pony Killer. Close to town she meets the rest of the party and in panicky tears she tells Clemens of her adventures. Clemens is shocked and believes her. His holy Order infiltrated by evil spawn of the night! Angus and Herman are shocked as well, Tavelia might be in danger! They suspect the monster might be a vampire, posing as a human, crawling along the walls like that. The whole party returns to the Cathedral, they want to speak to Tavelia immediately, but are told this is not possible, as she led a service the whole night and is now taking a well deserved rest.

Session XI: 5 October 2007

Herman is convinced the three fingered hand will bring nothing but misery and he wants to be rid of it. Velouria failed a horror check after seeing the man crawling along the walls and carrying a small boy. She now suffers from nightmares.

18 May 735 BG, Martira Bay, Darkon

Later that day, after noon, Tavelia is able to meet with the party³². She hears their story and is deeply shocked, but not surprised as she too had suspicions about a monster living on the premises. She thinks she knows where this monster hides. She is in favour of immediate action to protect the whole of the Cathedral and the people of Martira Bay. The party and she are powerful enough to meet with any monster. She leads the party into the basement and hallways beneath the Cathedral complex³³. This consists mainly of all sorts of storage rooms. After some time following Tavelia, she finally leads them to a small, room with a low ceiling. In the room stands a single coffin. Angus holds a light, while Clemens opens the coffin. In it lies a man, dressed in the robes of the priesthood. He wakes as the light falls on him³⁴. He calls out: "Lady Tavelia, wha...!" And then Clemens slams a stake through his heart.

The group is very relieved by this easy success. Tavelia takes the group back to her office, thanks them, rewards them and sees them out. Only when the group is standing outside in the warm afternoon sun, do the questions come to them. Herman proposes they go to a small inn and talk things over, a lot has happened in the last week and needs to be talked over.

First of all, the vampires inhabiting the Cathedral, was the one Clemens killed the only vampire on the premises? What happened to choirboy Charlie? Tavelia was uninterested in answering these questions.

What about the Hag and the strange machinery in her basement? Is she gone? For good, or ill she return and wreak more havoc? What about Herod? Did he start the fire in the orphanage? Why, he must have known Velouria was no longer there. Or was it the Hag, who needed bodies to power her infernal machine and then burned the orphanage to hide the crime of the kidnapping of 5 of its members? Is there a connection between Herod and the Hag?

What about the appearance of the Vistani and their hunt for the criminal male seer? Was he too looking for the machine? Perhaps to manipulate conjunctions?

After some time the conversation returns to priestess Tavelia, the group is worried for her safety and is convinced that the one vampire they destroyed so easily cannot be the only one. There might be more of them menacing Tavelia. How to draw them out and keep her safe?

³¹ And she is only 11 years old, very gutsy.

³² Tavelia is able to move around in the daylight hours, but prefers not to. Only direct sunlight harms her, but within the building and offices of the Cathedral she is safe enough.

³³ Easy enough, since Velouria, Herman and Angus are still under her influence and Clemens is following a superior.

³⁴ He too can wake during daylight hours, but prefers not to.

Perhaps Herman can pretend to be Tavelia to draw them out. Velouria wants to enter the Cathedral and investigate the goings-on there further. Clemens wants to meet with the priestess and discuss their worries with her. The rest do not want to burden her with this fearful information until they know more.

In the end it is decided that the party will attend the evening service and that Herman and Velouria will go to the dorms, with the excuse that they are looking for some stuff of Velouria. Clemens and Angus will attend the service and keep an eye out for strange things happening.

Session XII: 19 October 2007

Late at night 18 May 735 BC, Martira Bay, Darkon

The party is in the Cathedral attending the evening service. The Cathedral is rather full with people, so Herman and Velouria are able to sneak off without being seen. They make their way to the dorms of the children living in the Cathedral. There they find Charlie; he lies in bed and looks pale and wan. Herman makes him some blood wine³⁵. Charlie is a cute little guy, pale with brown curls and freckles. Velouria wants to chop off his head as some sort of pre-emptive measure against possible vampirism³⁶.

Charlie tells Herman and Velouria that he has been ill and is slowly recovering. He suffered a fever and some bad dreams. The priestess Tavelia has saved him.

Downstairs the service is over. Clemens and Angus have stayed behind; hiding in the shadows and hoping to be able to speak with Tavelia after all the other worshippers have left. As the people file out of the building, Tavelia remains behind with two other priests. They are talking softly. As the cathedral is built to magnify the sound of speakers, Angus and Clemens are able to hear them clearly.

Tavelia speaks with the other priests about the destroyed vampire in the catacombs. It becomes clear that she used this vampire as a sacrificial lamb to throw the dumb meat off the scent. They will now believe the threat is removed and this leaves Tavelia and the others free to rule the cathedral and the city.

Angus and Clemens realise the situation is much worse than they expected. Clemens starts to scream and runs from the Cathedral out into the square, where some worshippers are still standing around, reluctant to go home on this balmy evening.

Upstairs Herman and Velouria hear the screams of Clemens coming in through the dorm window. As they look out, they see him fleeing the building. They immediately realise that something is very wrong. Herman uses smoke form and flees through the walls with Velouria and Charlie.

Outside the general public was spooked by someone fleeing the Cathedral screaming like a madman. But they become really scared when a wisp of smoke or mist descends from an upper storey window and travels along the roads, especially since it looks like a shape of a man with some children.

Angus is the only remaining witness and menaced by three vampires. He manages to concentrate long enough to transform into a form of ectoplasm and he escapes.

³⁵ It sounds worse than it is, it is a Dutch fortifying drink for people suffering from general weakness. Cheap wine with some additives.

³⁶ This was a bit worrying.

Session XIII: 2 November 2007

Early morning 19 May 735 BC, Martira Bay, Darkon

Angus goes to the home of the Superior family in the hope of finding the rest of the party there. He is in luck; Herman opens the door and lets him in. Herman is profoundly worried, he is the only one he came through the ordeal without some sort of trauma. Clemens, Velouria and Angus as well are all so badly affected by what they saw; they are not able to function normally³⁷. And now several powerful vampires know about them, as soon as it becomes dark again, they will no doubt be attacked and silenced, or worse.

Herman decides to flee with the party and the Superior family. He warns Sheriff Alanik Ray about his discoveries and leaves with the party and the Superior family to Ravenstein. There he will be able to hole up and defend his family from the attack of the vampires. They will not be able to enter the village without notice.

On the way to Ravenstein the party meets other refugees. They are fleeing the town since last night a group of ghosts was seen around the Cathedral. Not even the priests were able to put these ghosts to rest. No doubt the dead have finally had enough and are now rising to take their vengeance on the living.

Herman really pushes the horses to the limit and they make it to Ravenstein late in the evening.

20 May 753 BC, Ravenstein, Darkon

Clemens and Herman install their family safely in the Estate at Ravenstein. Then they and the rest of the party travel on to Il Aluk. They want to warn their liege Azalin Rex of the corruption of the branch of the Eternal Order in Martira Bay. He must know how his message was perverted there.

Herman wants to visit the University of Il Aluk as well, to study possible cures for the affliction of his friends.

26 May 735 BC, Il Aluk, Darkon

The party arrives in Il Aluk and they are completely overwhelmed with the grandeur of Il Aluk. There are so many people, so many different sorts of people, huge buildings and so much more.

As a member of the Eternal Order it is relatively easy for Clemens to manage an audience with a high ranking civil servant of Azalin Rex. He attentively listens to Clemens's report and promises to investigate these allegations further. The report of Clemens corroborates other reports of irregularities in Martira Bay, so the civil servant is inclined to believe something odd is going on. He will certainly inform Azalin Rex of these developments.

In the mean time Herman is visiting the university of Il Aluk; he is looking for the faculty of mental or medical science. His friends all suffer ill effects from their encounter with the corruption in the Cathedral. Velouria is suffering from nightmares and has not slept without magical aid for some days. Clemens has developed an irrational fear of church buildings and Angus is deeply afraid of women with long brown wavy hair. This makes it impossible for them to function normally and a cure must be found soon.

³⁷ Failed Horror Checks.

After some asking around Herman finds a Dr. Rorsach. He discusses his friends' problems with him and runs into some trouble. It is clear that the good Doctor does not believe in the existence of the friends. He thinks Herman has invented the 'friends' so he can talk in some privacy to the Doctor about his own problems. It is clear he suffers from some deep seated sexual frustration towards women; this expresses itself in a deep fear of women with brown hair and of the Eternal Order. The Eternal Order is a representation of moral authority and social repression. This all expresses itself in the kleptomania and nightmares he so clearly suffers. The kleptomania is another way of defying the rules of society and the nightmares are an expression of his fear of punishment for his breaking of the social rules.

Herman feels he is not getting anywhere with Dr. Rorsach, so he decides to force the Doctor to come with him and so meet his suffering friends. At the inn the Doctor at last becomes convinced that Herman is not a very troubled individual, but that the party-members are. he can offer some help. Hypnosis, magic and psionics can all be used to modify the memories of the suffering party members. If they cannot remember their trauma, it will no longer trouble them. And there are of course more modern and controversial therapies available if the party wants to try that.

Session XIV: 16 November 2007

A year of playing. I think we celebrated by watching [Black Sheep](#).

