

LUCEAT LUX VESTRA

A Roleplaying Game set in an
era of Christian persecution.

BOOK II: GM GUIDE
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PROLOGUE

It is said that to understand someone, one should walk a mile in their shoes. This game challenges the players to do just that: to walk a mile in the sandals of a fictional martyr.

While I am no bible scholar, the period of Christian Persecution was a time where the faithful were damned to terrible consequences for practicing their faith.

My hope for this game is for the players to appreciate the hard choices required from those who lived in such a time. Such dark days are behind us now, but the choices we make for our faith are rarely simple. Perhaps in playing the game, we may all learn a little more about ourselves and how we would tackle such dilemmas.

To Christine and James, whose lives
matter more to me than my own.



As with many stories, this one begins with fire.

The Great Fire of Rome burned for six days. Six days of death, despair and ruin to the greatest civilization that the world has ever known. On the seventh day, the Emperor Nero turned against us, blaming us for the incident, branding us as criminals.

It was easy to blame us, for we were few, we were different, and our ways ill-understood. They set the dogs upon us, and crucified or burned those that they captured.

They drove us into hiding, to practice our faith in secret.

Any sane person would have been satisfied by the secrecy, to hide their love for God in their hearts, keeping their heads bowed in public.

But we need to do more for Him, for we are always His loyal servants.

And so we act in secret, performing His will despite the odds.

We are the Light Bearers. And in His name we perform our duties to kindle the faith in Him who gave his life for the sins of mankind.

How could we possibly expect to give any less in return?

LUCEAT LUX VESTRA!
“*LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE*”

WELCOME AGAIN TO LUCEAT LUX VESTRA!

As a Game Master you have a special responsibility in the game. Lux is a game that is both fun and with opportunities to learn from the trials and tribulations of characters from that time period.

As a Game Master, your responsibilities are:

- To be the world they play in
- To keep the action going
- To challenge the characters
- To talk it over at the end

BE THE WORLD THEY PLAY IN

As a GM, you're responsible for painting the image of the situation they're in. Try to be descriptive and engage all five senses. If the players are trying a daring escape through secret tunnels under the streets of Rome, tell them of the smell of damp soil all around them, and the heat of their torches as they make their way. This helps bring the world to life and helps them immerse themselves into the situation.

Speaking of immersion, don't be afraid to act out when playing the role of the various Non-Player Characters that the players will be interacting with. You don't have to go overboard, but even just shifts in body language and word choice go a long way.

KEEP THE ACTION GOING

Given Light Bringer's missions, the game should always be moving forward, and the Light Bringers should always be encouraged to make a decision or take a course of action. Sometimes this can be achieved by establishing a deadline, for example, "Antonius will be executed by dawn. We must rescue him tonight!" In other instances it might serve to introduce a more direct threat, like having their location discovered by a group of soldiers. Likewise, perhaps appealing to their Virtues will be best, as a Light Bringer with Justice as their Virtue would be spurred to action by seeing an innocent being beaten up by thugs.

CHALLENGE THE CHARACTERS

Every character in Light Bringer is a being with varying Attributes, Virtues and Weaknesses. Each of these is a way to introduce tension to the situation. As a teaching tool, Light Bringers can present situations where a character struggles with their weakness.

For example, in a situation when a Light Bringers with Justice as a Virtue is trying to sneak past a guard post unnoticed to deliver an important piece of information to the other Light Bringers, only to find that the guards are beating up a helpless beggar. Will she act upon her Virtue and step in, or will she stay true to her mission for a greater cause?

Another example would be a Light Bringer with Greed as a Weakness being identified and approached by a Roman investigator, who offers him a princely sum if he were to provide the location of a Light Bringer cell. Would he divulge the location of another cell and collect the money, knowing that his friends would never know and aren't at risk?

Some situations will be easier than others, and you should always tailor it to the comfort levels of your players.

