

Session Six – Interlude in Lamordia: *Of Winter Storms and Chance Meetings...* / A loose adaptation of *Raiders of the Black Ice* from Dungeon #115 (cont'd)

(Played December 19th, 2007)

November 23rd, 750: Furchtenburbit, Lamordia

For three days, the guys transcribed the journal while I read up on my Lamordian. Nice book, gotta love my luck on having found these six language books eh? So after all is said and done, we decide that yes we'll go to Tonnsborg from here (The bellybutton of nowhere really¹) to help the Tonnsborg citizens against the invaders.

We buy provisions from the only store in a three hundred mile radius if not more and get some good deals especially on the portable hut. It takes us two days to get there.

November 25^h, 750: Tonnsborg, Lamordia

Tonnsborg is a fishing/hunting village with some pelts being made there. According to what we gleaned in Furchtenburbit (*Funny name if you can speak French and play with it*), about one hundred and fifty people live in Tonnsborg. As we approach the village we can see around twenty buildings and next to the village is a river, twenty-five to forty feet wide at some places. We also see boats at the river even though it's winter. (*The river hasn't frozen.*)

I spot two forms on one building and one on another. A wolf attacks us and dies quickly. Guess we are getting better at cleaning up on enemies. Two of the three forms jump down and battle ensues. Too busy to realize that the third form is getting away, we kick some serious barbarian butt. One gets knocked out, and as to the other, Niles magically charms it. So Mag, that's his name – barbarians need a little more on the vocabulary by the way, grunting and fighting won't get ya understood in the real world. So Mag has this ring and I think he's supposed to be married but we don't get it. I even get to practice my Lamordian! Sweet deal indeed!

We learn a name from Mag: Letvar and the third form who got away is named Angmesh. We inspect the house that "Angmesh" was in before he took off to find some kind of journal stating inventory in Tonnsborg as well as short list of how many villagers there are, I think (My memory can wander at times – who has time to take notes anyways... "Yes excuse me ya stinking barbarian just give me a moment while I note how bad you smell and how ugly you really are").

So we decide to leave the charmed Mag in Tonnsborg with his limp unconscious buddy to guard the village... he seems to actually, um, trust us and appears to be eager to help if only so he can marry back home? (That ring he showed us must mean he wants to marry).²

¹ This has got to be the funniest euphemism I've seen in a while! And no I will not say what I called it during my game ☺. The idea was to say how nothing ever happens in remote Lamordia.

² Actually, this is Miranda's journal so we get her point of view... Philippe and Niles had different interpretations of Mag and his ring. We'll see if this comes back...

We leave Tonnsborg for the mountains Mag pointed out to us where some Citadel is supposed to be. We camp for the night and Philippe has a bad dream. Basically, a repeat of what happened in the old warehouse but he is PyroBaron and kills children. But when he passes in front of a mirror he sees his own face and then the Goblyn children he killed. Creepy.

November 26th, 750: travelling in Lamordia

So as we travel we come upon a group of five people early in the afternoon. There's an encampment and the people look civilized, two women and three men. We meet a Balfour de Casteelle, Imron Gauthfallow, George Weathermay and Laurie & Gennifer Weathermay-Foxgrove (twins). Apparently Niles has heard of this George. I haven't. I might need to get out more in the future.

They got lost in the *mystical* storm as we did and were heading for Darkon. Apparently they were headed for Karg and its university there so Balfour (a scholar of mysteries) could teach there or give some seminar. It seems the twins are searching for a Dr Rudolph Van Richten, whoever he is. Apparently he is a *famous* monster hunter? To put it mildly, never heard of him, so he can't be that important. I've heard of the king Azalin Rex now that's an important person. Where was I? Oh yes... Van Richten... Supposedly he disappeared over the Summer and the two girls have their knickers in an uproar over him being missing.³

Imron introduces himself as a scholar with some arcane abilities. He is rather pleasant and chitchats about all kinds of things but does go on a bit too much about his interest in painting... He is now looking for a place to retire to a quiet life he says: He is looking into Darkon and says Paridon might even interest him (!).⁴

George is really sociable with us and seems to have a horseshoe stuck up his behind, hence the stiff walk eh. Ok so we share information with them a little about what we are up to. We all have a grand ole time until a shape comes out of the mists or woods. We shout for the person to identify himself. He whispers: "John ApNeblu..." and falls face first into the snow. So many people, so little time to be antisocial with them all. Ah what can ya do? Grin and bear it I suppose. So we revive this unconscious form and discover that lo and behold it is John ApNeblu a.k.a Joachim from the Maison de l'Anneau's journal. But imagine our surprise when we see his (its?) face: he looks sort of like a lizard man.

Well, as usual our information gathering goes awry and we scare the crap out of John and he flies away (Yes I am no mage but it is quite obvious what spell he cast – Unfortunately I can't jump that high or he'd have been dead meat, minced even).