27 May 735 BC, Il-Aluk, Darkon

Now that he is in Il-Aluk, Angus searches for more coal burners, a secret society of people who are able to use psionics and who use the guild of coal burners as a cover for their strange activities. After some searching around, he finds a chapter of the guild in Il-Aluk. He is able to identify himself as a legitimate if foreign member of the guild. The guild is willing to accept him, but they want to test his abilities first.

Velouria continues to steal, which causes no end of trouble. She tries to steal everything everywhere, picking pockets, stealing pills from doctors, produce from market stalls. After a while she grows careless and a victim catches her in the act. Clemens tries to smooth things over, but he is very worried and realises that his ward needs some sort of help. He tries to find a hypnotist at the university. At the moment the group feeds Velouria alcohol until she becomes insensible and sleeps through the night, but this is no way to treat a young child.

Herman too, keeps visiting the university. He wants to learn more about magic and the state of Darkon. He finds some old documents detailing the Kargat and the role of Tavelia in the Kargat. He realises that the Eternal Order is some sort of cover-organisation for the Kargat, the secret police.

Angus researches Hyxosa and conjunctions. He learns little of the Vistani, but at the faculty of Experimental Metaphysics he learns more of the existence of other worlds and how to open gates between these worlds. Conjunctions of planets and stars play an important role in the opening of these gates.

Once back at the inn, Herman shares his discoveries with the rest of the party. The Eternal Order is nothing more than a front for the Kargat. Is the Kargat a government within a government? Especially Clemens is shocked by this. Does his liege Azalin Rex know about this organisation? His name as spiritual leader of the nation is being abused! Clemens finds it hard to accept that the Church, to which he has dedicated such a large part of his life, is so abused. As the party is discussing this, a group of watchmen enters the inn and orders the party to come with them. This is the wrong tone and a fight is imminent.

Clemens cannot watch this and uses all his considerable charisma to calm both parties down. After some talking the leader of the watchmen deigns to explain why the group is wanted. Azalin Rex himself wants to meet with the party at Castle Avernus. The party is very impressed and as good citizens they follow the watchmen.

At the imposing Castle Avernus the party is quickly brought into the presence of Azalin Rex. His throne room is huge, dark and very intimidating. When the group is in front of the throne, they are struck with cold fear and they hardly dare to look at their rightful king.

Azalin speaks to them and tells them that the threat of Tavelia is removed from Martira Bay. He is grateful to them for bringing her and her machinations to his attention. But there is another danger in Martira Bay still. The criminal Styrix escaped the dungeons of Avernus and fled to Martira Bay. He orders the party to go back home, find Styrix and kill her. Any and all of her possessions must be brought back to Castle Avernus.

Azalin Rex understands that the party will need help with that and he bestows gifts upon his loyal subjects. Clemens receives a large sword, Herman a book full of spells, Velouria some knives and Angus a bracelet with a very large, black, shiny jewel set into it.

Very much impressed with their visit to their monarch, the party returns to the inn. There Velouria tries to test some of her stolen pills in Herman. Thankfully Herman suffers no ill effects, but this might have ended very differently and Velouria is forever tainted by her evil deeds³⁸.

Angus puts on his bracelet and discovers he cannot take it off. And that he is in contact with Azalin Rex.

Session XV: 14 December 2007

3 June 735 BC, Martira Bay, Darkon

Through the bracelet of Angus, the group is in touch with Azalin Rex. He leads them to an abandoned house in the harbour of Martira Bay. It is a dilapidated and dishevelled building. Normally several families would be living in the apartments, but now it stands forlorn and empty. Carefully the group opens the door and enters the hallway. They see bloodspots on the stairs.

Then Angus hears screaming from the basement. The party goes downstairs, with Clemens in front. In the basement the group discovers the new laboratory of the Hag Styrix. It is dominated by a huge apparatus. In the middle is a globe with lighting flashing inside. Three chairs are mounted on some sort of turning wheel surrounding the globe. An old man and a child are strapped in two of them. In the third chair sits a vision from a nightmare, a huge ugly woman, with black matted hair, red claws a midnight-black skin and talons.

As the group enters the basement, the wheel with the chairs starts to turn, spinning around the globe with the lightning. The lightning starts flashing faster and faster as the speed of the wheel increases. The group starts to attack, hoping to disable the hellish machine. Herman's magic especially is very useful. Somehow he makes a hellish noise, which distracts the Hag so badly that she can do nothing but scream and cover her ears³⁹. The hellish machine starts to wind down and finally stops completely. Herman is able to untie the old man and the child. Velouria sneaks up to the still suffering Styrix and backstabs her, killing the monster.

³⁸ A failed powers check

³⁹ Occasionally the party is extremely lucky. The noise is a wild surge effect from an otherwise useless spell. Due to luck with the saving throws, the hag is the only one affected by the sound.

At the death of the Hag, the empty machine suddenly starts turning again, faster and faster. The group flees up the stairs. Halfway up the stairs, they hear a thunderous boom and a rushing wind. When they look in the basement again, the machine is gone and so a rather large part of the basement floor. The Rift-Spanner teleported away, but no one knows where.

10 June 735 BC, Il Aluk, Darkon

The party reports to Azalin Rex. Angus hopes for a heroes welcome, but Azalin is very angry that the party did not manage to capture the Hag or that they did not bring the Rift-Spanner back to him.

Chapter 5: Night of the Walking Dead

My first published adventure. I decided to run this, because I want to run the Grand Conjunction with my players and because I read on the boards that this was a good adventure to play. I rather liked it, a complex story, not too heavy on the fighting. The only downside was my own planning, I ran this as the party was too powerful and did not beef up the antagonists enough, so the party was never in any real danger.

“The light of the sky shining over the dead shall gutter and fail, turning all to red.”

Session XVI: 11 January 2008

11 June 735 BC II Aluk, Darkon

The party has killed the Hag and has been duly rewarded by their king Azalin. Now they need to find a new way to keep them selves occupied. For Clemens his task is clear, he must return to the estate of Ravenstein and Avezaath and take the education of Velouria in hand again, although he would like to know more about the miniature flail he has carried with him for as long as he can remember. Herman feels the same way; he wants to get back to studying his magical powers and the status of being a court-mage. But he also wants to look into the political machinations in his home-country. Angus wants to become a member of the Darkonese coal-burners.

Clemens decides to go shopping for Velouria in the cosmopolitan II Aluk. As he passes several shops, he enters an antiquarian shop in the hope of finding out more about his flail-heirloom. The shop is rather run-down and grimy. It seems to double as some sort of pawnshop. The old man running the store recognizes the flail however. It is a ceremonial implement of the priests from Har’Akir. Har’Akir is an isolated desert realm, but on occasion travellers from there make their way to II Aluk. The old man even points out the lettering on the flail, Clemens had thought it to be some sort of decoration, but it is actually a line from their holy writings.

In the mean time Velouria has grown bored and wandered off to look at all the stuff in the shop. She is soon attracted to a small statuette of a scorpion, made of some sort of pinkish crystal. Soon she has stolen the wondrous figurine. As Clemens wants to leave the shop, he thinks to pat Velouria down, finds the statue and gives it back to the rightful owner. A vengeful Velouria listens to the desperate preaching of Clemens.

As they are walking back to the inn, Clemens and Velouria come across a marketplace, where they see a horse trader viciously abusing a very skinny horse. Clemens is appalled at the abuse of an innocent animal. And slightly disturbed as well, only last night did he dream of a horse just like that¹.

Clemens tries to stop the trader from abusing the animal. In the end he buys the animal from the trader, just to stop the abuse. The horse, a large, grey stallion with clear, intelligent eyes, is really in a very sorry shape. Clemens uses his powers of Lay on Hands to cure the horse. The horse clearly benefits from the attention. Clemens turns away, looking for some sort of bridle to use on the horse. While he is doing that, the horse suddenly rushes past him, attacking the horse trader with his hooves and teeth, instantly killing the cruel man. Clemens is horrified at the sudden bloodshed. Then he sees that the trader was carrying a knife, trying to attack

¹ Introducing the paladin mount, ravenloft style.

Clemens. The horse has just saved his life! Clemens is very grateful and is now certain he and the horse were meant to be together. He names his steed Swift Justice².

In the mean time Angus too has some adventures. He has made contact with the Il Aluk branch of the coal-burners. One of them, Timon, has volunteered to be Angus's mentor and sponsor within the guild. He tells Angus that becoming a member is a lifelong commitment. Then he gives Angus some tea...

...Angus wakes up in a dark cell. He makes some light and sees that he is in a very small cell. Suddenly water starts to flow into his cell. Soon the water comes up to his knees, his thighs, and his chest. Angus transforms into a large fish and swims around the tiny cell. Then the bottom falls out of the cell.

In the rushing torrent Angus the fish follows the water until he lands in a small underground lake. Angus swims to the shore and turns into a human again. He walks up a small, dark, cold beach. He stumbles onto the skeletal remains of a man³ holding a small statue⁴. Angus takes the statue and walks on. He is met by Timon, who congratulates him on becoming a member of the Darkonese coal-burners. Angus is happy and glows with pride. His only regret is that his parents from Nevuchar Springs didn't live to see this⁵.

Back at the inn, Angus passes the statue on to Herman for further research⁶.