TALK IT OVER AT THE END

At the end of a session, give the players time to decompress. Light Bearers is great fun, but some of the choices and situations that they have played through might need time to process.

Encourage the players to talk about the game. How did they feel about the actions taken by the NPCs? Where there any moments where they felt at a loss for what to do? Why do they think a character chose a certain action? Were certain actions taken correct given the circumstances? Was lying about something acceptable if it meant you were sparing someone grief?

Let the conversation flow freely, and see what everyone has to say about it. If you're so inclined, you can prepare ahead and look up anecdotes from the Bible that relate to the situation at hand, and discuss among your peers as to how the lessons apply in that situation.



LUCEAT LUX VESTRA

SAMPLE ADVENTURE

Genesis 11:1-9

The Tower of Babel

Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.

They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth."

But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. The Lord said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other."

So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel—because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world. From there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

SYNOPSIS:

Frustrated by the slow pace of their work, a cell of Light Bearers goes rogue to strike a deal with a corrupt merchant. The plan was to bribe the merchant to provide a safehouse and human smuggling operations to a nearby foreign port outside of Rome and establish a Christian enclave there.

Unfortunately, the merchant double-crossed them, selling them out to the Roman authorities for a large sum of reward money as soon as he had them all corralled in a warehouse.

The Player Characters must then find a way to rescue the other Light Bearers before the Romans execute them.

THEMES:

Forgiveness

Best laid plans



SCENE 1: ROGUE AGENTS

It is late at night and your characters are on the run from a patrol of Roman soldiers and their dogs. You are in the middle of the wealthy residential district, and have a wounded young man with you by the name of Cicero. Cicero is a Christian that was discovered and was being beaten in the street as an example to "his kind."

The characters intervened, and now they have to find a way to safety before they all get captured.

At this point, the characters have several options:

- Outtrace the pursuers (Physical Task, Difficulty 8)
- Find a place to hide Cicero (Intellect Task, Difficulty 8)
- Convince the soldiers to look elsewhere (Social Task, Difficulty 8)

If the players have other ideas as to what to do, let them try it out and assign a task accordingly.

Once the characters have successfully rescued Cicero, he thanks them for their assistance. Having gleaned that they are Light Bearers, he informs them that he's out to meet a group of Light Bearers that have promised sanctuary to all Christians away from Rome, a new city that they could call their own without fear of persecution.

He mentions the name, "Fabianus" the man that they were supposed to find. The Light Bearer that promises Sanctuary.





SCENE 2: MEETING FABIANUS

The next scene opens as the Light Bearers finish their worship a few evenings after Cicero's rescue. One of the faithful arrives at their safehouse, asking to speak with them regarding an invitation. The faithful explains that Fabianus has sent word to invite them to join his cause.

In the conversation, the Light Bearers will learn of the following details:

- Fabianus is the leader of a Light Bearer cell operating near the docks.
- He is a particularly ambitious man with plans to establish a Christian state outside of Rome.
- With his ties to the Merchant class, his cell enjoys multiple safehouses and have a substantial treasury from which to draw on when preparing for their operations.

Once they are done with their inquiries, the Faithful tells them that they are being invited by Fabianus to join him, as they embark on what he calls, "The Ark Project."

Fabianus' safehouse is a far cry from the humble basement where your team operates. Instead, his cell of Light Bearers have a building cleverly disguised as a warehouse, but is actually a gathering hall for Christians. There are code phrases and other secret signs to enter, but this was perhaps the closest thing to a true church that the Christians have had at all.

Fabianus is a young man with olive skin and dark, curly hair. His demeanour is friendly, like someone used to networking for business contacts. He is enthusiastic about his Ark Project, and tells the players that he's heard of them from Cicero, and has invited them to join him on the task.

He envisions a Christian City-State. Independent, and self-sustaining. His Ark Project will be initiated soon, with only the best of the Christians first, so that they may build on a strong foundation. The others, he said, will arrive in the City-State on their own, once they see it become a success.