So John Boy gets away. We do learn from one of the twins that one of them was nearly infected with lycanthropy but luckily was cured. George must have taken that the wrong way because he shut up real fast and got kind of creepy quiet on us. He went off to bed and the twins told us that Gennifer or Laurie [dunno which one] was attacked by a lyncathrope by the name of Natalia Vhorishkova. She got cured but I think George wants revenge on it for nearly infecting his niece.

³ To say that I did not expect van Richten to get this kind of treatment in a campaign journal is such an understatement. But you know what? You gotta LOVE my group, I honestly never know what to expect from them!

⁴ Remember my campaign does not have "Claimed by Darkon" memory loss.

We learned that ApNeblu was a caliban. Just a lil odd enough fella, really. We asked him a few times yet got no answer. Probably lying through his teeth, the bastard.⁵ After he flies away we split company with the other five with promises to leave notes or messages in Darkon with news of what is going on about the Maison de L'Anneau...

Session Seven – A loose adaptation of *Raiders of the Black Ice* from Dungeon #115 (cont'd)

(Played January 10th, 2008)

November 27th, 750: en route to the citadel in the mountains.

We track Angmesh and his group into the mountains. We come to a river about twenty-five feet wide but not that deep. It isn't frozen either. There are rocks big enough to hop across on, so we proceed to do just that. Of course if something can go wrong it usually does. The Divine Law I'll call it from now on. Niles and I make it across safely by hopping on the rocks, but Philippe falls in. A water-like woman creature emerges from the water, and grabs him by the neck. We need to pay a toll to this creature so we can cross: A toll in blood. I get a knife from Niles. Being the *healthiest* person in our band, I cut my arm and pay the toll. My blood drips in the river until she seems satisfied then she lets Philippe go and we move on.⁶

We continue traveling and come upon a dead caribou and two dead wolves. They're frozen solid and covered in white lichen. Philippe notices a silver thread in the lichen. That is really odd. I'm no scientist of course but I doubt lichen usually has silver threads in it. We also notice this *effect* spreads out somewhat... We walk around this at a safe distance.

We travel a bit further and, in the distance, we see twelve villagers led by what looks like barbarians and four dogs, two each leading a sled. The villagers consist of four men, six women and two girls.

A combat ensues and as usual we emerge victorious though some of the bad guys escaped. During combat, not only were they attacking us with hand axes, but one of them also sent out waves of cold at us! We inspect the dead barbarians close up. Their leader, his skin is actually colder than the temperature outdoors at first. His skin even has a fake wax-like quality: He is not human! Once he's been dead a few minutes it becomes the same as the outdoor temperature. He had a battle axe, studded leather and twenty silver pieces. We keep the coins but leave the villagers the armor and weapon. As it turns out the villagers weren't badly treated and were very grateful for our rescue. We accompany them for two hours. They head back to Tonnsborg while we head for the citadel. Oh by the way. In our fight, Niles' killer kitty helped us, and did a really good job. So the question we really have to ask is this: Who is the familiar, Niles or Killer Kitty!⁷ We do finally come upon the citadel but judge it wise to rest and inspect it more closely in the morning.

⁵ Again, this is Miranda's point of view... I seem to recall Philippe being somewhat more intrigued by John's appearance.

⁶ I was surprised to see them accept this deal so quickly. I don't even remember them trying Sense Motive or anything. They didn't even ask who she was! Miranda inflicted herself 4hp of damage!

⁷ This is one of those funny situations that just happens. You cannot, as a DM, create this without looking like an idiot, but Niles just kept rolling from 3 to 7 on his attack roll while his cat familiar had something

November 28th, 750: Closer to the citadel.

In the morning, we finally get to the citadel. We inspect it in *stealth mode*. The first story of the citadel has two doors but no windows or arrow slits (P.S – in French arrow slits are way cool⁸). The second story does have arrow slits, but no windows. The third story has arrow slits and what we believe are Neanderthals inside. Someone could, in effect, sneak into the tower unseen by climbing. No thanks. I don't relish the thought of Miranda road kill after falling from three stories. And on top of this, we find this strange "frost" lichen covering the outer walls. So I say: No way are we climbing! The citadel appeared to be on alert all day because the surviving Neanderthals spilled the beans on us I suppose. By the time evening rolled around, the security returned to the lackadaisical way it probably was before we kicked some Neanderthal butt.

November 29th, 750: Ground Zero – Bad Guys Citadel

So we discuss strategy and decide the safest way in is by using the stoneshape wand⁹ and create a secret door. We enter and lucky for us, we come upon a sleeping wolf. Cha-ching! One down. There's a door in the room, so we listen. In Lamordian, I hear, "*Bedtime. Shut Up!*" We silently open the door and see six villagers, three Neanderthals and one wax-like human freak of nature. We can also hear people speaking on the floor above ours. We enter and by surprising the four dimbulbs, we defeat them. We notice two things about wax-man:

- One: It has white eyes.
- Two: And we find a necklace with a strange earpiece. No clue what that is!