Session XVII: 22 February 2008

1 August 735 BC Ravenstein, Darkon

Back in Ravenstein the group tries to put their past experiences behind them and get back into the stride of a normal life. This is not a success. Their horrific experiences bother them and prevent them from having a normal life. Strange dreams bother them as well. Clemens especially keeps dreaming of a hot sun burning down on a sandy, hilly landscape. He was a figure of importance there, performing important works. The world of Darkon seems strangely dreary and cold compared to that. Herman has dreams of fame, success and untold wealth, finally surpassing his cousin Clemens in status and fame. The little statue seems to play a large part in that.

Herman does some research into the little statue and finds that it is no statue at all, but some sort of living being. Some sort of monster fulfilling the deepest wishes of the holder of the statue. Herman presumes that there will be some sort of price to pay, since nothing comes for free. Angus wants to get rid of the thing. Nothing good will come of this. Herman is not in favour of this. By throwing it away the thing might fall into unsuitable hands, or it might even return to them⁷. Herman proposes to present the thing to Azalin Rex. After all it is a law of the land that all magical items be donated to the Eternal Order and so to its leader, Azalin Rex. A powerful mage like Azalin Rex will be able to deal with a thing like this.

Clemens wants to take the education of Velouria in hand. She is growing older and must be introduced to her peers. The sons and daughters of other local lords, after all she will pre-

² He does not think about the illogic of the trader attacking him, the powers of the ravenloft mount at work.

³ Presumably another aspiring coal-burner.

⁴ The Wishing Imp from the Ravenloft Monstrous Compendium III.

⁵ And the Darkon memory alteration kicks in. Angus now believes himself to be a Darkon native from Nevuchar Springs.

⁶ That was a bit unexpected. This party is really rather levelheaded and sensible.

⁷ Herman is highly intelligent and dangerously genre savvy.

sumably marry one of them. So Clemens organises a tour of the surrounding fiefs and estates so that Velouria can meet her peers and perhaps some sort of proto alliance can be arranged. Herman is supposed to come along as her court mage and Angus wants to come along to open up new markets for his products. The closest fief is that of Babyioniënbroek⁸.

The party sets out for Babyioniënbroek. It is not far and the group feels it will be a cheerful outing to a peaceful neighbouring estate. Soon the group notices how the landscape changes, it becomes flatter and wetter. A fog rises and swirls around the legs of the riding horses. Then the sky grows dark, it seems like a summer thunderstorm is brewing. The group wants to hurry to find shelter before the storm unleashes its fury. The fog rises and thickens as well; soon no one can see a thing. Velouria wants to storm off, to find shelter. But Clemens is afraid of losing her in the fog and stops her.

In the strange mists the group waits for the rains to fall. But somehow this never happens and after a while, the fog clears. Suddenly the temperature rises steeply and the group is surrounded by strange bird noises, not native at all to Darkon. As the fog clears completely, the party is stunned. Instead of the Darkonese countryside, they now see before them a tropical swamp. There are tall trees with strange roots that seem to grow above ground. Everywhere is water, flowing slowly or in stagnant pools. Weird creepers and mosses hang from the trees.

The group is in a serious swamp and the ground is unstable, already the wheels of Angus's cart are sinking in the muck. Angus quickly unhitches the pony. Velouria decides to climb a tree and see where they are. She sees a sea of leafy green interspersed with pools of water. In the middle distance she sees a light shining. She also sees that the sky consists of dark, angry rain clouds. A summer storm seems imminent. Herman wants to make some sort of emergency signal to call for help. Velouria opposes that, as you never know who might come to investigate a sign like that.

The party decides to travel towards the shining light. They are slightly worried, as they don't know what they might encounter. Velouria tries to reassure the rest by saying that if the people near the light turn out to be hostile, they can always kill them at that point⁹.

On their way to the light, the group wades through a slow moving stream of shallow, lukewarm water. Suddenly it turns out that the tree trunks floating in the water are some sort of monstrous lizard with huge teeth. They attack Herman and they try to drag him under water. A short but panicked fight takes place and Herman is seriously injured. Angus and Clemens manage to kill the monsters.

The light turns out to be a small Vistani camp, consisting of an old man, his daughter and her husband and another son. The group is invited to join the fire and a meal. After the meal, the old man tells the party where they are. They are in the domain of Sourange, a land of tropical swamps. The party has never heard of this place and they are amazed that they managed to get here. They have of course heard the stories of strange mists abducting people, but they never believed the stories to be true.

The old man continues to describe the land they are in and the recent troubles that plague it. He tells of the village Marais de Tarascon and the troubles of the de Tarascon family. They lost one son, another went mad and the third is trying to keep the family and village together, even though it is ripped apart by a strange disease and the walking dead.

⁸ Another small Dutch town.

⁹ For some reason the others do not find that reassuring at all. And it is another sign of Velouria's disturbing lack of empathy.

The group is invited to spend the night at the camp and they do so gratefully. They still fear that a storm might break at any moment, but it never happens. That night Clemens has some strange dreams in which he visits the hot, sunny, sandy land again. He feels at home in a way he never feels in Darkon. He feels that the sunny land is much more real than the life he is living when he is awake.

Session XVIII: 7 March 2008

Day 1¹⁰, The Swamp, Sourange

The group wakes up and they find that the family of Vistani has disappeared. There are no trails to be found, nor had the large and heavy Vardo trouble moving in the soggy swamp ground. Still the rain clouds swirl overhead.

The group follows the directions of the old Vistani man towards the village of Marais de Tarascon. Even though they fear a lot of trouble lays that way, after hearing the stories of the old man. But they really have no where else to go and they want to find a way to get back to Darkon. Herman's weather sense tells him there might be more rain later that day, so the party quickly packs up and travels in the directions of the Vistani.

The group travels without too much trouble through the swampy jungle. After a while they come to a large lake. At the shore of the lake is a small hut on poles. It looks like a simple hut for hunters or fishermen, who stay for a night of hunting or fishing. From a small window shines a weak light.

Clemens decides to approach the hut and ask for more directions towards the village of Marais de Tarascon. As he comes closer, a rope ladder is let down, so Clemens can climb inside. Inside the primitive hut he sees a young man surrounded by lamps and holding a children's book. There is something wrong with the man, he does not greet Clemens or talk to him. He is not hostile, but very strange. Clemens thinks he might be dim-witted.

Clemens signals the rest of the group that all is safe and they enter the hut as well. They too find the young man very odd, but he seems harmless enough. Suddenly he starts to talk, but not in an intelligible manner. He mentions the land, evil things, dark nights and six signs. The group wonders what he might be talking of, perhaps the predictions of the Vistani they met yesterday in the jungle.

Since the hut does not contain anything of interest and the young man seems simpleminded, but well cared for, the group decides to leave. They will learn nothing here. Then they hear the sound of a paddle and a boat. A short time later an elderly man enters the little hut; his long white hair is in a very dashing ponytail. He is very surprised to see the group. He introduces himself as Father Brucian, the religious leader of the village of Marais de Tarascon.

Father Brucian tells the group of the young man, he is Luc de Tarascon, the youngest son of the de Tarascon Family. About three weeks ago Marcel de Tarascon, eldest of the brothers died unexpectedly. Luc must have witnessed something horrible about the death, because he has behaved like this ever since that time. There is one other brother left, Jean de Tarascon. Since the death of Marcel several other people have died as well in the small village of Marais de Tarascon.

In spite of this bad news, the group still wants to go to the village. Brucian points the way for them and tells them how to transport their horses around the shores of the lake. When the group leaves, Luc gets up and follows them, not saying a word. The group finds this strange but slightly hopeful; perhaps the young man will shake off his strange affliction.

¹⁰ At this time the date is unclear. I feel that the prophecy of Hykosa is manipulating time as well as space.

In the village of Marais de Tarascon the group goes to the Full Moon Inn and takes some rooms there. The very talkative serving girl Katey tells them all about the zombies and the disappearances. Velouria hears all this, but soon becomes very bored, she wants to do something. At this point Luc is still silently following them around.

After eating a light meal, the group decided to check out the small village. They feel the air-pressure rising, but feel that they will be able to return quickly to the inn if the storm breaks. The village is indeed rustic and small. The only real point of interest is the local cemetery. Due to the high water level most of the families here opt to inter their dead in mausoleums. As the group wanders around, they notice the mausoleum of the de Tarascon family. The last to be buried there is Claudine Tarascon, beloved mother of Marcel, Jean and Luc. The group is surprised at this, why is Marcel de Tarascon, who died three weeks ago not buried here?

Some time later, the group is met by Pierre, who takes care of the graves and the cemetery. He tells them that Marcel indeed passed away and that Brucian tried to raise him. Apparently this did not work out, but Pierre has never received a body to inter in the mausoleum. The group is impressed with the clerical might of Brucian.

Session 19: 21 March 2008

Day 1, Marais de Tarascon, Sourange

In the Full Moon Inn Clemens thinks of zombies. He knows about them from his time in Darkon. They are very weak undead. Some wizards and clerics manage to raise dead bodies into a state of mindless obedience. This is of course an abomination in the eyes of the Eternal Order, as this interferes with the dead, who own the land of Darkon. They will probably take offence at something like that. On occasion these undead can arise spontaneously.

