

# HORROR ON THE ORIENT-EXPRESS



## Book III

### ITALY & BEYOND

## VIII. VENEZIA



# Death (and Love) in a Gondola

*Our heroes head east to the city of canals, and there its past glory, present decay, and eternal romance affects everyone, even Fenalik.*

by Penelope Love

**T**HE TRIP TO VENICE is a short one, of a few hours total. This leg of the story begins in Milan's Stazione Centrale, where Maria Stagliani is introduced. She too boards for Venice, her home, and the investigators travel with her and witness her reception at Venice station. Events concerning her and the Left Leg of the simulacrum develop concurrently.

## Scenario Considerations

This chapter consists of two independent adventures, both potentially deadly, one supernatural and one mundane, each unconnected with the other except through the investigators and the sharing of common time.

"Love" and "Death" interpenetrate from the start. Alas for optimists, whether or not true love triumphs, death usually concludes the Venice chapter.

All material is presented chronologically, and most of the events for "Love" occur during the events of the first four days, as summarized in a nearby box.

## Keeper Information

The Left Leg of the simulacrum arrived in Venice with Napoleon's soldiers in 1797. It was bought by a powerful noble and reputed sorcerer, Conte Alvise Gremanci. Fate forced him to donate it to repair an automaton in one of the city's many clock towers, where it remains. None now know of it.

Venice is a cultural glory of Italy and of humanity, but it is no longer a political or economic capital—no chapter of the Brothers of the Skin exists here.

Fenalik, the vampire dogging the investigators' footsteps, succumbs to the atmosphere of Venice (a city he has dwelt in before) and cannot resist the temptation to

## Daily Events for "Love"

### Day One

Evening. Georgio Gasparetti visits the investigators at their hotel; see "Georgio Calls."

### Day Two

Daylight. In the morning the investigators receive a message from Maria Stagliani; see "A Note From Maria."

### Day Three

Daylight. This morning the funeral of Maria Stagliani's father occurs; see "The Funeral."

### Day Four

Evening. Soon after sunset, the investigators receive a second message from Maria; see "Another Note From Maria." The missive alerts them to Maria's dire need and leads to "Maria's Rescue," the climax for "Love In Venice."

**SIX TURKISH BRAWLERS****Damage Bonus:** +0.**Weapons:** Fist/Punch 50%, damage 1D3

Kick 25%, damage 1D6

Grapple 25%, damage special

Knife 25%, damage 1D4

	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	POW	HP
One	11	13	13	12	10	13
Two	12	14	12	11	14	13
Three	14	12	10	9	11	11
Four	12	11	12	11	8	12
Five	10	10	14	16	11	12
Six	11	11	11	10	13	11

**SIX SERBIAN BRAWLERS****Damage Bonus:** +0.**Weapons:** Fist/Punch 50%, damage 1D3

Kick 25%, damage 1D6

Grapple 25%, damage special

Thrown Rock 25%, damage 1D4

	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	POW	HP
One	11	16	12	15	9	14
Two	13	9	11	10	17	10
Three	12	12	12	13	11	12
Four	15	7	8	17	13	8
Five	11	12	13	12	10	13
Six	10	12	14	8	11	13

**Dr. MILOVAN TODOROVIC, Age 57, Curator**

STR 10 CON 9 SIZ 10 INT 15 POW 12

DEX 10 APP 10 SAN 75 EDU 21 HP 10

**Damage Bonus:** +0.**Weapon:** none.**Skills:** Accounting 15%, Archaeology 15%, Art History 70%, Bargain 45%, Credit Rating 65%, Debate 55%, Drive Automobile 15%, English 40%, German 45%, Greek 25%, History 35%, Hungarian 55%, Italian 45%, Latin 30%, Library Use 65%, Linguist 15%, Oratory 40%, Political In-Fighting 45%, Psychology 50%, Serbo-Croat 75%, Spot Hidden 55%, Turkish 35%.**VLEJA RADI, Age 29, Under-Secretary & Smuggler**

STR 11 CON 8 SIZ 11 INT 13 POW 13

DEX 11 APP 8 SAN 65 EDU 16 HP 10

**Damage Bonus:** +0.**Weapon:** none.**Skills:** Archaeology 25%, Art History 35%, Credit Rating 35%, Debate 40%, Deceit 45%, English 20%, Fast Talk 45%, German 25%, Greek 35%, History 40%, Italian 35%, Law 25%, Library Use 35%, Listen 55%, Psychology 45%, Serbo-Croat 65%, Smuggle 50%, Sneak 35%.**TODOR NEDIC, Age 55, Village Headman**

STR 8 CON 11 SIZ 12 INT 14 POW 9

DEX 11 APP 8 SAN 0 EDU 10 HP 12

**Damage Bonus:** +0.**Weapons:** 20-Gauge Shotgun 50%, damage 2D6/1D6/1D3

.22 Rifle 70%, damage 1D6+2

Knife 80%, damage 1D6

Club 40%, damage 1D6

Fist 75%, damage 1D3

**Skills:** Botany (Domestic Plant Varieties) 60%, First Aid 50%, Listen 75%, Livestock 50%, Mechanical Repair 45%, Operate Heavy Machinery 60%, Poultry 45%, Spot Hidden 60%.**MARJA NEDIC, Age 52, Priestess of Shub-Niggurath**STR 13 CON 12 SIZ 8 INT 12 POW 16  
DEX 10 APP 15 SAN 0 EDU 12 HP 10**Damage Bonus:** +0.**Weapons:** Knife 80%, damage 1D6**Skills:** Botany 90%, First Aid 75%, Folk History 90%, Gossip 99%, Listen 90%, Spot Hidden 90%.**Spells:** Contact Shub-Niggurath, Dread Curse of Azathoth, Summon/Bind Dark Young, Voorish Sign.**FATHER FILOPOVIC, Age 49, Eastern Orthodox Priest**STR 12 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 8 POW 12  
DEX 10 APP 14 EDU 13 SAN 60 HP 14**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.**Weapon:** none.**Skills:** English 20%, Oratory 80%, Sing 55%, Theology 75%.**Baba Yaga**

She has three aspects: Grandmother, Daughter (Kcerca), and Mother (Filopovic's wife, Ibrisca). The aspects can exist independently or not, as she wishes. Her weapons and skills remain uniform, regardless of aspect. It is possible to kill an aspect, but that aspect soon reappears unharmed.

**Damage Bonus:** +1D6.**Weapons:** Knife 85%, damage 1D6+1D6

Shovel 85%, target is flung into the oven.

Pestle 85%, damage 1D6+1D6

**Armor:** only iron harms Baba Yaga—she is impervious to lead bullets, wooden clubs, dynamite, acid, fire, etc.**Skills:** Cackle Gleefully (Hag) 100%, Move Silently 90%, Pilot Mortar 150%, Tapestry 150%.**Spells:** best left undefined. Baba Yaga's magic is very different than found in the Mythos. Its essence lies in the power over nature and information. She can also produce a wide range of curses and afflictions virtually at will. Obscure metaphysical conditions determine her movement, especially the speed of her flying mortar. The keeper should strive for an effect of great strength and great weakness, mysteriously mixed.**Sanity Loss to See:** 1/1D6 when her true nature is revealed.**KCERCA, Age 18, Daughter-Bearer Aspect**STR 30 CON 100 SIZ 9 INT 16 POW 17  
DEX 17 APP 19 HP 55

birds were all black: Sanity cost to realize this is 0/1 SAN.

The villagers are at first dismayed, and then grow angry. The investigators have brought ill fortune by angering Baba Yaga. "All our birds are dead! You will pay!" The investigators should come up with a few pounds sterling, if they want help.

### A MINOR PLAGUE

An investigator starts to itch. Examination reveals a large and ugly rash resembling an ulcerating sore; it is irritating and eventually very painful. Even as they watch, it spreads (SAN 1/1D3). Before long, all of the investigators break out in blotchy open sores, inflicting 1D3 points of damage. After two hours, the sores recede and fade. In the morning, it is as if they never existed.

### THE OBSERVING PRESENCE

Until they board the Orient Express, the investigators notice (with or without a successful Spot Hidden) ill-defined figures crouching in doorways, or just out of view in a copse of trees, or briefly illuminated by a lightning flash. Always the figure is female in outline, and always gone whenever investigators look directly at her.

## On to Sofia

Either in Belgrade or in Crveni Krst, the investigators board the Orient Express for Sofia, safe at last. Or are they? As the train steams toward the Bulgarian border, the night stirs.

Dimly in the gloom, a huge running shape, like a giant bird—like a house on legs—paces the train, loping on slender, wrinkled chicken legs across hill and field, now visible, now gone. It is Baba Yaga's hut, a house of dead children's bones, following the investigators at its mistress' behest. Pointed out to anyone other than the investigators, it's just not there.

When the moon breaks through the clouds, high across its face careens a hunched figure, also pacing the train. Sometimes it looms near, sometimes it is a distant blot against the stars. It is Baba Yaga, finally caught up with those who bested her. She rides the winds in her huge bronze mortar, propelling it by the grinding of her equally impressive stone pestle. The rasping of one against the other can be heard above the staccato of the train,

Those who lost more than 6 SAN in the little cottage in the woods lose another 0/1D3 SAN for the reappearance of their foe.

Strangely, no attack comes. A successful Occult or INT x1 roll suggests that she cannot touch them while

they are protected by the ribbon of iron upon which the train rides. Aboard the Orient Express, they are safe.

Hours later, the Orient Express arrives at the last stop before the border, and it is here that the investigators realize that Baba Yaga and her malevolent house have gone. As they cross the border, they spot a small cottage by a stream in the nearby woods. As the train whistle howls, the receding hut seems for a moment to be pale as bone—waiting, perhaps, for their return. But a hag and a house of bones, even magical ones, are not that worrisome compared to what they'll face further down the line. *Dovidjenja!*

## Conclusion

Each investigator gains 1D4 SAN for recovering the Right Arm of the Sedefkar Simulacrum. As Baba Yaga is obviously still alive, they gain no Sanity for eluding her.

If the investigators now have five parts of the simulacrum, thresholds for their idea, luck, and know roll thresholds are uniformly reduced by 25 percentiles each.

## Statistics

### PETAR RITICHT, Age 20, Guide and Hustler

STR 13	CON 11	SIZ 10	INT 16	POW 16
DEX 13	APP 13	EDU 4	SAN 80	HP 11

**Damage Bonus:** +0.

**Weapons:** Fist/Punch 55%, damage 1D3  
Small Knife 40%, damage 1D4

**Skills:** Albanian 15%, Bargain 60%, Climb 50%, Debate 20%, Dodge 36%, English 30%, Fast Talk 55%, German 35%, Hide 25%, Hungarian 40%, Italian 35%, Linguist 10%, Listen 45%, Psychology 35%, Serbo-Croat 75%, Slovene 65%, Turkish 40%.

### STATUE VENDOR, Age 47, He Knows What He Wants

STR 12	CON 13	SIZ 15	INT 14	POW 11
DEX 11	APP 10	EDU 12	SAN 55	HP 14

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** Fist/Punch 50%, damage 1D3+1D4

**Skills:** Bargain 93%, English 5%, Fast Talk 66%, Serbo-Croat 70%, Slovene 69%.

### TWO STATUE THIEVES

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** Fist/Punch 70%, damage 1D3+1D4

Kick 40%, damage 1D6+1D4

Club 35% (parry 25%), damage 1D6+1D4

**Skills:** Dodge 40%.

	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	POW	HP
Bigger	17	16	15	11	13	16
Smaller	16	17	13	10	12	15

### USING THE COMB

About now would be a good time to remember the comb. Thrown to the ground, it quickly burrows in and 1D10 dark young spring up in its stead. Their first target is Baba Yaga, who disappears beneath their onslaught.

The comb thrower automatically loses 1D4 SAN, and all 1D3 SAN each for witnessing the shadowy terrors of the dark young—lessened damage because of the darkness and because the things aid the investigators at first.

Any investigator who stops gets entirely too good a look at trees that have mouths, teeth, and writhing tentacles. Sanity loss is the full 1D3/1D20 SAN. Dark young not trying to consume Baba Yaga direct their attentions toward such investigators; successful luck roll to evade the first attack, but lingering investigators are doomed thereafter. The dark young do not pursue beyond the edge of the wood.

## Unexpected Journey

Presumably most of the investigators make it out of the wood. They have no idea where Oraszac is—somewhere downhill. There are other villages in the region, of course, and a couple of hours spent stumbling through the cloud-darkened night bring them to one, or at least to a road, one end of which must lead somewhere.

To ask directions, the muddy, limping investigators probably have to wake suspicious villagers; lacking useful Serbo-Croat or Russian, that could pose problems. Successful Linguist and luck rolls eventually communicate their needs to someone, who at least knows where the nearest constabulary is.

The investigators' next move may be to their luggage and to the rest of the simulacrum, since they are unlikely to have taken it on the hike. If at Oraszac, their re-entry into the village may be a quiet one: folk who know how to summon dark young deserve circumspection. Things seem totally unchanged. But at the church Father Filopovic is staring at the desiccated corpse of his wife (Sanity loss 0/1D4 SAN to see).

If there is nothing at Oraszac, then they return to Arandjelovac to wait for the train to Mladenovac or Topola, from whence in turn they go to Belgrade or Crveni Krst.

Depending on the hour of the day, the keeper's mercy, and the investigators' ingenuity, they buy, borrow, or steal a truck, a horse and cart, or some other form of transport.

Crveni Krst is a town of modest size a hundred miles southeast of Belgrade. It is the point at which the Simplon-Orient Express service branches, one service heading south for Athens, and another going east to Sofia and beyond. Here investigators may have to wait a day or more before the next Orient Express arrives, but in the

meantime, they can seek medical attention for injuries, reserve berths on the train, recover, and make plans.

### Attack

Whichever way the investigators go, the journey to meet the Orient Express will take some time. The roads range from bad to invisible. The night journey takes at least ten hours, even by motorized vehicle, and exhausts everyone.

Baba Yaga, though severely weakened by her encounter with the dark young, overcame them. To survive, she had to drain the life from her two younger aspects—the priest's wife shrivelled to a husk before his horrified eyes. Baba Yaga is too weak to attack the investigators personally, but her malign influence can plague them while they remain in the area. The keeper is invited to use any of the following.

### BABA YAGA'S EMBLEMS

As the investigators pass through another hamlet (one of many), commotion swells. As a villager goes to see what the noise is about, a small girl races around a corner screaming "Aaahh! Aaahh! Tata! Peeleh! Peeleh!" —*Papa! Chickens! Chickens!*

A second later, black chickens swarm after her around the same corner, their glaring-red beady eyes focused on the investigators. There are hundreds of them, and their beaks and spurs are bright and sharp.

Plucked and disemboweled, chickens at the butcher's counter seem harmless enough, and the proverbial rubber chicken has long symbolized the bird's low status in the United States. But a free-running chicken on the attack turns out to be enough to send most people scurrying; even a single bird may overwhelm children or the infirm. Each investigator is attacked by ten fierce birds.

These chickens have wings clipped long enough to allow them to flutter up to the lower branches of trees—this also allows them to peck and claw at human heads, faces, hands, anywhere vulnerable. Each bird is large (five to ten pounds), with feathers obsidian-black. Statistics for the flock occur at the end of this chapter.

Villagers cross themselves and race for the safety of their homes; if the investigators are regarded as friends, they are sheltered as well. The birds continue to smash against the windows, fly down the chimneys, or come in at the eaves until the families organize themselves.

Clubs and brooms clear the interiors of the cottages, and shotguns wipe out the outside attackers. The villagers realize only when cleaning up that they have slaughtered their own fowl, which they thought penned for the night. Dead poultry flops everywhere, forlorn white and brown bodies heaped in clumps and windrows. Moments ago the

## Who's for Dinner?

The Right Arm is firmly wedged in the roofing. While the investigator tries to tug it loose, Kcerca opens the oven door to check on the heat. Murmuring a caution that the investigator not fall, Grandmother sways from side to side, her eyes glazed, and begins singing a ditty under her breath. Then several events happen simultaneously.

- The investigator reaching for the Right Arm feels it come free: it is, in fact, the Right Arm of the Sedefkar Simulacrum. As the arm comes free, the fingers of an adjacent marble arm and the toes of an adjacent leg flex and grasp the investigator's reaching arm in vice-like grips.
- The investigators looking upward realize that the roof is not thatched, but is lined with the hair of the hundreds of skulls leer down at them. They seem to hear laughter from everywhere.
- Grandmother stands to her full height, suddenly well over seven feet tall. She grasps the bread shovel leaning against the oven. Her suddenly long and gleaming teeth glint wickedly sharp as she laughs and slides the flat of the shovel under the feet of the investigator on the cabinet, and unhesitatingly pivots him or her toward the oven.
- The oven gapes huge as it animates and waddles toward the paralyzed investigator on the shovel; its mouth expands to fill half the cottage. Grandmother swings the investigator onto the roasting pan within the oven's fiery maw.
- Kcerca, holding a large kitchen knife, smiling merrily, advances on a second investigator.

Sanity loss to participate in this crazed scene is 1/1D6 SAN for each investigator—2/1D6+1 SAN for the investigator on the shovel.

### STAYING FREE

The investigators are on the menu of two powerful supernatural beings. Their sole hope is escape. To do this their players need to succeed with a number of die rolls. The keeper must judge whether to require all the rolls for all the investigators, or whether one or two will do for each. The odds that an average investigator could receive successes for all of the following are very small.

- POW x4 or less on D100 for the investigator caught on the shovel. A success lets him or her instantly comprehend what is happening and to avoid the oven, where the investigator would lose 1D6 hit points per round from burning. Failing the roll, the valiant investigator still might be able to hand out the Right Arm to another of the team.

- A successful D100 roll of DEX x3 or less for the investigator threatened by Kcerca to avoid her blade (1D4+2 hit points lost automatically if the roll fails).
- A successful Dodge roll. All of the shelves have turned into interlaced finger bones. These detach and reach out to grasp at investigator hair, clothing, limbs, etc. Thus the roll could either avoid the grasping fingers or the falling statuary. For a failure, the investigator loses 1D3 hit points.
- A successful luck roll to remain standing as the cottage rises up on huge, gnarled chicken legs, and begins to run into the darkest depths of the forest.
- A successful know roll to find, amongst the dancing bones of the mobile cottage walls, the cottage door.
- An successful idea roll by the investigator who has it to remember to hang onto the Right Arm. If nobody has it, where is it?
- A successful Jump roll to avoid damage in leaping out the door into the passing forest (lose 1D4 hit points if the roll fails).

Since the investigators now possess the Right Arm, their know, idea, and luck roll thresholds now uniformly reduce by 25 percentiles.

## Escaping

When they tumble out the cottage door, the investigators see clearly that the fence pickets are arm and leg bones of former victims, each topped with a skull. As they race past, it is still light enough to see those skeletal parts assemble randomly to form horrific bony shapes that chase after and attack the investigators, swinging other bones as clubs: 20% chance to hit for 1D3 damage.

The investigators hear the snap of crushed branches and feel the ground tremble beneath the running legs of the house, which pursues as fast as it can weave between the trees of the forest. Baba Yaga's Hut can stomp with 30% success, causing 1D20 damage. A successful Dodge, Jump, or DEX roll avoids a successful stomp. Sanity loss to be attacked by the running house is 0/1D6-1 SAN.

And louder still, ancient singing punctuated by the clang of stone against metal comes through the tree-tops toward them. Baba Yaga has taken to the air in her bronze mortar, driving it along with her stone pestle. If she can get close enough to an investigator, she swings the pestle as a club (85% chance to hit, damage 2D6 hit points) but they should be able to duck around trees or behind rocks to avoid her. Sanity loss to witness Baba Yaga's aerial pursuit is 0/1 SAN.

## Kcerca

When the investigators knock, the voice calls them in. Across the lintel wafts the heady smell of newly-baked bread.

Inside the single large room, a fire burns in the grate, and freshly-turned bread steams on a table near the open door of the cooling oven. The walls are crammed with shelves, loaded floor to ceiling with fragments of statuary. Near the hearth, an attractive young woman sits at a tapestry frame, rapidly passing a needle and thread back and forth through the canvas, and singing in time with her stitches.

She smiles and greets them in Serbian. The investigators come to understand is that it is not the young woman they need to see but her grandmother, who will be home later today.

She introduces herself as Kcerca, busies herself making tea, and offers them slices of the bread topped liberally with a berry spread. Kcerca is the youngest of the three aspects of Baba Yaga. She will not leave the cottage, as she controls the actions of the cottage.



Kcerca

### SOME ITEMS OF INTEREST

The deep shelves are packed with bits and pieces of worked stone. If the investigators look specifically for their piece, they see dozens of arms tantalizingly correct, none accessible except by removing dozens of other pieces. A failed DEX roll sends a shelf crashing to the packed earthen floor. Kcerca apologizes for her grandmother's haphazardness and assists them in putting back the shelf and its contents.

Should an investigator examine Kcerca's tapestry (perhaps while she helps clear up statuary splinters), they see a vivid depiction of a peasant village. With a successful know roll, the investigator realizes that Kcerca has pictured a version of Oraszac. A successful halved Spot Hidden roll confirms that the actual villagers are depicted, accurate to the minutest detail, wearing the clothes that the investigators last saw them in (lose 0/1 SAN to understand this).

## Baba Yaga Comes Home

While puzzling over the tapestry or praising Kcerca for her artistry, a sound like the flapping of sheets in a breeze

is heard from outside. Footsteps come up the path. A draft gusts through the cottage. An ancient, vigorous woman enters.

She is dressed in embroidered traditional skirts and a cloak, neat and tidy. She walks with a pronounced stoop. Her skin is sun-browned and deeply wrinkled. Large moles dot her face. She smiles a greeting at her visitors, showing her few remaining teeth to be stained dark brown.

Kcerca greets her with a hug, and leads her over to the fireplace, talking animatedly in a language neither pure Serbian nor Serbo-Croat. If an investigator understands any amount of either tongue, a successful Linguist roll reveals the words as from an archaic dialect, but their meaning cannot be made out. During this talk both women glance frequently at the investigators, and many smiles pass between them.

Settling in the chair by the fire, Grandmother greets the investigators in broken but intelligible English, asking them why they are here and what it is that they seek. They must seek something extraordinary; she has very few visitors these days. Those who bother to make the trip to her house usually have good reason.

"You will stay for supper? There will be plenty of time before darkness falls to return to Oraszac."

As Grandmother talks, Kcerca places more wood in the oven, greases a large roasting pan, and peels carrots, potatoes, and onions which she arranges neatly around its edges.

### LOOKING FOR THE ARM

Meanwhile, the investigators describe the arm, and Grandmother's eyes begin to flicker rapidly around the room, looking, searching amongst the fragments. Her brow furrows. Maybe it is on this shelf? Maybe that? She has so many pieces. Could they help her find it?

She directs the search. Maybe on this shelf, maybe under that table, maybe wrapped up in that rug? The investigators find dozens of arms, but none appear to be the right piece. Meanwhile, Kcerca places the pan in the oven, and arranges kindling and tinder in the firebox.

Grandmother questions the investigators as they search. "Was there anything unusual about this piece—the color, the age, the size?" Again she looks puzzled, and then her gaze fastens on the highest shelf, high up in the peak of the cottage's eaves.

"There! It is there!" An arm of sorts is wedged half in the rafters and thatch, angled up from a shelf. To reach it, an investigator must climb onto a chair, and then onto a cabinet, and then onto a higher cabinet.



*The Little Cottage*

with mud. The villagers await her outside, carrying burning torches.

They lead her from household to household, dancing and swaying, chanting rhythmically. At regular intervals water is ladled over her by the woman of the house she has entered. As she leaves each home, the man of the house hands her a small present.