We proceed to another door and listen but hear nothing. I give the six villagers my last waterskin. They're grateful and all but I'm not really a people person. So we send them off. Opening the next door we see a wax-woman in a hammock in what appears to be a kitchen? Ok so we defeat her though she pleaded with us. Hey lady, you take villagers hostage and we should be lenient with you? Not on my watch, you dumbass.¹⁰

There stairs lead to the lower level so we take them. Of course we hear human voices and descend. We emerge into a room. Getting overconfident or cocky, you chose one, we fail to notice a foe in a dark corner. A battle ensues and we do win, but Philippe nearly dies, and both Niles and I are in a bad way. That's it for now. I'll write again soon, once the guys and me are in better shape and have perhaps defeated the citadel villains.¹¹

like three critical hits I assumed it was some kind of humbling experience for them all. ☺. And Miranda makes it sound as if it was an easy fight, but I think I remember seeing Joël (Philippe) wondering if they shouldn't have put more thought into this fight before getting into it. They were pretty outnumbered for a while.

⁸ An arrow slit in French is a "meurtrière": a murderess.

⁹ That's the wand they found during their adventure with the Dromdals in Paridon during *Shut-In* in Dungeon 128.

¹⁰ Things are getting rather personal for Miranda here...

¹¹ They were getting pretty reckless towards the end. And Miranda forgets to mention how Niles did a Shocking Grasp on this creature and how it healed after it was almost done for! Ha... Good times... ☺

Session Eight – A loose adaptation of *Raiders of the Black Ice* from Dungeon #115 (cont'd and end)

(Played February 4th, 2008)

Nov 29th, 750: Citadel, somewhere in Lamordia's mountains...

So we saved the last seven villagers. On this room's wall in the citadel is a tapestry. We see a bump behind it. Oh the tapestry is around eight feet high by fifteen feet wide. *Maybe the villagers will carry it back for us? The guys seem to think it's worth a pretty penny, well try between fifteen hundred to two thousand gold pieces.* Before I forget, the tapestry is a scene of a hunter on horseback hunting a wild boar in the summer. In Barovia, we think. So anyways, we move the tapestry and find a humanoid form encased in ice in the wall. We only see the head and shoulders sticking out. It has a human face but gold? Its eyes are closed. And it is not an armor! Weird...

In the room are crates of provisions. Of course not really thinking sometimes, we give the seven villagers more than enough provisions (and when, later, we eventually leave the villagers to regroup and plan our next move, we don't keep any for ourselves. Neat eh?). Ok so where was I? Yeah so Philippe thinks it might be a good idea to free the gold man: He has a 'good feeling' about this. We use torches to melt it enough to liberate it from the ice. It takes us roughly ten minutes. When it wakes up (to the sound of internal gears!), it looks at us funnily. Turns out it has a name: Oskari Lodestar. It has a little bit of amnesia and has probably been frozen for the last fifty years as its speech is about that old. It has a monotonic voice.

As we leave, using that secret door made with our wand of stone shape, one of the villagers makes a noise to alert the people in the citadel and a trap door opens in the ceiling. *[The DM said we should kill this villager, but being the really nice people we are, of course we didn't. Yeah that's my story and I'm sticking to it¹²]* Some ray fires down at me as we are leaving and I feel like I lose almost half my strength. I see a waxman up there, the bastard! Er, yes, so we let the seven villagers out before us and then flee. Once we set them on their merry way (with ALL the supplies!), we head for the little cave we found earlier. There we rest until the morning.

Nov 30th, 750: A cave near the Citadel, Lamordia.

Yes, so we wake up and as I stated earlier we had no food since we were only thinking of the villagers. We heal up first then Niles goes hunting. But before he can get far enough, he spies four Neanderthals and three wolves heading our way. I am thinking they were looking for us and were sent by the waxman. A battle ensues and we win. Hey! Oskari can speed up our metabolisms so we can fight better and be harder to attack. Nice little trick he does indeed. So we win again. Well the last fight we had was bad but this one went fine. We killed all but two wolves who fled after we killed one of them. We discover some sort of morphogenetic implant in one of the dead Neanderthals ear¹³. It's decided that it would be beneficial to actually use it, so Niles keeps it. It basically allows you to speak with animals twice per day

¹² Somehow I get the feeling it did not happen this way... I don't remember how I worded this, but I think I was making fun of a certain character with a somewhat skewed sense of honor... Now, that's my story and I'm sticking to it! ☺

¹³ Gotta LOVE Lamordian science!

or understand them for that matter. Philippe hunts and we rest until evening. Then we return to the citadel by the back door.

Niles hears wolves inside and they're waiting for us because they heard us arriving as we are the stealthiest people ever ... **NOT!** ... So we open the door and we dispose of the wolves. At another door we see a waxman. Of course I get anxious to kick some wax butt. Moving to intercept him I run into what acts like two zombies first! (They seem dead and have all kinds of wires sticking out of them...) Well yet another fight ensues with the same outcome. Waxman is trying to escape via a rope ladder to the trap door. Niles and I, of course wishing to help him on his way, shake the rope and the poor waxman falls twenty feet. Poor, poor waxman. Ok so we fight him and finally beat his ass! We search the citadel now and discover we are done fighting.