Herman thinks of the de Tarascon family. Would they be looking for a cheap alternative to paying wages? Would they kill and then raise the bodies of their workers? Things like that have happened before; people will do almost anything out of greed.

Day 2, Marais de Tarascon, Sourange

In the Full Moon Inn the group enjoys a large breakfast consisting of porridge, eggs, ham, bread and coffee. Outside, the weather is still gloomy, humid and clammy. Thunder rumbles in the distance. Herman consults Katey on his theory that the de Tarascon family has turned villagers into undead as some sort of horrific cheap labour. She scoffs at that notion.

After breakfast Katey asks the group to leave the Inn for a few hours, she is going to close the Inn so that she and her co-workers can attend the funeral of Jeremiah. Jeremiah passed away yesterday and today is the funeral. Most of the village will attend. The group decides to attend as well; maybe they can learn something of these strange events.

Katey was right and the whole village turned out for the funeral of Jeremiah. The priest Brucian has a short service in the open air, remembering all the good deeds of Jeremiah. The populace listens intently. To the groups horror the coffin of Jeremiah is tied up with ropes and a large chain. Occasionally the coffin moves and thumping can be heard. The standers-by are profoundly worried and scared of the movements and sounds, but none of them try to open the coffin. Neither do any members of the group.

The short service is over and the onlookers go to the cemetery, where Jeremiah will be put up in the mausoleum of his family. After the door of the mausoleum is closed by Pierre, the funeral is over and one by one the villagers depart. The group stays behind and approaches Brucian, who has stayed behind as well. From the small mausoleum the sounds of Jeremiah can still be heard.

Clemens tells Brucian that he is a paladin of the Eternal Order and has some experience with the laying to rest of the restless dead. Brucian appreciates the offer of help and would like to make use of it, but not right now. He proposes the group returns at sundown.

At sundown the group returns to the cemetery and they meet with Brucian. Thankfully he carries a light. Due to the storm clouds, it is extremely dark at the cemetery, although distant flashes of lightning outline some silhouettes. He quickly leads them to the mausoleum of the family of Jeremiah. There he opens the door. Inside the bound coffin of Jeremiah still moves around and will do so until what remains of Jeremiah manages to escape or rots beyond the ability to move. Brucian opens the coffin and an enraged zombie jumps from the coffin and attacks Clemens. Clemens coolly swings his sword and destroys the foul abomination.

Brucian is grateful for the help of Clemens and the rest of the group. He shares his worries with them. The last few weeks everything has gone wrong in Marais de Tarascon. Marcel died, Luc went mad, and people die and rise as zombies. Sometime people even disappear and are not seen again. This worries Brucian the most. Brucian greatly fears the future.

On the way back to the Full Moon Inn Clemens worries about himself. He suffers from strange dreams and nightmares about the sunny, sandy land. As he tried to bless the remains of Jeremiah he remembered other times and places in which he did the same. But they were not in Darkon. His whole life in Darkon seems like a strange, dark dream.

Day 3, Marais de Tarascon, Sourange

The next day is still threatening rain and storm. The strange weather makes the group edgy and they decide to go out and walk for a bit. The group manages to prevent a murder in the twisty streets of Marais de Tarascon. They heard the scream of a young woman and the party rushes to the rescue. They manage to scare off the assailant, Velouria throws a knife after him and Clemens chases the assailant through the street of Marais de Tarascon. Eventually he loses the caped assailant at the edge of town. Clemens sees the fields of sugarcane and the ancestral Estate of the de Tarascon family.

The group now thinks that Jean, last sane, living member of the de Tarascon family might be behind the attacks on the town. They decide to pay a visit to the Estate and snoop around for a bit. They leave the horses at the Full Moon Inn so as not to attract too much attention. As they leave the village they notice that for the first time, Luc is not following them. They feel rather relieved about this, as they were very creeped out by his strange, silent presence.

At the plantation the group sees that the fields are neglected, weeds grow everywhere and plants have not been harvested. The building looks deserted, there are no sounds of the many servants a place like this needs.

The group knocks at the front door and there is no reaction. After a while Herman uses magic to turn his right arm into a huge snake, which worries the rest of the group. The enormous snake slithers up a pillar and onto the railing of the balcony above the front door. From there it pulls up the rest of Herman. On the balcony, Herman looks through the windows and sees some sort of office room. He opens the door and goes inside. Inside he opens the door into the hallway and sends the snake out to investigate. Soon the snake sees some servants carrying a meal. The snake cannot see well and sees nothing wrong with the servants; however they do have a room temperature body heat. Herman immediately concludes that they must be some sort of undead, probably zombies.

Herman helps the rest of the party up as well and shares his findings with them. The group decides it is too dangerous to return through the fields to the village, so they will spend the night barricaded in the little office¹¹.

Session 20: 4 April 2008

Day 4, De Tarascon Estate, Sourange

The group spent the night in the office of Jean de Tarascon, at the de Tarascon Estate, while they knew zombies lied downstairs as servants. They probably ate the flesh of the dead and disappeared villagers. Herman and Velouria were especially cold-blooded and managed to sleep that night. Angus and Clemens were too nervous to sleep and kept watch.

Then the group hears that Jean de Tarascon has returned to the Estate. He calls his zombies to him and tells them to search the fields, looking for intruders and unknown people. He knows about the party and wants them out of the way. The group worries when they hear this and they prepare themselves for a big fight. Herman uses many spells to protect himself and the group. Clemens positions himself close to the door and asks the rest to get the clothes iron for the spring cleaning. The group looks on confusedly. Angry that the rest seems to be lollygagging, Clemens grabs a cabinet and puts it in front of the door¹².

The moving of the cabinet has alerted Jean that someone is upstairs. The group hears him coming up the stairs, while he orders his minions to feed the goldfish. Then he sees the group and attacks them. He is soon followed by his loyal zombies who cry for “Calves, calves!” Clemens stands behind the cabinet to hold off the first wave of attackers. “Puddle, skirt, topsy-turvy!” he screams at them. More zombies follow and Clemens tries to give orders to the rest of the group to help him. “Cover the walls with floral wall-paper, and then I will iron the floors with the cat!” After some blows, Jean and the zombies are killed and the strange aphasia disappears again¹³. The group flees back to Marais de Tarascon.

Session 21: 18 April 2008

Day 4, Marais de Tarascon, Sourange

The group has just killed Jean de Tarascon, who used the bodies of the villagers as some sort of horrific undead servants. They return to the village to speak with Father Brucian. They still worry about the whereabouts of the body of Marcel de Tarascon. They killed Jean and Luc has joined them again, but is still as silent and weird as ever. Was the body of Marcel eaten by the zombies, was he a zombie?

During this conversation Luc starts to mumble again about the signs signifying evil. Angus suddenly realises what the boy is talking about and together, in perfect unison they recite the prophecy of Hykosa. When they come to the couplet about the Son of the Suns, Clemens feels very uneasy indeed, but he does not understand why. After Angus and Luc have finished, the rest of the group wants an explanation.

Angus confesses how he got the prophecy of Hykosa when the group lived at the Ravenstein Estate. He promised Hykosa to keep the scroll secret and feels guilty that the rest of the group now knows about it too.

¹¹ Yes I know, I find it a strange decision as well.

¹² A wild surge, confusing tongues to be precise. Nobody can understand anybody else. Mass aphasia.

¹³ Too bad, it was really fun and the group was a bit worried about not being able to coordinate their attacks.

Herman foresees that the prophecy is indeed accurate and that every couplet predicts some sort of event and when all events have come to pass, it will mean the end of the world. So all the couplets must be prevented from occurring, or at least the last one mustn't occur.

After the group has calmed down a bit, Father Brucian tells all he knows of the life and death of Marcel de Tarascon. He was killed when he was together with Luc. Jean begged Father Brucian to bring Marcel back to life, but for some reason Father Brucian failed. Since all the bad things on the area started happening after his failed attempt at resurrection, he suspects that his attempt partially succeeded. He thinks that Marcel may have come back as some sort of undead and that he is behind all the recent killings and attacks.

As Father Brucian tells all this, the storm that has been threatening for the past 4 days, finally breaks. Rain falls down in torrents, lightning flashes and strikes treetops in the forest, thunder roars with deafening might. It is truly an intimidating storm. Then a man crashes through the door of Father Brucian's home and babbles incoherently about zombies, raised from the dead. The group is frightened; they have been fighting zombies just this morning and exhausted their spells. Quickly they run outside and try to get as many villagers as possible into the Full Moon Inn, the largest building in the village. From there they will hold off the zombies. Herman uses spells to seal the doors.

Angus and Herman cook up some crude Superior-cocktails¹⁴ to keep the zombies at a distance. This works, but they also set parts of the village on fire. This adds to the panic and confusion of the people. The slaughter is terrible to behold. Villagers are killed by zombies, who in turn are killed by the intrepid group. For the fugitives this is a truly traumatic experience. They see their loved ones, still recognizable, returned from the dead as horrific undead monsters. These monsters are brutally killed by fire (Aunt Cecile! No!). And all the while the rain keeps rushing down, flashes of lightning outdo even the fire consuming the village and screams of the dying are drowned out by the thunder. And still the zombies keep coming.