The visits continue until all of the houses in the village have been entered. The brave girl is soaked to the skin, her teeth chattering in the cold. The women of the village then bathe her, feed her delicacies, bundle her warmly, and escort her and her new trinkets home.

This is a ritual for the Black Goat of the Woods. It is intended to provoke the prodigious fecundity of Shub-Niggurath. A successful Anthropology roll suggests a variety of amusing interpretations, but allow the benign nature of the ceremony to be clear.

## The Next Morning

Presumably the investigators at the Nedic home manage to ignore the snoring adults, the scratching dogs, the snivelling children, and get a good night's sleep.

At the Filopovic home, the Priest's wife draws aside one of the investigators. She warns him or her not to trust some of the people in Oraszac—she is not from the village, and finds the local traditions un-Christian. Father Filopovic looks upon the old traditions with interest and amusement, and thinks them harmless customs, but since he is related to a couple of Oraszac families, his attitudes are colored. She is much less tolerant of such events. "The ways of this village have many sides," she says cryptically, refusing to say more.

### A GIFT

Before the investigators leave the village to see the old collector, Nedic's sister presses something into the hand of the investigator with the highest POW. It is a bone comb, simply and elegantly carved. It feels old. Speaking no English, but using signs and simple language, she conveys that the comb is a charm against forest spirits. If they are chased into the woods, they should throw it to the ground in front of their pursuers and the wood will protect them. Well, it's a nice gift, whether or not the investigators believe the explanation; it'd be rude to refuse it.

This decorative bone comb, made to hold a woman's hair in place, is six inches wide by four inches deep. It has four long tines, and is intricately carved with small blossoms and tentacular-like vines. A successful Archaeology or History roll identifies the artifact as of early Byzantine design, carved by a Slavic craftsman—too precious to be a casual gift.

### About the Comb

It is a talisman enchanted by Ilija Nedic, prepared in case a member of the Shub-Niggurath cult somehow penetrated Baba Yaga's wood. The comb summons dark young of Shub-Niggurath at once. To work, it must be thrown down in a wood or forest sacred to the Black Goat. This done, 1D10 dark young rise from the earth, and immediately begin to search out and devour everyone in the wood not worshipers of their dark mistress.

## The Little Cottage

The hut of the old collector is more than an hour's walk from the village. No paths lead to it, and neither villager nor priest will accompany them more than a quarter of the way. Anybody who does soon finds a feeble excuse—"I left the porridge on the stove" or "I've got to water the cat"—to turn back to Oraszac. The investigators are pointed in the correct direction and told to continue on. "You can't miss it. It's very distinctive."

They cross unplanted fields and open woodland, but before long, the dark trees close in and layer upon layer of old leaves and needles muffle the soft forest floor. Entering the forest, travel steadily progresses up a long, gentle slope. Trees and moss swallow every sound, except for the investigators' own footsteps and occasional hushed speech.

The trees grow bigger and older yet. There is a strong smell of humus and the tickling sensation of rotting vegetation. As the limbs of trees intertwine, the sheltered ground gets wetter. Mushrooms, toadstools, bracket fungi, and slime molds coat every surface. Movement slows and becomes unpleasant.

After a long time in the cold, damp air, they enter a small clearing in the forest, where a thatched cottage stands. The cottage is made of a creamy white wood, with an off-white picket fence surrounding a neatly-tended plot in which cuttings have just been set out. A young woman's voice can be heard from inside the cottage, sweetly humming.

The cottage door is shut, and the shutters of the windows are closed. Declarations of care or caution, or a successful Spot Hidden should be told of an odd feeling about the cottage. Investigators are certain that they see movement out of the corners of their eyes, but direct looks show the scene unchanged.

those villages, they must hike the remaining three miles to Oraszac.

The investigators soon discover that only they travel to Oraszac. The other passengers point out the wagon track, and then head off across the fields in every other direction but the one to Oraszac.

If the investigators follow the indicated path, they shortly reach the crest of a hill and strike a dirt road. It winds over gentle slopes, where small fields nestle between ancient groves. Here and there are whitewashed cottages surrounded by fruit trees. As the investigators approach the village, many more houses and outbuildings are apparent. Oraszac is no hamlet.

## Nice-Seeming Villagers

Dogs bark. Children suspend their games, and peep around the corners of wooden cottages. Housewives call out in Serbo-Croat. Do the investigators understand? If they do not, calling out Filopovic's name brings him quickly; otherwise, a long time goes by before a few men trot in from the fields, among them Todor Nedic.

### VILLAGE HEADMAN & FAMILY

Todor Nedic is the spokesman for the villagers. He and his wife Ilija are honored to have foreign visitors. In the house, their large extended family includes Todor's sister Marja, four grandparents, Todor's two sons, their wives, and seven grandchildren.

A big household always has a bit more room. The Nedics can provide beds for two investigators. The others are taken to see the village priest by Todor, who explains to them that it is the priest's duty to provide lodgings, as he has the largest house in the village, and no children. Imagine that, married for twenty years and no children!

He invites them all to join in the evening meal, a chaotic pleasure in which twenty-three or so people sit around tables shoved together and fight over enormous platters and bowls of steaming food.

After dinner, Todor comments that it is a very important night for the village, as there will be a ceremony at which they are all welcome. This ancient ritual is described below.

The headman and his sister are secretly leaders of the ancient cult of the Black Goat of the Woods; they worship



Todor Nedic

Shub-Niggurath. They are among the last adherents in the region to this age-old cult which originated in Byzantine times. They are the dispossessed heirs to the sacred wood occupied by Baba Yaga for more than a millennia.

The Nedics reveal none of this to the investigators, save that should the investigators mention the old woman who is the collector, they do not speak well of her, and warn the investigators against dealings with her.

Todor Nedic has great respect for Father Filopovic, yet he does not approve of the priest's dealings with the old woman. The headman is as sincere in this matter as he could be, as a successful Psychology roll shows.



Father Filopovic

### PRIEST & WIFE

Father Filopovic is 49, pleasant, and the only person in the village who speaks useful English; his wife Ibrisca can make herself understood somewhat in that tongue. He is most hospitable when the investigators introduce themselves, but his wife is reserved, niggardly, almost shrewish. Father Filopovic is happy to arrange for the investigators to meet the old woman in the woods whom he and his wife call *grandmother*.

The next morning he provides them with directions, explaining that the cottage is to the northwest, deep in the wood, a good walk from the village.

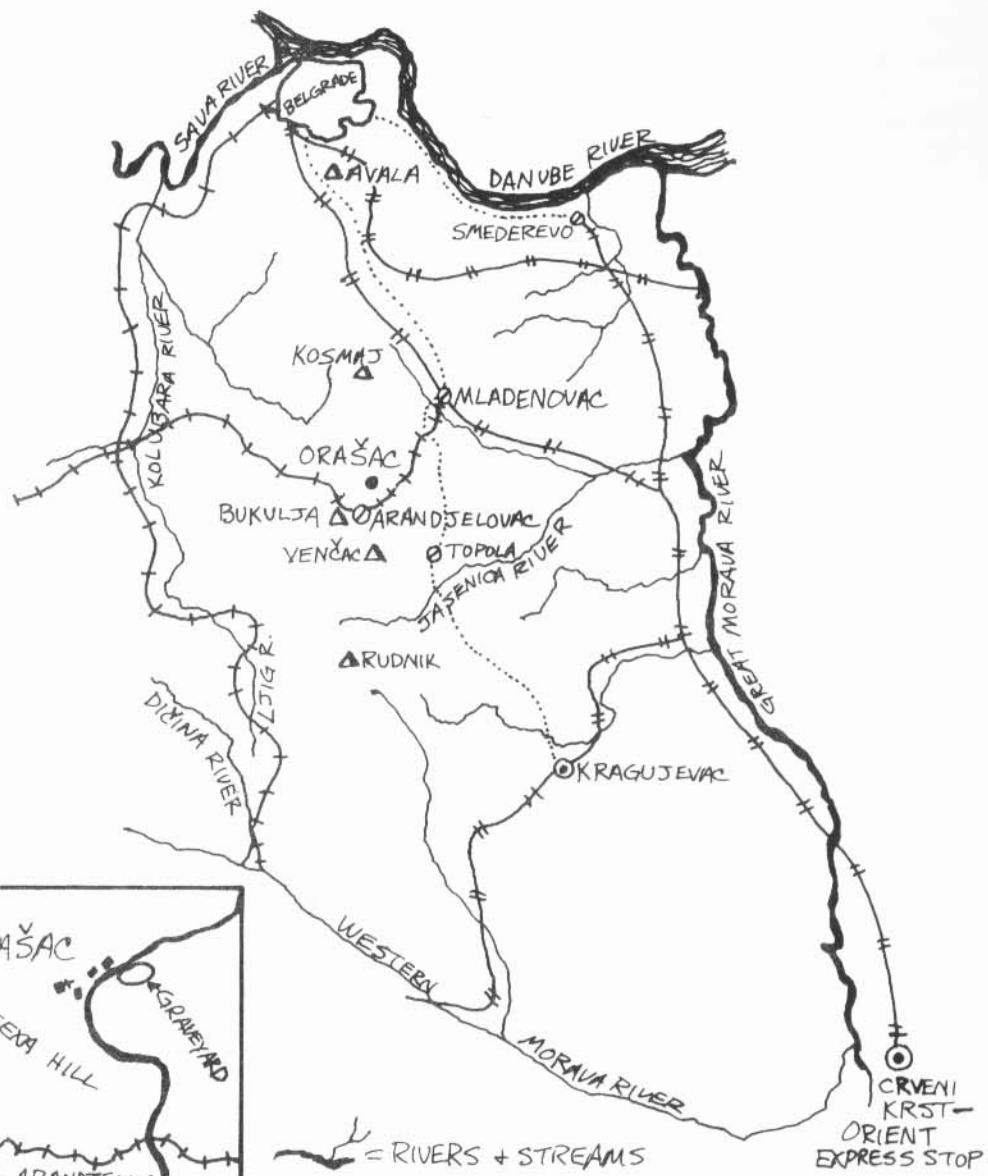
Unknown to the investigators or to Father Filopovic, his wife is an aspect of Baba Yaga. In this way she observes her enemies, the Shub-Niggurath cultists.

## An Ancient Ritual

The villagers know that the spring plantings will go badly without rain. Though the rains have been good so far, they have decided to perform a special ceremony in hopes of extending the favorable weather. Todor Nedic has arranged the rite. Father Filopovic disapproves of the activity, exhorting the villagers instead to place their faith in God.

A family of gypsies have been staying near the village. The headman's wife has been feeding them, as it is good luck to have gypsies near. That evening, the women of the village invite the youngest daughter of the gypsy family into the headman's house. When she emerges, she wears a skirt and cape of thick leaves, her skin smeared

# Oraszac Region



= RIVERS + STREAMS

= UNPAVED ROAD

= STANDARD GAUGE  
RAILROAD

= NARROW GAUGE  
RAILROAD

△ = MOUNTAIN

0 10 20  
STATUTE MILES

Investigators who complain about paying a bribe finally find attentive ears. An investigation is launched. Naturally, the investigators must surrender the incriminating documents and the arm, which constitutes the physical evidence. If they are patient, the under-secretary is finally arrested as partner in an antiquities-smuggling consortium; it is by then November of 1924.

## Oraszac

**O**N THEIR RETURN to the museum with the proper documents, Todorovic happily provides the name of the village—Oraszac, pronounced *orashach*—and gives directions to it. He also writes a letter of introduction to his contact there, Father Filopovic, the local priest. Oraszac has special historical significance to many Serbs.

Petar Riticht will not accompany the investigators into the countryside. He is a city boy, not an explorer.

The road south from Belgrade is unreliable and motor transport is scarce. The railway is the normal way to move people and goods. Standard-gauge tracks connect Belgrade with Mladenovac, a town some forty miles south. The trip takes nearly five hours.

This line has only one class—peasant. Its carriages are full of families traveling to and from markets with their wares and purchases. Conditions are cramped and noisy, but there is a friendly feeling amongst the solidly Serbian travelers. They happily share food, drink, stories, and songs with the investigators. Baskets of chickens and rabbits, sacks of vegetables, baby pigs on leads, and small children block the aisles.

At some point before Mladenovac, an investigator is confronted by a recalcitrant black rooster occupying his or her seat. It seems to belong to no one. It refuses to budge. Attempts to dislodge the bird result in hoots of amusement from the other passengers, as the enormous bird defends its perch with a beak and spurs which could dent steel.

At Mladenovac, changing trains is a chaotic affair, and great care must be taken by the investigators to ensure that they and their belongings stay together. From here, a connecting narrow-gauge line heads south and west. Oraszac is an additional hour and a half along this spur line, which meanders through hills and woods to the village of Arandjelovac. Before this train reaches its destination, the conductor instructs the investigators to get off at the station for Kopljare or Vrbica. From one of

### About Baba Yaga

Europe is rich in female deities whose ancient influence lingers on, even among populations now incontestably Christian. Baba Yaga is one such deity, especially well-known in the western Soviet Union. In the Teutonic tradition, Berchta, Hulda, and the White Lady are all similar figures.

Like the rest, Baba Yaga was once a goddess of the Slavs, but her great powers dwindled as waves of patriarchal conquerors came and, with characteristic panache, slaughtered or stole everything in sight. What power remains to her now manifests mostly as whimsical malevolence of a personal sort—poisoned livestock, stolen children, episodic cannibalism, and so on. If no longer the honored guardian of the waters of life, she still must be propitiated locally to insure oneself safe from her spite.

Her interest in statuary is new. As science unearths the past, its studies inadvertently admit (in the name of reason) shadows of all the fallen faiths. In sending pieces to Belgrade for reconstruction, in a minor way she reconstructs herself.

### About Oraszac

It is named after a long-vanished grove of walnut trees that stood near the present graveyard. Here began the successful rebellion of loyal Serbians against their Ottoman occupiers last century.

Oraszac numbers around 1,600 people, about 800 of whom live in the village. The remainder live on surrounding farms. The village proper consists of around 100 houses clustered around the church and community hall. The market town of Arandjelovac is 6.2 km away. Due to the state of the roads, people here consider that a long journey.

The surrounding area is hilly, rising to mountainous in the north and south-west. Mt. Kosmaj is to the north, the rounded twin humps of Mt. Vencac lie to the south, and the evergreen-clad Mt. Bukulja lies southwest of the village. Further south, Mt. Rudnik nears 4000 feet, the highest peak close-by.

Though Oraszac is an actual village, one dear to the national dreams of many, the residents' depicted aims are fictitious. Real-life travelers who visit this historic village enjoy kindly hospitality—neither Baba Yaga nor dark young have been neighborhood problems for a very long time.

if the keeper wishes, or the other way round. The investigators find themselves caught in the middle of a widening brawl. To their frustration, the arm is swung, dropped, or snatched away, always just out of reach, passing from person to person.

The investigators, tired and bruised, extract themselves from the fight having regained the arm. The vendor is also there, bloody-nosed but satisfied. He cheerfully cheats them unless their bargaining skills are good (match Bargains on the resistance table). The selling price stops somewhere between 1000 and 100 dinars.

Petar Riticht helps with the bargaining if the fight was short. He flees if the fight gets big or if the police come, leaving the investigators on their own.

#### A FINAL MISTAKE

As our heroes walk away with their purchase, the investigator carrying the piece stumbles to avoid knocking over a small child; he or she drops the arm, smashing it. As a know roll or Cthulhu Mythos roll establishes that the breakage proves this arm was never part of the Sedefkar Simulacrum.

### Muzej Beograd

The Belgrade Museum is a neo-Gothic edifice housing a vast collection of sculpture and oils, with one heavily-guarded room devoted to a collection of Byzantine gold.

The curator, Dr. Milovan Todorovic, is expert in Classical and Byzantine statuary. His office is also a workshop where he currently is piecing together a large Venus from a rubble of fragments left by Byzantine, Turkish, Mongol, or Hungarian (choose one) vandals.

After discussion, and after a successful Fast Talk or Oratory roll convinces him that the investigators are searching for a single piece and are neither dealers nor from competitive museums, he reveals that he has obtained many items from a village priest. Dr. Todorovic believes that the priest acts as an intermediary for someone else; he does not know who.

He remarks that in consequence of the looting of Belgrade during the war, the removal of antiquities from the kingdom is now prohibited without a permit of export. Representatives of museums and other scholars are able to obtain these from the Bureau of National Treasures,

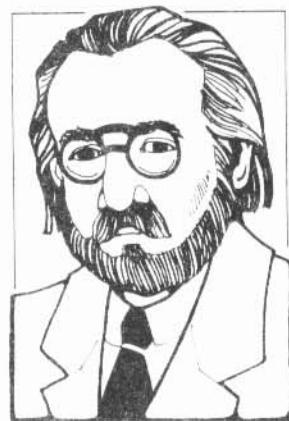
located in a warren of government buildings near the railway station. Until a permit is obtained, and shown to him, he will not reveal the village's location.

### Bureau of National Treasures

Tracking down the location of the bureau proves time-consuming without someone who speaks Serbo-Croat or Slovene. Investigators who speak German, Albanian, or Russian still need a successful luck roll to quickly find the bureau. English-only speakers need half a day, directed to and fro, shrugged at, smiled at, ignored and given copious amounts of help in languages they don't understand spoken at them slowly-and-loudly. When they find the office, it's closed for a late lunch.

The Bureau of National Treasures is a small office at the end of a long corridor, down steps that appear to lead to the furnaces. The office has a single occupant, a young under-secretary who bears a deep red birthmark covering half of his face, a sign perhaps disconcerting to investigators who know of the Brothers of the Skin.

Vleja Radi, the under-secretary, is quite pleasant, and even speaks limited English. He implies—the investigators should not be too certain—that the permit can be obtained in one of two ways.



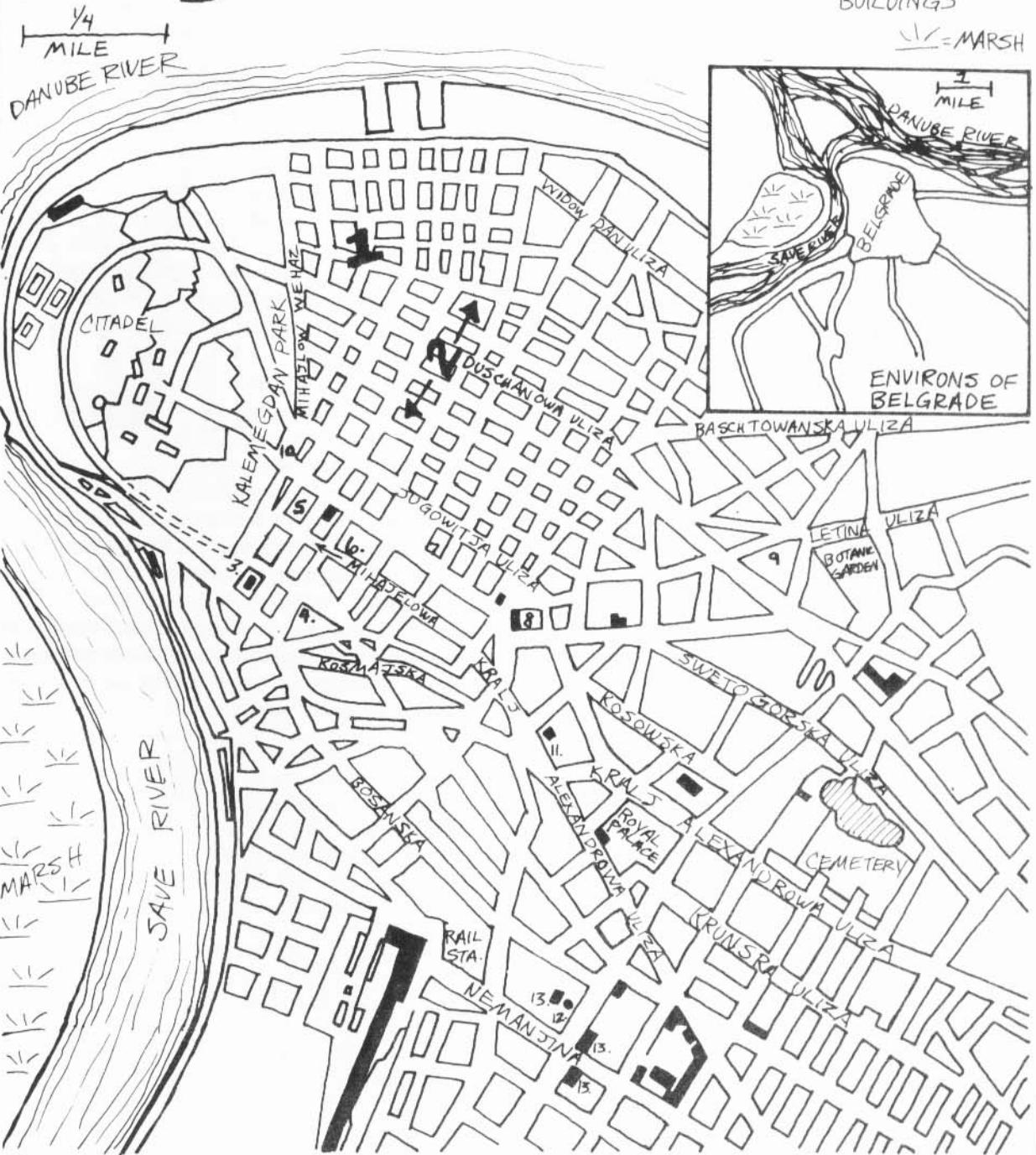
Dr. Milovan Todorovic



Vleja Radi

- Convince him of the sincerity and legitimacy of the request. This requires a successful Debate or Oratory roll and the presentation of credentials. An investigator, for instance, might prove that he or she holds a university post in history, archaeology or something similarly pertinent, and show proper bills of sales for the items they wish to take out of Yugoslavia.
- If an investigator tries a successful Fast Talk or Credit Rating roll on him, he perceives that as an offer of a bribe and, at the keeper's option, begins to speak of his destitute village, the destitute orphans in Belgrade, of his own ill health, and how all charities prefer British pounds. Radi starts at £15, a sum equivalent to his POW. He barely contains his glee if they pay up. Successful Bargains bring down the price, but he'll accept no less than £5 for the short letter and blank form which he officiously dates and stamps.

# Belgrade



a meeting until three, presumably the investigators stroll on to the Bazaar.

## The Bazaar

It is in the Turkish quarter, sprawled along the base of the Citadel—a crowded, noisy hive of activity. The stall holders are a mixture of Turks and Serbs, and tensions between the two occasionally are obvious as angry scuffles break out. Stalls purport to sell ancient artifacts and religious relics. A fortune teller plies her trade. Old clothes and Italian boots, often imported used, intrigue many.

There are hundreds of stalls, and thousands wander between them—all pushing, yelling, cajoling, pondering, weighing, or absently scratching. Perfumes, herbs, meats, spices, motor oil, and horse manure permeates air already thick with human odors.

The Bazaar is a source of exotica, and might further campaign subplots of the keeper's own. Liberally scattered amongst honest merchants and vendors are pickpockets, pimps, whores, tourists, spies, fanatics, naive country folk, and other useful characters.

### THE FORTUNE TELLER

The investigators come across a fortune teller. She's a pleasant old lady with an undeniable air of mystery about her. Her method of divination is an odd one; she takes a freshly laid egg from the black hen that is always in her presence, waves the egg three times widdershins about the head of the subject, then pierces a hole in each end of the egg and blows its contents onto a small wooden tray. She then peers intently at the patterns splashed there.