It turns out the waxman had scientific bracers which Niles takes¹⁴. We find sleeping quarters and there we find a bronze necklace, a silver torc and rabbit fur. Nothing of interest is on the second floor. In the tower we find a laboratory. All kinds of boring science gadgets here... Yawn... So there are journals of how the waxmen came to be¹⁵. There is also a book detailing a Lamordian family and some of their theories: The Mordenheims.¹⁶ These we keep. The rest of the laboratory we totally destroy. Smashing and breaking is real fun when you get to do it. See, you can vent doing this, which helps a person keep her cool. There's also a book, *The Cosmology of Lamordia*, which I keep. I like books on languages and lands. Information is food for the brain. The more you know...

Ok, so we leave the citadel and part company with Oskari Lodestar our new mechanical friend. He asks where he can find us or leave a message in case he ever needs to contact us. We tell him the University in Karg or my parents' home in Paridon. We make it to Tonnsborg and tell the people it's over. We get a reward plus we cash in the tapestry¹⁷. The Mayor Harold Veendis is more than happy to pay us and we are now like heroes in Tonnsborg. Whatever, I'm no hero. I'm just venting my frustrations on bad people is all. So we leave Tonnsborg and make it out of Lamordia... Good riddance. I hope we never return. *I wonder if Balfour de Casteelle will leave us any messages or the others in that party for that matter. I so don't want to give Pyro Baron the book. He can kiss my behind.* Now we head for Nartok and it is now December 4th! Christmas is just around the corner... Joy.

Ok until next time...

¹⁴ Those are bracers which, when activated, repel metal, i.e.: swords and other metal weapons. I thought it was a neat treasure and better than the ever-loving bracers of defense. And it fit in well with Lamordian science again. Advantage: They are not magical so cannot be dispelled. Disadvantage: They are not magical and only work for so many rounds every day.

¹⁵ The "waxmen" as Miranda calls them were created by a Lamordian scientist who just gave up on them. All they can feel is his indifference towards them and it is driving them insane. That's the major reason they were capturing villagers, so they could learn about life and what it means to be alive. They wanted to prove themselves worthy of their creator. Yes they turned out to be a pathetic evil bunch...

¹⁶ Basically I gave them *Legacy of the Blood: Great Families of the Core*. I told them they could read the Mordenheim section and they could use it in any way they wanted if they studied it. My reason behind this is that if nobody uses that book what's the use? It's a really good RL book. And I don't have any Mordenheim PCs or NPCs at the moment. We'll see if they like it...

¹⁷ Since it's a small village, they get something like 700GP for something worth that has a market price of roughly 2000GP. Still, they were happy cos there was no way they were schlepping that around in the snow on the way back to Nartok, Darkon.

Session Nine – Return to Nartok

(Played February 28th, 2008)

4th of December 750 - 7th of December 750

We travel intensely for three days and travel back to Thistle to make sure things are ok. There, we learned that goblins had not returned. The antidote the PyroBaron sent had worked and the villagers were no longer sick. The Baron had sent a lackey, Ghini¹⁸, to check up on the villagers. Seeing as nothing much else was going on in Jolly Old Thistle, we decided to travel to Nartok. It takes another two days. We discuss (at great lengths!) what we want to tell the PyroBaron during our travel. This is what we have decided: We say nothing about the book (detailing the Maison de l'Anneau's history + some spells from the Stars & Shadows school of magic¹⁹) but decide to tell him of the library and the paintings of nobles from 20 years past found in the depot (said depot he was supposed to have burned down when asked by the Maison!). I like the idea of that. He rubs me the wrong way and I just as much see him dead in the sewers than alive and kicking.²⁰

9th of December 750 : Nartok, Darkon

We're in Nartok!

Here is a work in progress for the city of Nartok, Darkon. It's a blend of Nartok (RL Gaz II) and Zobeck (Wolfgang Baur's default setting Open Design) with just a dash of NPCs from Dungeon 131. I gave this info to the players to give them a better sense of the city since it's different from canon And especially since Patrice (Niles) does not know RL too well). It is a mix of both Ravenloft and Zobeck. Bear in mind that some things MIGHT be somewhat altered when Open Design 5 comes out and is played.

City of Nartok

Nartok has been slightly influenced from Lamordia and its scientific achievements (but, still, not everybody trusts mechanical devices).

Population : 8000 to 10,000 depending on the season (because of the lumber trade), Mixed (Human 85%, Fey-touched – half-elf – 2% Dwarf 10%, Caliban 3%²¹)

- (The Calibans of the Nartok region speak a Darkonian pidgin. Anybody speaking Darkonese may make an intelligence check to understand DC: 15.)

Authority figures:

- Baron Joaquim Aulbesmil
- Chief Constable Turner Miktis
- Alexis Aulbesmil, cpt of the citywatch.

¹⁸ The heroes met her during their voyage from Paridon. She is some fighter type with a stick up her butt to be honest... She is Ghini from *Dungeon 131*.