When pressed for more details, Fabianus is able to give the following answers:

- He has been preparing for the Ark Project for many years
- He has been able to bring together several cells of Light Bearers, all chosen for their expertise in establishing a new civilization
- His wealth has been instrumental in the necessary bribes to acquire the vessel that will ferry them across the sea to their new location, courtesy of his co-conspirator Decimus.
- He is absolutely convinced that this is the right thing to do

At this point, he presents his invitation to the players. Players may choose to try convincing him of the vulnerabilities of his plan, which should trigger a Social Conflict. If the Players win, Fabianus begins to doubt this course of action.

SCENE 3: NASTY BUSINESS

Regardless of whether or not the players accept Fabianus' offer, the charismatic Light Bearer bids them to stay at least until the end of the worship. At this point the warehouse is full of Christians, and it is easy to see that many now look towards Fabianus for inspiration... and leadership.

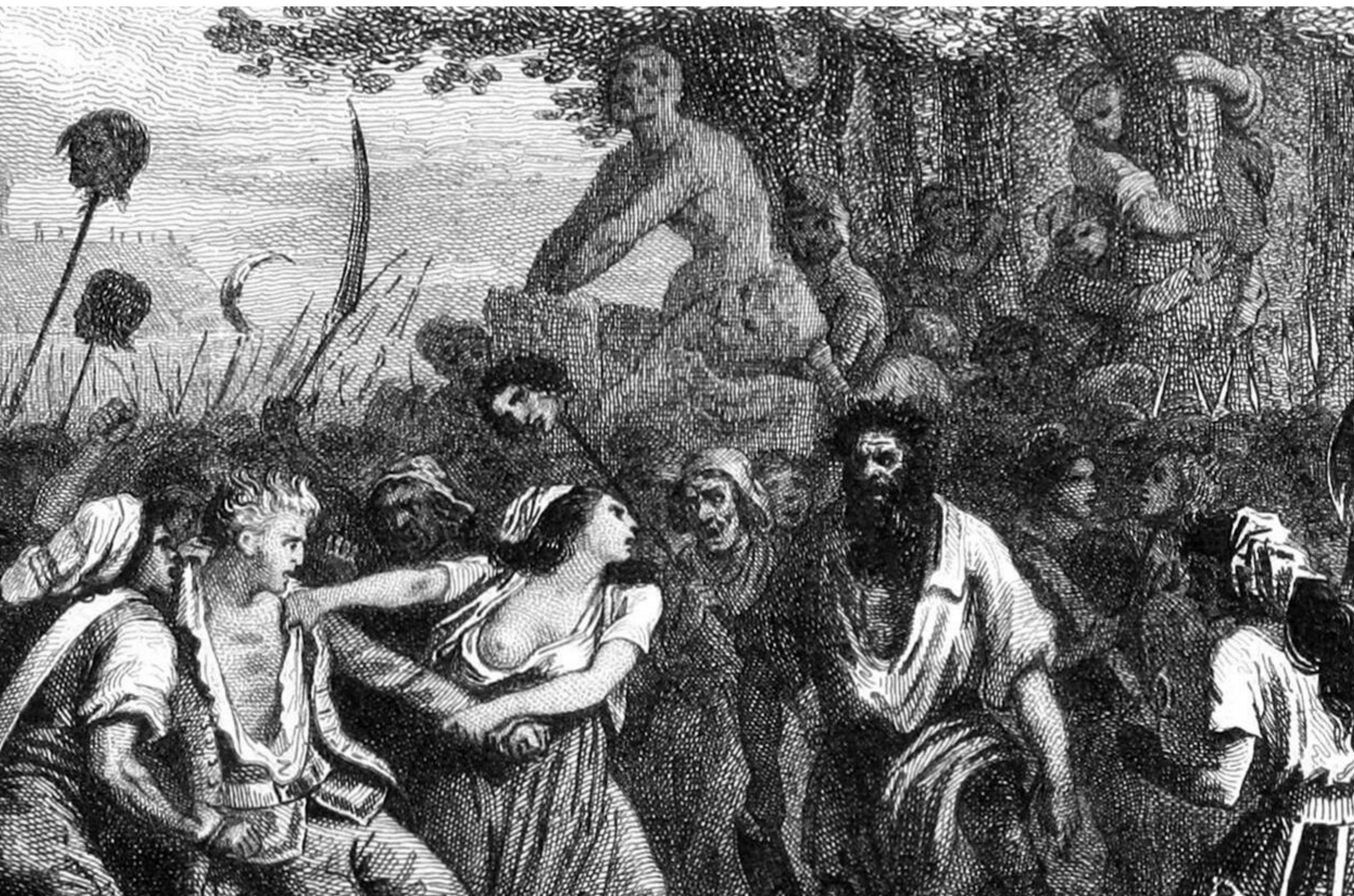
Fabianus is clearly enjoying it, and is telling them that their decision to join him is right when the doors burst open, and the soldiers arrive, led on by the pasty-looking Decimus. The Merchant whom Fabianus has been planning the Ark Project with.