Whether she performs a divination upon one or all of the investigators, the gist of her reading is uncannily accurate. Keeper, exercise your knowledge of the campaign to best effect. State something about each investigator's past, then make a general prediction of each character's future. The statements should stay open to interpretation but remain relevant. Examples of statements follow.

*"You seek something that was once whole and is now apart."*

*"You are on a long journey."*



Vrocha the Fortune-Teller

*"There are three who have opposed you."*

*"Beware the one who is unseen."*

*"A man you think a friend is your enemy."*

*"Beware of the man with three faces."*

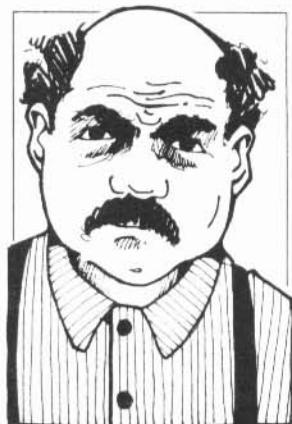
*"Iron is safe for you, but iron invites new dangers."*

*"The three who greet you are as old as man."*

And so on. All the while the investigators are at her booth, the black hen stares at them warily, but with a glint of anticipation.

### THE ARM

As the investigators tire of the Bazaar and nag at Riticht, who promised them statue vendors, they arrive at roofed stalls laden with larger, heavier items, including chunks of statuary. The investigator with the lowest Spot Hidden roll sees an arm about the right size, color, and shape. An estimate of 'seems right' is the best they can do, since the simulacrum annoyingly changes its appearance every time one studies it.



The Statue Vendor

As they ask the shopkeeper to bring the arm forward for inspection, two burly mustachioed men snatch it away (resistance table roll of STR 17 against that investigator's STR who had the successful Spot Hidden roll). They race off into the crowd.

What ensues is a chase through the market in true pulp-adventure style. The stall owner shouts out to his friends to aid in the chase; some of them do. Soon a band of 8-10 men plus the investigators are in hot pursuit. The fleeing men dodge and weave; shoppers are shoved about to cause distraction; call for Spot Hidden, Fast Talk, Grapple, DEX, STR, and luck rolls, as useful.

The pursuers round a corner, investigators in the lead, and confront the two statue thieves. They are about ten yards away, at the far end of a circle made by a slightly bemused, slightly hostile crowd. One of the men holds the arm like a club, insolently swinging it to and fro. He smiles at the investigators, saunters forward, and at the last possible moment takes a swing at the statue vendor (Club 35%, damage 1D6+1D4).

This is the signal for other men to burst from the crowd to take on these villains. The numbers are about equal; the statue thieves are Turks and the vendors Serbs,

hotel, and Riticht assures them that all the important train travelers stay here.

In moving their surprisingly heavy bags, Riticht learns that they include pieces of statuary. "The Bazaar might be a good place to find new pieces," he remarks. "It is a huge market. Many stalls there sell all sorts of treasures, especially parts of things. It's possible that someone there could have something interesting. If you find what you want, I can get you the best price."

Riticht hangs around until they are checked in and their luggage is seen to, and he has been adequately tipped for his services. He disappears into the crowd. If



Petar Riticht

the investigators wish, he can make himself available later for extended duty as guide or translator.

The time is close to mid-day, and the sounds of tables being laid for luncheon in the restaurant can be heard from the hotel foyer. For five dinars, a sketchy city map and a small hard-bound city tour book in oddly-phrased English can be obtained at a bookstore. The investigators stop for lunch and plan their next moves.

#### WHAT THEY CAN DO

The investigators are now free to follow what leads they wish. If they require the services of Petar Riticht, he'll turn up after half an hour. Riticht's rates are not cheap, but he is well-educated compared to his peers, and knows his way around Belgrade.

If the investigators travel without a guide, they are periodically confronted by hordes of urchins attempting to make off with anything they can snatch, especially the colorful map. They beg shamelessly for money, food, and favors.

The hotel is a quick walk to the Belgrade Museum, a few minutes more to the Bazaar. Since Dr. Todorovic is at

## Beograd (Belgrade)

**B**ELGRADE IS THE CAPITAL both of Serbia and of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slavs; the duality of the definition intimates much about regional politics in the 1920s, and in later years. Belgrade is recognized as the most frequently-destroyed city in Europe; the Turks at one time called it *Darol-i-Jihad*—home of wars for the Faith.

The royal palace situated in the city center is relatively new, constructed in the past twenty years. Though the site was first settled by Celts in the third century B.C., the buildings in general are relatively new; the only building older than 1830 is the Kalmegdan fortress, built by the Serbians in the 1400s. Everything else was progressively destroyed during the numerous bloody wars fought between the Hungarians, Turks, Bulgars, Byzantines, Austrians, and Serbs.

Belgrade is situated on the southern bank of the river Danube at its junction with the river Save. It

has a cathedral, a university, and a national museum and library. Since the latest destruction in the Great War, Belgrade has been extensively rebuilt and modernized.

Population is currently around 150,000, the majority Serbian. Ethnic Turks compose a strong quarter of the city. That quarter, the Dorcol, is not often spoken of by the majority of Serbs, who view the Turks with suspicion, if not open hostility. Turkish rule here ended in 1866, only 57 years ago, within the memories of many.

Decent rail services connect Belgrade with many regional towns. Roads outside the capital are not easily traveled by car at any time of the year.

The Belgrade Museum dates from the early 19th century. It is known for a unique catalogue of Byzantine gold artifacts, and for a large collection of statuary from many periods.

Travelers who use the Orient Express are most likely to stay at the Hotel Excelsior, considered one of

the best in Belgrade. A more modest, but still upper-class hotel is the Metropol, built in 1910, partially destroyed in the war, and since rebuilt.

#### Facts and Figures

The principal language spoken is Serbo-Croat. An investigator with 10% or more skill in Russian also has the equivalent of 10% Serbo-Croat.

The basic monetary unit is the dinar (100 paras = 1 dinar). British £1 equals about 25 dinars. The kingdom is hungry for foreign exchange, especially British pounds. However, one pound sterling currently purchases the equivalent of £10/17s/2.5d in goods and services at the local level. Black-market money changers may be encountered, offering roughly that rate or as much less as they can manage; the official exchange rate applies in banks, better hotels, shops, and restaurants.

## XI. BEOGRAD i ORASZAC



# Little Cottage in the Wood

*Wherein the investigators must locate and then persuade an elderly collector to give up an arm; for their efforts, she invites them to stay for dinner.*

by Marion Anderson and Phil Anderson

THE ORIENT EXPRESS arrives at Belgrade's central railway station at 9:00 A.M. The station is on the west bank of the Save River, just before that river merges with the Danube; across the Save lays a vast marsh.

The morning is still. Hordes of people in dozens of different ethnic costumes mingle here. Wood smoke and human sweat hang heavy in the air.

## Keeper Information

The investigators have one contact, Dr. Milovan Todorovic, curator of the Belgrade Museum. Once their credentials are accepted and he understands in some sense what they desire, he in turn provides a contact, Father Filopovic, a priest in the village of Oraszac, fifty miles south. The priest in turn refers them to an elderly antiquities collector who lives alone in the woods.

This adventure is not a simple errand. The reclusive rural collector is Baba Yaga, a figure of great and ancient power in Slavic myth.

Within a district outwardly Christian, she controls the flow of life, though whimsically and mostly invisibly. A handful of Shub-Niggurath cultists linger here as well, their origins pre-dating the foundation of Byzantium. They chafe at Baba Yaga's reign—she and the Slavs arrived and conquered comparatively recently—and the cultists still dream of displacing the old crone from the wood once sacred to the Black Goat with a Thousand Young. Interested keepers might broaden and emphasize

the friction between these competing deities, and indeed with the followers of Christ, but that material is not developed in this adventure.

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## Investigator Information

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**O**N LEAVING THE RAIL CAR, the investigators are surrounded by ambitious youths who rip their luggage from the hands of the train porters, load it onto different luggage carts, and attempt to take the bags and boxes in several different directions, all the while talking to the investigators in unintelligible languages. Eventually, the investigators hear a voice calling to them in English.

A youth, neat of clothing and hair, pushes his way through the confused huddle. "May I be of assistance?" he asks in clear, accented English.

Their rescuer introduces himself as Petar Riticht. He organizes their luggage onto one cart, fluently swears at the other youths in a variety of languages, and leads the investigators to the Hotel Excelsior. They see that many other Orient Express passengers are checking in at this

fling themselves aboard and, with the stranger's words ringing in their ears, run to their cabins.

## An Ending

The bells strike seven; they are too late. Their beds are occupied, by themselves, snug, warm and safe. Seeing this is too much, their failure too keen; they fall senseless (roll Sanity, lose 0/1D3 SAN from total disorientation) and come to, in bed, confused, and then the door crashes open and in bursts themselves, panting and pop-eyed, gasping and staring at themselves in bed while the color drains from their faces. Better not to cope with this, easier to moan and sink back onto the pillow and surrender consciousness again and come to, confused, wakened by knocking on the door.

It is the night conductor. It is 3:10 A.M., he says, and the Orient Express has just arrived in Zagreb, their stop. Their baggage has already been taken off. If the investigators protest, he looks concerned, and checks his book; indeed there has been a mistake, the cabin numbers are wrong. His embarrassment is genuine, his apologies are profuse, and he retreats with as much grace as he can muster. Their baggage is brought back on board, and at 3:30 A.M. the Orient Express leaves Zagreb, bound eastward, next stop Belgrade.

As the train pulls out of slumbering fogbound Zagreb, a hooded figure raises a sad hand in farewell. The other hand cradles a bone-white object which does not speak.



*"But surely you joke. You are not to disembark at Zagreb?"*

## THE REAL ZAGREB

If the investigators do decide to disembark here, they find a city totally different from the one they explored. They never see the hooded stranger again. There is nothing here for them.

## Conclusion

Investigators who made it back to their beds regain what they lost of their Sanity, up to 2D6 points. What they chose to absorb of the terrible knowledge borne by the stranger in the fog remains with them.

Investigators who did not make the train in time are found in their beds, snoring. They sleep solidly for twenty-four hours; nothing will rouse them. Doctors diagnose it as the sleeping sickness which swept the world in the 1920s. They do wake though, at exactly 3:10 A.M. the next morning, screaming. They continue to wake at 3:10 A.M. every morning thereafter, for the next 1D10 nights, losing 1 point of Sanity a night if the concurrent Sanity roll fails. After that they return almost to normal: thereafter each has an aversion to the number seven, and all shudder at the toll of bells. They regain 1D4 SAN when these nightmares halt.

Investigators who lost their skulls to forbidden knowledge wake mad and raving. Their skulls are in fact still in place, but the minds within them are gone. Such characters are out of play, and must be handed over to the keeper, to escape or be committed or to attack their fellows, as it amuses that kindly soul.

If the investigators stay on the train to Belgrade, those at breakfast in the dining car that morning who are both sane and awake are presented with lavish fare, compliments of the Simplon-Orient Express. The staff serves with flowers and fuss, and sincere apologies for the early morning mistake in Zagreb. It will not, they promise, happen again. And it doesn't.

## A Discovery

When they have been told where to find their quarry, he obliges them by attending there. A single stone bridge leads across the moat of canals surrounding the huge star-shaped fortress; their unknown benefactor waits at the other end. "At last," he barks, and turns to lead them inside.

Doors, grilles, gates, all open at his touch. He takes them upwards, up stairwells both straight and cylindrical, up ladders, up ramps, to the uppermost turret, and then out onto the roof. The city drifts below, suspended in its cushion of fog. He takes the skull out once more, and comments: "How like the mind is this fortress, no? Solid apparently, and holding stores and sally gates, and defendable; but old, and cracked, riddled with time, abandoned by some, conquered by the smallest of things."

If the investigators prod for what he promised to tell them, he holds a hand up against their questioning. "Like you, I once clamored for knowledge, all knowledge; and my wish was granted. I can impart this to you," (and here his voice takes on a pleading tone) "and it will be yours to keep and to safeguard, and I will be . . . will be . . . well, you see my friends, it is only fair to warn you. You have noted this silent white partner I carry with me so fondly," and here he raises the skull, its silent sockets locking patient gaze with the investigators, "it is my own. It could not contain the things I asked it to hold. So sit down, sit comfortably, and I shall tell you all I know, and pass on this accursed burden of enlightenment to you."

Thus he explains his hidden visage and muffled tones. Those who dare may demand proof, and he will sadly lift his hood and provide it: Sanity loss to see his sunken face is 1D2/1D6. Those who fail cringe back in revulsion, and feel their scalps begin to itch and their eyeballs begin to bulge.

The price of his assistance has already been paid. Those who bid him go on reap words flying from his mouth in a black stream. Their meanings burrow into the investigators' brains, carving into their neurons visions of cosmic voids and mankind's insignificance and the true nature of the center of the universe and the unthinkable expanses of the Great Old Ones who shift slowly, slowly in their cold tombs waiting for the earth to grow old and grant return.

One by one hideous secrets of existence are bared, naked and jagged, or implied—the cataclysmic power of the Cthulhu Mythos, the horrible pointlessness of the universe, ghastly prophecies for humanity's future—and every minute the investigators listen, they lose 1D10 SAN automatically and gain the same number of percentiles of Cthulhu Mythos. Their skulls spasm and twitch and seek escape from the damned knowledge which swells their

brains to bursting. Investigators can stop listening at any point. Any investigator who reaches zero Sanity shares the fate of the muffled man; such an investigator is lost forever, and the last thing he remembers is looking down to find clenched in his hand his own bloodied skull, gazing up with a blank accusing stare.

If the investigators do not accept the stranger's offer, or if they try to stop his torrent of secrets once it has begun, he shakes with rage and self-pity. "You are lost anyway!" he cries, his words echoing out into the mist, "for if you have not returned to your beds at dawn, you are doomed to walk the endless night of this place with the rest of us!"

The words are true, and the bells grope towards the striking of seven, seven the magical number, seven to speak the truth of the claim, seven to bring the dawn and with it their imprisonment in this shrouded eternity. In that dread waiting silence, the investigators clearly hear the blast of the train whistle, as the Orient Express prepares to depart Zagreb, inexplicably four hours behind schedule.

## A Genuine Peril

They must flee, flee down the tower, away from the ranting figure, down and across the canal and into the streets, running wild and praying for the fragile memory of the way back to the station (each investigator must receive a successful know roll); for the shortest route (a successful idea roll); for the will to keep going (a successful STR x5 or less roll on D100); for the energy (a successful CON x5 or less roll on D100); and for the surefootedness along the crooked lanes (a successful DEX x5 or less roll on D100). Each time a roll fails, that investigator falls in the rush, urges the rest on, and is left behind.

Remember that the successes for idea and know rolls should be uniformly reduced by 5 percentiles per simulacrum part that the investigators possess. Allow no rescues. Allow *no* rescues.

Then the sky breaks with the dawn and the bells rise in mocking cacophony to usher it in. Some, perhaps all investigators stay behind in the fog, and their consciousness slows dims and dies.

Survivors reach the platform just as the train is pulling out, steam whistling, wheels beginning to turn. They



*Cloaked Man Revealed*

From the earliest days of man there has endured the conviction that there is an order of existence which is entirely strange to him. It does indeed seem that the strict order of the visible world is only a semblance, one providing certain gross materials which become the basis for subtle improvisations of invisible powers. Hence, it may appear to some that a leafless tree is not a tree but a signpost to another realm; that an old house is not a house but a thing possessing a will of its own; that the dead may throw off that heavy blanket of earth to walk in their sleep, and in ours. And these are merely a few of the infinite variations on the themes of the natural order as it is usually conceived.

But is there really a strange world? Of course. Are there, then, two worlds? Not at all. There is only our own world and it alone is alien to us, intrinsically so by virtue of its lack of mysteries. If only it actually were deranged by invisible powers, if only it were susceptible to real strangeness, perhaps it would seem more like a home to us, and less like an empty room filled with the echoes of this dreadful improvising. To think that we might have found comfort in a world suited to our nature, only to end up in one so resoundingly strange!

After serving out the hours of a night in which sleep was absolutely forbidden, I went out for a walk. I had not gone far when I became spectator to a sad scene. Some yards ahead of me on the street, an old man was being forcibly led from a house by two other men. They had him in restraints and were delivering him to a waiting vehicle. Laughing hysterically, the man was apparently destined for the asylum. As the struggling trio reached the street, the eyes of the laughing man met my own. Suddenly he stopped laughing. Then, in a burst of resistance, he broke free of his escorts, ran toward me, and fell right into my arms. Since his own were so tightly bound, I had to hold up his full weight.

"Never tell them what it means," he said frantically, almost weeping.

"How can I tell them what I don't know?"

"Swear!" he demanded.

But by then his pursuers had caught up with him. As they dragged him off he began laughing just as before, and the peals of his laughter, in the early morning quiet, were soon devoured by the pealing of several church bells. Poor lunatic. This was one of the most malignant conspiracies I had ever witnessed; the bells, I mean. (They are everywhere.) This was also what made me decide that I had better keep the madman's secret after all.

As a child I maintained some very strange notions. For instance, I used to believe that during the night, while I slept, witches and monkeys removed parts of my body and played games with them, hiding my arms and legs, rolling my head across the floor. Of course I abandoned this belief as soon as I entered school, but not until much later did I discover the truth about it. After assimilating many facts from various sources and allowing them to mingle in my mind, I realized something. It happened one night as I was crossing a bridge that stretched over a narrow canal. (This was in a part of town fairly distant from where I live.) Pausing for a moment, as I usually do when crossing one of these bridges, I gazed not down into the dark waters of the canal, as I also usually do, but upwards through the branches of overhanging trees. It was those stars, I knew that now: certain of them had been promised specific parts of my body; in the darkest hours of the night, when one is unusually sensitive to such things, I could—and still can, though just barely—feel the force of these stars tugging away at various points, eager for the moment of my death when each of them might carry off that part of me which is theirs by right. Of course a child would misinterpret this experience. And how often I have found that every superstition has its basis in truth.

Out of sheer absent-mindedness I had stared at my reflection in the mirror a little too deeply. I should say that that mirror has been hanging from that wall for more years, I would guess, than I have been on this earth. It's no surprise, then, that sooner or later it should get the edge on me. Up to a certain point there were no problems to speak of: there were only my eyes, my nose, my mouth, and that was that. But then it began to seem that those eyes were regarding me, rather than I them; that that mouth was about to speak things I had no notion of. Finally, I realized that an entirely different creature was hiding behind my face, making it wholly unrecognizable to me. Let me say that I spent considerable time reshaping my reflection into what it should be.

Later, when I was out walking, I stopped dead on the street. Ahead of me, standing beneath a lamp hanging from an old wall, was the outline of a figure of my general size and proportions. He was looking the other way but very stiffly and very tense, as if waiting anxiously for the precise moment when he would suddenly twist about-face. If that should happen, I knew what I would see: my eyes, my nose, my mouth, and behind those features a being strange beyond all description. I retraced my steps back home and went immediately to bed.

But I couldn't sleep. All night long a greenish glow radiated from the mirror in triumph.

# From the Journal of J.D. Drapeau

## Player Handout #19

I have noticed that certain experiences are allowed to languish in the corners of life, are not allowed to circulate as freely as others. My own, for example. Since childhood, not one day has passed in which I have failed to hear the music of graveyards. And yet, to my knowledge, never has another soul on earth made mention of this phenomenon. Is the circulation of the living so poor that it cannot carry these dead notes? It must be a mere trickle!

There is a solitary truth which, whether for good or ill I don't know, cannot yet be expressed on this earth. This is very strange, since everything—outward scenes as much as inward ones—suggests this truth and like some fantastic game of chaises is always trying to coax the secret into the open. The eyes of certain crudely fashioned dolls are especially suggestive. And distant laughter. In rare moments I feel myself very close to setting it down in my journal, just as I would any other revelation. It would only be a few sentences, I'm sure. But whenever I feel them beginning to take shape in my mind, the page before me will not welcome my pen. Afterward I become fatigued with my failure and suffer headaches that may last for days. At these times I also tend to see odd things reflected in windows. Even after a full week has passed I may continue to wake up in the middle of the night, the silence of my room faintly vibrant with a voice that cries out to me from another universe.

Two tiny corpses, one male and the other female, live in that enormous closet in my bedroom. They are also very old, but still they are quick enough to hide themselves whenever I need to enter the closet to get something. I keep all my paraphernalia in there, stuffed into trunks or baskets and piled quite out of reach. I can't even see the floor or the walls any longer, and only if I hold a light high over my head can I study the layers of cobwebs floating about near the ceiling. After I close the door of the closet, its two miniature inhabitants resume their activities. Their voices are only faint squeaks which during the day hardly bother me at all. But sometimes I am kept awake far into the night by those interminable conversations of theirs.

Last night I visited one of the little theaters and stood at the back for a while. Onstage was a magician, shiny black hair parted straight down the middle, with full prestigitorial regalia about him: a long box to his left (moon and stars), a tall box to his right (oriental designs), and before him a low table covered with a red velvet cloth littered with divers objects. The audience, a full house, applauded wildly after each illusion. At one point the magician divided the various sections of his assistant into separate boxes, which he then proceeded to move to distant areas of the stage, while the dismembered hands and feet continued to wiggle about and a decapitated head laughed loudly. The audience was at great pains to express its amusement. "Isn't it incredible!" exclaimed a man standing beside me. "If you say so," I replied, and then headed for the exit, realizing that for me such things simply do not hold much interest.

I had just finished a book in which there is an old town strung with placid meandering canals. I closed the book and went over to the window. This is an old town, if medieval counts as old, strung with placid meandering canals. The town in the book is often mist shrouded. This town is often mist shrouded. That town has close crumbling houses, odd arching bridges, innumerable church towers, and narrow twisting streets that end in queer little courtyards. So has this one, needless to say. And the infinitely hollow sounding of the bells in the book, at early morning and sullen twilight, is the same as your sounding bells, my lovely town. Thus, I pass easily between one town and the other, pleasantly confusing them.

O my storybook town, strange as death itself, I have made your mysteries mine, mine yours, and have suffered a few brief chapters in your sumptuous history of decay. I have studied your most obscure passages and found them as dark as the waters of your canals.

My town, my storybook, myself, how long we have held on! But it seems we will have to make up for this endurance and each, in our turn, will disappear. Every brick of yours, every bone of mine, every word in our book—everything gone forever. Everything, perhaps, except the sound of those bells, haunting an empty mist through an eternal twilight.

**ONE**

Up ahead in the fog, a hissing and squawking is heard, a slithering of scales and beating of wings. When the investigators pass, all that is to be remarked upon is a stone statue depicting a griffin and a serpent locked in combat.

**TWO**

A splash of silver on the cobblestones; a fish lies here, waterless and dying painfully.

**THREE**

Here a shadow casts across the wall, menacing the investigators' own: a tall shadow, bald, with pointed ears, and abnormally long fingers with spine-like talons. It is a shadow cast by a tangle of dead trees in a stone garden.

**FOUR**

A young man, in the street, on his hands and knees, crawling, upturning and inspecting each and every stone, muttering "It must be here, it must be here," in endless litany.

The bells of the town sound, telling of four, forewarned, forearmed, for naught....

**FIVE**

A dry chuckling comes from above. A stone gargoyle, as ugly as desire, snickers once more and resumes its motionless vigil.

**SIX**

A message laid across a patch of earth is written in frost:

*but do they dream?*

**SEVEN**

From a fractured wall springs a tree bearing dark purple fruit, bruised globes sagging from over-ripeness. The severed hand of a would-be picker can be discerned dangling from one of the ominous purple spheres.

**EIGHT**

A flock of children run, patter pitter patter, small cloaks billowing. Their eyes are as white as the moon at its fullest, and just as blank. The infants smile without joy and run by.