¹⁹ See either *Kobold Quarterly 3* by Open Design or *The Book of Roguish Luck* by Malhavoc Press.

²⁰ Miranda sure has a dark side...

²¹ Zobeck has a high Kobold population. This did not work for me so I changed them to Calibans.

- Ghini Eagleye (close advisor to the Baron)

Important locations:

- Arcane Collegium:
 - o Guildmaster Orlando;
 - o The staff is composed of sixty people.
 - o The Collegium has seven buildings in the city.
- City Barracks (with guards)
- Docks and River Gate
- Great South Gate
- Lord Baron's Hall (city archives)
- Leatherworker's Guildhall

Nartok is a mercantile city of roughly 8,000 to 10,000 people (depending on the season). Its livelihood depends on the river trade, with important North-South road connections.

It is home to an Arcane Collegium of almost a hundred apprentices, scribes, and masters, and it is known for its odd and small devotion to the Gear Goddess, who gave the city the gift of steam power and gearing (which some argue is simply Lamordian science). Surrounded by the rest of Darkon's realm (a magocracy – of one some would say), Falkovnia and the Shadow Rift, it survives by its wits.

Here's a list of place names and locations:

- 1- **The Arcane Collegium:** It's arcanists and scholars come from far and wide, and form a university in many arts, not just the arcane.
- 2- **Crown Square:** The posh address where merchants and the wealthy have their homes. The two public buildings here are the Baron's Hall and Courthouse.
- 3- **Part of the Vuchar river:** flows north to south near the Collegium, but there's a bend not long after; it travels wide and slow from west to east near the warehouse district.
- 4- **The Margreve Forest to the South...**

Humans, calibans, and dwarves are residents of the city. Elves are known but not residents, yet a fair number of fey-touched live in the city.

We enter the city and head for Old Nartok and the Veteran Arms inn. Inside, there are exotic arms and weapons all over the walls. Anyways, we get rooms and ask the innkeeper, with a nice 10gp bribe²², to find someone to get us into contact with Lord Joaquim "PyroBaron" Aulbesmil and also a person to buy what we'd acquired in our travels. As a sidenote, I guess that flaunting gold around isn't such a good idea, because I discover later in the day that I was pick pocketed. Oh well the person probably needed it more than I did? Whatever. Ok so an Asheron Coyl is to meet us the next day at 11am and then the PyroBaron at 1pm.

Asheron Coyl arrives at the appointed time. And he is a native of Paridon. He is an importer/exporter. The three masterwork goblin daggers are worth 450 gp, the crown 50 gp and the ceremonial bowl and

²² They really managed to buy everything with this one... The innkeeper wasn't so helpful at first, but once he got some gold, connections started to appear...

knife he will find a collector for, not a user. No price given. He leaves to find some buyers. The guys go read some more about the book but don't seem to learn anything new...²³

So it's one o'clock, time for our meeting with Pyrodude. A stinky looking decrepit man enters and nods once to the Innkeeper and heads upstairs. Well, well, guess who came for lunch? The innkeeper tells us to go up to room so and so on the second floor. As we begin to ascend the stairs, three men enter the inn. Geez, like no one will notice that they're the PyroBarons guards? This is way too fun so I descend and walk up to them. "You're Lord Aulbesmil's guards aren't you?" I state. They act all innocent and stuff. That was fun, I think to myself.²⁴ So we go to the room, knock and then enter. Little conversation with PyroBaron ensues. We tell him of the paintings and the library, explaining to him that we didn't burn the place down because maybe he might want to investigate the library and ex-warehouse. Also told him the goblins were taken care of. He seems happy about that, about the villagers being safe, but who can tell with these stinkin' blue bloods?

So this'n that and he ends up giving us this magical ring he was given by the Maison de l'Anneau people years ago (!) (a black snake-shaped ring biting its tail). He also tells us that he thinks he's in danger, that the Maison might want to get rid of him... But he's sort of confused and paranoid if you ask me! Then all of a sudden he lights up the room magically! I almost pound on him! What the...?! Is he crazy casting spells without warning? I think he's asking for a beating and I let him know! He *sort of* apologizes and explains he developed sorcerous abilities a bit over six months ago. He also thinks the Maison *knew* he would get those and that's why they chose him. Yeah. Sure. That was 20 years ago!

So anyways he gets ready to leave. I am of course my usual polite self and ask him to salute his guards for me downstairs, with a big smile on my face. I think he didn't like that because he gave me a look like he wanted to spank me or something. Sorry you're not my type. Oh, he did offer to pay us 5gp a day as a retainer to stick around, but I don't think I wanna do that.

A few minutes after he leaves a falcon taps at our window. Hey! It's Imron Gauthfallow's birdie. So opening the window, we find a note attached to its leg. After taking the note, the falcon flies away.