Angus and Herman realise that they must rest. So everybody barricades themselves into the inn. Clemens and the able bodied defend the inn from the zombies and Angus and Herman catch some well deserved sleep.

Day 5, Marais de Tarascon, Sourange

The new dawn rises, but due to the zombies laying siege to the inn, the torrential rain and continuing storm, very few people see this. However, Angus and Herman are rested and feel up to some serious zombie-smashing.

Clemens saddles Swift Justice and storms out of the stables, dealing death and destruction to the zombies still laying siege to the inn. Angus and Herman follow him, mopping up the remaining moving bodies. The group makes for the cemetery, as they feel this is the place where all the trouble concentrates.

At the cemetery the group goes to the old part of the cemetery, where the old and forgotten mausoleums stand. There they soon find the crypt where Luc and Marcel did their exploring. There the group fights some zombies who seem older and are more powerful than the recently risen undead villagers. Then they see a faint light shining from the De Tarascon mausoleum. There they find the undead horror that Marcel de Tarascon has become after the unsuccessful attempt of Father Brucian to raise him from death. Marcel is involved in some strange ritual. The group decides not to wait for the completion of the ritual and they use violence to stop it. While the group fights Marcel, the rain suddenly stops and some sort of eclipse takes place.

¹⁴ Molotov-cocktails.

The mausoleum is awash with a strange red glow, which gives the fight another hellish dimension.

Then, after a harrowing fight, the long-dead body of Marcel finally falls. The group is relieved and they search the mausoleum, trying to understand what Marcel was trying to do. They find a scroll with the six signs of Hykosa on it. Strangely enough, this scroll seems to be very old, whereas the Vistani that Angus met and the band that was chasing them and met with Clemens met with the group no more than a few months ago.

As the group steps out of the mausoleum, they see that all the zombies beleaguering the village have dropped lifelessly to the ground. The rain clouds have disappeared. Still the landscape is awash in the strange red light. They see that the moon is covering the sun and that for some reason it has turned red. As the moon moves slowly away from the sun, the light grows strong and normal again. Very soon steam rises from the soaked ground.

On rereading the scroll, Herman realises that at least one of the signs has come to pass. The light of the sky has turned red and it had shone on the walking dead. Perhaps another sign has also come to pass. Many orphans died in the fire at the orphanage, perhaps one of them had a stern mother.

Chapter 6: Blaustein

A short chapter between Hexads. After the adventures of the previous chapter, the group needed to return to some sort of normalcy and I did not want to move to the completion of the next Hexad. So the group will visit Blaustein. This will also focus a bit more on the extraordinary position of Velouria as the only woman in the party. As she grows older, it will become increasingly difficult to travel with her.

Session 22: 16 mei 2008

Day 6, Marais de Tarascon, Sourange

After the horrifying events of the day before the group and the villagers need a day to recover. Clemens has an unsettling experience in this time. He realises that his name is really Oded Fay and that he is from Har' Akir and not Darkon at all. He is no paladin for the Eternal Order, but for the Green Hand, worshipping Osiris. He now remembers the happy times he spent with his mentor, a full priest of Osiris. He remembers their quest to bring a known grave-robber to justice, how this quest brought them into Darkon. He remembers the despair when the thief killed his mentor and the anguished tears that fell as he promised his wounded and dying mentor to bring the thief to justice. He remembers being taken in by Clemens and Olivia Superior and in due time they adopted him and made him their heir. He remembers. Angus has a similar experience, he remembers that he is not from Nevuchar Springs, but from Tepest.

By now Velouria has turned 12. Oded Fay worries about her. Where can he find a woman to teach her the things only a woman can teach her?¹

The villagers are very grateful for the assistance the group has given them, but now they feel it is time for these unsettling people to leave again. They are given directions to the harbor city of Port D'Elhour. There they can find a ship to any port.

Angus and Oded Fay compare their experiences and realise that something in Darkon must affect their memories. Herman knows about this, many people sometimes have trouble with their memories, after they have come to Darkon or leave it. But this is the first time he sees the phenomenon up close. He remembers Clemens' adoption very well. It is rather normal for highranking people without heirs to adopt one. Uncle Clemens and Aunt Olivia did not have an heir and so adopted a bright young man with a shining career in the Eternal Order. Oded Fay worries some more. Even though his memory was affected, his essential character still led him to a life in service of religion. Angus too remained a loyal coal burner, even though he did not remember his past in Tepest. So what new role was there for a murderous grave robber from Har' Akir after he entered Darkon? Herman suggests that he might have found his place with the Kargat, the Darkonese secret police. Angus also worries about what will happen if he and Oded Fay return to Darkon. Will they again lose their memory? He does not want that. How soon will he lose his memory?

While the group is discussing this, Velouria has wandered off. The discussion bored her. She walks through the streets and wonders in the direction of the harbor district. Usually this is a low part of town. But in Port D'Elhour there is a very nice boulevard along a part of the beach. It gives a very nice view of the ocean and there are several shops on one side. This

¹ Rather poorly put, but he means things like the sex talk.

street attracts a lot of people taking the air and the view. They do not pay much attention to Velouria, who robs them blind. When she makes her way to one end of the boulevard, she passes a dark alley. In it she sees a couple of neat-looking sailormen. Completely unexpectedly they hit her on the head and she faints.

Velouria wakes up with a terrible headache in a small wooden room. The room seems to tilt to and fro. After a bit she realises she is on a ship. It moves! She is abducted!

By now the rest have discovered that Velouria is missing. Using his spells Herman tries to locate her. She is on a ship named "Pride of Blaustein". The group races to the harbor, just in time to see "Pride of Blaustein" leaving the harbor. Quickly they commandeer another ship, "Siren", and give chase. Angus turns himself into a dolphin and gives chase as well. Outside of the harbor lies a large mistbank. The "Pride of Blaustein" disappears into the mist and "Siren" follows.

Meanwhile Velouria does not like being abducted. She decides to escape. In a rage she throws herself at the door, which gives way. She now stands in a very cramped hallway. She hears stumbling footsteps above, someone is coming! Quickly she darts into another room, some sort of storage. She hides behind some vats.

Some men are walking along the small corridor. She hears them talking. They heard the sounds of her breaking down the door and they are checking if the fiancée is all right. In horror she realises that she, a 12 year old girl, is the fiancée. The men, the same sort of neat sailors she saw in Port D'Elhour, enter the storage room. Velouria throws coconuts at them, knocking out one man with a lucky throw. But then she is overpowered.

For the worried group on the "Siren" the mists finally clear and they see a small rocky island. There is a tiny harbor with some ships, "Pride of Blaustein" is among them. There is a small village built on the cliffs near the harbor. Above that towers an enormous castle with 4 towers.

Session 23: 13 June 2008

Day 6, Harbour, ?

The group has arrived in pursuit of the "Pride of Blaustein" in a harbour on a very small, rocky island, presumably this is the village or country of Blaustein. The "Pride of Blaustein" is moored to a dock. The smaller vessel "Siren" is still adrift outside the harbour. The group is reluctant to enter the harbour, but they also need to rescue Velouria. Herman wants to save his employer, he uses magic to write a threatening message in the sky for the return of Velouria. There is no reaction from the ship or the village. Angus uses his ectoplasm form to be able to enter the ship "Pride of Blaustein", to see where Velouria might be. He sees the crew, but no Velouria.

Eventually the "Siren" moors at the docks as well, next to the "Pride of Blaustein". Oded Fay walks onto the dock, towards the "Pride of Blaustein" and demands his daughter back². This gets a reaction, just not the one Oded Fay expected. The crew and the harbour-labourers welcome Oded Fay as the 'Father-in-law' and are very friendly and congratulatory with the engagement of his daughter. This deeply disturbs him and the rest of the group. Velouria is only 12, way too young to get married.

² They did not think that this was the time to reveal that Velouria has no living family left.

In the meantime, Velouria was hustled off the ship and into the large castle. She saw little of this, as she was properly subdued by the crew of the “Pride of Blaustein” after she nearly killed someone with a coconut.

In a very richly appointed room (wall-hanging, curtains, pillows, furniture everywhere) she is bathed by a servant, dressed in fine new clothes and fed with very expensive food. Velouria is used to the good life as a minor noble in Darkon, but this is something else. During all this, Velouria questions the maid. The maid is not very bright and tells Velouria all she wants to know.

The island is ruled by Captain Bluebeard, so called because he paints his black beard blue, to scare off enemies. The captain intends to marry Velouria and make her the happiest woman alive. The highest honours will be bestowed on Velouria in the course of this marriage.

Velouria indicates that she does not want to get married. The maid does not understand her and tells her that she will not be married for some time. But when she is grown a bit more, the Captain will make her the happiest woman alive. Then Velouria tells the maid that she would like to be alone for a while. The maid misunderstands her again and shows her the privy. The maid will not leave Velouria however.

By now it is late afternoon. The maid wants to take Velouria down into the village for some exercise, as the bride-to-be should remain in perfect health for the Captain³. Tragically, he lost a wife to illness. So now everyone will see to it that Velouria stays healthy by eating properly and exercising. Also the maid and Velouria will not spend the night in the castle. The first wife of the Captain still haunts the castle after her death, so no one remains there at night. As she walks through the castle with the maid, Velouria keeps seeing female shapes flitting just out of sight, around corners and through doors⁴.

