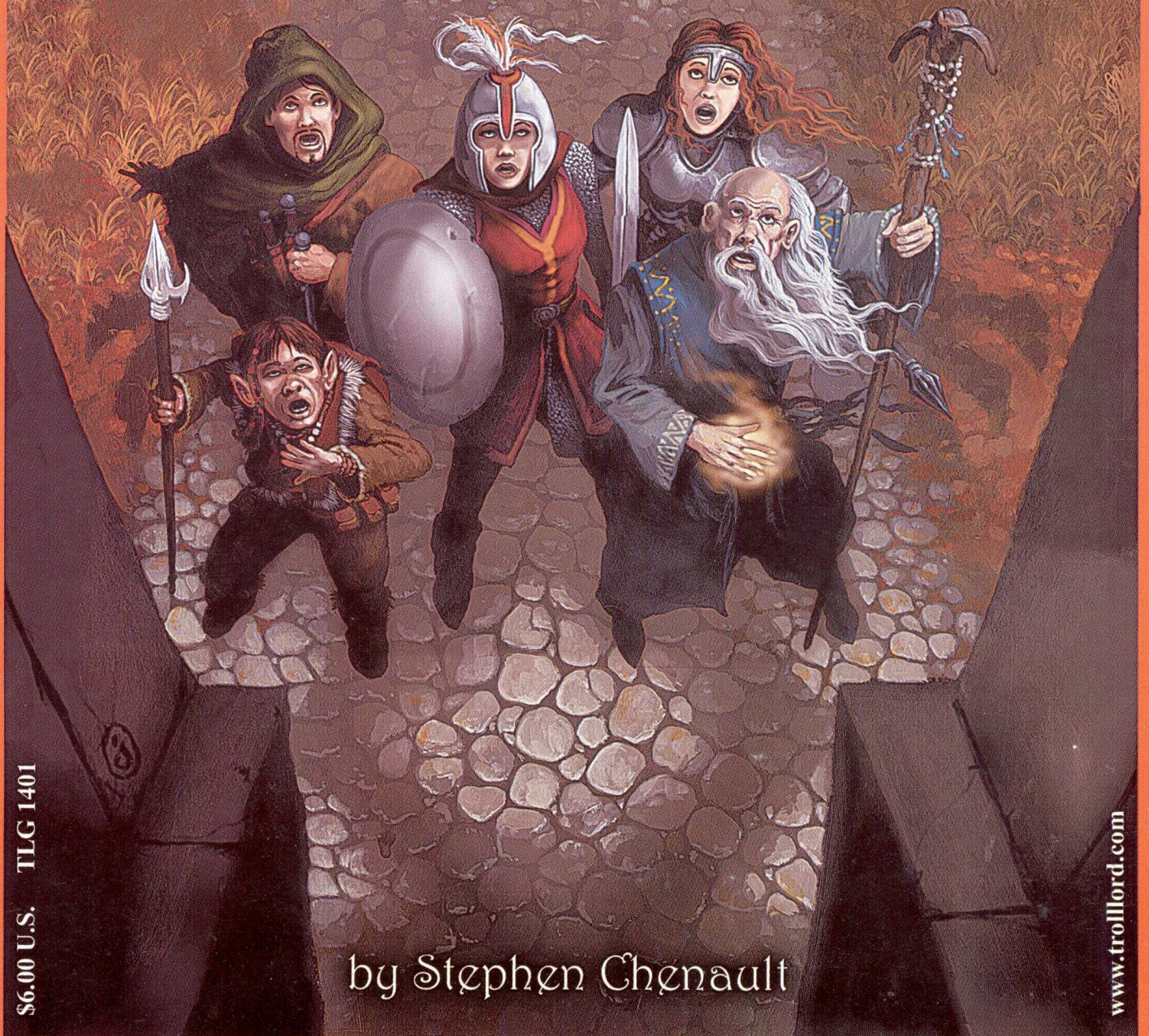


Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons® Player's Handbook,
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A Lion in the Ropes



\$6.00 U.S. TLG 1401

by Stephen Chenault

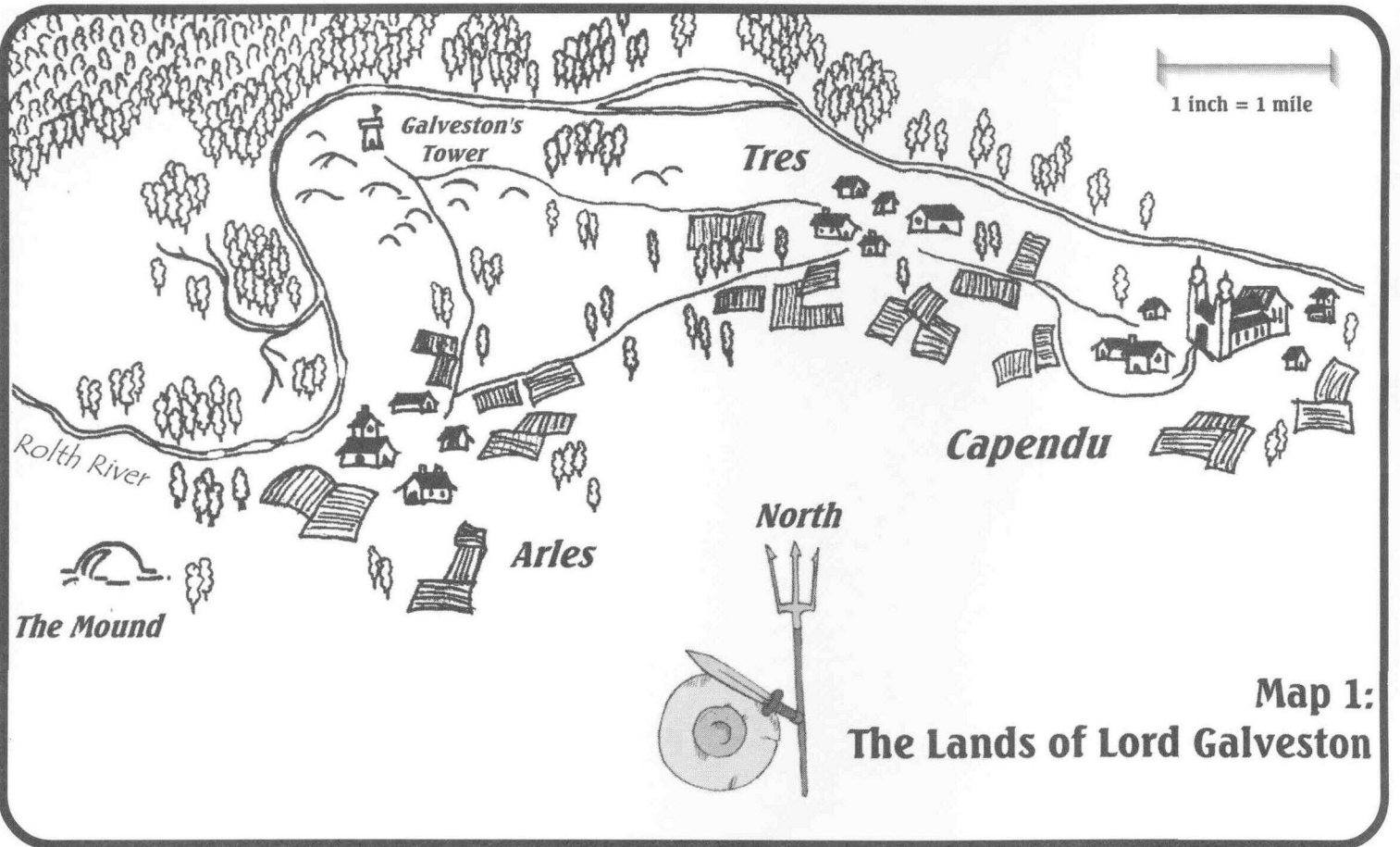
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*A d20 system adventure set in the World of Erde, After Winter Dark,
for 4-8 characters of levels 2-4.*

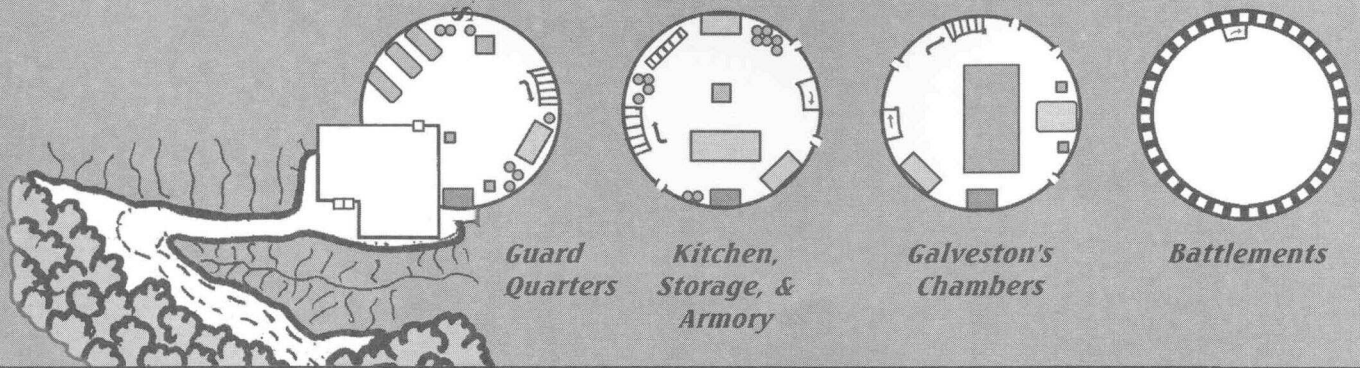
Maps detailing the lands of the good Lord Galveston. This being a record of the villages of Capendu, Tres and Arles; further maps of the Lord's own keep, Tower Galveston; and the Church of Four Saints and the dungeon beneath.

Area Map: Inside Front Cover
 Tower Galveston: Inside Front Cover

Four Saints Church: Inside Back Cover
 Dungeon: Inside Back Cover



Map 2: Tower Galveston

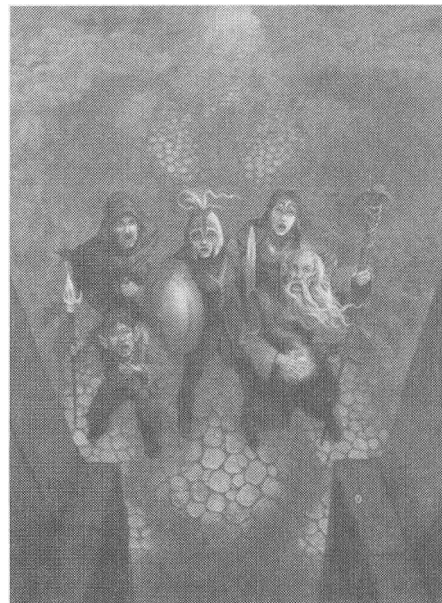


A LION IN THE ROPES

by
Stephen Chenault

Editor: Mac Golden
Assistant Editor: Nicole Chenault
Cover Art: Jason Walton
Interior Art: Matt Lemmons,
Chris Seaman, Derek T. Stevens
Cartography: Mac Golden
Art Direction/Cover Design: Mac Golden
Interior Design/Layout: Stephen Chenault

Special Thanks to Jason Walton. Combining a wild imagination and amazing attention to detail with an artist's eye and skill, Jason renders paintings both fantastic and real. With an artist's tools Jason captures a mood and creates a moment. Thanks for all the hard work Jason.