Letter from Imron Gauthfallow

Dear fellow adventurers

- *I have to apologize for lying to you. I could not talk in front of such a crowd when we met. I did hear of the Maison de l'Anneau during my travels of youth, I even met some of them during my years of adventuring... I would rather not reveal their identities right now out of respect for them, but of the Fraternity of Shadows I cannot say much I'm afraid.*
- *Amongst other things, I heard about the Maison destroying a nest of ghouls in the forests near Karg quite a few years ago. And putting to rest the sorrowful ghost of a mother who even in death kept looking for her son in Mordent. They apparently wrote some kind of treatise about Forlorn and some kind of time-shift effect in that realm...*
- *Some of the last rumours were that they were looking into the Shadow Rift, trying to find ways to restrain the Fey from invading the Core.*

²³ It's pretty funny seeing them roll these insanely low numbers while trying to decipher this book they've had for weeks now... ☺ Well sooner or later...

²⁴ Great Disguise for the baron, but since they were waiting for him and the guy likes going incognito... Then a great Spot from Miranda for the guards. Darn. ☺

- *Personally I have searched for something called the Crown of Air & Darkness for quite some time but never found it. It is supposed to be some evil artefact created by an ancient Goddess and possibly tied to the Fey. According to legends it must be destroyed or it shall bring an Age of Darkness to the world. I leave this task to younger people now...*
- *I once stopped an Ancient Dead from properly rising in Mudar in Har'Akir. Somehow wood could hurt that undead horror... I keep thinking of painting the scene. (Something to occupy my retirement years.)*
Good luck with all your heroic endeavours,
Imron Gauthfallow, scholar and retired adventurer.²⁵

We discuss this note. Maybe those Maison guys aren't so bad? Niles magically identifies the ring given by PyroBaron. He finds out it is an object attuned to sorcerers.²⁶ We also head out to the King's Head Tavern to talk and find out about rumors in the city. After a few well spent gold pieces, we hear about guys from Souragne in black offering a reward for Philippe about the murder of a servant girl. Well, Philippe wastes no time and starts bluffing his way through the evening and turns the rumors around against the Mont-Mirebalais! Good for him! In the Duchy of Nartok, somewhere in the west, there are brigands causing trouble. There is talk of a beautiful black haired woman, a thief in Nartok as well. Maybe she took my gems?

Ok so that's it for now. Kinda tired, it's midnight here.

Session Ten – Return to Nartok (Cont'd) / Prelude to *Dungeon* **#131²⁷**

(Played March 17th, 2008)

December 10th, 750 Nartok, Darkon

Once we've slept sufficiently and the boys have studied for their spells we are ready for our next meeting with the PyroBaron. This time we don't see any of his "*pals*". Oh well I guess I must still have been tired. We see him in a room again. He appears afraid for some reason. My thinking is that it's been twenty years and this Fraternity has probably forgotten about him and I tell him so. He tells us that not only are there brigands at Aulbes but there are ferocious beasts southwest of Nartok near the Oros bridge to Aulbes. He sent his nephew Lysander two weeks ago but he never came back. Then he sent his "bodgyguard" Ghini and no word back from her either.

²⁶ The Ring of Sorcerers (inspired by *Denizens of Freeport*, p. 34) (Poor Niles, the Wizard, identifies the ring and hands it to Philippe!)

- Increase the DC of each sorcerer spell cast by the wearer by +1. If the target of the spell is another sorcerer, the DC is +2;
- The wearer gains a +2 to all saving throws made versus spells cast by another sorcerer;
- The wearer may apply the Maximize Spell feat to any spell 1/day without changing the level of the spell.
- Sense sorcerer: Spellcraft check DC: 30 (or DC 30 minus spell level if there is an active spell in the area. 2/day. Range 100'.

²⁷ I'll reveal the name of the adventure later on. Although I like this adventure, it's got one of those stupid names that gives away too much... ☺

He did bring us two objects to help us as we did decide to go investigate. I even told him.... *gasp...*
gasp... gasp... **THANK YOU.** I think it must have been a slip of the tongue. I mean I guess he had his reasons to burn down the warehouse back then. I did some foolish things in my youth as well. So yeah, he gave us a silver dagger²⁸ which is good against lycanthropes²⁹. Also whoever is holding it can create a light source once per day if they concentrate. And they can have some kind of insight if they concentrate while holding it, twice a day. Niles will use the dagger. The other thing is a scroll³⁰. Basically it is a ceremony to link a person with their weapon. Meaning they can even call the item to them if it is thirty feet away or some distance like that. And as the person develops their skills, they get special abilities thanks to this ceremony. You have to read the scroll and it's like a ritual, if you prefer, that takes 24 hours. I took it.

Pyro can get us a carriage and horses so we can pretend to be merchants to perhaps trick the brigands at Aulbes so they attack us and we catch them.

So we ask him for provisions for our trip, like rations and perhaps some potions of healing as we've no priest or cleric. For the horses and carriage we should go see our ole pal Asheron Coyl. For the potions we need to go see a *chevalier* named Silas Armand at the apothecary. I guess the Pyro man is really appreciative of our help after all. I did thank him again. The voice of the **DIVINITY OF MANKIND** *whispers in my head...wedding bells wedding bells....*(P.S that would be the guys teasing me about Miranda being nice to Lord Aulbesmil).