(The bells of the town talk, five times, once for each of mankind's senses—but with seven more marks on the face of the clock, is not mankind a limited and incomplete creature?)

**NINE**

A war of frogs and mice.



*Tearful Woman*

**TEN**

A woman lopes and lolls, head twisting, gargling with tear-filled mirth. "I've seen a man ahead!" she cries. "A man, a head! Ahead! Harharharhar!" She weeps for no reason. If the investigators ask where did he go, she replies "Ask the tide, and name the one you seek by his proper title, she can tell you where to find him." And she goes, smiling with blood on her lips.

**ELEVEN**

A lane where milk seeps slowly. The white liquid flows over the paving, except for one stone, which greedily drinks the gentle trickle. Slurping can be heard. Lifting that stone uncovers a pool of milk and a ring of tarnished silver.

If this ring is presented to the crawling man (see FOUR above), his eyes fill with lust for the object. He takes it, regardless of whether it is offered. When united with it, he sighs "Now is my happiest day, my wedding day, and let Death be my bride." If asked about the stranger the investigators are following, he says "Ah, find the one who knows, and ask for 'He that knows great men's secrets.' But beware, it is not a name to be mentioned often, so be sure to have the right ear."

With that he goes whistling to the river, to board a floe of ice and sing while it melts into the black.

**TWELVE**

A statue of the Madonna. Below her calm form a wretch has been lashed with heavy rope and left to starve. "Hear my crime, hear my crime, which was to show that any mother's toil is just as great, so why cannot my son be the Son of God also?" The woman is tied—tied?—tide! She is the one referred to by the mad woman of TEN above.

If the investigators ask after 'He that knows great men's secrets,' she replies tunelessly, "'He that knows great secrets, and proves slight, that man ne'er lives to see his beard turn white.' He waits for you at the bridge to the great fort." If they cut the woman loose she curses them, and restrains herself anew.

(Again the bells of the town clamor, six times, in stubborn disharmony.)

arrived once more at the fogbound platform; there is the hooded stranger, and there is their luggage being unloaded. Go back to "A Beginning" and start the scenario again. Keep this loop going until the investigators give in and disembark. Now the adventure can truly begin.

## A Search

The figure's promise should entice the investigators, so that they hunt for him through the dripping streets, down the murky lanes, across the sluggish canals, and under the yawning arches of this old city; this slumbering colossus of stone and half-remembered histories. The investigators search and marvel, search and wonder, search and quail, search and finally flee back to the station lest the search never end. Sometimes the figure may be sighted ahead ("Come, come!"), or on the opposite bank of a canal ("Hurry on!"), or above on a rampart ("Tsk tsk, dawdling again!"). He is always gone by the time they catch up.

A map is provided. Let them wander where they will. Numbers on the map correspond to sights, sounds and events, recorded below. It is a loose framework only, for those who find comfort in such things, and should be juggled as the keeper wishes. Do not let the investigators miss a favorite scene just because they turn down the wrong alley.

The asterisks on the map indicate points at which the investigators come across a page from the journal kept by J.P. Drapeau. These unsigned pieces of paper are found lying on the cobblestones, or wafting past on a gentle breeze, or crookedly plastered to a wall, or crumpled into a ball as the plaything of a small gray kitten, or aflame in the gutter, or fluttering down from unknown heights. Use the handouts provided or photocopy the journal pages. Cut them apart, and distribute them in the fashion in which they are found—crumpled, burnt, wet, torn, etc. The journal is a story within a story, and will not help the search; but it lends the night more eeriness.

Investigators may unwittingly stray to the boundaries of the map. There they meet unyielding obstacles.

At the north is *The Wall*, a huge surface of stone stretching east to west, without gate, window, or reason. It is sheer and not climbable. The top is out of sight in the fog. Strange sounds are heard distantly from beyond it.

To the south, *The River*, wide, slow, and black. Is it the Styx? Perhaps. Chunks of ice whirl in lazy spirals, quiet testimony to the biting cold of the dark water. No bridge dares to conquer this slumbering wet beast.

To the east, *The Fog* lies everywhere in town, licking its tongue into the corners of the evening, lingering on the pools that stand in drains (to quote Eliot). It lies quiet, and watching. To the east is the place where the fog comes



*The Cloaked Man*

from, the spawning ground, the birthplace. Here it falls in a carpet so thick as to preclude all vision, a floating ocean of white on white, a null, a void, a blind drawn on unknown terrain.

To the west, *The Boulevard* is a long road with cabarets and theaters and cafes, lit by harsh lamps, brash with noise and color. Barking and laughing, creatures lounge and stroll and preen and tussle arm-in-arm along

this street of short memories. These people shun sleep, fearing it. It is obvious that the investigators' quarry would not cross such a rude and vibrant place, but would instead prefer the soft solace of the mews behind to these fleshly beings loudly gulping breaths in busy lifetimes.

Thus confined by each cardinal point of the compass, the investigators track and trail through quiet stone courtyards, past rusted low iron fences encasing slow tombstones of unknown origin, past walls crumbling from the deathly lovemaking of withered viney, past statues of uncertain figures worn smooth by age and lichen, beneath square towers housing cracked brass cackling bells, by the ancient fortification standing salient and senile, over placid canals via short carven bridges, and past buildings of all shapes sharing the common traits of age, silence, stone, and dignity. Some high windows weep feeble tears of light into the gloomy streets; but for the most part, the town sleeps, as if its inhabitants are in that state eternally by matter of course.

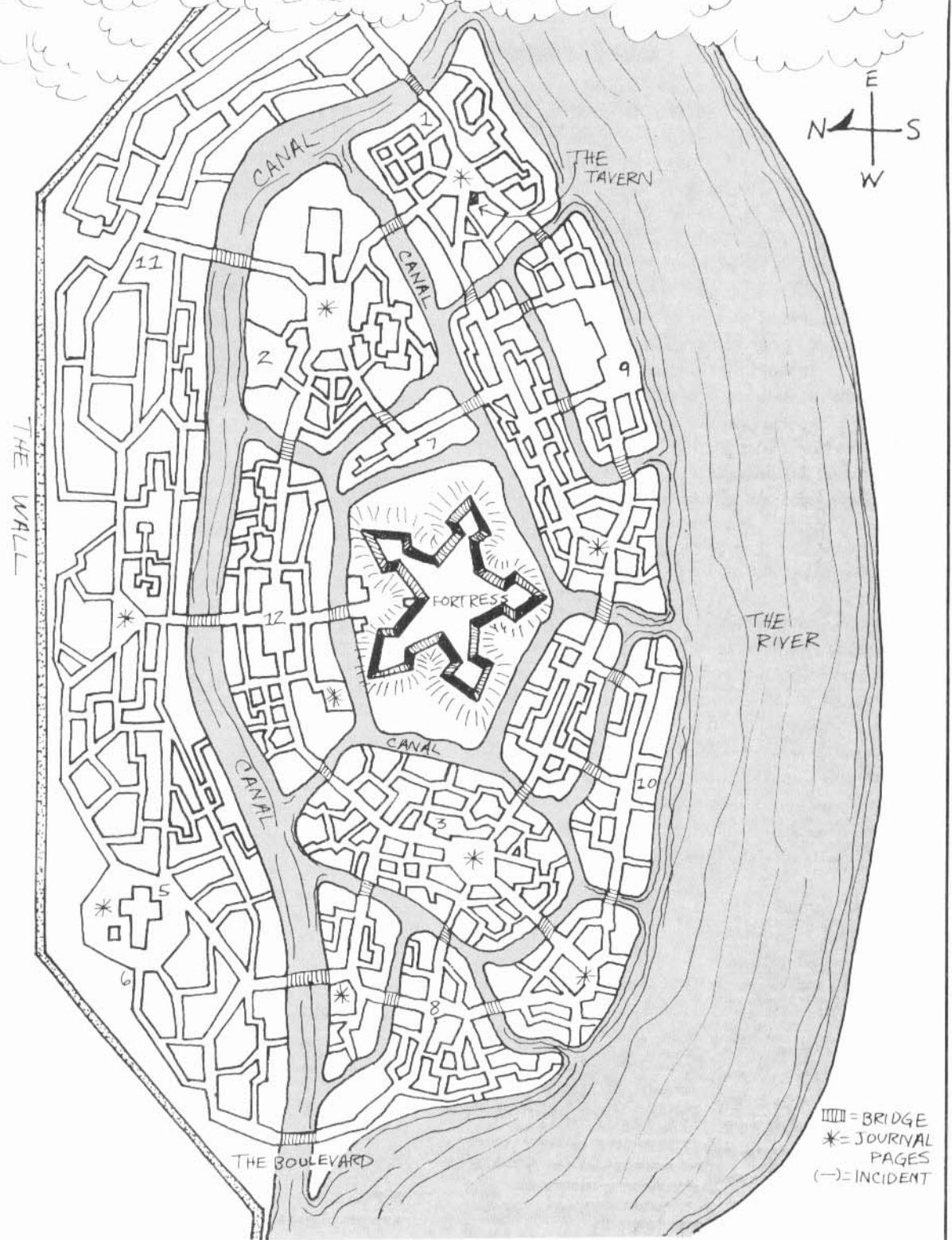
The investigators may turn to their skills and faculties to aid them in the pursuit, but to no avail. Spot Hidden only reveals unwelcome shadows, or odd features of architecture; Listen detects whispering, or soft sighing; Track denotes strange and vaguely terrible traffic; Psychology on the few inhabitants met indicates that their behavior is perfectly rational—the instability is in the mind of the beholder.

## What They Meet

Some of the occurrences below may be disturbing to the onlooker. Request Sanity rolls if the investigators seem disturbed by an event, with a penalty of 1 Sanity point for a failed roll. Events are keyed by number to the map.

As the investigators can only wander, in wandering they meet the following.

# The City of Bells



classic area southeast of the city of Bordeaux. If the investigators inquire, the label is from Château Guiraud-Lafon, a house and vineyard puzzling to the sommelier, but which he believes must border Yquem itself. In fact, such a label does not exist, and the Prince has obtained this wine from nowhere on earth.

The glass of the bottle is nearly black. The cork is sound. Scribbled in ink across the label are four words, translatable roughly as *a dream of the sap*, but implying a complexity of taste and association which could be connected to wine.

*un sommeil de sève*

The attendant decants at the table if the investigators wish, since the bottle is a gift, exclaiming at the extraordinary clarity of the rich stream. A fine sweetness drifts about the car. Millionaires, statesmen, aristocrats, and poets turn toward the party, all with envy in their eyes. "Superb," the sommelier murmurs. "Gentlemen, a few moments, and I shall pour, if you wish."

If the investigators request his estimation, the sommelier obliges, pouring a thimbleful into the tiny silver cup he wears around his neck on a silver chain. He inhales, and sips lingeringly. "Profound!" he exclaims. "Magnificent! The greatest I have ever tasted! Gentlemen, if you will forgive the informality, for moments such as this I would not trade my service for a dukedom."

Now the investigators raise their fine crystal glasses, enjoy the amber depths of the old wine, and experience a fragrance which evokes the fineness of life. The Sauterne has lost much of its sweetness, but its lingering finish is redolent with rich depths of fruit. A mediocre Sauterne is of little interest, as the saying goes, but a fine first growth like this is beyond words. The dinner concludes with feelings of profound contentment and satisfaction.

## The Consequence

The investigators tumble into bed and, in falling, begin to dream. All the investigators who drank of or scented the Prince's Sauterne have the same dream, and their dream is the rest of this chapter; the sommelier and other travelers in the car have disturbing dreams which they cannot remember.

They are awakened by a knocking at 3:10 A.M. next morning. The night conductor is walking along the passageway, waking those passengers who are disembarking at Zagreb. The investigators' names are on his list.

Outside, the station is shrouded in fog, and the tongues of bells can be softly heard, lapping at the chill night air. As the investigators argue with the night conductor, a Listen roll hears someone speaking on the sta-

tion platform. Outside in the dusky whiteness is a stooped figure, gazing at the investigators through the train windows, but for the most part addressing a skull carried lovingly in his hands. He strokes it from time to time, and recites.

*Here's a cheek keeps her color, let the wind go whistle:  
Spout rain, we fear thee not, be hot or cold  
All's one with us. And is not he absurd  
Whose fortunes are upon their faces set,  
That fear no other God but wind and wet?*

Well-read investigators recognize the speech as from *The Revenger's Tragedy*, III.v., by Cyril Tourneur. The speaker's face is shadowed in a large hooded cloak, drawn up against the cold night air, and this gives his words a curiously muffled tone. A Spot Hidden notes that all of the investigators' luggage from the fourgon van is on the platform, piled about his feet. He speaks again, addressing the investigators this time:

"What ho!, [investigator name], abed so early? And you too [another investigator name]? Sluggards! Did you plan to slumber like swine and forego one of Europe's great cities, hurrying onwards to your gathering task? Bah! Come, come. I have arranged your stay here. Time flows swiftly, and we have much to talk about ere dawn. Perchance you will permit me to tell you the full strange history of the Sedefkar Simulacrum, and of what you can expect to find on your arrival in Constantinople. Hah! Follow good fellows, and let the Devil steer the course."

He turns and walks into the eddying clouds of gray. His promise of information should goad the investigators off the train. Alas, by the time they have dressed, packed their cabin luggage, and stepped out, the figure is gone. The investigators are cold, and alone on the platform with all their bags. Where the figure stood is a crumpled piece of paper, an unnumbered page from J.P. Drapeau's journal, handout 19. Select a random page from the handout, crumple it, and give it to the players.

Behind them, the train has not left. The windows are dark; most of the passengers sleep, dreaming of shifting white haze and unceasing bells.

## IF THEY DO NOT DISEMBARK

The night conductor expects them to get off here, and all their luggage is on the platform. However, concerted investigator effort will entrench them on the train, and ensure that their journey east is uninterrupted. They are obviously suspicious souls, without curiosity.

If this happens, they get back on the train, and resume their sleep. Soon after they drift off, the train slows to a stop, and there is a knock on the door; it is the night conductor. The train has just arrived in Zagreb, it is 3:10 A.M., and this is their wake-up call. Indeed, the train has

## X. DREAM ZAGREB



# In a City of Bells and Towers

*Wherein the investigators think they have arrived at an ancient fog-shrouded European city, but their wine has disembarked them into dreamscape and nightmare.*

by Mark Morrison and Thomas Ligotti

THE FOLLOWING SCENARIO is a dream. It occurs on the train between Trieste and Zagreb. The investigators may not know for certain that it is an unreality until the closing stages. It does not advance the plot, although it promises to; it is the Jigsaw Prince's joke, a token of revenge against the investigators.

In this surreal sidetrack on the long and bloody journey to Constantinople, no historical or geographical data is supplied for the actual Zagreb, as the investigators never in fact disembark there.

Nor do statistics exist for this scenario; none are relevant or necessary. The keeper may find it convenient to read most of this narrative out loud to the players.

### A Gift

The Orient Express departs from Trieste at 8:14 P.M. The investigators are en route to Belgrade, where the train is due in at 9:00 A.M. the following morning. They are probably exhausted after chasing about in the Iloigor cave, battling the Brothers, and struggling in the bora, and probably famished as well; the journey is an opportunity to eat, relax, and catch up on some much-needed sleep.

First things first, they congregate in the dining car, dine sumptuously, and perhaps toast fallen comrades. Maurice, their waiter, brings dessert and the announcement of a surprise.

"If the party would not take it amiss, a gentleman—" here he turns to bow in the man's direction, and in turning, pauses. "Ah, I see he has departed; your pardons.

However, the rotund gentleman who sat at the far corner table attested to, as he put it, the vitality of your youthful enjoyment, and has sent with his compliments a bottle of his personal wine. If you wish, we can serve it."

Even with a successful know roll, the investigators do not recall the gentleman in the far corner; they have noticed, however, that such gifts, anonymous or otherwise, are not unusual aboard the Orient Express, whose luxury and presentation seem to stimulate generosity in some not otherwise normally noticeable. The keeper should feel free to advise that the wine is not poisoned or harmful. However, keepers, even the scent of this wine is enough to provoke the ensuing dream.

The sommelier proceeds to offer the bottle for inspection. It is a bottle of fine Sauterne, a dessert wine from the

### Author's Note

This chapter was originally written as an attempt to capture in scenario form the work of author Thomas Ligotti. Anyone interested in weird fiction is urged to pick up his collection *Songs of a Dead Dreamer*. One Ligotti story, "The Journal of J.P. Drapeau," was a direct inspiration to this scenario. It has been provided here to use as the player handout, and to inspire keepers and players with visions of a shadowy European nightmare.

**MARCO MONTANELLI, Age 44, Lloigor Cultist**

STR 8	CON 12	SIZ 10	INT 17	POW 16
DEX 8*	APP 11	SAN 0	EDU 21	HP 11

\* a tentacle replaces left leg.

**Damage Bonus:** +0.

**Weapon:** .32 revolver 35%, damage 1D8

Letter Opener 45%, damage 1D3

Tentacle 50%, damage 1D4

**Skills:** Archaeology 30%, Classical Greek 70%, Debate 65%, English 60%, German 45%, Latin 70%, Linguist 80%, Wheelchair 50%.

**Sanity Loss to See:** 1/1D4 SAN if the tentacle is revealed.

**SIX BLACKSHIRT THUGS, Ages 23**

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** Fist/Punch 70%, damage 1D3+1D4

Kick 45%, damage 1D6+1D4

Club 55%, damage 1D6+1D4

	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	POW	HP
One	12	12	13	13	9	13
Two	13	13	12	12	14	13
Three	13	14	12	11	10	13
Four	11	14	14	11	11	14
Five	14	14	16	10	10	15
Six	15	13	15	9	10	14

**CESARE DRUNI, Age 26, Red-haired Lloigor Cultist**

STR 11	CON 9	SIZ 16	INT 12	POW 11
DEX 10	APP 15	SAN 0	EDU 8	HP 13

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapon:** Knife 40%, damage 1D4+2+1D4

**Skills:** Hide 30%.

**HELMUT GROSSINGER, Age 33, Insane Former Investigator**

STR 8	CON 6	SIZ 14	INT 14	POW 14
DEX 5*	APP 6	SAN 0	EDU 15	HP 10

\* has neither hands nor tongue.

**Damage Bonus:** +0.

**Weapon:** none.

**Skills:** Listen 75%, Lurk 65%, Spot Hidden 65%.

**JOHANN WINCKELMANN, Ghost**

INT 14 POW 20

**Sanity Loss to See:** 0/1D4.

**SAMPLE BROTHERS OF THE SKIN**

All have dead men's eyes, allowing them to see in the dark.

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** Knife 40%, damage 1D6+1D4

**Skills:** Dodge 25%, Hide 30%, Listen 40%, Skin Human 25%, Sneak 30%, Spot Hidden 60%, Track 25%.

**Spells:** Control Skin\*, plus Transfer Body Part\* at the keeper's option. See the Constantinople chapter for spell information.

**Sanity Loss to See:** for noticing obvious sewn-on additions, 0/1 SAN.

	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	POW	HP
One	14	12	13	16	9	13
Two	14	13	17	15	14	15
Three	13	14	15	11	10	15
Four	15	13	13	13	11	13
Five	13	15	16	13	10	16
Six	12	13	13	13	16	13

**SAMPLE LLOIGOR CULTISTS**

Most of the lloigor cultists carry clubs or knives; a few could have pistols. At least one has displeased the lloigor enough to warrant the grafting-on of tentacle. These new limbs can wield melee weapons normally, and can extend out up to 3 yards from the cultist in a direct attack, in the manner of a whip. The tentacle usually replaces an amputated limb, but might also lash out from a cultist's mouth, or from under an eye-patch, or from the cultist's chest or back, etc.

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** Club 35%, damage 1D6+1D4

Knife 40%, damage 1D3+1D4

Tentacle 50%, damage 1D4

**Skills:** Climb 50%, Dodge 35%, Hide 25%, Jump 45%, Listen 40%, Sneak 25%, Spot Hidden 50%, Swim 50%.

**Sanity Loss to See:** 1/1D4 SAN for tentacled cultists only.

	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	POW	HP
One	15	16	13	14	11	15
Two	16	17	12	13	11	15
Three	17	14	12	13	10	13
Four	18	16	14	12	12	15
Five	16	16	13	12	10	15
Six	14	13	15	12	9	14

**SAMPLE LLOIGOR**

Extensive notes about lloigor and their interesting abilities exists in the rulesbook, and should be consulted.

STR 42	CON 30	SIZ 65	INT 20	POW 15
DEX 10	APP 48	SAN 0	EDU 15	HP 10

Move 7 (3 through solid rock in immaterial form).

**Damage Bonus:** +5D6.

**Weapons:** Claw 30%, damage 6D6

Bite 50%, damage 7D6

**Armor:** 8-point hide.

**Sanity Loss to See:** 0/1D6 SAN if it becomes visible.

## The Race for the Train

Outside the cavern, night is approaching, but the battle between the two cults continues, with the investigators caught in the cross-fire.

The spray of bullets and stilettos is further complicated by the bora, which has reached STR 30 in fury. For each five minutes spent in the open, the investigators and cultists alike take 1D3 hit points damage. Shelter may be found in the lee of hills and buildings, or inside buildings and vehicles. The investigator now bound to Ithaqua is immune to this damage; however, carried on the wind from far, far away he can hear the hunting cry of Ithaqua, which is more chilling than the bora could ever be: lose 1/1D6 SAN.

Trieste is four hours away by car, three hours distant by train. The next east-bound Orient Express departs at 8:14 P.M. On the way, if the keeper wishes, cultists continue to harass them, although these attacks grow less frequent if they move quickly away from Postumia and lie low once they reach Trieste. If they sleep there tonight, once again they risk losing 1D6 magic points.

### THE VORTEX

If they still have the medallion, the lloigor attempt one last time to stop them with an implosion vortex, which does 1D100 hit points of damage to anything within a five-yard radius. The vortex takes three rounds to form, and is detectable as a whirling distortion in the air and a sub-sonic throbbing, allowing the investigators a lot of time to escape. The vortex is centered on the investigator carrying the amulet, but does no harm to the medallion; if the others flee in all directions when the vortex starts to form (abandoning their comrade to their fate) then only one investigator is hurt. In any event, the vortex should catch one or two of the pursuers, and their messy expirations should make amusing description. Due to the heavy magic-point cost, only one vortex is sent.

### FENALIK AGAIN

Fenalik is also about. The vampire has an active interest in the investigators' welfare, so will rip up any lloigor followers or Brothers he can catch. He is careful not to allow any investigators to see him in Trieste, but they might distantly hear him in action—a successful Listen roll might detect sounds like some wild beast uncaged. They may also stumble through the remains of one or several of his kills. The vampire ensures that no Brothers survive; Selim receives no report of the investigators' identity.

## Hiding in Trieste

The investigators may need to spend some time in Trieste, waiting for the next train east. The train leaves at quarter past eight in the evening. Not all of the lloigor cultists went to Postumia, so the investigators must be careful.

Their hotel is being watched. Some strategy needs to be devised to safely recover luggage left there. The partially-collected simulacrum is bulky and not easily hidden; this may draw unwelcome attention to them as a second taxi arrives to carry their numerous bags. Is there a cultist among the hotel staff? The investigators should be made to be nervous, distrustful of anyone, and jumpy at shadows. If the keeper desires, there may be attacks by knife or tentacle-wielding cultists; bear in mind that after their tribulations in the caverns, the investigators may be unable to withstand a concerted attack.

## Conclusion

Eventually the investigators board the Orient Express at Trieste and head for Belgrade. They will not be out of lloigor-drain range until past Ljubljana; they'll risk losing another 1D6 points tonight.