In lasting memory and dedication to those gamers who came before the golden age, Steve Sollohub, Dean Suzuki, and Charles Shipp. Also, to Jared "Oh my Spleen" Hale, and to Eric Beasley without whom I would never have become enlightened to Blue Oyster Cult. (If any of you are out there, drop me a line.)

TROLL LORD GAMES

P.O. Box 251171, Little Rock, AR 72225

email: troll@trollord.com

Web site: www.trollord.com

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A Lion in the Ropes

A KNIGHT UPON THE GREEN

"So this is Capendu? It is a beautiful village. It will make a wonderful home for this tired, old soldier. I shall display my Lion banner proudly so that all may know me. You have been too good to me, Luther."

"Tis not my land, noble Galveston, the mage lays some claim to it, he suggested we give it to you. But I dare say, he probably wants you on the border between the Twilight Wood and his wondrous town of Freiburg." The paladin laughed quietly. "So do not thank me until the land here serves you well."

Galveston looked out over the rolling green hills of Capendu. He sat quietly for awhile, musing on the peace which stood in marked contrast to the horror of the great battles recently fought upon the Toten Fields, far to the east. There, he stood as a peer of the wondrous Council of Light. He fought alongside St. Luther and Daladon. He slew a giant at the feet of the Arch-Magi Aristobolus, and saw the horror of battle without mercy. It had, though he did not know it, ruined him for war forever more. "I'm tired Luther, and look forward to days of peace."

"And you will have it my friend, you will have it."

So did Lord Galveston, Knight of Renown, friend of the Council, and soldier settle and make his home in Capendu. The villages of Capendu, Aries, Tres, Contru and Mortsu welcomed him for the protection he brought and swore allegiance to him. He ordered a tower built upon the banks of the river Rolth, between the villages of Aries and Tres. He called to the Bishop in Freiburg to send clerics and architects. From his own stores of money, he built a large cathedral in Capendu, "Four Saints," and installed the acolytes of Demeter there. And the lands knew peace and prosperity.

At least for a time.

A WARNING TO THE CURIOUS

Aye, stop with the prying! Stop the reading of this tomb forthwith! Stop, unless of course, you are crafty enough to spin the tale of this bold adventure, to mesmerize the players at your own council, and to carry its several threads to their proper conclusions.

USING THIS MODULE

"A Lion in the Ropes" is a mystery. The module is designed for 4-8 characters of levels 2-4. A cleric would be extremely helpful, as would a ranger or some character with rudimentary tracking skills.

The adventure occurs in the lands of Lord Galveston, largely within the village of Capendu, and specifically in and around Four Saints Church. It requires some overland travel however, between the other villages and the tower of the aged Lord Galveston. Because the adventure involves several discordant threads designed to challenge the players and to mislead them, the Referee should thoroughly read the module and familiarize him/herself with the mystery.

THE ADVENTURE

Lord Galveston's lands are plagued by murders. For the past several months, people have been disappearing. Some bodies have turned up, their half-mutilated corpses found along the banks of the river.

Strange tracks of a cat-like creature have been found around the villages, and rumors abound that a Charon Fiend, a dreaded beast of chaos, has come from the Twilight Wood and settled in the area. The latest victim is the Deacon of the Four Saints Church in Capendu. His body, found torn and mangled in the river, sent the alarmed villagers to the aged Lord Galveston for aid.

Galveston is 101 years old and grown feeble. He can offer little aid outside of hiring mercenaries. This he does, but in the meanwhile, he orders that no one may leave their houses after dark and that all doors and shutters must be locked.

The source of the murders actually resides in Four Saints Church. The engineers who built Four Saints placed her foundations on the already existing ruins of an older building in Capendu, a prison from the days of the evil Empire of Aufstrag. Many poor souls lost their lives in suffering and pain in the pits of the prison's dungeon. So great the suffering in the pits that some stayed, even beyond death, in tortured agony, searching for peace. These Orinsu (an ancient word meaning "Lost Souls"), have recently manifested themselves, haunting the Church and the surrounding villages. Every seven to ten days the Orinsu rise from the crypts, animate the bodies of the churches' gargoyles, or sometimes, even the saints rendered in stain glass, and come forth into the darkness to

Background

kidnap and slay whomsoever they find.

The cat-like beast stalking the villages is actually a lion, recently escaped from a traveling circus. He still wears a large wooden collar, dragging the twin ropes that bound him. The tracks of the ropes led the villagers to mistake it for the dreaded Charon Fiend, an actual creature with the body of a lion and a mane of coiled serpents.

To complicate the situation a bandit group has moved into the region. Under the notorious half-ungern, Garrick Orange-Hair, they seek plunder and booty.

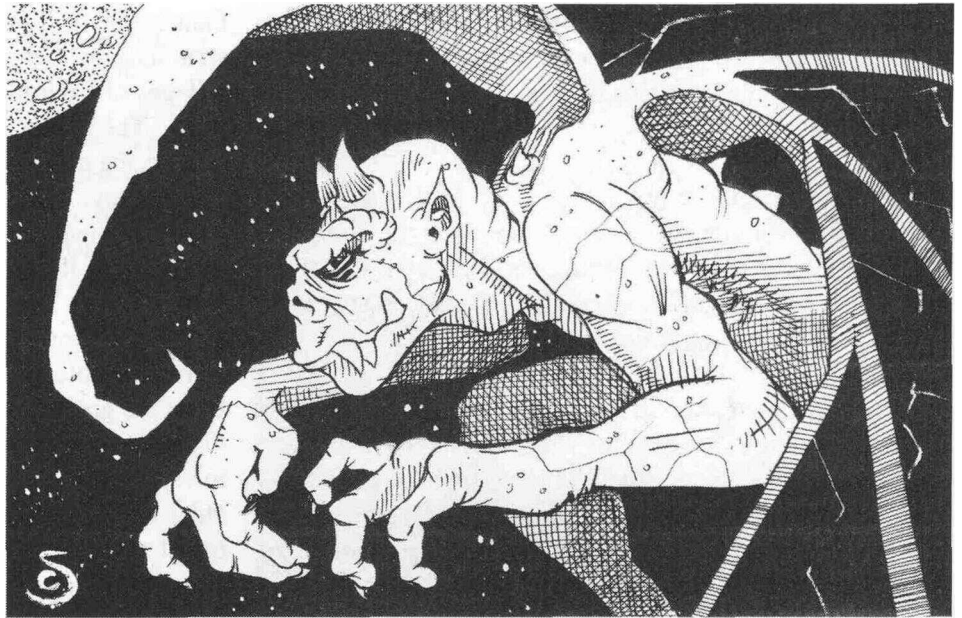
When the Players enter the picture, the villagers and/or Galveston attempt to enlist them to fight what they believe is a Charon Fiend. The Players must first unravel the mystery of the lion in the ropes, find the bodies of the six Orinsu in the dungeon underneath the Church, and then destroy them. To do so, they must overcome Orange-Hair's bandits and the animated gargoyles.

ADVICE FROM A TIRED REFEREE

As its not much in my disposition to guide people (in the game or out of it), I'm reluctant to include this section. But, I do think a few words might help you brother Referees out there. Read 'em if you want, ignore 'em where you will.

This mystery revolves around three separate actors. The Orinsu, the escaped lion, and the bandit, Orange-Hair. To track the movements of all three, the Referee should create a time line and allow the characters to weave in and out of it in a chaotic, albeit, realistic manner.

To maintain the mystery of the adventure, you should have the party spot the escaped lion in the shadows. By stressing the tendril like ropes coiled around the beast's neck you could add more fuel to the fire of the mythical Charon Fiend. Moreover, the lion's tracks, ropes/tendrils included, should be spotted occasionally so as to entice the characters into thinking that the lion, and not the Orinsu, is in fact the source of the murders.



The Orinsu are men whose souls were never given proper release. The characters can end their terror by either destroying them or by giving them a proper burial (see **In Dungeons, Dark Things Sleep, room 10 below**). The second method will not be easy for the players to envision, so help them out. Make certain the party is aware of the importance of burying the dead. Mention the cemetery in the village and while the party is in **room 9, The Catacombs**, make reference to the importance of burying the dead held by the worshippers of Demeter.

BACKGROUND

CASTLE KAPUND

Many years ago, when fell Aufstrag dominated the sprawling snowy wastes of Erde, the village of Cappendu served as a border post upon the East-West Imperial Road. The legionnaires built a squat border keep along the road, not far from the Twilight Wood, to serve as both garrison and prison. They called it Castle Kapund, after its first commander. Beneath its stone walls the legionnaires constructed a dungeon, wherein they kept all manner of "criminals," both innocent and guilty. Many goodly folk found their last resting place in the dungeons of Castle Kapund.

Eventually, merchants set up shop near Kapund to sell their wares to the legionnaires. Taverns, brothels and gambling houses sprang up as well, and eventually, skilled craftsmen, armorers, weavers and others settled in the area. In time, the small village of Kapund-Ua grew up around the castle.

A Lion in the Ropes

During the Winter Dark Wars, however, the legionnaires neglected the castle and abandoned it. They fled north and eventually across the straights of Ursal to disappear forever into the east.

The villagers stayed. They tore down the castle, using its stone for houses and walls. Upon discovering the dungeon, they filled the entrance with dirt and timber and promptly forgot about it. In doing so, they inadvertently created the Orinsu which now haunt Capendu.

Within the dungeon, buried in circular pits, were six men condemned to die. Forgotten by the legionnaires and never found by the villagers, the dead failed to find the peace that comes with burial or cremation. So their souls, racked with the uncertainty of their own deaths, became lost, doomed to haunt the regions underneath the ground and above it.