After he leaves, we decide to go see Silas Armand later in the day. He gives us five potions of quintessence³¹ which will come in handy. Niles and I take two and Phil takes one. We go get the carriage and horses from Asheron. He hasn't found a buyer for the bowl from the goblins. For the rest of the time, we rest until the next day while I perform the ritual.

11th December, 750 Nartok, Darkon

For most of the day we rest and at night we leave for Aulbes. Niles and Phil ride up on the carriage while I follow by foot. When I tire I do go in the carriage to catch my breath. Nothing really happens for the first few hours. In our tenth hour of travel we hear squeaks at the side of the fifteen feet wide road. Thanks to the torches up on the carriage we can see. Some big looking rats are there, quite a few of them actually. Niles and Phil attack with their ranged weapons from the carriage and I from the ground. I rush one. A battle ensues, where we win. Phil cast this neat spell where the brush and roots from the ground, well, tangled the beasts up. Neat one. We are an hour from Aulbes and continue on our way, whereupon we arrive in Aulbes at around 5am. We enter the village. The buildings we do see are made of stone and haven't been painted in a while. We do come upon The Sylvan Glade Inn. Curiously, at 5am there are lights on. We leave the carriage at the stable. Then we enter the Inn where I think we tick off the sleepy

²⁸ [Aulbesmil Masterwork silver dagger](#): at 3rd character level: *Light* (Int or Wis mod / day – as per char level) + *Insight* (2/day)

²⁹ Please do appreciate the subtle metagaming at work here... “Would such a skill mean that my character knows this?” DM rolls his eyes and says throw a die... ☺ And it's pretty funny how everyone assumes their on a werewolf hunt by now!

³⁰ [Bonded Item \(variation from Arcana Evolved\) scroll of ceremony \(improving with every second level after.\):](#) character level required 3rd: + 1 to a weapon; at 5th level: Mage Hand on weapon (Cha mod / day. Min 1);

³¹ God, I LOVE Van Richten's Arsenal!!!

Innkeeper. I guess I'd be ticked off too if I was working at 5am and got bothered by three travelers. He gets us our rooms. I don't know about you but there are five or six people there. Do people sleep in Aulbes?³² Ok so the Innkeeper is a little talkative and we find out that he did see Ghini last week but hasn't seen Lysander. Also there used to be a silver mine which dried out a few years ago, but lord Aulbesmil kept his word and still protects the village even though it probably costs him more money. There is also a garrison protecting the village. That's it for now. Oh, before I forget I feel more capable in my abilities since the huge rat battle. I am presuming that the boys do as well. I feel a little change, but it's all for the better and will help us in our travels.³³

Until next time...

Miranda in Aulbes...

Session Eleven – Adventure from *Dungeon* #131³⁴

(Played April 17th, 2008)

December 12th, 750. Village of Aulbes, Darkon.

It's early morning, so we settle in at our table. Some clients leave and then two guards come in. They see us and approach our table asking us who we are rather rudely. We tell them we're here on official business for Lord Aulbesmil. Anyways, these guards seem to be hard headed and after a bit of discussion they ask us to stay there while they get their captain. Well la-de-da, guess who their captain is? Ghini the Lord's bodyguard. So the rumor was true she has been seen in Aulbes. So anyways the Ice Queen, that's how I like to think of her by the way. She recognizes us so her dull-witted guards relax. Apparently there are guards who aren't doing their jobs properly at the village entrance. Why am I not surprised about this? Ok so we tell her why we're there and ask a few questions. We are told that beasts roam around the village at night. This began about six months ago when the village began losing trappers and lumberjacks at the rate of one or two per month.

Also, the old captain of the guard tried to go find another beast whose tracks have been seen around the village. This beast is thought to be a bear. We get the location of the bear's den from Ghini. And she tells us that maybe Lysander is at his uncle's hunting lodge which is about one and a half hours to the west of Aulbes. The den is about an hour north from Aulbes. The latest caravan lost a guard who disappeared and another now works at the Inn, his name being Durmain. (I don't think he's a singer though heh heh.) Ghini is willing to hire us to go see the bear's den.

Ghini tells us the villagers are nervous and no one goes out at night or is allowed out for that matter. Everyone hates the miller for the simple reason they think he is stealing from them. So Durmain arrives at the Inn and we get him to talk thanks to Phil's generosity. Durmain was a guard for this Erthorn fellow with two other guards, one named Ruburn. They were on a caravan from Nartok to Aulbes and beyond.

³² *Mwah! Ha! Ha!*

³³ Because you do go up a level when you keep bothering the DM! Ha! Ha!