Each investigator gains 1D4 SAN for recovering the Right Leg of the Sedefkar Simulacrum. They now may have four of its pieces, raising to 20 percentiles the penalty against all idea, know, and luck rolls for them.

If the investigators did not hand over the medallion to the lloigor, they recover 1D6 Sanity points, knowing that they have helped stave off in a small way the return of one of the Great Old Ones. They also know they should be very careful on their return journey through Italy.

## Statistics

### ANTONI TERMONA, Age 39, Lloigor Cultist

STR 10	CON 14	SIZ 12	INT 11	POW 14
DEX 8*	APP 13	SAN 0	EDU 21	HP 13

\* a tentacle replaces left arm.

**Damage Bonus:** +0.

**Weapon:** .32 revolver 30%, damage 1D8  
Tentacle 50%, damage 1D4

**Skills:** English 35%, Fast Talk 55%, History 55%, Latin 25%, Spot Hidden 40%.

**Sanity Loss to See:** 1/1D4 SAN if the tentacle is revealed.



The Lloigor Approaches

## Escape

Their medallion obtained, the lloigor are uninterested in the fate of the investigators or of the leg, and consequently do not protect the investigators from their pursuers, who will be cautious until they learn that the lloigor intend no intervention.

But if the investigators have not handed over the medallion before they try to leave, a wave forms in the center of the lake and spreads outward as one lloigor forms a massive, dragon-like body, and the displaced water swirls ashore.

The now-material lloigor surfaces and comes after the investigators, its serpentine bulk filling the tunnel behind them. The earth starts to vibrate. One by one the stalactites forming the upper teeth in the mouth of the tunnel break off and tumble down, mostly sealing the way shut. A voice bellows in the investigators' minds.

**GIVE US  
THE MEDALLION!**

If the investigators comply, hurling the medallion at the advancing monstrosity behind them, the lloigor disappears, and the medallion spins into the darkness. The stalactites immediately stop falling. If the investigators hang onto the medallion, each must receive a successful DEX x4 roll or less to squeeze through the lower teeth. Those with successes get through safely; those without must choose between jumping back and being caught by the lloigor or pressing ahead and being hit by a falling stalactite for 1D6 damage (20% chance of impaling for 2D6 damage instead).

Once the investigators are out of the tunnel, they must find their way out of the caverns, pursued by both the lloigor cultists (who want vengeance if the medallion has been handed over), and by the Brothers of the Skin, who want the Right Leg and the location of any other simulacrum parts. Of course, these two groups also fight each other.

If all else fails, Fenalik might appear to keep the investigators alive until all the simulacrum is recovered, but such intervention should not be lightly attempted. Fenalik almost certainly remains in dark safety, intending to embark with the investigators tonight or the next night.

Ideally, the investigators should be left running through the caverns pursued by an indeterminate number of attackers, enough in number that concealment somewhere should seem very attractive. Referring to the caverns map, choose some point for the entrance to the lloigor cavern.

After the shouts of cultists and their lights dim and fade, eventually the investigators will have to find their way out. Perhaps, while wandering through the caverns, they come across weird stalagmite and stalactite formations, reminding them perhaps of unpleasant events on their European tour thus far.

## Lair of the Lloigor

Just when the investigators begin to think they may get out without further incident, they hear the approach of a large group of people.

The only cover is behind a formation which looks unpleasantly like a set of needle-sharp teeth. Climbing the slippery formation is not easy, but can be done. Behind the teeth, a successful Spot Hidden roll locates a narrow passage, leading down to a huge grotto. As they make their descent, the keeper might have their right legs begin to tingle, as a way of having them press on.

The shores of the lake are covered with stalagmite formations, and huge creamy-orange stalactites drip from the ceiling of the great chamber. The lake waters are black and still. Just then they hear a huge voice, echoing not in the vast reaches of the cavern, but in the convolutions of their own brains.

**So...**  
**YOU HAVE**  
**BROUGHT IT**  
**AT LAST!**

Telepathic transmissions from the invisible lloigor does not cause Sanity loss in itself, but the unusual nature of the lloigor mind utterly depresses any human who comes in contact with it, to the point of suicide.

Each investigator must receive a roll on the resistance table, matching his or her INT against POW, as each tries to rationalize the despair flooding through them. If INT prevails, the investigator realizes the despair is part of the

lloigor, the ‘outside mind;’ they are still depressed, but recover quickly. A failure results in investigator loss of faith. He or she wants to return home and forget the quest, or to sit down and wait to die: nothing matters, all is lost. These powerful negative feelings last a period determined by the Temporary Insanity timetable in the rulesbook.

A result of 00 indicates despair of suicidal proportions—companions will have to prevent the afflicted from throwing himself or herself into the freezing waters of the underground lake. Again, determine the duration of this on the Temporary Insanity time table.

The lloigor want the medallion; that is the only reason they have allowed the investigators to find them. The single-minded lloigor do not actively respond to investigator attempts to bargain the medallion for the Right Leg of the simulacrum. They do not care if the investigators take the leg.

## The Right Leg

Confronted with powerful mental entities, the investigators probably make sure of their own safety before rummaging about for the leg, but even casual inspection of the area notices an incredible store of random physical items heaped about the shores of the lake, apparently in some order or pattern that appeals to the lloigor mind.

Many of the items are lightly coated by the dripping limestone. The investigators may see the shapes of scrolls and tomes covered with sheets of increasingly opaque stone and quite unreadable, or strange icons and idols depicting oddly-deformed gods. At one place there stands a single column of metal discs, some golden, some tarnished or rusted—amulets and medallions accumulated over 155 years by the lloigor cultists.

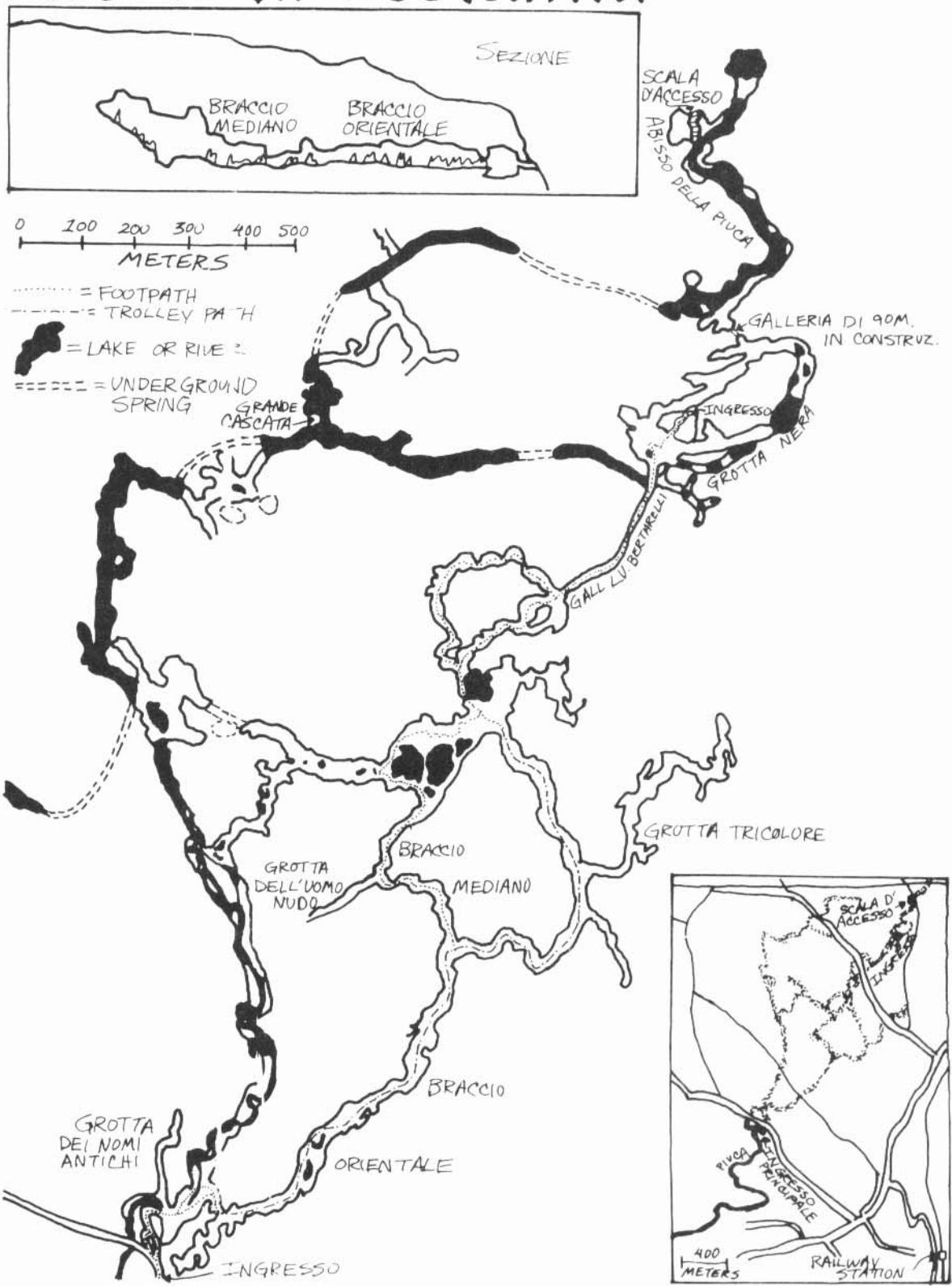
The Right Leg is in this wasteland of occult junk, in one stalagmite amongst hundreds. Finding the correct stalagmite takes half an hour, shorter if the investigators receive a successful Spot Hidden roll.

If the investigators have not surrendered the medallion, the lloigor continue to demand it, but make no attempt to hinder the investigators.

Echoes of approaching cultists might put some urgency into the search.

The Right Leg is found, partially encased in a thin film of limestone. Some iron oxide has mixed with the limestone, so that a bloody stain has formed at the top of the leg, making it appear to be recently severed. Blows with a heavy object shatters the limestone sheath enough that the leg can be pulled free. Immediately afterward, a shout is heard from the far side of the lake, opposite the investigators’ entrance, and a dozen torches may be seen. The lloigor cultists are coming.

# Grotte di Postumia



## Helmut Grossinger

It is possible that, after Winckelmann's visit, the investigators may wish to visit Termona to gain more information or to return the diary. He is likely to try to kill them, as they now know too much, and have the medallion.

As the investigators head towards Termona's house, Grossinger appears from a neighboring alley, where he has been keeping watch. Although he can give no clear warning with his inarticulate, tongueless cries, his increasing agitation each time they approach the house is obvious. If this fails to make the investigators suspicious, the cultists may well capture, torture, and dismember some or all of them. Perhaps their successors are luckier, or perhaps a merciful keeper allows a Psychology roll to comprehend Termona's intentions.

## The Caverns At Postumia

**T**HE INVESTIGATORS SHOULD HAVE sufficient information to prompt a visit to the lloigor caverns at Postumia, fifty miles northeast of Trieste, near the Yugoslav border and the town of Longatico. A local train makes the trip in just under three hours. The station is about a half-mile from the Postumia proper; the entrance to the Grotti di Postumia lies about a mile further on.

Once it becomes apparent that the investigators are leaving Trieste, the lloigor cultists mobilize. Termona and his fellow cultists don't know whether the investigators have the medallion, but continue surveillance just in case. As soon as they are certain the investigators have the medallion (sufficient proof is the investigators entering the lloigor caverns), they act.

The Brothers also follow, closely watching both investigators and cultists closely. They are starting to hope that this episode actually may lead them to a piece of the missing statue.

## Into the Depths

The caverns of Postumia are only open to guided groups, who spend about half of the two-hour trip traveling in small trolley cars. The sole daily tour at this time of year commences at noon. Naturally enough, the local guides are members of the lloigor cult. Few visitors brave the foul weather. When the investigators take the tour, they and the lloigor cultists are the only participants. Members

of the Brothers of the Skin enter the caverns after the tour group has moved inside.

If the investigators sneak into the caverns, the same groups are present, but unknown to the investigators.

### WHAT THEY SEE

A walkway shares the entrance to the cavern with a river, which flows into the entrance on the left. The river disappears into the darkness, but the walkway leads to a narrow-gauge railway on which run small trolleys for intrepid tourists.

The investigators' guide for the tour is Carlo, a youngish man with a gold tooth. The trolleys at Postumia which the tourists ride are open cars, not unlike those which miners use to transport earth, though with seats, doors, and much more comfort. The railway is over a mile long, but does not extend the full length of the tour; visitors must walk for at least an equal distance. Guidebooks suggest wearing warm jackets and stout boots.

The limestone caverns are glorious, though imperfectly lit. The stalagmite and stalactite formations are considered by many to be the finest in Europe. Sharp beauty can turn to horror, though, and keepers should emphasize the formations which look like exposed brain-tissue, fang-like teeth, a half-buried skull, a gigantic femur, and so on. Carlo fully expects the investigators to be dead very soon, and takes ghoulish delight in pointing out formations whose names he translates as The Sepulcher, Dead Man's Bones, The Brain, and The Beheaded Dwarf.

Some parts of the caverns are flooded, and pools of inky black water reflect some formations to bizarre effect. In some passages flow underground streams, of depths ranging from knee-deep to roof-high. The water is ice-cold and drinkable. Once the trolleys halt, a broad lighted footpath makes accessible additional parts of the cavern complex, but dozens of openings can be seen which lack paths or lights; the investigators see only part of these caverns; new areas continue to be found and explored today.

If the investigators take the tour, the lloigor cultists wait until the investigators disembark and have walked some distance from the trolleys. Then they turn off the electric lighting and move in for the kill. If the investigators sneak in, perhaps using one of the alternate entrances, the lloigor cultists take a shortcut and wait in ambush. Each cultist has a flashlight.

The trailing Brothers of the Skin take exception to the lloigor cult attack, since it threatens to ruin what seems to be a good lead. If they need to, they join in the fight on the side of the investigators. To the cultists' consternation, the Brothers do not need lights—dead men's eyes see just fine in the dark.

efforts. If the investigators break down the door by taking runs at it, when they succeed, they find themselves passing through the ghost inside, who waits just within the door. This is profoundly unpleasant: Winckelmann's own deathless cold obsession with the medallion washes over them, as well as the stench of his decay: lose 0/1D2 SAN.

Out of the wind, it is still bitterly cold. If no one has thought to bring a flashlight or lantern, they are able only dimly to perceive their surroundings. The villa appears once to have been a hotel of some sort: to one side, a counter or reception desk rots amidst the cobwebs. The ghost leads the way down a short flight of stairs into a cellar. A few rats scamper into holes as the ghost moves to the far wall of the cellar, which is made of large cut stones set curiously in steps, so that the wall slopes away toward the ceiling. A successful Archaeology roll suggests that the wall is part of an old amphitheater, and therefore the curve of the street outside follows some bound of the ancient stadium.

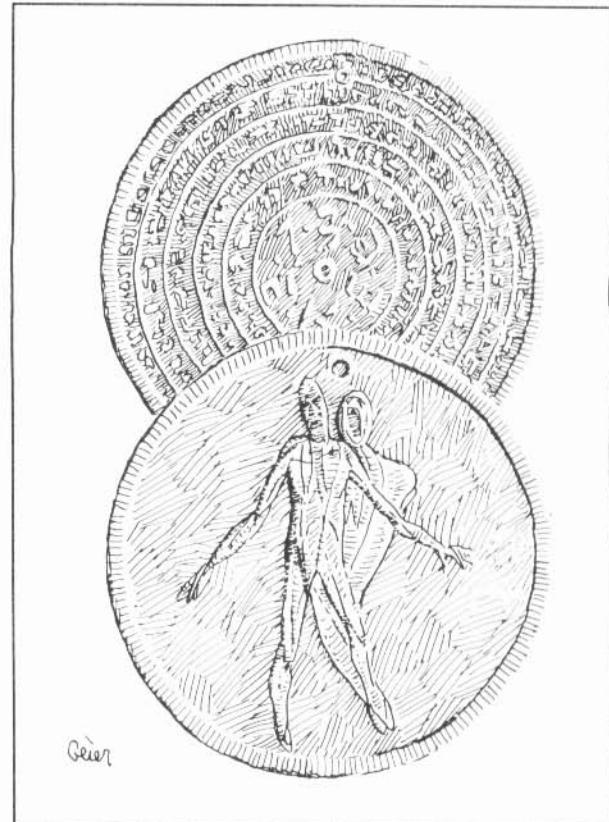
The ghost points at the earth of the cellar floor next to the stepped wall, and indicates that the investigators should dig. After scooping aside a century's dust and rat droppings, the investigators uncover a stone floor. The ghost indicates that they should lift the stone revealed there (SIZ 12). Beneath is a mass of rotten leather. It falls apart to disclose the gold medallion.

## The Medallion of Ithaqua

The gold medallion is incised on one side with strange hieroglyphs in a language never spoken by human throats, and on the other side with a relief carving of some entity which, whilst parodying the human shape, seems to writhe and shift continually.

The investigator who picks up the medallion feels something akin to an electric shock, and a blast of frigid air sweeps past them out of the medallion. The toucher hears, far off, a terrible howling and feels the unearthly chill of the medallion course up through the arm and reach his or her heart: Sanity loss to feel this is 1/1D3 SAN. If the investigator has dealt with Ithaqua, or with the wendigo, he or she now feels their shadows.

The investigator who first touched the medallion is bonded to Ithaqua, the Wind Walker. He or she becomes immune to cold, indeed revels in it, but also must bear the horror of the cry of the Wind Walker when abroad and the wind is from the north—every day the investigators remain in Trieste or its surrounds, and at the keeper's discretion thereafter. At sundown each day, as Ithaqua stalks the Arctic wastes, the investigator outdoors must receive a Sanity roll costing 1/1D6 SAN, until a total of 6 Sanity points have been lost. Rolls thereafter cost 1 point.



*The Medallion of Ithaqua*

If the investigator goes permanently insane as a result, he or she travels north as quickly as possible to worship Ithaqua in its frozen domain. The bond continues if the medallion is given away or destroyed, but the Ritual of Cleansing in the Sedefkar Scrolls removes it. After that ritual, the medallion—if the investigators still have it—transmutes from gold to lead, and no longer have effect.

Once the investigator has touched the medallion, he or she becomes very attached to it, and refuses to let it pass out of sight or reach. It is the most natural thing in the world to string the heavy medallion around his or her neck, so that it is always present. Indeed, when the investigators go to the Postumia caverns, it has to be present; keepers should remember this.

### BACK TO THE HOTEL

When the investigators look up, Winckelmann has vanished, and never returns. They are freezing, except for the investigator who first picked up the medallion. He or she is quite comfortable. The investigators make their way out of the ruined villa and back to their hotel with minor difficulty. All must battle the bora, but the investigator bound to Ithaqua is not affected by the temperature of the wind, nor indeed does he or she lose magic points to the lloigor while remaining in the area.



*Visitation in the Night*

visible through his features. They are looking at Johann Winckelmann; lose 0/1D4 SAN.

Aside from the fact of his existence, nothing about the figure of the ghost threatens anyone. In fact, after he sits down, he becomes almost solid.

His voice is harsh and strained; it appears to come from a long distance. It is obviously an effort to speak, so his communications are terse, and his reply to questions no more than an anguished look from the sunken pits of his eyes. If the investigators persist, he tilts his head and raises the kerchief at his throat to reveal a gaping stab wound. Small creatures best not thought upon wriggle into the wound, away from the light: 0/1 SAN to notice.

Winckelmann speaks fluent, somewhat formal German and Italian, as well as excellent classical Latin and Greek. He will try communicating in each tongue. If none

of the investigators can understand him, he attempts mime. If anyone thinks to hand him a bilingual dictionary, the ghost is momentarily diverted by the concision of the scholarship, then comes to the point of his haunting.

If at all possible, have a verbal conversation. Winckelmann will say, among whatever the keeper finds useful, that the Things in the Caves seem to attract magical artifacts of all sorts, and that They will be pleased with whomever brings them the medallion. He knows nothing of the Right Leg, nor of Napoleon or other events after his death; he sees no connection between the medallion and the Right Leg.

## A Chilly Walk

Winckelmann indicates that he wants the investigators to follow him. He is not adverse to using force to encourage the reluctant, and he is in a hurry. Unless they act quickly, the investigators find themselves plodding into the night dressed as they are. There is no sign of other guests or staff as they leave, and outside the streets are deserted. The hour is late and the howling rage of the bora, which threatens to tear the investigators from their feet (STR rolls to avoid being knocked down), not to mention freeze them to death.

Winckelmann is totally unaffected by the wind. His hair and clothes hang limply as the bora's ferocity passes through him. The ghost chivvies the investigators into motion, and they find the cold tolerable for a while, though an hour or two of exposure might prove fatal.

The ghost, unimpeded by fierce wind or intervening obstacles, sets a rapid pace, and the investigators must struggle to keep up. If the investigators have taken little or no damage so far, another DEX roll or two on the resistance table might be in order.

Winckelmann leads the investigators a few blocks away from their hotel. He pauses momentarily in a short, curving street before an old, boarded-up villa, and then enters through the door. The door is stuck fast, STR 20 to enter; there is room for two investigators to combine their

- Between the soup and the fish, imperceptibly over the course of several minutes, the table begins to rise. Just as the investigators realize that they seem to be sinking, the table drops to the floor with a crash, causing other patrons and staff to stare at them.
- As one investigator cuts into a chicken, writhing maggots tumble forth, and inch across the plate toward him or her. Perhaps they want to rescue whatever it is that wriggles on the investigator's tongue! Only that investigator can detect the maggots. Then the maggots disappear.
- One of the wine glasses fills by itself, with a red liquid too thick to be wine. The level rises until the glass overflows, and a pool of what appears to be blood spreads out across the table. The glass rises into the air, inverts itself and then shatters onto the table, amidst the spilled . . . wine.
- One investigator picks up a knife, and finds it burning cold, freezing to the skin so that it cannot be dropped. The knife rises into the air, drawing the investigator with it, and makes repeated stabbing motions in the air. The investigator's hand is covered with blood, as the knife is brandished in the air. The knife drops to the floor. The investigator's hand is unmarked.

These events require a Sanity roll for all investigators, costing 1/1D4 SAN. The investigators draw everyone's attention as they shriek and throw themselves about. A successful Spot Hidden notices among their watchers a pale man dressed in black, who then slips into the kitchen entrance. If the investigators attempt to follow, they are met by an irate cook, who denies truthfully that anyone has passed him in the kitchen.

## The Haunted Hotel

The investigators leave in disarray. At the hotel, the power is still out. They collect candles at the desk and mount darkened staircases to their rooms.

The investigator who was given the diary hears his or her name called out but, upon turning, no one is there. If the diary was left in the investigator's room before dinner, the investigator is pushed roughly against a wall, and the word "Tagebuch" (German for diary, pronounced *tar-ge-booch*) is hissed in his or her ear. There is no sign of an assailant.

The other investigators do not hear anything, but all feel a sudden drop in temperature as the investigator with the diary slams against the wall.

Passing down the hallway seems ominously dark, but eventually the investigators arrive at their rooms. Inside, the strange goings-on cease briefly. The investigator with the diary is left in peace unless he or she tries to get rid of the diary. This can be done readily enough, but thrown

into the garbage or into the sea, the diary keeps turning up: on the bedside table, in the pocket of a dressing gown, cold and hard at one's feet in bed. If the possessor of the diary tries to destroy it, he or she feels destroyed: burning pains if fire is used, gut-wrenching cramps if they intend to shred it, etc.—such perceptions cost 2/1D4+1 SAN per each occurrence. The horrible pains always commence just soon enough to prevent actual damage to the diary.