LORD GALVESTON AND CAPENDU

Lord Galveston settled in Capendu in 1045md. His vast stores of money, earned on campaign in the east during the Winter Dark Wars, went far in building the local economy, improving the roads, fortifying his tower, and constructing Four Saints. In the immediate aftermath of the Winter Dark Wars, traffic followed the Freiburg road through Capendu and into the western Kingdoms. Galveston and the five villages managed quite nicely. The only ale house in the area, Marlowe's Tavern, expanded from a dirt floored building into a respectable two-story establishment with rooms to let. The Church, Marlowe's and a few of the more respectable land-holders, managed to shingle their roofs in the famous green ceramic tiles manufactured in Freiburg. Galveston's land and people knew peace and prosperity, and his lion banner hung with pride over his tower.

This prosperity did not last. Avignon, eight days north by road, underwent its own renaissance. Within a few short decades of the Empire's fall, the commercial sea routes expanded and the port of Avignon, centrally located between the lands of the east and west, became the natural conduit for traffic. As the great city benefitted, Lord Galveston's lands suffered. The east-west trade route shifted north by a hundred miles, and the Freiburg road through the village of Capendu saw less and less traffic.

Lacking their main source of income, the villages began to dwindle in size, and Lord Galveston grew in years. Young sons and daughters left in search of work, south-east to Freiburg or north-east to Avignon. The elders passed on,

their bodies laid to rest in the cemetery of Four Saints, the wealth of days gone by a distant memory. The smaller villages of Contru and Morsa vanished almost without a trace. The timber of their houses was pulled down and used in the other villages, or fell into ruins and slowly rotted away. Only the mound, upon which sat the Great Hall of Morsa, can now be found. Only the very old can point out its location.

Lord Galveston has reached the almost unheard of age of 101. He is old and tired. His back is so bent that he almost faces the ground. He cannot walk without the assistance of his four men-at-arms, his only company. He lives in the tower and rarely ventures forth. Occasionally, some of the elder villagers, those who remember the days of prosperity, travel to Tower Galveston to sing to the elderly knight the songs of his youth, or deliver him personal gifts. His once great wealth has slowly withered away.

THE MYSTERY OF FOUR SAINTS CHURCH

When Galveston arrived in Capendu he ordered the Church built upon the mound of earth where the old castle sat. Upon discovering the dungeon the architects walled off the back rooms and added its foremost sections to the designs of the Church, using the rooms for storage and other mundane purposes.

Eventually, however, an acolyte tore loose some of the stones of the dungeon wall, discovering the forgotten rooms. The Curate decided that the new rooms could serve as a burial catacomb for fallen clergy. (In 1051md the Conclave of Bishops in Avignon ruled that all clergy must be buried, not in the common cemetery, but rather within the walls of the religious house wherein they served). This act of consecrating the burial chamber created the Orinsu. Left to die in the deep cold pits, unburied and forgotten, the souls of the men hovered in a purgatory between life and death. The spells of the clergy laying their own to rest wrenched the souls back to the world of the living. Lost and in the pain of terror, the unknowing Orinsu began to haunt the church and villages, hunting for something, though they knew not what.

For awhile they haunted the dungeon and the Church, their poltergeists turning over chairs or snuffing out candles. They soon learned, however, that they could possess things and make them move. The roof-top gargoyles and the stain-glass castings proved the perfect hosts for the raving mad Orinsu. Then began their silent reign of terror, coming out about once every five days (or at the Referee's

Background

discretion) to fly or crawl through the villages, hunting the living in order to visit out the horror of their suffering.

The murders began several months before the party arrives in Capendu. Every five to seven days a person has been killed. Fourteen people have died, and only seven bodies have been found. Those corpses found have been horribly mutilated and dumped into the river, so that presumably, some of the missing drifted downstream with the current. The villagers, simple farmers and craftsmen, are terrified and unsure of what to do.

Obviously, Galveston's age hinders him from intervening in the villager's affairs. He is aware of the murders, but has little resources to aid his charges. His one effort involved hiring several rangers to track the beast down. Because this was before the lion entered the area, the rangers found nothing. They refused the marks of gold and left the region for adventure elsewhere.

A LION IN THE ROPES

Two weeks after the rangers left, a lion escaped from a traveling circus which had passed through Capendu some months previous and wandered into the region. Villagers in Tres spotted the large beast moving along the banks of the river. They fled when one of their number mistook the remnants of the lion's rope leash for moving tendrils on the creature's neck. Thus started the rumor of the dreaded Charon Fiend.

The poor lion is a little tame and very hungry, and is prowling about looking for stray dogs, chickens, or the occasional goat. If the characters attack the lion it will defend itself. Otherwise, it avoids human contact.

OF GHOSTS AND DEACONS

Adelton, the deacon of Four Saints, sent to his masters in Freiburg for aid. None was forthcoming. Not believing that a Charon Fiend was responsible, Adelton took it upon himself to unravel the mysteries of the murders. The gargoyle/Orinsu slew him, carried his body to the top of the church, tore at it for several days, and at last deposited it on the banks of the Rolth River. The unfortunate incident left six young acolytes to deal with the terror of the monster and the fear of the villagers.

Charon Fiend

Large-sized Magical Beast (6 ft long)

Hit Dice:	4d10 (25hp)
Initiative:	+5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed:	40ft
AC:	16
Attacks:	2 claws +4 melee, bite +4 melee
Damage:	Claws 1d6+1; bite 1d10+1
Face/Reach:	5ft. by 10ft/5ft
Special Attacks:	Poison
Special Qualities:	Scent, Darkvision 60 ft.
Saves:	Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +1
Abilities:	Str 13, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10
Skills:	hide +9, Listen +5, Move Silently +10, Spot +12
Feats:	Improved Initiative, Darkvision 60ft.
Climate/Terrain:	Any land or underground
Organization:	Solitary or pair
Challenge Rating:	2
Treasure:	None (standard in lair)
Alignment:	LE
ADV. Range:	4-5 HD (Large), 6-8 (Huge)

Also known as Spirit Fiends, these grim beasts served the Geist of Unklar as pets and hunting companions. With Unklar's fall and the end of the Winter Dark Wars, these beasts slipped from Aufstrag and into the world. The terror of their passage left a mark upon the people of Erde, for their depredations knew no bounds. Eventually, they vanished into the dark places of the world and became legends of the Age of Winter Dark. On occasion, one or two are seen, in the wilder lands of Erde.

Description: Charon Fiends resemble a cross between a large, otherworldly dog and a great male lion. Upon closer examination, the Charon Fiend's mane is revealed to be a writing mass of snake heads, each about 2 ft. in length. Charon Fiends are close cousins of chimaeras.

Combat: The Charon Fiend attacks with its great front claws and jaws, much like a lion. However, if the Charon Fiend overbears its opponent by successfully scoring 3 hits in one round, it then draws its hapless victim into the nest of snakes which form its mane. Eight of these snake may strike in the following round, injecting venom with each successful hit.

Poison (Ex): Those struck by a snake must succeed at a Fortitude save (injury DC 14) or become poisoned. Though not fatal itself, each failed save results in 1d2 Con initial damage and 1d2 Str secondary damage. The infected area will also swell for 1 day.

Note: All OGC material is in the grey shaded boxes. Bold faced script is to be read or paraphrased to the players (except, of course, this bold script that you are reading).

A Lion in the Ropes



Cool Receptions

PRELUDE

Johannes Fever owns and manages a traveling circus. He passes through almost all the villages south of Avignon and around Freiburg. He's very famous as his traveling troop of gypsies and troubadours entertain locals with their wild animals and outlandish freaks, including the famous Bearded Elf, Gelion, Pugh the ore-skinned dwarf (he wears ore skins for clothes), and Hawk the mad jailer, who talks for hours without stopping. Fever's Circus also peddles milk tonics to cure any disease, magical disks that return to the thrower, and other various items of mischance and happenstance.

If the Referee needs to set the stage, then a week or so prior to arriving in the village of Aries the party should be entertained by the gypsies and Johannes Fever's traveling Circus. Hawk the mad Jailer will regale them with the tale of the dreaded Charon Fiend, the lion beast from the Twilight Wood which sports serpents for a mane! The Party will be given directions to the villages of Lord Galveston, where they may find safe haven, warm food, and a warm reception on the road to Freiburg.

ACT I: COOL RECEPTIONS

THREE VILLAGES: TRES, ARLES AND CAPENDU

The party has been followed and harassed all day by a group of bandits waiting for nightfall. To make matters worse, it has been raining for several days. The party approaches Galveston's lands from the south-west along the heights of Flytrap Ridge. Spying a village in the distance, they cross the small river at the ridge's foot and head for the safety of stone walls. Just after evening fall the party enters the tiny village of Aries.

Boots wet from crossing the small river, you tramp up onto the remnants of an old road. A small village lies before you. Its mostly wooden cottages stand arrayed in neat order along either side of the road. The dinner hour is only just passed and the town is muted and dark. Shutters and doors are tightly closed, and the gentle clanking of your armor and equipment echoes in the still quiet. No dogs bark. There is no sound but the ragged breaths of your tired band.

Attempts to rouse the villagers will yield no results. The murders, particularly that of the deacon, have terrified the people, and they have embraced wholeheartedly the

commandments of their Lord Galveston. Eventually, enough banging on doors or windows will yield the following response:

"Look milords, we don't want no troubles from yer! You can find safe lodging but a few miles down the road in Capendu. There be a Church there. Four Saints, its called, and the acolytes will take you in and give you a warm, safe place to stay. But hurry now, 'fore the evening grows too late and the road too dangerous."

No amount of cajoling will bring out the villagers. If need be, they use the name of Lord Galveston in hope that it will drive off the unwanted visitors.

Reluctantly, you cease trying to convince someone to give you lodging and you start off north along the road. An eerie silence engulfs the village as you leave. In the distance, to your left, a mile or so off the road, a fire burns atop a tower, which looks to be on the far side of the river. Rain begins to fall as you turn north-east toward the village of Capendu. The fire's light is soon lost in the dark as the rain picks up. Following the road for several miles you spy the dark silhouettes of scattered buildings surrounding what, even in the dark and rain, you can tell is a large Church. No doubt you have arrived in Capendu.

The party passed Tower Galveston, where the men-at-arms were lighting watch-fires. In the dark, they also marched past the village of Tres, which sits on the far side of a hill a half-mile from the road. They have arrived at the outskirts of Capendu.

CAPENDU AND THE CHURCH OF FOUR SAINTS

Much like the previous village, Capendu lies dark and quiet. Being later in the evening, no lights burn from under doors or windows. Where Aries' cottages were made of wood and arrayed one or two deep on either side of the road, Capendu's homes are mostly stone and seem to tumble out and away from the road in a haphazard fashion. Some of these rather stout looking houses have tile roofs, something unheard of in most farming communities.

Marlowe's Tavern, the Church of Four Saints, and the town fountain stand at the northern end of the town on the square. Marlowe's is closed. No one answers if the party knocks.