Once outside the castle, the dim-witted maid is no match for the ingenuous thief that Velouria has become. She soon escapes her captor and makes a bee-line for the harbour. There she soon meets with her foster father Oded Fay and her friends. The villagers on the docks soon realise that they are looking at the Fiancee and her Father and they become extatic with joy. They surge onto the dock and all try to personally congratulate Oded Fay and Velouria. They become scared of the press of bodies of all these friendly people.

The atmosphere soon changes when Captain Bluebeard himself enters the scene. He orders that his Fiancee and her family must be brought to the castly, to enjoy the hospitality of Blaustein. The crowd surges forward again to obey the wishes of their beloved Captain. Some villagers fall into the dangerous waters between the docks and the ships because of the press of bodies.

The group tries to keep the mob away and get back on their ship “Siren”. Some of the villagers are killed, while the group tries to accomplish this. Then Captain Bluebeard enters the fray, he does not want to lose a chance to mold his juvenile wife to his own wishes. Then Angus shows his worth. With one hand he releases a thunderbolt of electrical energy, which hits the captain in the chest. All the hairs of his blue beard stand on end. Jerkily he moves around the dock, while sparks discharge from all the metal bits of his uniform. Still sparking he falls into the waters of the harbour. Deeply shocked the populace looks at the downfall of their captain⁵.

Quickly the group rushes on board the “Siren”. The captain quickly lifts the anchor and the ship leaves the harbour, before the crowd can turn hostile on the killers of their beloved ruler.

³ The friendly but brainless chatter of the maid drove Velouria nuts.

⁴ This is Velouria’s Ghost Sight at work, a trait I do not use often enough.

⁵ Rather anti-climactic I felt. The group was too powerful for this encounter.

The death of Captain Blue sends shockwaves not only through the crowd, but through the physical land as well. The Island quakes and shakes. The castle starts to collapse and the buildings of the village as well. The rocks and masonry falling into the harbour cause waves, which cause more destruction. The continuing quakes make these waves bigger and more powerful. Desperately the "Siren" makes for open water, while the screams of the villagers on their sinking Island follow them.

On the open sea the "Siren" is still not safe. They are followed by larger and larger waves which toss the little ship to and fro. Then the "Siren" is dragged along by a huge wave towards a maelstrom. Further and further down they go, while the crew of the ship tries desperately to escape. Eventually the little ship is smashed to splinters and group tries to hold on to pieces of the wreckage. But eventually everyone is swallowed by the dark waters.

Chapter 7: Touch of Death

Oh please, you didn't really think that was the end, did you?

In this chapter the events of the adventure Touch of Death are played out. We return to Har'Akir, the native land of Oded Fay, formerly known as Clemens Superior. Things have gone rather downhill since he left his native country.

I rather liked the Touch of Death adventure, but I played the Vistani girl Dulcimae as extremely dim-witted, only because of her pose on the front cover of the adventure. Someone who drapes herself so helplessly in front of a huge mummy can't have more than two brain cells to rub together.

“Seventh time the son of suns doth rise
to send the knave to an eternity of cries.”

Session 24: 11 July 2008

?, ?

Oded Fay wakes and sees he lies in the sand. As he rises he sees he lies on a beach, the gentle waves of a crystal-clear turquoise sea lapping at his feet. Some way away he sees the bodies of Herman and Velouria. They are not moving.

The sky is deep blue and the sun shines down with murderous heat. The beach slowly changes into dry, sandy dunes. Oded Fay realises they need to find some shade fast, before everybody gets a sun stroke.

Oded Fay wakes Herman and Velouria; they remain very dazed and confused. They don't seem to wake up properly. Oded Fay herds them to some palm trees and shrubs. He sits them in the shade of the trees and folds some primitive hats out of the leaves of the palm trees. Angus, Swift Justice, Herman's mule Tiffany and Velouria's pony Destroyer are nowhere to be seen. Most likely they died in the apocalyptic aftermath of Bluebeard's death and ensuing shipwreck.

Herman and Velouria are unable to formulate any plans for their own wellbeing, so this task falls to Oded Fay as well. Oded Fay feels very tired and drained after his ordeal, but if he fails his friends now, they will all die. In the distance Oded Fay sees a small line of green against the dunes. He concludes that water may be found there. He tries to get Herman and Velouria to the source of water. As he tries that, he realises that Herman and Velouria have lost their memory during the traumatic experiences of the recent past.

The little strip of green turns out to be a small well with a village surrounding it. The villagers greet Oded Fay warmly. With a shock he realises that he understands what they say. He is back home in Har'Akir and these are his people.

The shipwrecked group is housed in the temple of Osiris, where they can recuperate after their ordeal. The little group falls into a deep sleep.

That night, a scream wakes Herman. He hears how someone is dragged along the sand against his will. Bravely he ventures out of the temple and manages to chase off the abductor and save his victim. As he comes closer to help the limp victim, he sees that the victim has turned into some sort of primitive mummy, dried by wind and heat. Despite the noise, no one else came to help their fellow villager.

By now, Oded Fay has awakened as well and he and Herman wake the priest of Osiris and compel him to bury the body with all due regards. The priest is a weak and small minded man and does not offer much resistance, although Oded Fay and Herman notice that he is very unwilling to do his duty.

Oded Fay realises that the short respite has restored the mind of Herman. He hopes that Velouria will recover quickly as well.

Session 25: 25 July 2008

Day 1, a small village, Har' Akir

The next day, Oded Fay feels completely at home in the little village. The sense of being slightly out of place, which has always haunted him in his years in Darkon, has left him. He makes himself known as a servant of the Green Hand and is welcomed as such. While Oded Fay looks and asks around, he notices that all is not as it should be. Osiris seems to have turned into an angry and vengeful god. The people fear him, as they worship him. The other gods do not seem to receive their share of worship.

The group exchanges fire water (made by Herman) for some supplies like clothing, weapons and a small donkey. Oded wants to travel to the capital of Har' Akir, a town called Muhar. The group then departs the small village and makes for Muhar. By now Herman and Velouria have recovered their wits and are anxious to return home. They have left behind Darkon for more than a week now and are worried about those they left behind.

On the road along the coast towards Muhar, Oded Fay sees his beloved Swift Justice again. Apparently he too survived the shipwreck. Angus and the mule Tiffany have also survived the demise of Blaustein.

Oded Fay wants to continue to Muhar to find out what has happened to the cult of Osiris. Why is it so much more dominant than before? Why is Osiris a more demanding god? Oded Fay feels that Osiris should be restored to his proper place and that the other gods should receive their due as well. Velouria is fine with this change in religious politics, it will mean that the other temples are abandoned and the fewer people will care if their treasures are stolen¹.

Then the group meets with the Vistana Dulcimae and her brothers. They stand around the Vardo, which has fallen on its side. The group helps with righting the Vardo. A grateful Dulcimae thanks the group and promises them a reading of the cards. Her brothers do not agree with that, but Dulcimae brushes them off.

The group moves on together with Dulcimae and her family towards Muhar. Along the way the group sees a hand sticking out from the sands by the sides of the track. After some investigation they see that the hand belongs to a person who is deceased for some time and that the rest of the body is still buried beneath the sands. The group decides that the body deserves a real burial, so they dig it up and lay it respectfully on the Vardo and take it with them to Muhar. With her Ghost Sight Velouria can see how this man died. His ghost is constantly re-enacting his own death. The man fled something, was overtaken, strangled and then withered into an instant skeleton.

These images frighten Velouria and she asks Oded Fay to tie the body down firmly, just like Father Brucian did with the bodies in Sourange. Oded agrees that this is no more than a sensible precaution and does so². Oded Fay further wants to protect the body from evil influences. He realises that the ceremonial flail he still carries as a memory of his fallen master, is a powerful holy symbol. With the lipstick of Dulcimae he draws a flail on the chest of the unfortunate mummy, and so hopes to protect the soul of the poor victim.

In Muhar the small caravan draws quite a crowd, as strangers are something novel. The villagers have never seen anything as exotic as a Vardo or the Vistani family. The villagers see the body on the Vardo. They recognize the man as one of their fellow villagers and a huge

¹ Thoughts like these earn her a powers check, without any effects however.

² Funny, even though the encounters in Sourange were never really dangerous for the group, it did scare them.

wailing goes up. Eventually one woman comes forward who identifies the man as her husband. She wants to take him home for a burial. Oded Fay gently dissuades her, he convinces her to take the body to the temple of Osiris for preparation for the burial. The woman is persuaded to give up her claims and she calms down a bit. The group is worried that a body that looks so old, passed away only recently, going by the reactions of the villagers.

The caravan comes to the centre of the village. There is a temple of Osiris and the holy well of the village. In front of the temple stands Isu, the high priestess of Osiris. She welcomes Oded Fay back to his home. She invites the group to stay in the temple for as long as they want. Dulcimae and her brothers decline. As Vistani they want to stay in their Vardo. They set up camp close to the holy well.

Session 26: 8 August 2008

Day 1, Muhar, Har' Akir

Oded Fay wants to spend the night in the temple, in his home, to be close to the dead man they found. He fears the manner of his death might compel the poor soul to walk again. He wants to be on hand then to be able to intervene. He cannot leave that responsibility to Isu. Velouria and Angus do not share this view. They want to be as far away from the dead body as possible. Herman sees no problem with staying near the body at night. He also wants to stay near Dulcimae, as he has taken quite a shine to her.