In each of the other rooms, things are worse, though it starts quietly enough.

- Candles are suddenly snuffed out and refuse to relight or, upon being extinguished, burst into flame.
- The door suddenly swings open, apparently forced by the chill breeze that blows through it. Upon being closed, latched, and double-locked, it simply swings open again.
- The fire lit by the chamber-maid burns with an eerie blue light, or suddenly goes out all at once, sending a cloud of smoke and ash into the room.
- The temperature in the room grows colder and colder.
- Comforters are torn off beds, pillows explode into clouds of feathers, furniture starts to slide about.
- This culminates in a frenzy of classic poltergeist activity, as pictures fall and smash, hair is pulled, fires and candles flare into jets of weird flame, furniture flies through the air and the shutters burst inward, shattering the windows and allowing the fury of the bora into the room.

The investigators are literally thrown from their rooms in random states of dress, to land in the darkened hallway. Their doors slam shut and do not open. Apart from the continued smashing noises from beyond those doors, the hotel is in silence, as though no one else had notice anything unusual.

This prolonged paraphysical display costs each investigator 1/1D6 SAN.

## A Late Visitor

When the investigators gather their wits in the hallway, they realize that one of their number is missing. What they find then depends upon what the investigator with the diary has been doing, but chances are they must rouse their companion from a sound sleep. He or she has noticed nothing.

As they congregate in the room with the diary, a ponderous knock comes at the door. Before it can be answered, the door swings wide, to reveal a small man with a pale face and black garments. Up close, he is perhaps recognizable from their researches at the library, despite the fact that his face is cadaverous and the door is clearly



Cesare Druni

ence, they see him being waylaid by two Turks, and dragged off. Sometime later (in Trieste or elsewhere), they will see the red-and-black hair and angular face again, this time on a short, fat body. Probably a relative.

#### **HELmut GROSSINGER**

Grossinger was once an investigator himself, one sufficiently successful to warrant the direct attention of the lloigor. As a result, Helmut has no tongue or hands, nor

sanity. He has watched the arrival of the Brothers of the Skin in Trieste with growing alarm and would like to warn people, but as his experiences have driven the poor fellow mad, no one will listen. Through an insane leap of intuition, he recognizes the investigators as kindred spirits, and shadows them. If approached, he gives a comprehensive but totally incomprehensible warning to the investigators, then his horribly mutilated body later turns up.

#### **THE TURKISH BUSINESSMAN**

The investigators become aware that a Turkish gentleman in a good-quality suit is staking out their hotel. It does not always seem to be the same man. Perhaps it is the same man with a different face.

#### **THE BLACKSHIRTS**

Mussolini's Fascist Party comes to power in Italy in 1924; members of the party have been organized into units known as *fascio di combattimento*. Their name, 'Blackshirts,' comes from their uniform. In 1921 there were 2,300 of these units in Italy.

The keeper may use gangs of hotheaded Blackshirts in this scenario as one more group to harass and bully the investigators. They can be lightly armed, and will use force. They are not intellectuals; a debate never settle matters. Their particular hatred is for Communists and socialists, but they enjoy taunting foreigners and those without swagger.



A Blackshirt

#### **THE PALE STRANGER**

On the way back to the hotel after having the diary translated, the investigator carrying it becomes sure that he or she is being watched. Careful looks glimpse at a distance a small, pale-faced man dressed in black. The other investigators do not see this man, nor can the investigator who can see him catch him, if the attempt is made. Keepers, it is whomever you like.

#### **HUSTLERS AND THIEVES**

Italy is a place longer civilized than some, and it ignores casual human deviance, given reasonable circumspection. As a port city, and thus even more tolerant, Trieste looks the other way about behavior which might require

police or politicians in Boston, Mass.

If the investigators prowl about the port section at night, they could run into almost anything. The most likely encounter is either prostitution or a request for money from someone who does his or her best to be appealing and sympathetic. Leave the investigators with enough money to get to Constantinople and back to London.

#### **FENALIK**

Our vampire intervenes to protect the simulacrum. Does one of the Brothers creep into an investigator room and find the pieces? Perhaps the Brother is found in pieces, when the investigators return.

#### **A Memorable Dinner**

Begin this sub-section on the first evening after the investigators have read or had translated the contents of Winckelmann's diary.

When the investigators reach their hotel, they find that the bora, which is picking up as night falls, has torn down the power-lines and that the hotel is in semi-darkness. Carrying oil-lamps and candles, staff bustles about in the gloom. Each room is provided with a candle and matches. A candlelight dinner is being served in the common dining room if they are at a hotel, or in the neighboring restaurant if at a pensione.

It has been a long day, and the appetizing smells coming from the kitchen are too good to resist. However, strange things keep happening to the investigators' food, cutlery, and table, although no one else much notices.

spell, Contact Lloigor, which after months of study requires a roll of INT x4 or less to learn.

But Montanelli can furnish a sketchy summary of it in a day and a half, since he suppresses so much of interest in it.

## Contact Lloigor

Allows the caster to interview one or more lloigor for so long as the lloigor choose to maintain the contact. To cast, the spell costs 3 magic points and 3 Sanity points. The caster then meets with the lloigor in his or her dreams, where they assume visible form and demand a sacrifice to them of 1D6 magic points.

This spell must be cast immediately before going to sleep, and takes effect only within 20 leagues (60 miles) of a lloigor. Upon awakening, the caster remembers all details of the dream.

## Player Handout #18

### Winckelmann's Diary

**3 MAY** — *The Tablet of [indecipherable] is correct, and I have traveled to Regensburg and spoken with the Things there. They have compelled me to carry an amulet to another enclave near Tergeste, in Austria. I am warned not to approach without the amulet, lest I be destroyed. They need this amulet for some dark plan of their own; I fear it will aid them in releasing that which they serve from its frozen Arctic prison.*

**15 MAY** — *I curse those Beasts, and I curse myself for ever seeking them! Night after night the dreams return, and I get no peace. I do not know how to go on; the art which has been my life is dross, and my fellows but painted masks on grinning skulls. I wear my mask too, and talk of "Art," but beauty has gone from the world, and my words are ashes in the wind.*

**1 JUNE** — *Arrived safely in Trieste. The dreams that have haunted me since Regensburg continue to lessen, but I fear I shall never fully recover. My one hope is that after I have handed on the amulet, the dreams will altogether cease.*

**2 JUNE** — *Met a native, Arcangeli, a handsome fellow who promises some diversion. More importantly, through certain signs and words he gives me to believe that he knows of those Entities, and can guide me to their lair.*

**3 JUNE** — *The dreams have returned. I realize I cannot trust Arcangeli. He has asked to see the amulet as a sign of my appointment as courier, but his manner is sly, and I suspect that he would prefer to carry the amulet himself. I have stalled him, but without his help I cannot reach Them, unless I do that dreadful [indecipherable].*

**5 JUNE** — *In my despair I weakened and made the ritual and spoke with the Thing that came, and learnt from whence It came. I am sick.*

**6 JUNE** — *I managed to give that rogue Arcangeli the slip and have hidden the amulet. I am certain now that he intends to steal it, as I came upon him searching my room. I shall have to wait until I am no longer watched, and make my own way to the caverns at Postumia to deliver the amulet.*

**7 JUNE** — *Arcangeli continues to plague me, and I cannot recover the amulet without his notice. I have discovered that he, along with other members of the local cult which serve those Beasts, attempt to steal every arcane or occult item which passes this way, and make thereof offerings to please Them. I fear that they will find the amulet, denying me the opportunity to fulfill my appointed duty, and that these dreams will never cease!*

### In Their Footsteps

Unbeknownst to them, the investigators have accumulated an entourage of followers, watchers, and the curious. Keepers may use these worthies as they see fit, and add more as needed, always remembering to first give the investigators clues or fair warning that these groups and individuals exist.

- Cesare, for the lloigor;
- Helmut, for the investigators;
- a Turkish Businessman, for the Brothers of the Skin;
- random Blackshirts, protecting Italy from vile foreigners;
- a pale stranger (Johann Winckelmann), who appears if his diary is translated;
- confidence men, hustlers, and thieves of all sexes;
- Fenalik, for the investigators while convenient.

#### CESARE DRUNI

Druni is a lloigor cultist who has been detailed by Antoni Termona to watch the investigators. His suitability for this job is doubtful, as he is tall, thin, and has a memorable shock of red hair with a single black lock. Shortly after the investigators notice Cesare's continuing pres-

## Player Handout #17

### Johann Joachim Winckelmann

Born 9 December 1717 at Stendal in Prussia, he died 8 June 1768 in Trieste. The son of a cobbler, Winckelmann's formative years were strongly influenced by a study of Greek, particularly the works of Homer. He studied theology at the University of Halle in 1738 and medicine at the University of Jena from 1741-1742.

His interest in Greek art may be dated from 1748, when he worked as librarian to Count von Bunauf. His first work in this area, *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks*, was published in 1755, and translated into several languages. He became librarian of the Vatican, and moved from his native Germany to Rome.

It was during a trip to visit his home in Stendal that Winckelmann was murdered, after unexpectedly turning back for Rome at Regensburg. He wrote to friends: "I am not what I would wish to be," and mentioned a melancholy which had overtaken him. Winckelmann's traveling companion, an



J. Winckelmann

art dealer named Cavaceppi, insisted that at least they should go to Vienna, but here Winckelmann abandoned his companion and headed for Trieste.

There, he met a man named Francesco Arcangeli, a thief who worked as a cook and pimp. Arcangeli fatally stabbed Winckelmann, apparently during an attempt to steal a number of medals carried by Winckelmann. Arcangeli was arrested, and later executed.

Winckelmann had time to make a will before he expired, in which he left most of his worldly goods to Andrea, a waiter at the hotel at which he stayed. The medallions eventually went to the Museo di Storia e d'Arte, whilst his papers, including a personal diary, were sold at auction to one Giovanni Termona, a local historian.

A picture of Winckelmann is also found, a reproduction of an oil painting by Anton Raphael Mengs made in 1758.

### The Termonas

The diary is in the hands of Antoni Termona, a descendant of the Giovanni Termona who purchased Winckelmann's diary. If the investigators ask about Giovanni Termona at

the library, the Termonas are well-known as a family of scholars. They also have success searching for Giovanni or descendants in the records of the Municipio, the city hall.

Antoni Termona is in his late thirties and an active member of the lloigor cult. He is another in a long line of scholars whom the lloigor have used to search for the medallion. His failure to date is marked by the empty left sleeve which he wears pinned up to his shoulder, to outsiders apparently a limb lost.

A successful Spot Hidden detects occasional movement inside the sleeve, as the tentacular growth grafted to his shoulder by the lloigor writhes gently. If asked, Termona refers to his missing arm as a war wound, but a successful Psychology roll detects that he lies.

Termona is only too happy to meet someone interested in the diary, since if someone can solve the puzzle, then his remaining arm may be saved. He has the investigators watched closely (see "Cesare Druni," below). He hopes to steal the medallion, kill all witnesses, and offer the prize to his masters.

Termona denies any knowledge of the contents of the diary. "It is an old family curio. No one has ever read it." But he can give the investigators the address of a scholar, Marco Montanelli, who should be able to help them with translation.

Montanelli, not by coincidence, is missing a left leg. Investigators who use his services do not gain any Mythos knowledge (including the spell), since he bowdlerizes the translation. They do learn all of Handout #18.

Termona stresses the value of the diary, and insists that the investigator with the highest Credit Rating keep it with him or her at all times.

### Winckelmann's Diary

It could be sensational to read on the train, but Winckelmann made the diary private by writing in an archaic Greek dialect. The fat, handwritten book requires forty hours and at least one successful Greek or Classical Greek roll to gain an understanding of its contents.

Succeeding, the investigators learn of Winckelmann's connection with the lloigor of the caverns of Postumia. In addition, if the investigators keep the diary for long enough to study it properly (2D6 months), the diary adds +8% Cthulhu Mythos and costs 1D8 SAN. It includes one



Antoni Termona

massive creatures moving in dark, swirling waters, and of a howling monstrosity moving towards them at impossible speed: Sanity loss at that point is 0/1 SAN.

## At Death's Door

In London, Professor Smith told the investigators to 'look up Johann Winckelmann when you get to Trieste.' Since this is their only clue for Trieste, presumably they do just that the next morning.

Outside, though not as fiercely as the night before, the bora continues to gust (STR 2 +3D6), making pedestrian excursions uncertain. Fortunately, lengths of chain have been strung along at waist height by the curbside, and locals use these aids with great alacrity. A successful DEX x4 or less roll keeps the visitors safely on their feet and making good progress.

Inquiries may be hampered by language barriers, or potential informants may be busy or laconic. After an hour of inquiries, an amused city clerk acknowledges that Winckelmann may be found at the Museo di Storia e d'Arte (Museum of History and Art), and he gives them directions.

### THE MUSEUM

Situated in the Via della Cattedrale, near the top of a steep hill, the museum is adjacent to the Cattedrale San Giusto, and close to the medieval Castello, which is still used as a barracks and magazine.

The museum contains a sizable Egyptian, Greek, and Roman collection. Enquiring after Winckelmann, they are told "Out in the garden," and directed to the Giardino Lapidario, attached to the museum but with a separate 2-lire entrance fee (Sundays free).

### GIARDINO LAPIDARIO

The Giardino Lapidario is a terraced garden containing antiquities from Tergeste and Aquileia, and would normally be a charming place to spend a lazy afternoon, but today a freezing wind roars between the statues and pillars. The garden is deserted. A successful Spot Hidden reveals a replica of a Roman temple down the slope, sheltered by plane trees which currently bow before the icy blasts. There is some movement within. It is the only place in the garden to provide any shelter, and the investigators, teeth aching from the cold, quickly make their way to it.

The inside is windowless, and it takes a few seconds for eyes to adjust. Cats curl in one corner, out of the wind. By the far wall, a sarcophagus rests on a marble base. Atop the sarcophagus is a reclining figure, winged and holding a medallion with a man's head in profile. On the side of the sarcophagus is a Latin inscription.

**IOANNI WINCKELMANN**

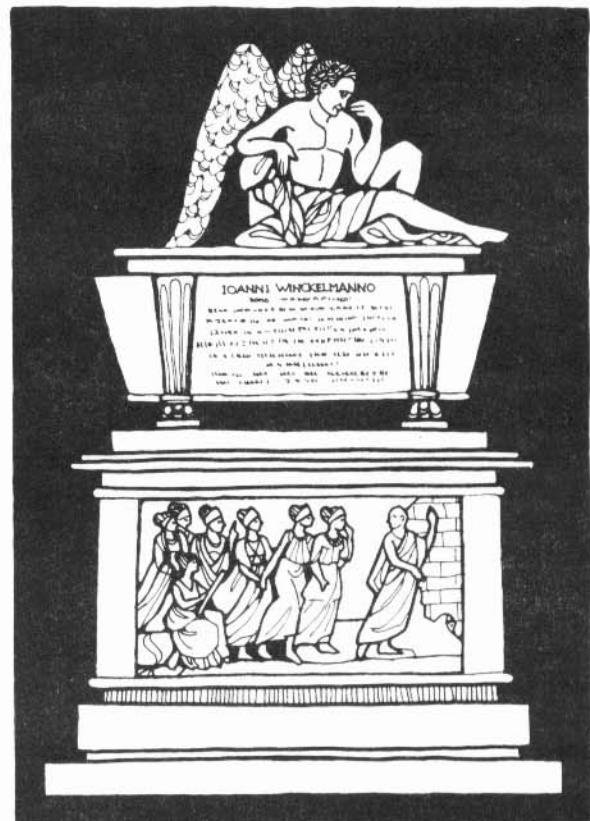
VIII . IVN . AD . M.DCC.LXVIII

Winckelmann, the man they thought to meet, died June 8, 1768!

Any investigator with a successful Archaeology roll already knows about Johann Joachim Winckelmann, father of modern archaeology, but had not realized he died in Trieste. The connection made, or a library consulted, the following sub-section and Handout #17 pertains.

### ABOUT WINCKELMANN

The investigators cannot talk to Winckelmann, but they can still learn about him, which must be what Smith intended. Trieste does not have a university; any research must be done at the city library, situated in the Piazza A. Hortis, opposite the Museo del Mare (maritime museum). Library Use rolls should be made, along with Italian rolls as appropriate. Fast Talk might be pertinent, to get immediate assistance with translations, quick access to special library resources, or to the library as a whole. Unless an investigator then receives either a successful Italian roll or a successful Archaeology roll, the rest of the day is needed to learn what Handout #17 relates.



Winckelmann's Tomb

angry beast, piercing clothing and sucking the warmth from their shivering bodies. Loose dirt and twigs hurtle through the air. Occasionally, a particularly strong gust rattles loose portions of the roof, so that the whole structure echoes and vibrates. Porters, secure in well-buttoned great-coats, assist with the luggage and eventually the shelter of the waiting-room is reached. Porters and passengers alike curse the wind, which they call the 'bora,' a common phenomena in this region.

If the investigators dawdled in disembarking and reaching the interior of the station, they now have to wait for a taxicab. Only motor-driven transport is out tonight; all the horse-drawn cabs have gone home—even the most heartless cabby would not force an animal out into this weather.

The ride from the rail station to the center of town is a short one. Alighting at their hotel, each investigator must receive a successful resistance table roll or be bowled over by the wind as it shrieks through the night: STR against wind STR 14 +1D6. Checked in, and their passports deposited with the hotel or pensione staff, the inves-

tigators can have a light supper and retire to their rooms, falling asleep to the wail of the bora outside.

## Asleep in Trieste

With each night spent asleep in Trieste, there is a 30% chance that the investigators lose 1D6 magic points to the lloigor. Whenever that happens, they wake feeling tired, irritable, washed-out, and depressed.

If the magic point drain exceeds the investigator's actual magic points when he or she retired, then the number of missing points becomes the number of hours past normal waking time during which the investigator continues to sleep. The investigator cannot be wakened during this period.

Local doctors are familiar with the phenomenon. They say not to worry, it will pass: "There is always a lot of this minor ailment about at this time of year. A product of the wind, perhaps." No doctor is able to treat the malady, or to provide a scientific explanation of it.

Affected investigators who receive successful POW x2 or less rolls on D100 remember strange dreams of

## Trieste

**F**OUNDED BY THE ROMANS as Tergeste, the city has a long and sometimes stormy history—the fourth restoration of its walls began in 1470.

A trade rival of Venice, it placed itself under the protection of the Austrian emperor in 1382, which led to Austrian possession of the area. Trieste became the major Mediterranean outlet for the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Despite increased trade as a result of the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, Italian nationalism grew in the town.

In 1910, approximately two thirds of the population were Italian, the remainder being Austrians, Germans, Slovenes, Croats, and other nationalities, all under the sway of the Austrians. Italian troops entered in 1918, and the treaty of Saint-Germaine-en-Laye ceded the area to Italy in 1920. City population in 1923 is approximately 225,000.

The city is built around Monte Giusto, a steep hill crowned with a fortress (the Castello). Nearby is

the cathedral of San Giusto. The hill slopes down to the flatlands adjacent to the harbor, which extends inland in the form of the Canal Grande at the northern end of the quay. With the harbor to the northwest, the town extends to the east of Monte Giusto. This eastern region of the town is connected to the harbor district by a tram line which passes through a tunnel (Galleria della Montuzza) under the hill. The tunnel is 380 yards long, and emerges on the harbor side at the Piazza Carlo Goldini.

City hall and the central police station are located near the Piazza Grande, later the Piazza dell'Unità.

Trieste is a major port, and throughout the 1920s between six and eight million tons of cargo passed through it yearly. Before the Great War, it was the most important port in the Austro-Hungarian empire.

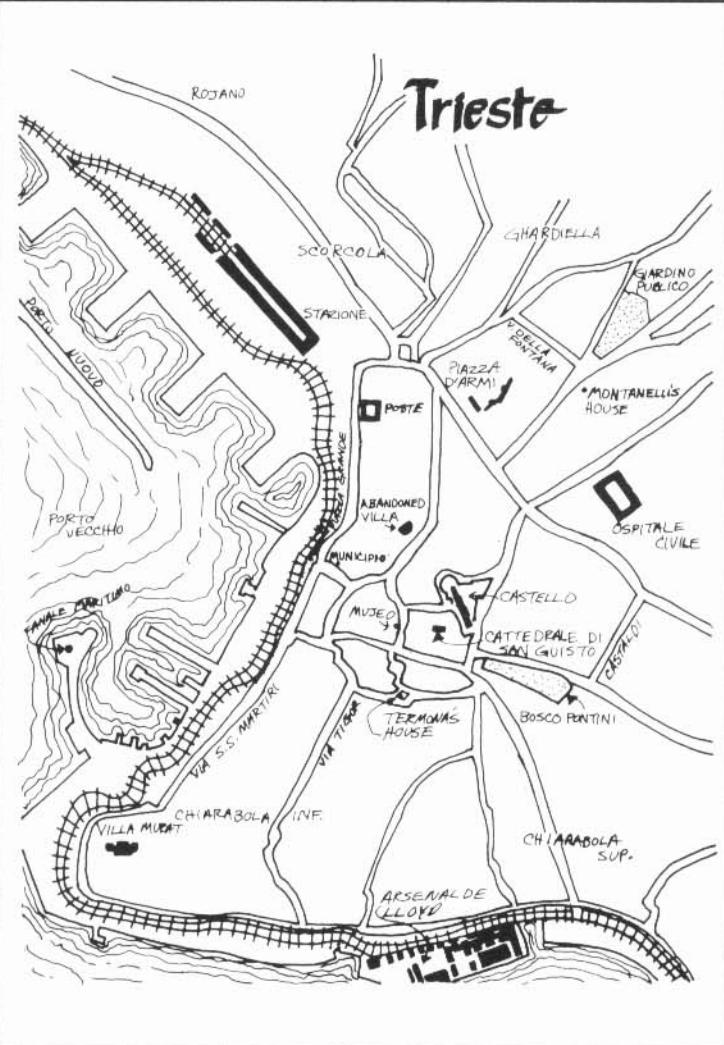
Personal transport is available in the form of horse cabs, taxicabs,

or electric tramways along the main thoroughfares.

Local dishes have a strong Eastern flavor, being heavy on paprika and other spices. A large fish market by the quay provides much of the local diet. A local specialty is *sardoni in savor*—sardines marinated in oil and garlic.

Accommodation may be obtained at a number of hotels, or at pensiones, which offer bed and board. The best hotels are the Savoia Excelsior Palace and the Hotel de la Ville. Others include the Metropole, the Moncenisio, and the Centrale.

Trieste is at the western edge of the Karst region, hills and mountains which have lent their name as a geological term: this limestone terrain is shot through with sink holes, caverns, and streams which start or end without warning. The nearest well-known cavern is the Grotta Gigante, about nine miles distant, whose largest chamber is a stalactite-laden 780 feet long and 453 feet high.



Many human lloigor cultists exist in the Trieste area. It is simple for them to know of the investigators, and to be able to move quickly when the investigators reveal themselves by visiting Antoni Termona.

#### MEHMET MAKRYAT

Makryat traced the Right Leg to Trieste, and suspects that the lloigor have it, since his researches have connected Winckelmann with the lloigor. He believes that Winckelmann must have known the location of the lloigor colony.

Calculating that the investigators might be overmatched against lloigor and lloigor cultists, he has left clues for his father that Trieste may hold one segment of the simulacrum.

#### BROTHERS OF THE SKIN

No Brothers live in Trieste. Selim Makryat has taken Mehmet's bait, however, and installed some agents there, Turks disguised as businessmen. They watch the lloigor

cultists; when the investigators arrive, these interesting new people arouse attention. When lloigor cultists are also seen on their trail, Selim's men become doubly interested.