A Lion in the Ropes

The rain continues, pattering down on cloaks and packs, soaking through to your clothes and down to the skin. As you turn up the street and head for the Church, you pass a fountain, the worn visage of a lion stands in the pool of stone. The church looms out of the darkness before you, dwarfing the buildings across the square. The decorative stone walls stand as testament to both the skill and wealth of the Church builders. The front facade consists of large double doors set within a deep nave. The arched doorway, shaped to represent two rearing horses, is crowned by stone renditions of four knights wearing the accouterments of war. They, in turn, look heavenward towards a greater statue of Demeter, who looks down with a benevolent smile. The Church's bell tower reaches into the darkness, easily 140 feet high. Grim faced gargoyles perch upon the roof, looking over the village of Cependu.



Refer to map 3 for details on Four Saints Church. Read the following as the party approaches.

Here, at last, you see the warmth of a light. Hanging on a small post, just outside the arched doorway, you see a small lantern, its flickering flame casting strange shadows upon the faces of the saints and the god. The cold, pattering rain has long since soaked through your cloaks, wetting your gear and clothes underneath. Wet, sore, and generally miserable, you climb the steps to the doorway where you are greeted by a large iron knocker with a devilish face.

Knocking on the iron portal you hear a muffled shout and something heavy striking the floor. A moment later a small panel slides back, exposing a wary eye. "Who goes and what may we do for you?"

Benjamin, the acolyte, is on night watch. He bolted the inner door for fear of what lies in the dark. Benjamin, like his other five brethren, is young and inexperienced. He questions the travelers, but once he realizes that they mean no ill will, he unbolts the inner door and lets the party enter the church.

It is the custom of the Churches, monasteries and hospitals of the followers of Demeter to welcome strangers (who are not harmful), and travelers in particular, and give them refuge from the weather, bandits, or whatever ails them. Though they do not charge for the service, plates sit near the door to collect donations. Often, these plates are in the hands of a statue of Saint Vivian, a Queen of Kayomar,

who devoted her life to rescuing the poor and downtrodden. Any humans in the party would be well aware of this custom and should be encouraged to use this knowledge when dealing with the acolyte.

The cold wind and rain give way to the dry warmth of solid stone and vaulted ceilings. Within the outer vestibule, closed off from the main Church by a second set of doors, the acolyte has placed a chair, table and a candle. A red, leather-bound book lies open upon the floor. Smiling and inviting all in, he explains that the dormitory is closed.

"One of my brethren has fallen very ill and you will have to make do in the central nave, where you can sleep on the pews. I ask only that you take off your wet clothes before passing into the inner vestibule and the nave beyond. I will fetch some dry blankets and bread from the priory kitchen."

Cool Receptions

Bowing, he opens the doors to the main nave. He crosses into the dark, pausing twice to light two lanterns which serve to break the wall of dark before you. The vanishing acolyte draws your attention to the central nave. Thick marble pillars stretch into the blackness above and unfold into carefully crafted arches, all supporting the vaulted ceiling, barely visible in the inky darkness above you. You catch a glimpse of a huge altar-stone in the transept at the far end of the nave.

Passing through the doors and into the inner vestibule, the beauty of the Church strikes you. Stone floors, marble pillars, and beautifully carved wooden pews reveal the piety of the villagers and the clergy. Many-colored stained glass dominates the arched windows. The glass figures seem to move, in the flickering torch light, twisting, turning in one direction, then another. Four wonderfully carved statues line the central aisle.

Any knowledgeable player will be able to identify the statues, as all are famous figures from the history of the church of Demeter. Each statue is also adorned with a plaque. There is: Saint William, first King of Angouleme, who converted the whole of his realm to the worship of Demeter; Saint Albrecht the River King who founded the Knights of Haven and made war on the Dark in the east; Saint Sixtus, the martyr and first Bishop of Avignon, who gave his life trying to convince Kain the Warlord to spare his beloved city; and Saint Diago, who lost his life to the north-men in Trondheim. Each of the white marble statues cast noble postures with stern gazes that seem to follow the viewer. Each overlooks the central aisle and holds a weapon of cold steel.

A closer examination of the statues will reveal that the weapons are separate from the stone and can be pulled out of the statue's grip with relative ease. The blades are as follows: Saint William's is a long sword (+1), Saint Albrecht's is a two-handed sword (+2), Saint Sixtus' is a claymore (+1) (bastard sword), and Saint Diago's is a mace (+1). The character's should be discouraged from taking the swords. Explain that the acolyte will throw them out, alert the village, or send for the Constable, Lord Galveston. Later, however, they may find the swords useful in combating the Orinsu (see below).

Shortly, the acolyte returns. He brings fresh blankets, a few flagons of warm ale, and three loaves of bread. He bids you eat and make yourselves at home. He asks

polite questions as to why you are journeying on the road at such a late hour, where you are headed, and the like.

Should the characters respond to him with complaints about their treatment in the villages, he nods in agreement. He explains:

"Twas not always so here in my Lord Galveston's land. Not long ago people were friendly and welcomed travelers into their homes for food and drink. Marlowe's tavern stayed open late into the evening, and the locals enjoyed good mead and quiet talk. But, my worthies," Benjamin shakes his head in sadness, "that was before the murders."

He pauses, gazing at you, a hint of fear crosses his youthful face. "They started several months ago. 'Twas farmer Nessman first I think, he disappeared while walking the road south to Aries, the village you passed through earlier this evening. Vanished without a trace he did. A fine fellow, with a proud family, he even owned his own allods, 3 hectares of land. So no one could believe that he'd run off, no one, no sir. But he was gone nonetheless." The young acolyte makes the sign of Demeter and mutters a prayer. "They found him a week or so after, lying face down in the mud by the Rolth River. Torn and mangled, we barely had anything to bury.

"They couldn't find any sign of what had done that to him. Nothing at all. So we buried him and made prayers for him. Then a week later, another fellow, young Giles, vanishes, never to be seen again. Folks started to get nervous. Two of our own, gone and dead, and no one knew how or why."

Benjamin pauses for awhile, looking at you. "Then a traveler, a soldier, who was encamped on the outside of town, was killed. More after him, 13 of our folk, good honest people, one and all, are gone. Only 7 have been found. Tracks were found too, those of a great cat. And only a few weeks ago a fellow from the village of Tres saw a strange cat like beast, 15 hands at the shoulder, with serpents coiled around its neck. They say it was a Charon Fiend, come from the Twilight Wood."

If the players did not interact with the Circus above, allow one of the players to know what the Charon Fiend is (See sidebar, page 3).

A Lion in the Ropes

"His lordship, Galveston, issued an order to one and all that no one was to leave their homes after dark, and that all are to bolt their doors and shutter their windows, and let no strangers in. You see, his lordship is old, just celebrated his 101st birthday, and he's too feeble to do much anymore. So we've been left alone, to help ourselves.

"And that is when the unthinkable happened." His chin visibly quivers and he turns away. "The Deacon, Master Adelton, he sends for aid to Freiburg. Nothing comes of course; Capendu is far from the city and his Imminence the Bishop. So, Master Adelton sets out himself, from these very doors," he looks askance at the large, doors leading to the outer vestibule. "I was up with him that night. When he left. When we last saw him. He passed through and into the streets, telling me to close these doors and open only when he returns.

"He never did. Though I swear that I heard him shout once in fear before he vanished." Tears well up in the young boys eyes, his head slumps to his chest. "Twas a goodly master, and kind man. You'd have liked him, everyone did. We found him on the bank of the river. That t'were only a week and a day gone. We buried him in the crypt below this very hall."

The acolyte falls silent for awhile. He suddenly rises, brushing aside your questions with promises that Brother Tarlek will see to your needs. He bids you good night and returns to his post in the outer vestibule. A moment later, his muted sobs carry through the hollow spaces of the Church, hanging ominously in the surrounding dark like tangible things.

The characters should be allowed to settle down and plot what plan of action, if any, they are going to take. In any respect, their dreams are troubled with nightmares of dark evenings, strange beasts and terrible shadows.

BY THE LIGHT OF DAWN

The following morning, the party is roused from their sleep by Brother Tarlek, another young acolyte, thickly built with a large beard. Tarlek doesn't bother the travelers with questions, but rather invites them to break bread with him in the Church kitchen where the acolytes are preparing the morning meal.

The party has several options. They should be encouraged to take up the challenge of solving the murders, and if

necessary, tracking down the dreaded Charon Fiend. Any hint that they will do so brings promises of the Church's eternal blessings and benevolence for one and all. Tarlek will try to recruit the party to save the three villages from the terror without any reward other than that which comes from the strong helping the weak. He recommends that the party meet with Galveston, and promises to take them as soon as they are ready. If necessary, Tarlek assures the party that Lord Galveston will pay the party for their services; how much, he cannot say.

Tarlek, male human Clr0: CR1/4; Med. Humanoid; HD 1d4; hp 4; Init -1; Spd 30; AC 10; Atks +0 melee (1d6, staff); AL NG; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 11, Dex 9, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills: Knowledge (Religion) +2; Deity: Demeter; *Spells (1):* 0 – Virtue; *Possessions:* Staff, holy symbol, robes, pouch with 5 gp.

Tarlek, is a strong willed young man with complete confidence in the Church's ability to keep him and his from harm. The party should not be allowed to push him around and cajole him into risking himself or sacrificing any of the Church's wealth for the party's own good (unless of course it aids the villages as well).

If the party decides to present themselves to Galveston, go to **Act II, Red Herrings and Tea**. If they decide to pursue other leads, such as searching along the river bank, skip ahead to **Act III, Visitations from Beyond**.

ACT II: RED HERRINGS AND TEA

AGE BECOMES You

Tarlek dons a light cloak, takes a pack from the wall, and leads you through Capendu. The village is alive with activity. Small groups of locals head for the fields, a burly fellow heaves a great axe, splitting logs of wood next to the tavern, and a group of young girls are gathered around the well, pulling water and gossiping with giggles and titters. A thinly muscled woman in a chainmail shirt sitting with her back to the Inn wall, smoking a pipe, watches you pass. Tarlek leads you down the road with an air of contented happiness. He bows and nods to his fellow townsmen. "Good morning, Andrew, my dear Innkeep," he remarks to the man

Red Herrings and Tea

splitting logs, "I trust the day finds you well." To which the Innkeep only nods, smiles a little, and goes back to work. Others watch as you pass, some bow their heads, not knowing whether you are simple travelers or lords from Freiburg. A few moments of this and you pass from the village into the open country, journeying back down the road you tread the night before.