³⁴ I'll reveal the name of the adventure later on. Although I like this adventure, it's got one of those stupid names that gives away too much... ☺

This is what Durmain tells us: *“The caravan consisted of house items and silk. Just at the outskirts of Aulbes that night, it was raining real bad. Erthorn didn’t want to go into the village so he had us camp outside Aulbes, that cheap so-and-so... The rain was really bad. We camped at the side of the road. You couldn’t see fifteen feet in front of you that’s how dark and terrible the rain was. When it was my turn for guard duty, Ruburn woke me and offered me a hot drink. This was around 4am. But I fell asleep at one point. I woke at dawn all wet and muddy. A wagon from the caravan had disappeared as well as Erthorn’s purse and Ruburn as well was nowhere to be found. I was the one who woke Erthorn and of course was accused by him and all that. So now I work here at the Inn and want nothing to do with that cheapskate merchant.”*

We all think Durmain is telling the truth. Also it is a strong possibility that Ruburn drugged Durmain and ran off with the wagon and Erthorn’s purse. So we thank him and after a nice meal, sleep a few hours. It’s near 5pm when we are ready to act. So we decide since it’s too late this day, we’d go talk with some citizens, starting with the miller. First of all he isn’t there, this Cloten. A man named Alain answers the door and though it is odd we are asking questions, I find him really rude. There are two more men inside as well. Luckily Phil has his foot in the door before Alain can tell us to come back tomorrow and shut the door. After a couple of minutes of Alain dodging questions and being rude, Phil sees a dog under some clothing and tells Niles in a weird language and me in Souragnien. That’s when it gets really interesting. Niles uses his morphogenetik ear piece³⁵ to speak with the dog, telling it he has a nice big bone for it. So as the pile of cloth begins moving, one of those huge rats we took care of last night turns out to be the dog! *[From Steve, AKA Miranda: I think we surprised the DM here because I don’t think we were supposed to find out some things until later or not at all! Go us!]³⁶* Guess what? We got into another fight with the rat and those three guys. Halfway during the fight a half man half rat comes in through a side door and attacks Phil. Well since Niles seemed to be faring fairly well [I think he was having problems with his dagger for some reason³⁷], I pulled Philippe from his predicament and took his place. Phil really got hurt during this one...³⁸ We kill one person, one flees and one surrenders. The rat man tries to flee but I’m fast and catch up. And Philippe ends it for him with a magic missile (Niles would like to add: “I missed with my crossbow; I probably would have missed an enlarged paralyzed elephant from a three feet distance last night”). Realizing that he’s a lycanthrope I use the magic short sword to chop his head off. Cloten had on him a leather armor, a magical buckler, a magic cape, a potion, a nice rapier, a short bow with 20 arrows, fifteen gold pieces and a key. It’s at this point that villagers begin arriving. They get Ghini and once we prove we are right by showing her Cloten’s rat tracks leading to his headless body, she believes us. With Ghini we search the mill. Inside we find two more men in the basement and to be safe, Niles cuts their hands to make sure they’re not lycanthropes (Niles would like to add: “Wow, you make it sounds like I cut their whole hands! I’m not evil!”³⁹). They’re not. We search the rest of the mill. We do find a hole in the floor and it’s too small for any of

³⁵ The Lamordian implant from *Raiders of the Black Ice* sessions 5 to 8.

³⁶ Steve is so right, the PCs really took a major shortcut with this one! But you know what? They earned it. There was no way I could stop this one without some bad railroading on my part. Something I refuse to do even if it messes up my plans!

³⁷ If by “problems” you mean rolling nothing higher than a 5, then yes Niles had problems. ☺

³⁸ Philippe went down to something like 2 hit points. And got hurt by the ratman... (Cue sinister music)

³⁹ Let’s all remember Miranda’s sense of humor! Ha! Ha! But yes, I will say that Niles slightly cut them to see if the wounds would heal instantly. They did not. And the PCs knew this info from their knowledge checks, which they argued came with a lot of superstitions too. It made sense to me to think that most people would think creatures of the night needed magical weapons to hurt them all the time.

us. We send Killer Kitty (*Niles' familiar*) to investigate and she finds it is safe as well as bringing us a silver armband. So we get a child to inspect the hole and he finds a chainmail, an onyx with gold on it and fifty gold. We give him five for his troubles.

We look upstairs and I think I surprised Phil by casting detect magic: mwahahahahahah! Oh well these new abilities are fun let me tell ya. Wait till I start playing with the shadows!⁴⁰ Ok there is a secretary here. We find two books on the core's geography and two on the core's history. Very, very nice finds. I also take an ink vial. Now here we also find Cloten's ledgers and discover that he has in fact been stealing from the village. And we find an entry with the name Largo and some of the profits go to him. Another entry is for Lysander with the word '*ransom?*' I think Lysander is either alive or been eaten by Cloten. The rest of the second floor has a chest. Hence the key! Inside are two hundred gold pieces, twenty-five platinum pieces and three bloodstones which we deduce for once that are worth fifty each. Usually it's more like "Hey, it's a rock!" [*Count that up to the fact that none of us are rogues and our appraising skills are all but non-existent!*] So yes Ghini thinks it's better if the money that is owed to the villagers goes there first, then we can keep the leftovers. I'm ok with that.

Well that's it for now...

⁴⁰ Miranda has multi-classed into the Shadowsworn class from *Book of Roguish Luck*.