Decimus apologizes sarcastically, stating that with so many Christians under one roof, the prize for their capture far outweighed the bribes that Fabianus provided. The Christians are given a choice of capture, or the soldiers will simply burn the entire warehouse down and make sure that nobody gets out alive.

Fabianus offers to surrender for the release of the women and children, but Decimus does not relent. Each head after all, is money in his coffers.

At this point players might be tempted to attack or somehow break out of the situation. While it is possible to sneak out of the warehouse to attempt a rescue later on, the task is a Difficulty of 10 given the number of soldiers surrounding the location.

Alternately, they could surrender and look for a different opportunity to escape.



SCENE 4: BEHIND BARS

Rather than be sent to prison, it turns out that Emperor Nero has had other plans for the captured Christians. The Light Bearers and the faithful are herded towards the Circus, where they will join the wretched and the condemned as they will be fed to the various ferocious beasts for the entertainment of the citizens.

The conditions in the prison are miserable, and all the player characters are beset by despair. Every day spent in the prison will have them see one of the Christians pulled from their cells and hauled by chains into the arena, crying and pleading for their lives. The characters must make a Willpower Test against Difficulty 10 or suffer from a -1 depression penalty to actions for the rest of the day.

Needless to say, they will need to find a means of escape. This is a difficult section to plan out, but here are a few scenarios that the players might look to do:

Wait for the cover of darkness and attempt to steal keys from the guards

Volunteer as tribute to the next arena and attempt to survive there and escape

In either case, resolve tests accordingly, with Roman soldiers having the following stats:

Physical +2

Intelligence +1

Willpower -1

Charisma +0

Fabianus is particularly distraught, and will assist the player characters in any of their plans. However, he is unsound of mind and may take unnecessary risks in hopes of martyring himself for the pain and suffering he's caused for others in his pride over the Ark Project.



SCENE 5: ESCAPE

Once the Light Bearers escape (and take any other surviving Christians with them,) they retreat to their headquarters as the rest of the Christians go to ground as well. Fabianus is a broken man, without any reputation to shield himself, no money to fund his dreams and with enemies everywhere.

He is truly repentant, but also suicidal. The Light Bearers can then engage him in hopes of giving him the hope he desperately needs to forgive himself and continue his chosen task of serving the Lord.

WRAPPING UP

At this point, take some time off to discuss the events of the game. Fabianus is presented as a well-meaning, if misguided figure. Someone, who, like the people in the story of Babel, sought to do everything by himself. His plans, while admirable, ended up self-serving as opposed to be in the service of the Lord.

After the events, his redemption lies not with suicidal self-sacrifice, but in having the courage to start over in his service to the Lord. Despite the weight of his sins, he can redeem himself through honest work, without relying on money or connections to do real good.