The morning is warm and the sun burns off the fog within an hour. Tarlek sets a brisk pace, and after 30 minutes, he turns onto a trail that leads to the tower on the river bank. This journey provides an ideal time for the party to find the tracks of the lion crossing the road. Allow them to follow it for a short while and then lose the trail in the grass. Where the ground is soft, the ropes score marks that look like tendrils.

To your right sits another small village, nestled under the eaves of the forested river bank. You can see a few farmers headed for the fields or working in and around the small wooden cottages. But Tarlek guides you along the track and up a gentle rise, where you behold, jutting from the trees, a small hilltop tower and keep.

Tarlek bids the party wait while he calls on Lord Galveston to announce their presence. He promises to return within the hour.

Tower Galveston (**refer to map 2**) overlooks a bend in the river between the villages of Tres and Aries (currently, the center of Galveston's holdings). The keep consists of a fortified building with a tower built into it. To approach Tower Galveston it is necessary to climb the steep, zig-zagging trail up the hill, in single file.

There, one must cross a natural causeway to a small landing jutting out over the cliff face and looking over the river valley below. This landing is where Galveston meets people he does not know, or trust.

Beyond that, the trail narrows and snakes underneath the keep's walls until it ends at its base. The only entrance (aside from the secret way, **refer to map 2**), are large, iron-bound double doors built into the rock of the hill and the mortar of the keep's walls.

The morning wanes. You relax in the clearing at the base of the tower hill. The warmth dries the remaining damp from your clothes. A gentle breeze picks up. Yesterday's hard miles and the evening's grisly tale

melt away as you sink further and further into the glade's comfort. An hour or so passes before Tarlek returns. You pick up the trek reluctantly, exchanging the warm sun and soft grass for a hard tramp through the still damp woods and up the winding, snaky path to the hill-top keep above.

As mentioned previously, Lord Galveston is an extremely old man. He has four men-at-arms in his employ, all are fiercely loyal, but all a little old for their job. If the party made a favorable impression on Tarlek, Galveston will greet the party on the small landing mentioned above. Otherwise, Galveston, greets the party from the roof of the gate house.

Lord Galveston greets you wearing a chain shirt and leaning heavily on a great two-handed claymore, the unusually sharp blade glistening green in the morning sun. He is very old and stoops over his own shadow like a weathered tree. His head frequently bobs to the left and right as he looks you over. His face is a mass of wrinkles, and he peers through almost lifeless, pale blue eyes.

Regardless of where he meets the party, Galveston treats with them in a forthright manner, being kind and respectful, if a bit fatherly. He expects the same. If not shown due respect, he becomes very short and offers little aid, and even less reward. Assuming all goes well, he imparts words of advice, and promises to reward the party with gold and jewels.

"I too was young once, much like yourselves, just beginning on my life's road. Those were good days, the fire of youth burnt in my heart with an avenger's fury! I fought at the Great Tree, at the very side of St. Luther don't you know." He pauses, his head bobbing a little on his thin neck. "Nay, you wouldn't want to hear tales of those days. But hear this my youthful friends, often things seem what they are not, and they are what you don't think they could be. Our world was built upon the ruins of another, and the stones of our halls cover a deeper dark. The very houses of our gods rest upon the broken tombs of this other world, and it is to these tombs that our paths lead. Track this beast, whatever it is, but always look at the world around you for the truth."

A Lion in the Ropes

Galveston retires with promises of a reward, but refuses to state any figures until the task is done. If the party balks, one of the men-at-arms repeats that their efforts will be well worth their time.

Men-at-arms, male humans Warl (4): CR1; Med. Humanoid; HD 1d8; hp 5; Init +0; Spd 20; AC 16 (chainmail & shield); Atks +1 melee (1d8, longsword), +1 ranged (1d8, It. crossbow); AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +2, Intimidate +2, Ride +2, Swim +2;
Feats: Alertness; *Possessions:* Chainmail, helm, longsword, It. crossbow, 12 bolts, 5 gp.

A TALL DRINK AT MARLOWE'S

Tarlek takes the party back to Capendu, to Marlowe's Tavern. Marlowe's is owned by Andrew Travis, it sports a large front room, kitchen and an outbuilding where there are five rooms to rent. All the rooms are small, and supplied with a cot, side table and a metal wash bowl. Travis is a young friendly man who welcomes the party and tries to make them feel at home. His beer is good and the food always fresh. His wife, Lysra, and daughter, Terry, help him run the place.

A small group of townsfolk have gathered at Marlowe's for lunch. Once settled, Tarlek offers the party sanctuary in the church, or they can stay at Marlowe's. He also offers them what little aid he and the other acolytes can give. Although the apprentice clerics have no spells, the church has a library that the party may access. If the party desires to research the region and the monster, they should be allowed to learn of the history of Lord Galveston, the villages, tower, and the church; also, an exhaustive search of the church records reveals the history of Castle Kapund (see above). Referee's should be careful to avoid mentioning the prisoners who were left behind as this knowledge would not have made it into the church records.

When the townsfolk learn that the party is going to hunt and slay the beast, they offer the party what aid they can give. This should include: free room and board at Marlowe's, maintenance on worn equipment and local guides. The Referee should not allow the party to take advantage of this good will, doing so will make the villag-

ers surly and unfriendly and will eventually result in the party being asked to leave the territory.

BAILEY QUARTERS

If the party needs an NPC to help track the monster, or to buttress its strength, there is a ranger, Bailey Quarters, staying in the Marlowe Tavern. She was the female leaning against the tavern smoking as mentioned above. Bailey is young, passing through Capendu on her way north. She has recently left the city of Freiburg to adventure on her own. She is stout and resolute and will take up the quest and aid the party with little objection. She is a competent ranger and tracker.

Bailey Quarters, female human Rgr2: CR2; Med. Humanoid; HD 2d10; hp 17; Init +1; Spd 30; AC 15 (chain shirt +4, Dex +1); Atks +3 melee (1d8, longsword), +3 ranged (1d6, throwing axe); SQ: Track, Favored enemy Vermin; AL CG; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 12.
Skills: Hide +5, Jump +5, Move Silently +5, Search +5, Wilderness Lore +5; *Feats:* Dodge; *Possessions:* Chain shirt, longsword, throwing axe, adventuring equipment, 25 gp.

NOTE: If the party explores the church and discovers the dungeon, skip to **In Dungeons Deep**. The party should be allowed to explore the dungeon but not to discover the secret door which leads to the pits and the final resting place of the undead. This should occur after the section marked **Where the Innocent Lie**.

A TIGER BY HIS TAIL, OR A LION BY HIS ROPE

Back in Capendu, Tarlek informs the party that it is nigh time for the dreaded Charon Fiend to strike again. The village will be locked up tight, only the Church remains open. Its doors unlocked, but closed. The party should quickly realize that the only way they are going to catch the beast is to stake out the village streets and keep watch, waiting for the creature's arrival.

Promptly at dark, the villagers retire to their homes, and lock their doors and windows. Andrew Travis will be the last to close, locking up Marlowe's tavern an hour after dark. With a heartfelt wish of good luck, he bolts his windows and bars his doors, allowing no one entry afterwards. The party must fend for itself. The Referee should make note of their positions.

Red Herrings and Tea

The Orinsu have indeed risen from the crypts. The presence of the party, however, confuses them and they have become very wary. They manifest within the gargoyles on the roof hovering in the shadows of the church spires. An elf or any party member with unusually sharp hearing may hear them moving about (Listen (DC 25)). Otherwise, the gargoyles keep a safe distance, flying about just beyond eye sight. If, by chance, one of the party members should be on the roof they have a small chance of spotting an animated gargoyle. (Spot (DC 18)).

The lion is holed up in an embankment on the Rolth River. It is hungry, tired, and unable to fend for itself. It is settling in. If the party attempts to track the lion they will find no leads, only a few tracks in Capendu itself, (DC 10). They will be forced to stake out the village and wait for the lion to come to them.

FIRST EVENING

As the last lights go out in the village, the dark grey evening descends upon you. After awhile, it begins to rain. At first, the clouds spit and sputter, but by midnight, the water descends in a steady drizzle, once more soaking through your cloaks, dampening armor, gear and clothes. Little disturbs the quiet of the evening. An occasional owl sounds in the dark, and somewhere to the south, a dog bays and barks. Several more hours pass as you wait, soaked and tired, seeing nothing but the faint light of dawn in the east. Slowly, the clouds turn from black to grey in the morning's light. The rain continues. The little light illuminates a dreary world of mud and grey hopelessness. Your night's watch was fruitless.

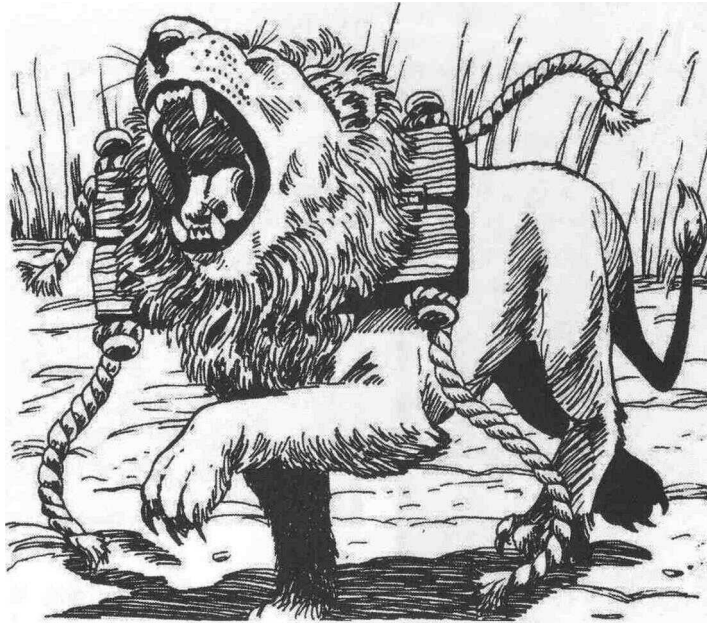
The party is wet and tired from their night's vigil. Tarlek and the other acolytes prepare warm soup and bread for them and allow them to rest that day in the sanctuary of the church. He promises that the creature, staying true to form, will strike again soon.

If the party leaves the village to search for the creature, they can find tracks along the riverbank leading toward Tres (DC 14). Otherwise, they find only tell-tale signs of the creature's tracks, crossing the road, or in freshly tilled lands (DC 10). If they track the lion to its lair skip ahead to the section marked, **The Lion**.