#### THE GHOST OF WINCKELMANN

The final protagonist in this scenario is Winckelmann himself. His ghost haunts Trieste, hoping to fulfill his mission by finally conveying the medallion to the lloigor. He does not wish those responsible for his death, the local lloigor cult, to profit from his murder, and so his spirit seeks someone else to make delivery.

#### FENALIK

The vampire continues to shadow the investigators, and to enjoy their success. As his goal begins to seem achievable, he has every interest in protecting the investigators. Does he sneak into their rooms occasionally to caress his beloved simulacrum, now tantalizingly reassembling? Perhaps he leaves behind a waft of his own charnel scent. In the evenings he drifts around the hotel, locating the watchers and understanding their purposes. He then departs for the docks to feast in grand style on hapless innocents far from home, the remains of whom the sea accepts without hesitation.

#### CTHULHU MYTHOS ROLLS

After the second or third night that the investigators lose 1D6 magic points, astute players will suspect lloigor in the area; when that comes up, the keeper should allow a Cthulhu Mythos roll to allow the investigators to make some sense of the situation. Similarly, allow if asked a Mythos roll after the effect of the medallion of Ithaqua becomes apparent.

## Investigator Information

**A**S SCHEDULED, the Orient Express arrives in Trieste at 7:54 P.M. When the investigators step through the open door of the train and emerge into the vault of the station, the first thing they are aware of is the wind. It howls about the covered platform like an

## IX. TRIESTE



# Cold Wind Blowing

*Our heroes dine with Herr Winckelmann, a personality with a long-term sense of obligation; he introduces them to a powerful contact, and hints toward the Right Leg.*

by Russell Waters

**T**HE INVESTIGATORS NOW HAVE another short journey, one placid enough that each earns a point of Sanity. They'll need it: in Trieste, five sets of ruthless villains compete or keep watch, and that's not even counting the ghost.

Much of the action in this adventure can come from keeper-inspired threats, ambushes, mysterious assassinations, rifled rooms, and so on. Read this episode carefully, with an eye to bringing the investigators to awareness of the knotted forces surrounding them in Trieste. How that is done depends on the strengths and predilections of the individual investigators: take care not to overmatch the team. Failing that, this adventure remains short and relatively straight-forward. Succeeding, the chase through the caves becomes a memorable one, chilling in some presentations, brutal in others, and perhaps other yet parody the waves of villains.

### Keeper's Information

In June 1768, Johann Joachim Winckelmann, archaeologist, art historian, and librarian of the Vatican, was murdered in Trieste. It is thought that thieves murdered him for some valuable medals which he carried.

Winckelmann, an actual historical figure, died as stated. This adventure proposes that forces of the Cthulhu Mythos were instrumental in his death.

Winckelmann had been aware of the Mythos for years, mainly through his studies of ancient Greek and Roman societies, and the unsavory cults of those times. He kept the details of his discoveries in a private diary and did not disclose them to his Vatican employers.

Winckelmann came into contact with a lloigor colony near Regensburg, and was entrusted by them to carry a medallion to Postumia, where another colony existed. The medallion was a Mythos item connected with the worship of the Great Old One Ithaqua, the Wind Walker.

Unfortunately for Winckelmann, he stopped in Trieste, and there was identified as a courier by the leader of the local lloigor cult, one Francesco Arcangeli, who murdered Winckelmann to win the honor of personally presenting the medallion to his masters. However, Winckelmann had hidden the medallion before his death, and to this day no one has found it.

### THE LLOIGOR

Years later, the Right Leg of the Sedefkar Simulacrum was brought to Trieste. It was recognized as an object of arcane power by the lloigor cult, who stole it to offer the segment to their capricious masters. The lloigor found no use for the leg, and so it has sat undisturbed in their lair for over 150 years.

The lloigor live in extensive caverns fifty miles to the northeast of Trieste, near the border village of Postumia (*Postojna* and across the border, after World War II). The lloigor serve the Wind Walker, Ithaqua; largely because of them, the destructive wind called the "bora" is so potent in this area. The lloigor drain magical essence from sleeping humans over a wide area, adding this to their own magical power to intensify the bora, and for other spells. The missing medallion is a minor component in the millions-of-years effort needed to effect Ithaqua's permanent return, and plays no other part in this campaign.

## The Automatons

STR 20 SIZ 20 DEX 12/18 HP 20 each

Six automatons have DEX 12; Rustic Lass and Rustic Lad have DEX 18. Each automaton can take 20 points of damage before falling to pieces or being effectively disabled. All weapons do normal damage except that no impales occur. For random attack, roll 1D8.

- (1) *Death*: Scythe 50%, damage 1D6 (to legs). If hit, roll under CON x5 or be unable to walk for 1D4 days.

Days can be converted to minutes with a successful First Aid roll.

- (2) *Angel*: Trumpet 50%, damage 1D4 (to head). If struck, roll CON x5 or unconscious for 1D4 hours.

Hours can be converted to minutes with a successful First Aid roll.

- (3) *Turk*: Scimitar 50%, damage 1D6+2 (to torso).
- (4) *Condottiere*: Sword 50%, damage 1D8 (to torso).

- (5) *Assassin*: Club 50%, damage 1D6 (to torso).
- (6) *Lion*: Paw 50%, damage 1D4 (to torso). An internal bellows roars as it attacks—lose SAN 0/1 for the surprise of the first time.
- (7) *Rustic Lass*: Flirty Pirouette (Kick) 50%, damage 1D6 (to torso) plus be thrown for 20 minus investigator's SIZ in feet. This last could be dangerous if near the open doors.
- (8) *Rustic Lad*: Spin, Bow, and Amorous Embrace (Grapple) 50%, no damage, but see next paragraph.

The investigator attacked must resist a Grapple roll or find himself heading for the automaton exit at high speed (one round). Require a Strength roll to break free. The next round, the doors spring open and Rustic Lad does his spin, bow, and embrace, opening his arms to empty air. The investigator needs to receive a roll of DEX x5 or less to grab hold of the bulwark. Failing, he or she falls five high stories (damage 6D6). Succeeding, a successful Climb roll or someone to offer a hand is needed before anything can be done but to hold on.

### SIX BLACKSHIRT THUGS, Ages 21, Superstitious Brutes

*These apes enjoy the power and invulnerability of hunting in a pack. However, they are made nervous by Venice's current climate of dread. Their Sanity is 40 each.*

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Weapons:** Fist/Punch 70%, damage 1D3+1D4

Kick 60%, damage 1D6+1D4

Grapple 35%, damage special

	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	POW	HP
One	16	15	9	10	8	12
Two	11	13	16	15	6	15
Three	15	9	12	8	9	11
Four	13	11	12	11	10	12
Five	11	11	14	17	7	13
Six	13	8	13	10	9	11

### SEBASTIANO'S FRIENDS, Ages 30, Venetian Low Life

*These ruffians are stout friends of Sebastiano Gremanci, and therefore willing to help the investigators. Otherwise they would stay out nights drinking, gambling, and being worthless. However, they too feel the strangeness of the times, and may flee at an inopportune moment. Their Sanity is 50 each.*

**Damage Bonus:** +0

**Weapons:** Fist/Punch 65%, damage 1D3

Grapple 45%, damage special

Knife 40%, damage 1D4

	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	POW	HP
One	11	12	11	13	8	12
Two	12	13	12	13	6	13
Three	14	16	10	11	9	13
Four	13	12	11	10	11	12
Five	10	15	9	9	14	13
Six	12	14	12	9	13	13

### CARETAKER, Age 66, Palazzo Rezzoniani

STR 10 CON 10 SIZ 14 INT 15 POW 7

DEX 12 APP 14 SAN 35 EDU 8 HP 12

**Damage Bonus:** +0.

**Weapons:** high and quavering voice.

**Skills:** Bargain 35%, English 30%, Listen 40%, Mechanical Repair 40%, Spot Hidden 40% Spot Tourist 60%.

### SIX POLICE (Vigili)

*The police seek to control and arrest first, then ask questions. If fired on, they retreat until reinforced. In hand-to-hand fighting, they seek to disarm, to restrain, or to knock-out opponents.*

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Weapons:** Fist/Punch 50%, damage 1D3+1D4

Grapple 45%, damage special

Nightstick 50%, damage 1D6+1D4

**Skills:** Follow Orders 65%, Law 20%, Listen 50%, Spot Hidden 50%.

	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	POW	HP
One	15	9	13	13	14	11
Two	14	13	11	11	11	12
Three	13	14	12	11	11	13
Four	13	12	14	10	11	13
Five	14	14	13	10	11	14
Six	14	17	15	8	10	16

## The Mob

At several points in this scenario the investigators may encounter a mob of Venetians. The mob is not a rational entity, it is a collection of fear-crazed citizens clinging together for self-defense. This mob has a ringleader egg-ing it on.

Hide, Sneak, or running (investigator DEX against mob DEX 12) let investigators elude the mob. Oratory or Fast Talk (in Italian) can defuse the mob.

Otherwise, the mob roughs up their victim or victims (lose 1D4 hit points each) and tosses them into the nearest canal; each investigator must receive a successful Swim roll or the keeper should begin the drowning procedure.

Investigators who resist when seized by the mob lose 1D3 hit points per round, until ceasing resistance or until unconsciousness or death. Discharge of a firearm scatters the mob and brings the police, who view dimly the killing of any Venetian by foreigners, even in self-defense.

Some individual stats are given below, but keepers are advised to run mobs as a collective entity, as outlined above. Mobs can have as many members as the keeper wishes. The group statistics below are similar to those for Sebastiano Gremanci's friends; they're the sort who would compose a mob, after all.

### CARLO CASCIANO, Age 35, Ringleader

STR 13 CON 13 SIZ 13 INT 12 POW 14  
DEX 11 APP 14 SAN 64 EDU 9 HP 13

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapon:** Fist/Punch 50%, damage 1D3+1D4

Club 50%, damage 1D6+1D4

**Skills:** Listen 50%, Oratory 50%, Spot Hidden 50%.

### SAMPLE MOB MEMBER, Age 25

STR 11 CON 11 SIZ 13 INT 10 POW 12  
DEX 11 APP 11 SAN 54 EDU 8 HP 12

**Damage Bonus:** +0.

**Weapon:** Fist/Punch 50%, damage 1D3

Club 40%, damage 1D6

**Skills:** Growl Ominously 55%, Listen 25%, Spot Hidden 25%, Wave Torches 65%.

### MINI MOB, Ages 25, Venetian Low Life

**Damage Bonus:** +0

**Average Sanity:** 45.

**Weapons:** Fist/Punch 50%, damage 1D3

Grapple 45%, damage special

Club 40%, damage 1D6

	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	POW	HP
One	11	11	11	14	8	11
Two	12	13	11	13	6	12
Three	14	17	10	12	9	14
Four	13	12	11	11	11	12
Five	15	9	9	10	14	9
Six	12	14	12	9	11	13

Assuming Georgio survives, the lovers need to get out of town in a hurry to avoid the wrath of either Alberto or officialdom. What better way to elope than on the Orient Express? They think of it if the investigators don't. Bon voyage! The Express leaves for Milan at 12:40 P.M. the next day. If the investigators get to see Maria and Georgio safely off, a feeling of warmth, well-being, and—well—romance momentarily stirs their hearts. Each gains 1D3 SAN.

If the investigators now have three parts of the simulacrum, their luck, idea, and know roll thresholds uniformly reduce by 15 percentiles each.

### A REASSURING NOTE

Travelers are advised to be at the train station half an hour before departure, as booking in of the luggage is a very slow process.

As they board, an elderly gentleman, Fenalik, heavily muffled against the inclement weather, is wheeled on.

### FENALIK

That night, the investigators dream of a whitish human form which scuttles louse-like, spider-like, crab-like over the exteriors of the hurtling cars, gazing in through curtain slits with dark-circled, hungry eyes. Through the thing's eyes they see absent images of themselves, discussing, sleeping, brushing their teeth, but as abstractly, as objectively as they in turn might look at turkeys or tomatoes—without a trace of sympathy.

The investigators, somehow eavesdropping on Fenalik as he has spied on them, come to feel an overwhelming sense of appraisal, and the glimmer of amusement at things so weak, so yoked together by weakness that they must be obscenely dependent on one another to achieve anything, instead of being glorious in solitude, totally self-sufficient. And then the dream dwindles insensibly into blind anticipation, and even that passes into blackness.

# Statistics

### ANTONIO GREMANCI, Age 76, Head of the Gremancis

STR 8	CON 16	SIZ 12	INT 16	POW 15
DEX 10	APP 9	SAN 75	EDU 15	HP 14

**Damage Bonus:** +0.

**Weapons:** none.

**Skills:** Accounting 90%, Psychology 45%.

### SEBASTIANO GREMANCI, Age 52, Antonio's Nephew

STR 10	CON 15	SIZ 17	INT 10	POW 17
DEX 7	APP 16	SAN 85	EDU 13	HP 16

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** none.

**Skills:** Accounting 40%, English 40%, Italian 50%, Sing 25%, Tell Jokes 65%.

### NIGHT WATCHMAN, Age 69, Gremanci Factory

STR 12	CON 14	SIZ 12	INT 12	POW 10
DEX 10	APP 11	SAN 50	EDU 9	HP 13

**Damage Bonus:** +0.

**Weapons:** .32 Revolver 20%, damage 1D8

**Skills:** Catch Rat 35%, Listen 30%, Spot Hidden 30%.

### MARIA STAGLIANI, Age 20, Young Italian Lover

STR 12	CON 14	SIZ 12	INT 13	POW 15
DEX 11	APP 15	EDU 15	SAN 72	HP 13

**Damage Bonus:** +0

**Weapons:** none.

**Skills:** Credit Rating 40%, English 50%, French 32%, Italian 65%, Library Use 52%, Venetian History 47%.

### GEORGIO GASparetti, Age 22, Young Italian Lover

STR 14	CON 16	SIZ 15	INT 11	POW 17
DEX 15	APP 17	EDU 12	SAN 85	HP 16

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Weapons:** Fist/Punch 67%, damage 1D3+1D4

Grapple 52%, damage special

**Skills:** Climb 78%, Dodge 53%, English 17%, Italian 55%, Jump 64%, Oratory 22%, Sneak 47%, Swim 51%, Throw 38%.

*If the Blackshirts catch Georgio alone, they give him a beating for 2D6 damage.*

### ALBERTO ROSSINI, Age 40, Fascist Leader

STR 10	CON 15	SIZ 18	INT 12	POW 10
DEX 9	APP 8	EDU 16	SAN 50	HP 17

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Weapons:** Derringer 36%, damage 1D6

**Skills:** Belittle 53%, Credit Rating 58%, Debate 43%, Listen 46%, Occult 9%, Spot Hidden 55%.

### TWO BLACKSHIRT ELITE, Ages 23, University Students

*These two idealists will be cruel and calculating in wielding power to establish the New Italy. Their Sanity is 75 each.*

**Damage Bonus:** +0

**Weapons:** Fist/Punch 60%, damage 1D3

Kick 50%, damage 1D6

Grapple 40%, damage special

	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	POW	HP
One	11	12	13	12	16	13
Two	9	10	8	15	13	9

## The Automatons

Any serious attempt to stop the Turk advancing (STR 25 or more employed), or to wrest the leg from the automaton at motion or rest disturbs the clockwork, with the results outlined below.

If the investigators let the Turk pursue his normal path, Fenalik hopes the surprise of his appearance can be written off as a trick of the light. The Turk returns into the clock on cue, both legs intact, where the investigators can attempt to disassemble him. It is a tricky job in bad light, requiring a successful Mechanical Repair roll to detach the leg.

Whether or not the investigators succeed, the following events occur.

For a moment after the Mechanical Repair roll, whether successful or failed, everything seems normal. Then the clockwork starts grinding and whirring faster, and a great gabble of stressed machine sounds begin. Gears and saw-toothed ratchets come loose and start falling off. Right next to the investigators and around them and before and behind, the clockwork figures come crazily to life, abruptly spinning and bolting along their figure-eight path, attacking with their normal weapons and with a ferocity made worse by their mechanical movements and fixed faces: lose SAN 2/1D8 to be involved.

Those with successful Sanity rolls see that their actions have disturbed the delicate weights and relations that control the clockwork. It is now breaking down in a spectacular fashion.

Those with failed Sanity rolls are convinced that the clockwork figures have come to life and are attacking them.

Whether or not their Sanity rolls succeed, each investigator in the clockworks must withstand or somehow evade two attacks by random automatons; see the statistics section at the end of this chapter for pertinent information. Each attack lasts only one round.

Those who become insane (temporarily or not) panic and run. They must receive successful idea rolls to think to Jump or to Dodge obstacles

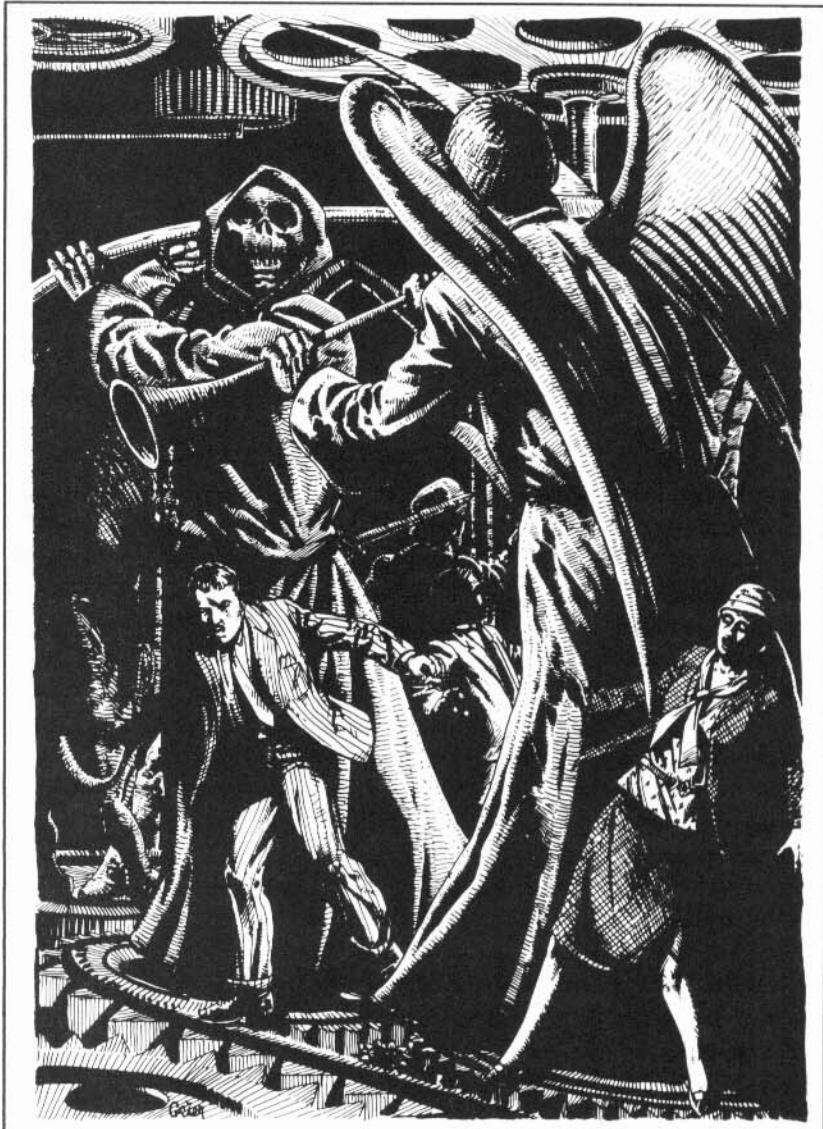
in their path, such as whirring head-high and groin-high cogs or swords or kicking feet. Each loses 1D6 hit points if the chosen roll fails, but regardless of injury they don't stop running until out of the clock tower.

Once the cacophony starts, the investigators have 10 minutes to quit the tower before police, Blackshirts, and mobs converge.

## Conclusion

The Left Leg is SIZ 4, heavy and awkward and difficult to hide. If they are caught with it, no one believes the destruction of the clock occurred as other than an irresponsible prank gone wrong. Jail or fines are real possibilities; allow bail so that the investigators can skip town.

Award each investigator 1D4 SAN for recovering the Left Leg of the Sedefkar Simulacrum.



*The Automatons Attack*

stone stairs and five creaking, rotten landings built of wood 500 years old to cross. Five successively higher slit windows, surmounted by particularly grotesque gargoyles, peer out into the rain. The windows have no panes, and are wide enough for a person of SIZ 13 or less to crawl through. The canal moves sluggishly far below.

The steps are not those kindly-graded, wide, low, and regular ones familiar to 20th century residents; the tower steps soar up at nearly 50°, each step is a foot higher than the next, and barely as deep as an average human foot. Climbers must take care. The stout new railings are a real help.

Finally the stairs reach a narrow landing. Above are narrow wooden stairs and a wooden trap door in the roof. It is padlocked against the idle curiosity of summer tourists, but the lock breaks so easily that if more than STR 16 is exerted, they are taken by surprise at its weakness and all involved must receive successful DEX x5 rolls or less on D100, or tumble down stairs. Uninvolved investigators may attempt to grab falling companions, STR against SIZ. Failing, they start to fall as well. Pitching down the top story does each 1D3 damage. At the fourth landing, a DEX x4 or less roll is needed for each investigator to stop tumbling. Failure means another 1D3 hit points lost for the next set of stairs, and so on until survivors hit the ground floor, very possibly with broken necks. But players should be thankful for the railings; without them, such investigator trips would be directly down the open central shaft, a loss of 6D6 hit points each.

The trap door open, the very narrow stairs (investigators over SIZ 13 must climb sideways) winds up one further story, opening into the clockwork itself.

## Inside the Clock

Tall investigators must stoop as vast cogs slowly wind overhead. Short investigators must stretch their legs to climb over interlocking pinwheels and gears protruding from the floor. Unexpected chains descend from the ceiling. This could be a deadly place in the dark.

Within the windswept cupola, the overwhelming impression is of ponderous, inevitable motion. As the investigators advance through this functional confusion, they glimpse some of the automatons, gaudy and sinister in the dim light, frozen mid-stride. Here and there a weapon glints.

Two automatons emerge onto a balcony beneath the hands of the clock at the quarter and three-quarters of the hour. Four emerge at half past the hour, and the full set of eight parade on the hour. Single chimes mark the quarters and half-hours; each hour is fully counted out.

At the appropriate time, the chosen automatons move forward on their fixed stands and out onto the heavy bul-

wark beyond the archway, through doors which slide open before them. They go to a great bell, strike it, and circle one another in a variety of figures and actions. As the hour passes, these tend to be more elaborate. The chimes over, they return, through the opposite doorway.

In the clock, the noise of the bell is loud enough to make one fear for hearing and sanity if near it. The strike of midnight, for instance, is intolerable. While the bell sounds, work must cease as investigators block their ears.

If the investigators are up here at night, Fenalik has followed them. He climbs up on the outside of the tower without effort. He soundlessly reaches the top and stands opposite the clock face, on the automatons' track. He realizes exactly where the left leg of his precious statue is and wrestles with the temptation to grab it and run.

### THE AUTOMATONS

These larger-than-life figures are gilded grotesques of their respective types. The following lists how they are paired and how they behave at the quarter hours. The 'triumph' listing simply indicates which figure holds the platform for a moment after the other retreats.