That night, when the villagers are all asleep, Herman goes to the Vardo of Dulcimae and her brothers. He wants to talk to Dulcimae and he manages to gain her attention. He tells her that only yesterday he fought with a mummy, who turned his victim into mummies as well. He feels that with finding this new mummy, more fights with mummies are on the horizon. He would like for Dulcimae to predict his future. In exchange he will let her know who the great love of her life is³.

Then Dulcimae starts to cry. She tells Herman that she really is not very good at predicting the future. She is nowhere near as good as her mother in laying the cards. Her brothers blame her for the fact that they ended up in Har' Akir, which was not their intention at all. Herman comforts her⁴.

When Dulcimae is calmed down a bit, Herman performs the "True Love" spell for her. It turns out that Herman is not her True Love, but that her True Love is to be found some 30 kilometres to the west. Looking west, Herman can see some sort of cliffs in the moonlight. Herman is rather disappointed that he is not the true love of the pretty Dulcimae. He is looking for love and recognition. He knows he will always stand in the shadow of his more accomplished cousin Oded Fay and sometimes jealousy rears its ugly head. He just wants to accomplish something for himself that Oded Fay does not also have.

Dulcimae is completely oblivious to this soul-searching of Herman and wants to set off in the middle of the night into the dangerous desert in search of her true love. Herman manages to convince her that this is not a good idea and that she should at least take her brothers with her if she goes in search of a husband.

In exchange for the revelation of her True Love, Dulcimae wants to arrange a card reading for Herman and his companions. Herman calls his sleepy companions and together they sit around Dulcimae while she lays the cards.

³ He is hoping it is him, he is a romantic, really.

⁴ Just look at the cover of "Touch of Death", Dulcimae is the kind of dimwitted woman who would cry in the arms of a complete stranger about her failures and insecurities.

This first card is a Knave of Spades; this refers to an evil man, who does not know his proper place. The second card is a Queen, who no longer serves her king. Then comes the sign of 6. Next is the Ace of Clubs, which refers to a special person with great powers. The fifth card is the King of Spades, the true lord, but a wrathful one and one with great power. The last card is the 4 of Diamonds, 4 nights will pass before the predictions of these cards will come to pass. But it also refers to great riches to be found.

After he sees the sign of six, Angus immediately thinks of the prophecy of Hykosa and his six signs foretelling doom for all the land. He thinks that the third prediction⁵ might come to pass in this very land. As Angus shares his thoughts with the rest of the party, Oded Fay thinks of an ancient Pharaoh, Ankh-Te-Pot. He was a powerful and evil Pharaoh and he ruled Har' Akir in ancient times with an iron fist. Because of the evil deed he committed while he ruled as a god, he can find no rest in the afterlife with the other gods. So occasionally he becomes restless and wanders the dunes of his former realm. In the prophecy that refers to the Son of the Suns, the title of the ancient Pharaohs, it is also said that he will send a knave to an eternity of cries. The group feels they can live with that, although innocent bystanders might get caught in the fallout.

Velouria identifies the Queen who no longer serves her King as the High Priestess Isu. The group thinks someone else might pretend to be the god Osiris and mislead her in that way. Oded Fay knows that there is a series of great cliffs to the west of Muhar, a great temple of Osiris may be found there. In ancient time the dead, including the pharaohs of old were buried there as well. Angus and Oded Fay both wonder who the King and Knave of Spades might be. Velouria is worried about this prediction and she wants to soothe her worries with more weapons. She wants to buy throwing knives. Only for the group to realise that in a village this small it might even be hard to find a smith who is able to make knives for weapons, let alone delicate throwing knives. The backwardness of his homeland suddenly hits Oded Fay. He has been spoiled in Darkon, where everything is available, for a price.

Angus thinks the group and Har' Akir might have 3 to 4 days before something goes seriously wrong. Herman thinks the group should accompany Dulcimae, if she goes looking for her true love. Her true love is to be found among the cliffs as well.

The group returns to the temple of Osiris. It is very late and they are tired of travelling and worrying about the near future.

Later that night Angus, Oded Fay and Herman are awakened by a blood curdling scream. They rush out into the moonlit, freezing night and they see something terrible. On one of the dunes near the village stands an old mummy. It seems to be directing a horde of zombies towards the Vardo of Dulcimae and her family. Her brothers are trying to defend her, but they are fighting a losing battle against these undead horrors.

The horrors of these monsters, which defile everything he believes in, overcome Oded Fay. He becomes enraged to see the dead so abused. Roaring and frothing at the mouth he throws himself into the fight⁶. Angus flees the scene and hides under Velouria's bed⁷, waking her. All the while Herman keeps his cool and he uses an illusion of fire raining from the skies, burning all in its path. It does not have its usual effect, a part of the zombies indeed flees, but the mummy on the dune top is not fazed and merely directs more zombies towards the Vardo of Dulcimae.

⁵ The group thinks that the mass murder of the orphans and nuns in the Orphanage of Martira Bay was the first sign.

⁶ A failed horror check, Oded Fay becomes enraged.

⁷ Another failed horror check.

The zombies become more violent in their onslaught and try to kidnap one of Dulcimae's brothers. Oded Fay sees this and still frothing, comes to his rescue. But in his blind rage he is no longer very discerning about where his sword lands. He kills Dulcimae's brother with one stroke of his sword, arms and legs bounce everywhere⁸.

Herman sees that in spite of his great powers, the tide of the battle goes against him, especially with allies like Oded Fay. He uses one mighty spell and suddenly Oded Fay and the five zombies he battles seem to disappear. A form of calm returns to the battlefield and Herman focuses on the remaining zombies. In the meantime Velouria has arrived at the battlefield. The first thing she sees is Herman casting a mighty spell after which Oded Fay and the monsters he battles suddenly disappear from her normal sight, but reappear in her Ghost Sight⁹. Her first thought is that Herman must have killed Oded Fay and that he must die by her blade for that, he is in a perfect position to backstab. But then she realises that Herman would never do something like that intentionally to his beloved cousin Clemens Oded Fay Superior¹⁰.

Session 27: 12 September 2008

Day 1, Muhar, Har' Akir

The fight still continues. Oded still fights the zombies in the Border Ethereal. Angus has conquered his fears and tries to kill zombies with the use of his fire staff and his displacement abilities. Velouria dispatches one of the monsters with her daggers. Herman tries to use Stinking Cloud and Fire Stars to keep the undead horrors at bay. No matter how hard they fight there seem to be more and more zombies. And no one has even been able to land a blow against the monster who is directing the zombies from a nearby dune.

Then the fight becomes even harder. One of the brothers of Dulcimae is caught and kidnapped. The zombies leave with his writhing form across the dunes towards the deep desert. Then another brother is captured as well. Angus takes on the form of a mountain lion and chases them. The zombies seem to have gotten new orders and leave the battlefield.

Herman uses another spell to augment his physical powers and manages to kill two zombies. The Mummy on the dune top now understands how truly powerful Herman and the rest of the party can be. He retreats and takes the zombies with him. Velouria is deeply impressed with the range of powers Herman commands and secretly wishes to be able to wield these powers as well.

Angus still follows the zombies through the dunes, slowly he gains on them. But he grows tired of maintaining the form of a mountain lion. He roars in futile rage at the zombies. Then the zombies sink into the loose sand of the desert, taking their kidnap victims with them. Desperately Angus changes back to his normal form and tries to save them. This fails, as the zombies sink down and try to drag Angus with them. After some struggle, he manages to free himself. He marks the spot where the brothers disappeared and returns to the village of Muhar.

Session 28: 19 September 2008

Day 2, Muhar, Har' Akir

Oded Fay is overwhelmed by guilt. Due to his rage-fuelled actions an innocent man lies dead! A man he was honor bound to protect! He wants to ask Isu, High Priestess of Osiris for abso-

⁸ The Rage, combined with a critical fumble, which causes triple damage.

⁹ Velouria has the Ghost Sight ability, although it is sadly underused.

¹⁰ Successful Wisdom check, whew.

lution for his sins. He must make this up to Osiris, the family of the man he killed and himself, if he is ever to function as a proper paladin again.

Herman tries to console Dulcimae after she has lost three brothers in one night.

Oded Fay visits Isu together with Velouria to ask for a way to find forgiveness. Isu seriously listens to his story. She then tells him how badly he has behaved by letting rage direct his actions. And letting his emotions rule him. She gives him a proper punishment. He must spend 5 days and 5 nights in the deep desert. He must continuously pray to Osiris for forgiveness. Oded Fay accepts this punishment as just.

Isu is not as she seems however. Velouria's interpretation of the cards is right. Isu is no longer a servant of Osiris, but now serves another. Isu is very happy that she was able to get the powerful Oded Fay out of the way this easily. Her plans are coming to fruition and she feels that Sen-Met¹¹ will be able to easily deal with this intruder.