SECOND EVENING

Upon your second evening's vigil, it is cool but without rain. The mud of the street clings to your boots and stains your cloaks. Hour after hour drifts by, until around midnight, a great commotion arises in the distance. A roaring and growling, the like's of which you have never heard, carries through the night. An unearthly quiet settles around you. You count your

heartbeats as the minutes tick by. Then, a shadow, moving upon the roof of Marlowe's tavern. It moves through the dark with ease, slinking slowly along without a sound. Shadows of tendrils move about its neck. The dreaded Charon Fiend has found you.



The creature is obviously the lion, the shadows of the night playing tricks on the character's minds. Upon the slightest movement of anyone in the party, the lion will leap off the roof and vanish into the dark, heading immediately for its lair by the river (see **map 1**).

Tracking the beast will be near impossible at night (DC 25). The party may be able to follow him out of town, but the dark should inhibit any further attempts to locate the creature.

All the while, the Orinsu watch through gargoyle eyes and wait, yet to overcome their fear of the strong and intent party. They creep around in the shadows (see **gargoyle animate below**), trying to observe the party. In their grief torn madness and undeadly state, their minds are unable to focus on the world around them. The characters bold stance has confused them.

A Lion in the Ropes

NOTE: The Referee can easily build suspense by using the Orinsu. They can make noise or make the party feel as though they are being watched, also, they can move through the shadows on the edge of a party member's vision.

With the arrival of dawn, the party will be able to track the lion (DC 9). The creature's footprints are easily discerned by even the most inexperienced tracker. It is only a few hours walk to the lair. A determined party could be there by noon, where they will find the creature under a river embankment. The lion is cornered.

As word spreads that the beast is cornered, the villagers gather to watch the outcome of the fight. The mayor of Tres, Arthur Carls-son, a large man with balding pate, offers the party any needed equipment, but shies away from allowing those in his charge to fight the beast. If need be, he and his sons take up clubs and enter the fray.

Arthur Carls-son, male human Ftr1: CR1; Med. Humanoid; HD 1d10; hp 9; Init +4; Spd 30; AC 11 (padded +1); Atks +1 melee (1d6, club); AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Handle Animal +4, Ride +2, Swim +2; *Feats:* Improved Initiative, Endurance; *Possessions:* Padded armor, club, 30sp.

William Kirby, male human War1: CR1/4; Med. Humanoid; HD 1d8; hp 5; Init +2; Spd 30; AC 12 (Dex +2); Atks +1 melee (1d6, club), +3 ranged (1d6, shortbow); AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Ride +4, Swim +2, Climb +2; *Feats:* Track; *Possessions:* Shortbow, 12 arrows.

Rodger Perry, male human War1: CR1/4; Med. Humanoid; HD 1d8; hp 6; Init +0; Spd 30; AC 10; Atks +1 melee (1d8, shortspear); AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 11.

Skills: Climb +3, Ride +2, Swim +3; *Feats:* Alertness; *Possessions:* shortspear.

NOTE: Arthur and his sons will not fight to the death. They will withdraw if the battle becomes too dangerous. They will, however, attempt to save any characters that may be wounded.

THE LION

At last you've tracked the creature to its lair. The den lies beneath an embankment on the river. Tree roots, washed clear of dirt and mud shield the opening of the relatively shallow, dark hole. Its entrance is half submerged in the river. Peering within, you see mud and roots. The water trickling around your feet gurgles in the quiet. A low ominous growl breaks the silence of the scene.

The Referee should attempt to maintain the secret of the lion's identity as long as possible. Visibility is poor and conditions wet and muddy. The ropes around the lion's neck can still be mistaken for tendrils, even in these close quarters. Regardless of the party's actions, they should at some point discern that the creature they were tracking is the lion.

The lion defends itself if attacked. If enticed with food, it emerges and eats from the party's hands. Any magical communication with the beast will reveal its tame nature.

Lion in the Ropes: CR 1; Large animal (5 ft. long); HD 4d8; hp 24; Init +5; Spd 40; AC 15 (+3 Dex, +2 natural); Atks Bite +3 (1d8+1), 2 claws +3 (1d6+1); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ: scent; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 7.

Skills: Hide +4, Listen +7, Move Silently +10, Spot +4; *Feats:* Improved Initiative.

The astute player may remember the circus which passed through the region some months previous or the Referee may wish to remind them by allowing them to roll a knowledge check (local) (DC 10).

Once the beast is subdued or slain, the villagers are overjoyed. Whether the party believes the lion to be the source of the murders or not, the villagers, particularly in Tres, are exceedingly grateful and offer the party food and drink. As word spreads through the valley, the party's reputation grows and they are welcomed as the champions of the hour. Travis offers free drink and food to the party. Old Galveston sends his thanks and promises a reward to be delivered upon the next day of worship (the Referee should set this within the next few days).

Visitations from Beyond



ACT III VISITATIONS FROM BEYOND

ORANGE, THE COLOR OF FEAR

Garrick Orange-Hair, the half-ungern bounty hunter turned bandit, has a group of 15 ungern, 11 rogue goblins, and 12 wild dogs. While the party returns to Capendu, Garrick descends Flytrap Ridge and crosses the Rolth River near the village of Tres. He is set on destroying the village and looting it in order to impress upon the other villages that he should be paid "protection" money.

His plan goes afoul from the beginning. The mayor of Tres, Arthur Carls-son, still excited over the battle with the lion, organizes a fierce defense along the river bank.

Though two of his men are slain, he manages to get word to Galveston, who, mounted on a great war horse, leads a sortie with his men-at-arms. One of Galveston's men is horribly wounded and they fall back to the tower in defeat. Orange-Hair pursues them and lays siege to the tower. He manages to invest the forest where the trail is, but his attack on the tower is repulsed. He loses an ungern upon the causeway.

By morning, word is brought to the party that an ungern band has attacked Galveston. The villagers plead for their lord's rescue. If the party takes up the challenge, they find a worried Orange-Hair encamped in the trees around castle Galveston.

Orange-Hair's determination to terrorize the valley has been terribly shaken. He did not expect the villagers to defend themselves, nor the tower guards to launch a sortie.

A Lion in the Ropes

If the party attacks, he becomes thoroughly confused. Unless the party is utterly inept, he immediately retreats across the river. Though a tough fighter, Orange-Hair has no desire to die. At no time will he stand and fight at the risk of his own life. If 1/4 of his band falls, he flees with the survivors, leaving the wounded behind.

The wild dogs serve as the bandit leader's eyes and ears and will never attack. If shot at or harassed in any way, they flee and regroup later.

WHERE THE INNOCENT LIE

The Orinsu have at last overcome their fears, deciding to visit their rage upon the villages once more. Still wary of the party, they await an opportune moment to strike. When the party is away from the church, battling Orange-Hair, celebrating their recent victory, or visiting Lord Galveston at his tower, they attack the apprentice cleric on duty, none other than young Tarlek.

Much relieved by the party's apparent victory, Tarlek opened the doors to the church to let in the cool spring air. He is last seen by his brother and sister acolytes lighting the lantern outside the church.

The Orinsu rise from the deep, animate the gargoyles, and strike the hapless Tarlek. They carry his body to the

church's roof, treating it in an evil manner. All that remains by morning is a trail of blood that has trickled down the slanted roof, into the gutters, and fallen to the ground below. The larger part of the body is dropped into the river early that morning, though some remains are left on the roof (see below).

When the party returns to the church, they find the doors wide open, several of the lamps burned cold and Tarlek's flagon of wine untouched. The young acolyte is missing. Rousing the acolytes yields nothing further.

A search of the grounds, however, reveals a small gold taper in the grass at the bottom of the front steps (Tarlek dropped it when the gargoyles swept down upon him), a sandal to the church's left, and blood on the ground near the rear of the building. Small stains can be found on the church walls, some older than the others. The casual observer will Spot (DC 18) any one or all of these signs, assuming that they look in the proper location. A detailed Search of the grounds increases the likelihood (DC 10).

Clues exist inside the church as well. Five of the malignant Orinsu chose to animate the gargoyles upon the rooftop, but the sixth chose to animate one of the stained glass pictures. As mentioned, the glass depicts many scenes from the Winter Dark Wars, between the Council of Light and the dark lords of Aufstrag. The Orinsu chose one of

Garrick Orange-hair, male half-ungern Ftr4: CR4; Med. Humanoid; HD 4d10; hp 28; Init +0; Spd 20; AC 17 (Half-plate +7); Atks +7 melee (1d12, Greataxe); SQ: Darkvision, Scent; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 17, Dex 11, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Bluff +3, Climb +5, Hide +3, Jump +5, Move Silently +2, Ride +5, Swim +4, Wilderness Lore +2; *Feats:* Alertness, Cleave, Expertise, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Trample; *Possessions:* Half-plate armor, Great Axe, dagger, 50 gp, gem (50gp).

Ungern (15): CR 2; Med. Humanoid; HD 3d8; hp 12; Init +6; Spd 30; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 hide); Atks +4 melee (weapon of choice) or 2 claws +4 (1d4-1), +3 ranged (2d8, Greatbow); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Gore +2 (1d6); SQ: Darkvision, Scent, Spell Resistance (rating 1); AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills: Hide +1, Listen +4, Spot +3; *Feats:* Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative.

Lesser Goblins (11): CR 1/4; Small Humanoid; HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +1; Spd 30; AC 15; Atks +0 melee (1d8-1, morningstar), +2 ranged (1d6-1, javelin); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ: Darkvision; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills: Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Spot +3; *Feats:* Alertness.

Wild Dogs (12): CR 1/3; Small animal; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +3; Spd 40; AC 14; Atks Bite +2 (1d4+2); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ: Scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 11, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Listen +6, Spot +6.

Visitations from Beyond



the devil shaped panes to animate. This particular pane, at the left rear of the church, has blood upon its claws. A long line of blood has flowed across the bottom of the window, onto the ledge, and down at last to the floor, where it has congealed in a small pool, still sticky to the touch. Casual search - Search (DC 18); detailed search - Search (DC 12). If the party fails to find any signs, a monk will discover the blood while cleaning the windows.

If the characters wish to search the church's roof, they can access it through an old stairwell attached to the rear of the building that rises on narrow steps to the roof 140 feet above. As the party or party members clamber onto the roof, a horrid sight greets them. The mystery of the missing monk is solved.

At first you are greeted by an odd smell, heavy with the stench of blood. Climbing through the small portal onto the roofs top you are greeted by a grisly scene. A small landing has been constructed on the church's roof. The two slanted sides of the roof rise to meet a walkway which stretches the length of the building to the front battlements, where one might easily hide from view and watch the town below. But where the portal opens, the walkway has been expanded into a small landing, and it is upon this landing where the grisly remains of Tarlek lie. The innocent monk's bloody smock and habit lie amidst the ruins of blood and splintered bone. Little is found of the his actual body.

An ill feeling creeps over you. A murder occurred upon your watch, under your very noses. The sky, dark and overcast, does little to assuage your growing fears. A dreadful howling ascends from below, building in intensity until at last it washes over you and vanishes into angry clouds above.

The rooftop search summons the Orinsu of the dead men. With howling curses they crawl up the walls and onto the roof. They animate the gargoyles and attack the party. Only 2-4 of the Orinsu join in the attack.

NOTE: There are eight gargoyle statues on the roof. The animates can leave one host and move to another with amazing speed. The Referee should take note of this. When one gargoyle statue is shattered the animate can move to another, until there are no more statues, (see **Orinsu below**).

Gargoyle Animate (8): CR 2; Med. Construct; HD 3d10; hp 17; Init +2; Spd 30, Fly 60; AC 15; Atks 2 claws +2 (1d4+1); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ: Immunity (slashing weapons do ½ damage), Darkvision; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.
Feats: Spring Attack.

As the party drives the last of the creatures off, howling shouts of the damned erupt from below, taper off, and grow quiet. The Orinsu have returned to their tombs and the party must follow them into the deeps of the dungeon.

A Lion in the Ropes

IN DUNGEONS, DARK THINGS SLEEP

As the party prepares to descend into the dungeon the Referee may wish to remind them of the swords placed in the hands of the four statues of the saints.

An iron rail and locked gate block access to the steps which lead into the dark below. Brother Orn opens the gate and offers a prayer for your safe return. "Below are the bodies of our Brethern, but seems that some foul creature has taken up abode in our catacombs. May Demeter guide you, keep you safe and bring you back to us in health." With that he walks quietly away and leaves you to the task at hand.

The stone steps, relatively new in construction, give way to a hallway which bears the imprint of work done long ago. Old grey stones, long worn smooth by the passage of time, beckon you into the dark beyond.

ROOM 1. STORAGE ROOM.

The door is new and unlocked. Within are 10 large barrels and 5 crates containing foodstuffs, wine and beer. There are also piles of cookware, dishes and silverware, all unused. 50gp value.

ROOM 2. STORAGE ROOM.

The door is new and unlocked. Within are two barrels of torches, four small barrels of cooking and lamp oil, a shelf with several hundred small packages of candles of varying size, and six sturdy lamps. There are also 14 empty barrels which obviously contained oil at one time.

ROOM 3. VESTMENT ROOM.

The door is new and locked, a padlock has been added for extra security. The room is used frequently, for it is clean and dust free. Within are clothing racks, shelves, a large armoire, and four trunks.

The racks hold four white habits with gold trim, each worth 10 gp. The shelves have two miters, with gems mounted upon them and ten white and silver hats with gold and silver trim. The miters are worth 25 gp apiece, the hats 5 gp. Within the armoire are a dozen finely tailored smocks, each worth 2gp. In the trunks, wrapped in velvet, are religious staffs and wands (10 total, each worth 50 gp). It should be obvious to the party that this is the vestment room, used by the clerics of the church above. They should be strongly discouraged from looting its contents.

ROOM 4. BARRED DOOR.

The hallway extends for 50 feet beyond the turn and ends in a large iron-bound, brass door. The door is locked and shows no signs of recent tampering. It is doubtful whether any of the monks have been down here in months, if not years.

The door has been sealed shut and locked for over 5 years. The monks, though they know that it leads to more rooms have been forbidden to go beyond it. The lock will have to be picked (DC 25). If this fails, the mortar around the hinges is greatly weakened and a determined effort will batter down the door after an hour's work.

ROOM 5. STORAGE.

The old wooden door gives way with a loud creak, and small whirlwinds of dust spin around as the door opens. Within is a room long disused. Old tools, their wooden hafts long since rotted away, are piled haphazardly about.

Lying amidst the debris is a trunk, tightly sealed. Within are a dozen bundles of yellowed paper. The top bundle consists of 6 warrant sheets. Each one has the heading *Wanted for Treason*, a name following with a list of charges. Many of the charges are vague, such as: Insulting Gestures, and Calling on the Council. After the charges are listed, there is a trial date, the seal of the Empire, and an execution date. Each one of the six reads: *Consigned to the pits.*

These are the warrant sheets for the six doomed men, the Orinsu, located in room 10. Their names are listed and still readable. The names of the men can be used against their restless Orinsu (**see below, room 10**).

There are two iron crowbars amongst the rubbish and a pick axe blade.

ROOM 6. ARMORY.

The thick, wooden, iron-bound door is unlocked, but jammed. It opens slowly with great effort. Beyond you see a tightly organized room with racks of armor. Twelve suits of mail hang on the main rack. Twelve shields hang on the walls, six on the east wall and six on west. Twelve high spiked helmets rest upon a long shelf over the armor rack. The breast plates, with chain sleeves and skirts, are obviously of Imperial Aufstrag design, as are the spiked helmets. The Crescent moon emblazons the shields. Clearly, an armory from the days before the Winter Dark Wars, when fell Unklar's folk reigned upon the world.

Visitations from Beyond

The equipment is in surprisingly good shape. The shields need new straps, as do the helms, but are otherwise valuable. The armor has suffered a little more. The leather straps for the breast plate, and the straps attaching the leggings and sleeves are seriously degenerated and will more than likely break if worn. The armor acts as Half-plate (AC 17).

ROOM 7. RUINS.

This room served as some manner of storage room. It is empty but for the metal remains of old casks and barrels.

There is actually a small chest hidden beneath a flagstone under the debris. It is metal, about 2' x 2' and 18" high. Upon the top are magic runes which read: *Initiate of the Blood Runes*. The box is locked and trapped. Triggering the trap causes an **Unklar's Breath** to spill into the room from the key hole and attack the party. Trap-lock (DC 20). Within, the chest is lined in purple velvet cloth, still in good shape. Lying on the cloth, neatly rolled and sealed with the seal of the Wizard Guild, *The Paths of Umbra*, is a scroll. **Scroll, 1st level spell, Ordain.**

Unklar's Breath (1): CR 1/2; Med. Magical Beast; HD 1d8+2; hp 7; Init +1; Spd 15; AC 18; Atks --; Face 5 ft. x 5 ft; Reach 5 ft.; SA Paralysis (DC 20); AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -1; Str --, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Ordain

Transmutation (good)
Level: Clr 1, Pal 1, Sor/Wiz 1
Components: special
Casting Time: 1 full round
Range: special
Effect: special
Duration: permanent
Saving Throw: none
Spell Resistance: No

This spell is used to sanctify an item or piece of ground, investing it with ministerial or sacerdotal functions. Any item *ordained* gains a +2 on all saving throws (A person wearing an *ordained* item does not get the saving throw bonus, nor can these saving throws be 'stacked'). It is used for other priestly purposes as well, such as, making holy water, consecrating a grave site or laying the dead to rest. In order for the spell to take effect, the caster must have a holy item of some sort present, ie, sacred earth, holy water, etc.

Unklar's Breath

Medium-size Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 1d10 (7hp)
Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)
Speed: 15ft.
AC: 18
Attacks: Special
Damage: Special
Face/Reach: 5ft. by 5ft/5ft
Special Attacks: Paralysis
Special Qualities: None
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1
Abilities: Str --, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 10
Skills: None
Feats: None
Climate/Terrain: Any
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 1/2
Treasure: None
Alignment: N
ADV. Range: None

These creatures were created by the Arch-Mage Nulak-Kiz-Din to guard treasure. An Unklar's Breath manifests wherever a drop of Nulak's blood has been placed and the proper incantation laid upon it. Nulak was known to supply his precious commodity to his more powerful guild houses and to some of his greater servants, so the number of Unklar's Breaths is limitless. The creatures are often placed on the locks of chests and spell books.

Description: When the enchanted drop of blood is disturbed by touch or spell, the Breath pours forth as a medium-sized purple mist.

Combat: The Breath attacks by entering the mouth or nostrils of its victim, infecting his/her blood and thereby paralyzing them. Holding one's breath will not keep the creature from entering the body. Though the creature can be hit by normal weapons, the most effective way of combating the creature is by casting a *Dispel Magic*, *Neutralize Poison*, or *Remove Disease* upon it. These spells instantly destroy it. **Paralysis (Sp):** Those that inhale an Unklar's Breath become paralyzed for 10 minutes if they fail their Fortitude save (DC 20). Elves are vulnerable to this paralysis.

NOTE: Because the spell was fashioned by the wizard guild, *The Paths of Umbra*, as the first step of the very powerful *Blood Runes* spell, the script is readable and usable by wizards (see **sidebar**). The whole incantation will appear in the upcoming module **Blood Runes**.

A Lion in the Ropes



Visitations from Beyond

ROOM 8. PREPARATION ROOM.

The door to this room has been torn away. Several counters line the walls, and shelves stand above each counter. A long table dominates the center of the room. The table is blood stained, though the stains are several weeks old. Upon the shelves and counters are various cutting instruments, fresh rolls of bandages, and jars of a thick yellow fluid. Several new dark habits with hoods hang upon the wall beside the open door.

This is the preparation room for the monks. Their fallen comrade's bodies are cleaned, bandaged and placed in a fresh habit with shroud. The yellow fluid is embalming fluid. This process keeps the body from decaying for awhile and reduces the smell over the long term. There is little of value here.

ROOM 9. THE CATACOMBS.

This room greets you with a musty odor, a smell of ancient decay. A large brass candelabra stands in the room's center, next to it is a large metal cask, filled with fresh dirt. A finely carved podium sits in front of the candelabra. Upon the east wall are four small iron doors, fitted into the wall. They are latched, though unlocked. Upon each is a brass plaque bearing an inscription in the Vulgate tongue. Upon the west wall are two excavated alcoves. Small and square, they are obviously burial tombs.

A plaque, firmly attached to the podium reads:

"A Prayer for the Dead.

In death know peace,

The quiet of earth's decay,

Rest now sorrowful ghost,

With holy word, entombed, stay.

That even the dead should rest we offer them their names and sanctified dirt upon their chest and we cast holy incantations upon them to give them peace. For we know that the restless dead are damned and with us they stay."

The inscriptions on the east wall read as follows: **Top Left: Our Beloved Deacon, Master Hugh Adelton, Too Soon Lost, 1097. Top Right: Brother Detain, 1096. Bottom Left: Sister Adelia, 1095. Brother Ulros, 1095.**

Within the tombs are the bodies of the above mentioned monks. Deacon Adelton's is relatively fresh, though it has been covered in the embalming fluid and bandaged. The smell of the tomb if opened is strong though not over-

powering. All four bodies have dirt sprinkled upon them from chin to toe. The two alcoves are empty, awaiting occupants.

The dirt is soil taken from Capendu's cemetery and is used to sprinkle the dead with consecrated ground. It may be used in the final encounter with the Orinsu, see **room 10**.