Oded Fay returns to the rest of the group and he tells them of the penance he has been given. Then he immediately goes to search for some food and drink for five days and nights. He plans to start his penance immediately, to regain his sense of self worth. Herman is the only one who does not like this penance one bit. He wants to know where Oded Fay will go. Oded Fay tells him that Osiris will protect him, if he is still worthy of protection. Velouria wants to follow Oded Fay at a distance, just far enough away for Oded Fay to think he is facing the dangers of 5 full days in the desert all alone, but close enough to help him if things get tricky. Herman decides to follow him from a distance with his magic.

While Oded Fay is packing for his long stay in the desert, the villagers find another dead body. This one is holding a scrap of Angus's clothing. Very soon the enraged mob is screaming for his head. In a panic Herman and Angus wonder what to do. Velouria is calmly preparing to discreetly kill the ringleaders of the smallish mob. Oded Fay steps outside and speaks some soothing words to calm the mob down. Their rage cools and the mob disperses¹². Oded is finally fully packed and goes to say goodbye to his horse Swift Justice, before he goes into the desert for his penance. As he is stroking the ears of his beloved horse, he suddenly realises that what he is doing is extremely stupid and dangerous. Oded Fay made a slight mistake, truly an accident. The victim was a foreigner to boot. There is no reason at all to go into the dangerous desert for some sort of penance over this. Oded Fay has done nothing which deserves punishment and he should tell Isu so. Confused Oded Fay steps back and these strange rebellious thoughts die away¹³.

While Oded Fay departs, Herman and Velouria discuss what to do next. It seems clear to them that the strange happenings in this land and the predictions of Dulcimae are tied to the strange Mummy they saw last night, directing the actions of the zombies. If this Mummy is laid to rest permanently, all the other problems will probably die away as well. Herman and Velouria think that they can make Angus go along with this line of thinking. Velouria is very irritated with Oded Fay and his need for a quest; she feels that the death of Dulcimae's brother at his hands was a tragic accident, with no need for penance.

Herman and Velouria realise that if they want to go after the powerful Mummy, they will need more powerful weapons than they have now. They want to have their weapons blessed by Isu, who as a priestess might command powerful magic against these undead beings. They present themselves to Isu with their quest, and after hearing them, Isu blesses their weapons. Then Herman and Velouria want to set off to find Angus and take him along. Perhaps this can all be solved before Oded Fay comes back from his meditations.

¹¹ For those of you who do not know the adventure, Sen-Met is the Mummy posing as another Mummy, Ankh-Te-Pot. He is in league with Isu.

¹² It is that extremely high Charisma again.

¹³ The influence of Swift Justice, the Ravenloft Paladin Mount.

Herman uses his mage sight to take a look at the weapons blessed by Isu and he sees that nothing as happened to them. He does not know much about divine magic, but he knows that he should be able to see something of the holy power imbuing them right now. He tells Velouria that something is seriously wrong. The weapons are powerless and Isu lies about what she does.

After some thinking, Herman draws some far reaching conclusions. Isu lied to them and pointed them at the evil Mummy, knowing they were seriously underpowered. She also sent Oded Fay into the desert for a penance, which does not make much sense. This, combined with the predictions of Dulcimae of the night before, points to the fact that Isu is not misguided in her actions, but is actively in league with the powers that wreak havoc here in Har' Akir. Where the group first thought that Isu might be misguided in serving the wrong King, they now feel that she is actively in league with a usurper to displace the rightful King of this place. Oded Fay might be in some serious danger!

Herman immediately scrys in the fire to find Oded Fay. He then find Angus and together with Velouria they set off to find Oded Fay and tell him all this. Oded Fay is very touched when his friends come to seek him after his first day of meditating in the burning sun. He is then deeply shocked by the news that Herman gives him. He wants to return to Muhar and confront Isu with this. This might turn into a fight with Isu, if she is truly become evil. Is this what Osiris would want?

Herman proposes to remove the wandering Mummy from the equation first. He feels that it is still possible that Isu is under some sort of evil influence. If this influence is removed, she might return to normal again.

Session 29: 3 October 2008

Day 2, The Desert, Har' Akir

Herman has told Oded Fay that the high priestess of Osiris, Isu and his superior, is not to be trusted. Oded Fay wants to confront Isu with this knowledge. Angus advises against this, he is still horrified about the manner of death of Dulcimae's brothers. They were pulled under the sand by some strange mummified zombies. He wants to chase down and destroy these zombies. Oded Fay feels that the brothers of Dulcimae are dead by now. But perhaps not and saving the innocent takes precedence over avenging wrongs. As long as the bodies of the brothers are not found, there might be a chance, however small, that they might still be alive. The very least Oded Fay and the rest of the party can do is try to find and possibly save them. Angus marked the spot where the brothers were pulled under the sand, and he can take the rest of the group to it.

The group follows Angus to the spot where the zombies disappeared in the sand with the still living brothers of Dulcimae. There Oded Fay notices how close they have come to the hills and cliffs of Pharaoh's Rest. Oded Fay leads the rest of the group into the deep valley between the hills. In these hills and in the valley are many burial sites from long ago. Even the temple to the ancient and evil Pharaoh Ankh-Te-Pot may be found here. Could this be the heart of the strange conspiracy in Har' Akir?

As the group moves into the hills, they are soon spotted by some hounds. These hounds immediately chase the group and soon attack. At the steps of the burial site for the great Pharaoh Ankh-Te-Pot the group defeats the first group of these hellish hounds. In the distance they see a second group approach. The group flees into the shade of the temple.

The temple turns out to be a huge complex of buildings inside the hillside. The group first ends up at the temple to Ra. They see many wonderful ancient statues there. One of them is

horribly mangled and partly destroyed. The group wonders how that could have happened; while the others are still in such superb condition after all these years.

After that the group wanders into the great hall, which contains the huge statue of Ankh-Te-Pot himself. Awestruck the group stares at the immense statue. After a bit they notice the many trails made in the dust on the floor. They follow one set, which seems to end in a wall. After some poking around they find the hidden door. This door swings open into a rather cramped but very nicely painted and sculpted hallway. It is clear that this hallway will lead to an important place. Somewhat nervous the group moves on.

The cramped hallway leads the group to a room with two standing sarcophaguses. With his mage-sight, Herman sees that both burial chests contain a re-animated mummy, which will probably become active if the burial chests are disturbed or the group tries to pass the sarcophaguses into the rest of the hallway or down the stairs to another, lower level. One of the burial chests contains a powerful magical object. The group pro-actively decides to set one of the coffins on fire and they brutally battle the other mummy. After a while they are victorious. They decide not to search through the remains for the magical object. They are worried it might be holy and they do not want to desecrate it further.

The group decides to follow the hallway. This takes them to a large hall which contains a huge ship on a pedestal. Oded Fay identifies this correctly as a ship to take the dead to the afterlife. The group searches the ship, but it is empty, except for a huge gong. There is no hammer or anything to sound the gong.

In this huge hall there is another doorway, guarded by two statues, which leads further into the complex. The group is afraid to approach the statues and goes back down the cramped hallway they came from. In the smaller chamber with the two sarcophaguses, they decide to take the stairs down to the lower level.

The stairs lead into another chamber with a lot of sarcophaguses in it. Herman determines that all the burial chests contain re-animated mummy, ready to come to violent life at a moments notice. The group decides to be very proactive again. Herman flood the small chamber with oil. Angus then lights the oil with his fire staff. With his powers he then keeps the fire hot and blazing. The mummies inside the coffins all catch fire and quickly burn to ash.

Except for one. With red eyes, glowing in rage, it steps unharmed through the fire, approaching the group in the stairs, with murder in its bandaged heart. Herman panics, pulls one of his guns and shoots Angus in the back¹⁴. Angus is not particularly fazed, as his eyes were just struck by the sight of a red hot glowing Ankh on the chest of the Mummy. Through a haze of pain and fire he understands that this thing might be very important. He uses his powers to pull the thing to him. After a bit the chain holding the Ankh snaps and the Ankh flies through the room into the hands of Angus.

The group flees the approach of this obviously powerful Mummy. They greatly fear that the Mummy is Ankh-Te-Pot, risen to punish evildoers. And they have certainly been doing evil in this temple. In their panic and confusion, they run towards the great hall with the ship instead of the exit. Angus rushes up the stairs, into the ship and bangs the Ankh on the gong. He is not very clear why he does this, but he instinctively understands that this gong will send a message.

The result is ear shattering. The vibrations of the gong are deep and seem to deafen everyone. When the sound finally dies away, a deep voice booms throughout the complex: "Who awakens Ankh-Te-Pot? Who disturbs the rest of the Pharaoh?" Only then does the group realise that the Mummy who had chased them was not Ankh-Te-Pot! The real Ankh-Te-Pot was asleep all this time. The strange happenings in the land passed him by.

¹⁴ Critical fumble.

From the doorway between the two strange statues comes a Mummy. But the Mummy which chased the group also enters the hall, on the heels of the party. When the two Mummies see each other, they no longer bother with the group, but assault each other. Their titanic fight shakes the foundations of the temple. The group slips away, while the two ancient monsters fight.

Rushing out, Angus again strikes off one of the predictions of Hykosa. They are still closer to the night of evil which will descend over the land. Oded Fay realises how far Isu has wandered from the teachings of Osiris, if she allied herself with one of these two mummies.

The group leaves the temple and rushes into the shimmering mirages of the deep desert, never looking back.