If the party conducts a detailed Search of the room, the false wall will be revealed at DC 10. If only casual observations are made, then DC is 16.

ROOM 10. THE CRYPT.

With only a little effort you pull down a large section of the false wall. A heavy musty odor engulfs you; the stench of old decay pervades the darkened room beyond. Your light flickers in the dust, causing shadows to twist and turn. Peering in, you see rack-lined walls, and tables covered in long unused implements of torture: pliers, spiked chains and cleaving blades. On the far wall of the room, a pair of manacles hang from the ceiling, the remnants of a skeletal arm dangling from one chain. Eight perfectly symmetrical pits dominate the center of the room, each about 3 feet in diameter. Four ancient statues, each of huge gargoyles are in the room. The winged monsters, grafted into the room's corners, seem to stare at you, their dark stone eyes follow you as you cross the room.

The room has not been used since the imperial forces left it many years ago. Castle Kapund's last captain constructed the false wall in order to hide the dungeon from enraged

Orinsu (6): CR 2; Undead Spirit; HD --; hp --; Init --; Spd 30; AC --; Atks --; Face --; Reach --; SQ: Animate, Etherealness; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +3; Str --, Dex --, Con --, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha --.

Greater Gargoyle Animate (2): CR 3; Large Magical Beast; HD 4d10; hp 24; Init +3; Spd 30; AC 16; Atks 2 claws +4 (1d8+1); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft; Reach 10 ft.; SQ: Immunity (slashing weapons do ½ damage), Darkvision; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Feats: Power Attack, Stunning Fist.

Lesser Zombie (6): CR 1/2; Med. Undead; HD 1d12; hp 8; Init -1; Spd 20; AC 11; Atks +1 melee (1d4+1 bash); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft; Reach 5 ft.; SQ: Undead immunities, (slashing weapons do ½ damage), Darkvision; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

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townsfolk or avenging lords of the Council of Light. The room has sat undisturbed for many years.

Here is where the six died. Their long decayed bodies each lie in a separate pit. When observed, the bodies appear as twisted zombies with rags on their bones. The pits are narrow and about 12 feet deep.

To combat and defeat the Orinsu, see below.

If any move is made to attack the zombies, the Orinsu invade and animate the giant gargoyle statues in the corners. It takes three Orinsu to animate one of the stone monstrosities, once done they will fight ferociously to defend the zombies.

As each of the Orinsu is turned or buried, the soul, freed from its undead state, flies from the room, up through the church, and into the night sky, howling and moaning as it goes. The sound fades as the creature passes on to the halls of the dead.

The jeweled eyes of the four gargoyles are each large opals, worth **100 gp** (total **800 gp**). There is a **ring of protection+2** on one of the zombies. > .

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With the Orinsu destroyed, the party and villagers realize that the true source of the murders has been overcome. Galveston acknowledges the party's efforts and success in a public ceremony on the following god's day. He rewards them each **250 gp** and a patent of land ownership within the valley. Each party member receives 10 acres of land to be held as an allod (they owe no dues or service for the land). They are also granted, upon Galveston's death, Tower Galveston and all the feudal holdings of the villages of Capendu, Tres and Arlet. The villagers welcome their new lords and ladies with shouts of appreciation and welcome! The Referee may wish to modify these treasures for his/her own adventure. If so, exchange the tower and land for equal money, **1000 gp** per party member for a total of **1250 gp**.

Orinsu

Undead Spirit

Hit Dice:	as Host animate
Initiative:	as Hosl animate
Speed:	30ft or as Host animate
AC:	as Host animate
Attacks:	as Host animate
Damage:	as Host animate
Face/Reach:	as Host animate
Special Attacks:	as Host animate
Special Qualities:	animate, Etherealness
Saves:	Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +3
Abilities:	Str --, Dex --, Con --, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 10
Skills:	none
Feats:	none
Climate/Terrain:	Any
Organization:	Solitary or group
Challenge Rating:	1; as Host animate
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	NE
ADV. Range:	None

Orinsu are lost souls spawned from those who suffered a horrible death due to torture, starvation, or other evil circumstances. The spirit, wracked by earthly pain, is unsure as to whether it should pass on from the realm of the living. It remains in the foggy middle, tied to its place of death as undead.

Description: Orinsu are ethereal spirits without form or substance. If they appear as pain-wracked versions of their hosts.

Combat: In combat the Orinsu animate the nearest, most threatening object and attack. They gain all of the combat abilities of the host they animate. Once the host is destroyed, or near destruction, the Orinsu flees it and searches for another host to animate. If none exist, it returns to its earthly remains.

Animate (Su): Orinsu remain near the remains of their former host, but they manifest in a number of ways. They may appear as simple poltergeists, moving candle sticks and books in the late of night, or they may walk the earth, haunting the living.

When desiring to affect the living world, Orinsu manifest themselves by animating objects. The bodiless spirits worm their ways inside a statue, a figure in a painting, or their former bodies (treat as zombie, lesser zombie, or skeleton). The more powerful Orinsu may even animate a fallen character. The animation process takes one round, both to enter and to leave a host. Orinsu Animates may never venture more than 1 mile from the earthly remains that once housed their uncorrupted spirit.

Defeating an Orinsu: If the zombie bodies are turned, the Orinsu are consigned to oblivion. The zombies will animate only if someone physically threatens them and only if the Orinsu has not occupied another host. The zombies can only be permanently destroyed by a cleric through turning. If the zombie itself is chopped down, burnt or otherwise destroyed the corpse will no longer be able to defend itself, but the Orinsu will still be able to animate another host.

The only other way to destroy the Orinsu is to lay them to rest. The corpses must be named, consecrated earth thrown upon them, and a burial spell cast over them. Any number of spells will serve this purpose, Bless, Consecrate, Remove Curse, Sanctuary, or the **Ordain** spell found in room 7. If the characters succeed in laying the Orinsu to rest they are awarded double the experience point value.

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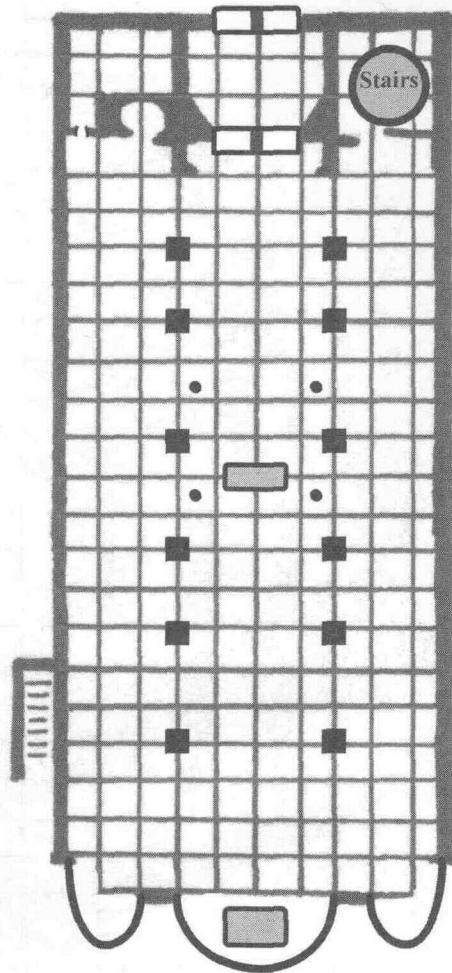
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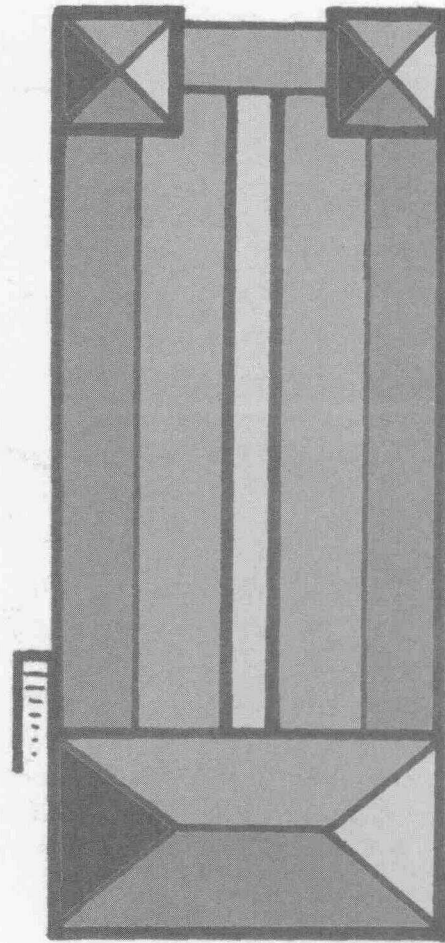
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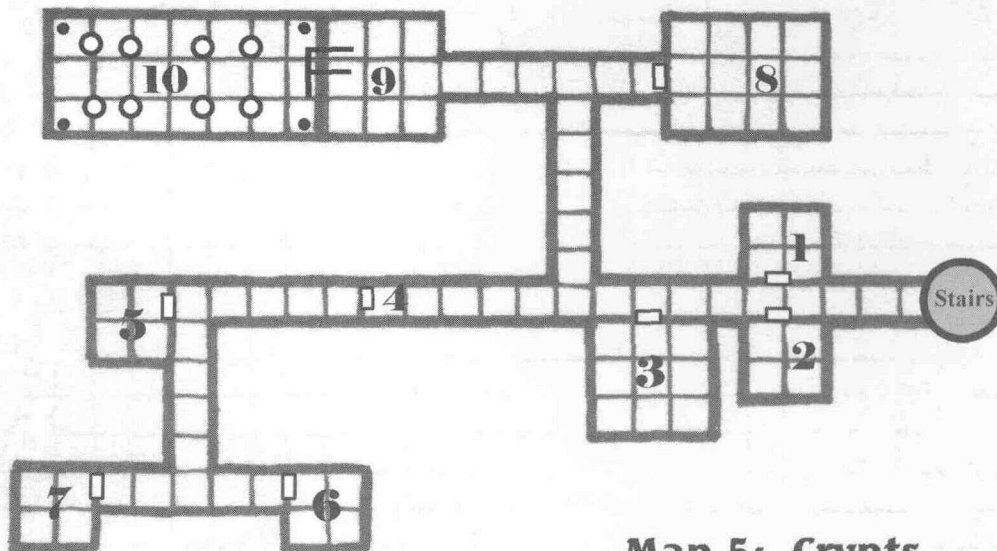
Map 3: Four Saints Church



Map 4: Roof



- : Altar
- : Archway
- : Column
- : Door
- F : False Wall
- : Pit
- : Statue



Map 5: Crypts