- *Death* (armed with scythe) and *Angel* (armed with trumpet) meet and fight: Death triumphs.
- *Turk* (armed with scimitar) and *Winged Lion* (armed with front paw) meet and fight: Winged Lion triumphs.
- *Condottiere* (soldier, armed with sword) and *Assassin* (armed with huge club) meet and fight: Assassin triumphs.
- *Rustic Lass* (exhibiting dancing leg) and *Rustic Lad* (enraptured, with Bow and Grapple) meet and dance: Rustic Lad chases Rustic Lass off-stage.

Figures with covered legs are carved as solid pieces; only the Turk, the Condottiere, and the Rustic Lass expose significant leg. Scratching the gilt quickly reveals the color of the original material beneath. The Left Leg of the Sedefkar Simulacrum is on the Turk, the ancient enemy of Venice.

Just as the scratch test reveals the true colors, the quarter hour is reached, and the clockwork grinds into motion. The Turk springs forward, brandishing his trusty scimitar. The doors spring open and on a successful Spot Hidden, Fenalik is visible standing by the clock face, five impossible stories high on the outside of the building.

Fenalik, mortified, leaps backwards and vanishes (0/1D3 SAN to see this astonishing suicide), but not before hesitating just long enough to make investigators think that he too wants the leg of the Turk. A successful Spot Hidden roll notes a large bat flying away.

air, even colder in this great ornate tomb than it is outside.

Only the plan for the ground floor services, offices, and servants' quarters are given—the second floor is made up mostly of grand and intimate chambers of much larger comparative size, intended for meetings, balls, and councils. The third floor was reserved for the Rezzonianis' private apartments.

Closed for the winter, all the carpets are rolled up, so footsteps echo. White muslin cloths cover the furniture. Huge carved marble fireplaces gape coldly. Tapestries and gloomy baroque paintings line the walls.

There are no statues or busts; none whatsoever. The courtyard is a huge affair in the center of the palace. Curtained windows face onto it. If investigators choose to look through the frosted panes, they will have to open them, or they can step through the unlocked interior doors. The view beyond is instantly depressing, showing a vast square bound on all sides by wings of the Palace.

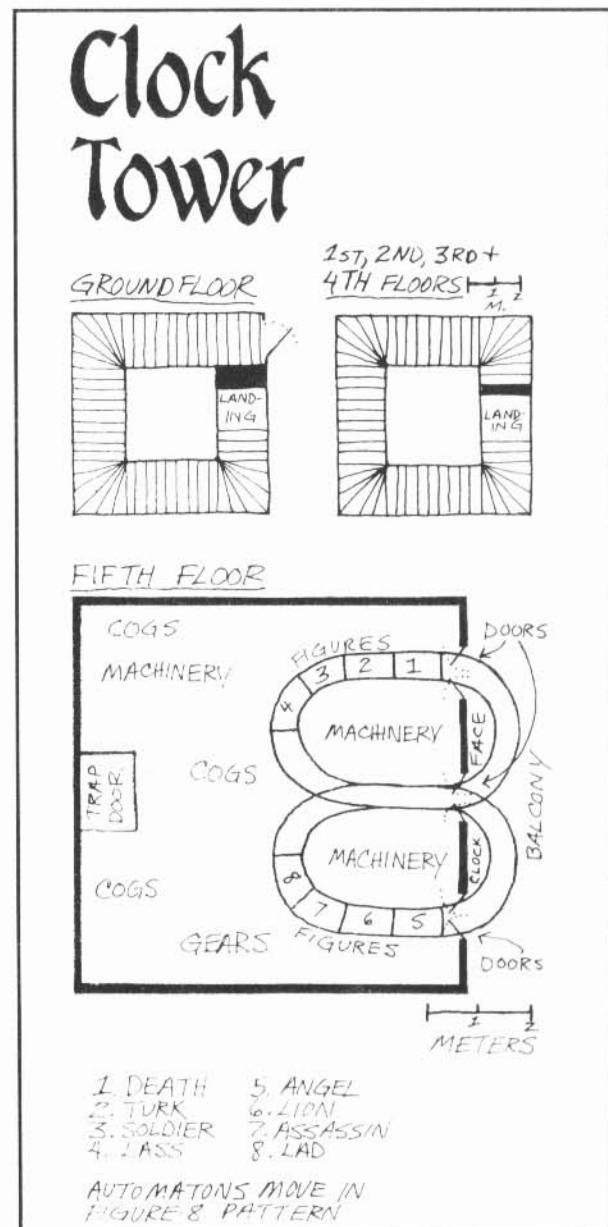
On every free portion of wall, crowded in every niche, on the outside of every story, bracketed in without reference to Renaissance geometrism, perspective, or form are statues, thousands of them, which seem to have migrated here from all over the building, silently, one winter's night. Must the investigators examine every form here for the Left Leg?

The courtyard is slippery with black ice. After a little searching, or if they take a closer look around, the clock tower five stories above gives out a great clanking and grinding of gears. Then jerkily, but with great precision still, a procession of automatons appears to chime the hour. The figures are Death, an Angel, a Lion, a Condottieri (Renaissance mercenary officer), an Assassin, a Turk, and a Rustic Lass and Rustic Lad, chasing each other in endless mechanical certainty. A successful Idea roll asks to the effect of, "Were a statue to be struck by lightning, where more likely than atop a clock tower?"

## The Clock Tower

The entrance to the clock tower is off the main campo entrance to the palace. The single door to the tower is both locked and visible from where the caretaker waits. He does not want them to enter the clock tower, as the stairs are unsafe and the clock mechanism old and dangerous. He will stand firm on this, since his job is on the line, and no reasonable bribe would be acceptable. If pressed, he summons the police with a few short sharp cries. Investigators should think of a cunning way to deceive him or get him out of the way so they could sneak in. Surely the group will not use force on an old man.

The palace can be broken into (or out of) after dark, through any of the many entries. All are of STR 20, and



opened by a successful Mechanical Repair roll. To escape notice by police, Blackshirts, soldiers, or mobs, a successful Sneak roll might be called for. Note that several entrances open from the Grand Canal side.

Having now come so close to the Left Leg, if the investigators break off for the day and return to their hotel to sleep, all are plagued by painful leg cramps. A successful luck roll for each allows the worst cramps to be in the left leg.

### INTO THE CLOCK TOWER

The door to the clock tower is locked, but is only STR 12. Within, the open tower is pitch-black. For light, the investigators must bring their own. There are five stories of

all nights is a good night for Fenalik. He follows the investigators closely.

## Palazzo Rezzoniani

**E**VERY GUIDEBOOK DISCUSSES the Palace Rezzoniani as a fine 15th-century building, bequeathed to the city in 1859. It is open to visitors all summer but in winter only by individual appointment with the caretaker.

The palace looks across a campo not far from the Piazza San Marco. The Grand Canal is at its back. The palace is a huge and ornate building, built with forethought on an elevated platform twelve steps above the campo. A tall square campanile, or clock tower, rises at the side of the building. The campanile has no statues on the side turned to the street, although it has empty niches for them.

The great bronze doors of the palace are of intricate relief; a winged Venetian lion holds the enormous door knocker in its jaws.

### THE CARETAKER

Legal entry to the palace must be arranged with the caretaker, who lives nearby, as any passerby can say. Investigators with a plausible tale and 20 lire achieve their purpose. This polite but unfriendly and incurious man otherwise agrees to admit them a full day later. He says that they should wear warm clothes, explaining that the Rezzoniani is a very cold building.

Yawning and silent, he lets them into the palace and waits by the main doors until about two hours is up, and then he tries to shepherd them outside. He gives up if given 20 lire. After four hours, he only lets up for 40 lire, and after six hours, then 60 lire. By this time he is sullen and suspicious and tired.

He talks of the recent events of the city with evident fear, and will not take investigators to the palace after dark for

less than 500 lire, nor will he stay after locking them in. All the while he clutches his crucifix and mutters ancient prayers for protection.

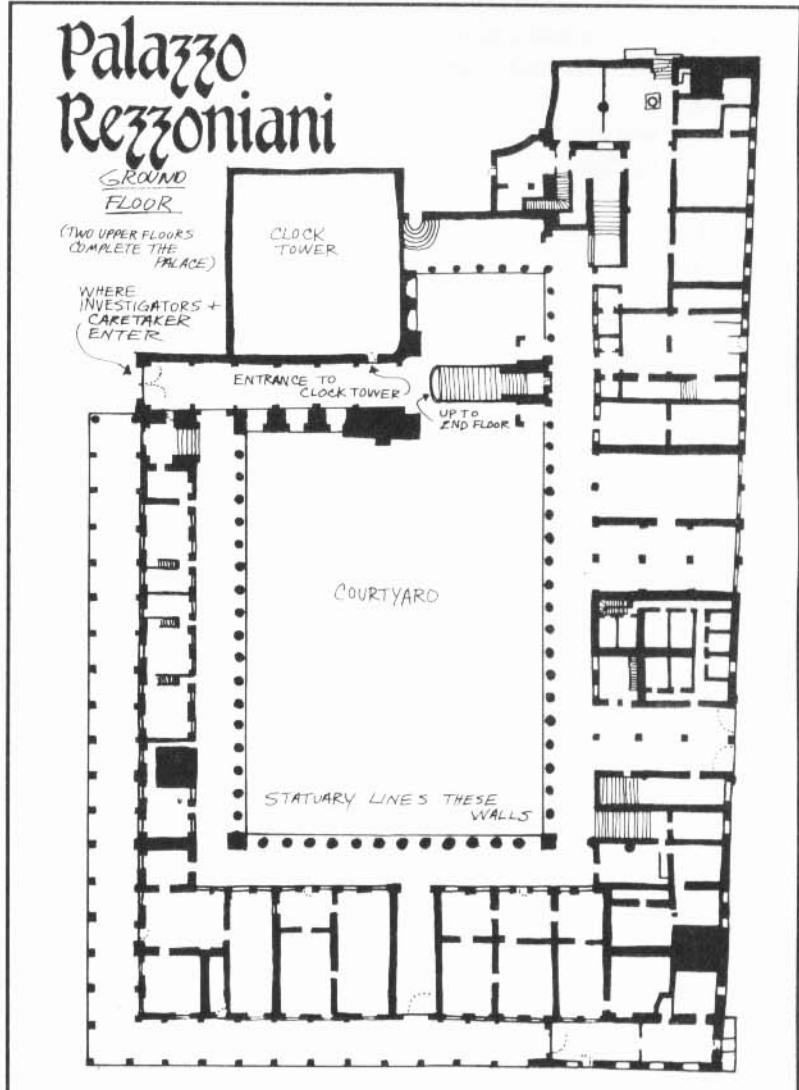
The brief winter sun descends into fog.

### Inside the Palace

The human-sized side door opens immediately into ante-chambers. There are no corridors. Rooms open into further rooms, all grand and rich and high, with equally impressive marble staircases leading everywhere. The wandering investigators' breath freezes in the chill, still



*The Caretaker*



sits stony-faced on her divan, twisting her rings nervously between her fingers. Any fight up here would have to be loud and prolonged to penetrate the hub-bub below, and alert those in the kitchen. However, the neighbors might hear, and take up the cry for "Polizia!"

Rossini is absent, fetching the priest to perform the marriage. Fascist relations with the Church are uncertain at present, but plenty of individual priests support Mussolini's populist anti-communism. Rossini returns with the priest just as Stagliani is rescued and the whole party is preparing to flee.

Allow the investigators to resolve this situation. It can hardly do anyone any good to kill Rossini, though Fenalik's activities do provide some unusual cover. Rossini admires Stagliani in his own perverse fashion, and will not hurt her—neither will he die for her, since obsessive lust is not love. Rossini has a derringer hidden in his flab, and may produce it if anyone threatens him physically. In this case Maria shields Georgio with her body. Rossini does not fire. The best outcome is for the Fascist leader to surrender, allowing the investigators to kick him out or tie him up. He will have difficulty doing so if his Blackshirts are watching.

The priest was hired to perform a politically correct wedding, and was keen to do so, but involvement with firearms and physical force dismays him. Rossini removed peacefully from the room, the priest may very well agree to marry Maria to Georgio Gasparetti, but not if he is encouraged to interview the couple, and learns of Gasparetti's politics. Not to worry: if a wedding is the solution, Gasparetti knows several leftist priests who'll do the job in short order. The investigators are witnesses. Sign here please.

The couple and Maria's maid may flee that hour to Milan, safely out of Rossini's immediate reach, or they may feel safe now, and wait until tomorrow.

## Day Five

*You mean the investigators are still in Venice? They must be crazy. Everyone else is. They probably spend the fifth day searching the Palace Rezzoniani.*

### MORNING

They wake to the stench of incense and smoldering wood. A light drizzle hangs over the city but not enough to disperse the smoke rising sluggishly from several burning buildings in different parts of the city. From somewhere, the investigators cannot see where, echo the stamp of boots on wet stone: troops have been brought in.

At breakfast, the waiters are sullen and uncommunicative, and talk vaguely of witches and communists. No newspapers have been printed today, no one knows why.

The manager of the hotel searches out the investigators and forcefully suggests they stay inside. He helpfully leaves a train timetable, departure times circled in red ink.

People deny knowledge of burning buildings, but smoke repeatedly drifts by during the day. Rescuers are sluggish and only act to stop neighboring houses catching fire. The investigators should remain horribly unsure as to whether or not the burning houses were occupied. The smoke collects in a pall over the city, which thickens as the day advances.

In the Piazza San Marco, which investigators must cross to reach the Palace Rezzoniani, the filthy flood water is thigh-deep, and the normally crowded square deserted except for a few boats. Cafes are closed and have crosses and garlic flowers nailed to their doors. The tidal flooding eased, St. Mark's fills to overflowing at midday Mass. Many of the religious crawl across the stinking plaza in penance, or whip themselves free of sin, or fall in fits, or dance, or speak in gibberish. To their credit, many of the priests try to curb such extreme behavior, but the crowd is possessed by spiritual enthusiasm.

### MID-MORNING CALLERS

Alberto Rossini and several very large men in lumpy suits visit the investigators—at the hotel, at a cafe, or in some other place public enough to discourage violence. Rossini is not at all happy about losing Maria Stagliani to a handsome young Communist. He tells the investigators that their stay in Venice has ended. He recalls that Venice used to make a portion of the lagoon illegal to fishermen, because bodies were routinely dumped there. "Those were days, gentlemen, of uncertain public order, such as have returned to us now. The State wishes no incidents involving foreigners. There is a murderer at large in the city. It is best that you leave promptly, tomorrow at the latest."



A Detective with Rossini

### EVENING

The night turns foul. A lashing rain washes the campos. People hurry home past the gutted remains of what neighbors swear were witch houses. Doors are barred against the occasional mobs that stalk the streets. Mobs, troops, and police compete to find the murderer. Strangers should expect no mercy. Cries for help are ignored. Tonight like

travel documents until the affair is solved to their satisfaction, and perhaps to their financial advantage.

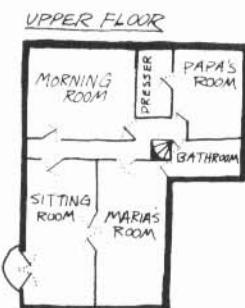
Moving about the city, the investigators see that the water in the canals is as black and glistening as the breasts of ravens. They see worried scientists from the university taking samples. The stench is not so overpowering today, but it permeates the air everywhere, like gasoline vapors.

If they arrive at the Gremanci factory, it is closed for the day. They will have to rouse Sebastiano from his house.

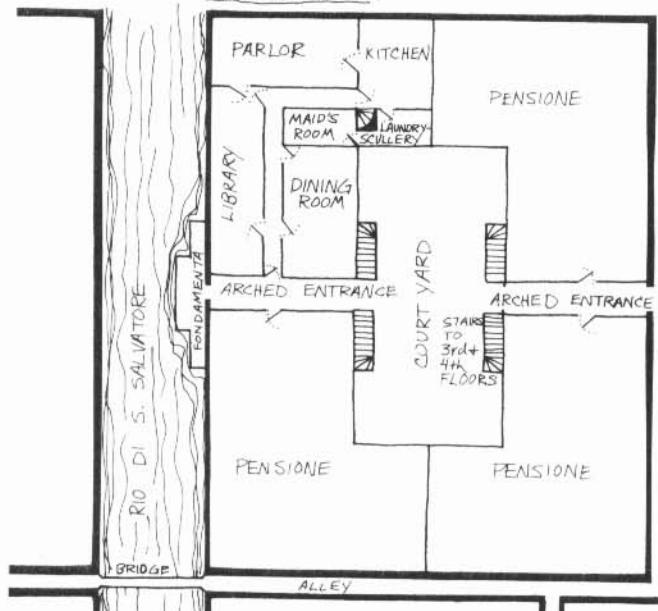
Meanwhile, hysteria is building in the city. False rumors spread that touching the strange black water causes immediate death. Plague and pestilence herald the second coming! Everyone rushes to church; priests have trouble dealing with their hysterical congregations. Worried citizens start pitching suspicious people into the canals.

## Maria's House

5 METERS



### GROUND FLOOR



### LATE AFTERNOON: ANOTHER NOTE FROM MARIA

Miss Stagliani's maid appears at the investigators' lodgings, with another note from her mistress. Rossini's men are holding her captive in her father's house; she believes that Rossini plans to force her to marry him. The maid was allowed out on pretext of visiting a sick aunt. Miss Stagliani requests their aid. Because of Rossini's power, police and civil authorities are useless.

She does not know where Georgio is. He did not come to her balcony last night as planned. She fears the worst. Could they find him and let him know of her plight?

Georgio can be found at the cafe in Campo San Angelo. His face shows fresh bruises and cuts, but he has not lost his sense of humor. The Blackshirts intercepted him last night as he went to meet Maria, and after some battle he led them a merry chase through the alleys.

He vows to rescue Maria and enlists the investigators' aid. He is a man of action rather than one of cunning, and his suggestion of storming the front door may not be favorably received.

### NIGHT

A woman claiming to be possessed by the devil is exorcised in the street. All night the sound of a great hound can be heard, persistently belling out over the waters. At about 10 P.M., a murderous mob stabs to death an epileptic in mid-seizure.

### LATE NIGHT: MARIA'S RESCUE

Miss Stagliani is a prisoner in her own house. Six Blackshirts loiter downstairs—one at each entrance and four in the kitchen, gossiping and gorging on food. Maria's maid is serving them, with a markedly prune-like expression on her face.

It could be that the investigators chase away all of these toughs by feigning or actually provoking a supernatural happening of some kind. It is spooky enough in Venice, and these men are on edge and uncertain, though they feel safe just now. Their laughter and shouts effectively cover incidental sounds the investigators may make knocking out the door guards.

Upstairs, in the morning room lounge two university Blackshirts, chatting archly with Maria Stagliani, who

## MORNING

The tidal rise of the canals is pronounced and the stench appalling. Gossip amongst the servants (and from Sebastiano) says that foul tidewaters have now crept into low-lying houses and two churches. At least one child who played in the water is now ill, with black blotches spreading across his limbs. People talk of the Black Plague, which ravaged Venice twice in the fifteenth century. Has it returned?

## LATE MORNING: THE FUNERAL

The funeral is not a success. The canal stinks. The shallow lagoon beyond is worse. Everybody feels queasy from the smell and the slight, greasy swell of the water.

The coffin, ornately laced, ribboned, and velveted until it resembles nothing so much as a pitch-black three-tier chocolate confection, creaks oddly at the wrong moments during the proceedings, as though someone was stealthily trying to get out. Georgio Gasparetti (pale, romantic, with artfully mussed hair and eyes he has rubbed red) and Alberto Rossini (pork-like and sweating) spend the entire funeral glaring at each other over the top of it. Miss Stagliani barely notices either of her suitors. No Blackshirt makes an appearance.

There is a reception with food at the Stagliani home. Rossini, Gasparetti, the investigators, many relatives from Milan, and many more Venetian friends attend. The Staglianis lived in a large ground-floor pensione in a four-story building. Four pensiones, each of two stories, are arranged around a central courtyard. There are a further four pensiones above them, taking up the third and fourth stories. The front door opens onto the canal, where there is a fondamenta (quay). The back door opens onto a small courtyard shared by the neighboring apartments.

Inside, the furnishings reflect her father's interest in ancient history, particularly the history of Venice. There are many books, oils, busts, medals, prints, and bits of statuary.

This long, somber affair exhausts everyone; can we blame the investigators if they decide to leave long before the sun sets? As they depart, Miss Stagliani extends her thanks. Gasparetti takes the opportunity to leave at the same time, deciding not to further provoke Rossini.

## EARLY AFTERNOON: AN INCIDENT

As they boat along, Gasparetti challenges the route chosen, but the gondolier makes a soothing excuse. If a successful Psychology roll is directed at the gondolier, he is noticeably nervous. If the passengers take no action, he leaves them not at their requested destination but at a campo even more run-down than the one that houses the Gremanci factory.



*Three Blackshirts*

Here Rossini's Blackshirts wait, intending to give every man in the gondola a thorough, scientific beating. They grab the craft when it reaches the quay, and a fight probably ensues on board as they attempt to hustle people off. They don't intend to kill, just to hurt, humiliate, and terrorize. Gasparetti, stricken at having brought the investigators into harm's way, leaps into the fray, calling out for the investigators

to run, swim, or punt. The guilty gondolier clings grimly to his pole, and must be shoved overboard before he relinquishes it (STR against SIZ 13 on the resistance table, or a successful Grapple roll). Georgio is the most severely beaten if there is fighting. He needs help to get back to his lodgings.

The Blackshirts are not armed. If the investigators are, the sight of a handgun brings the thugs to hasty retreat, but regular police are soon on the scene. If the Blackshirts have not fled, they now scatter laughing, and the police only arrest non-Blackshirts. Those arrested can spend the day cooling their heels in jail for starting a public affray before being released: Italian citizens pay bail, foreigners surrender their passports, entailing another day spent idling in government offices to retrieve those documents. Foreigners possessing illegal handguns are arrested, arraigned, and quickly expelled from Italy.

## NIGHT

Two huge fish, with recognizable limbs and hands, are seen flopping in the Grand Canal by believers returning from midnight mass. If the investigators are staying in a hotel on that canal, they can see the pair first-hand.

## Day Four

*Investigators probably spend the fourth day completing their hunt through the Gremanci records.*

## MORNING

Fenalik, having fed enthusiastically, murdered no one last night, but the newspapers report isolated looting and violent mobs in several parts of the city, as citizen unrest increases.

If the investigators have been keeping odd hours, the servants become suspicious and report them to the police. Investigators may have to cool their heels for hours in official corridors as police and government officials play pass-the-problem, and (more seriously) confiscate their

charming shrug. Rossini is in the government, and a Fascist. No one can touch him.

Gasparetti comes from a family of hard-working bourgeoisie. He has fashionable leanings towards Communism which he picked up hanging around with students from the university. While the creed is not something he would die for, he has a fair grasp of the metaphors. The love between he and Maria, Georgio finishes passionately, is symbolizes the break-down of the old order, and the emerging power of the proletariat.

The Stagliani funeral is the day after tomorrow, on a small island in the lagoon. Georgio suggests that the investigators attend, saying that Maria would appreciate the opportunity to properly thank them. Until then he plans to lie low, so Rossini will forget him. He intends to appear for the funeral, since it is his last chance to pay his respects to Maria's father. He secretly hopes for something lucky to result from his gesture.

#### LATE NIGHT

The investigators' sleep is broken dramatically at about 4 A.M. with a great cry of "Morte! Morte" (Dead! Dead!) in the street outside. If an investigator peers out a window, they see a woman run through the fog screaming. She vanishes before they can reach the street, and search is fruitless.

### Day Two

*Investigators probably spend the second day looking up Gremanci families and narrowing their search for the right Gremanci.*

#### MORNING

Over breakfast, newspapers and gossiping servants inform interested investigators that the woman they saw last night was witness to a grisly murder. By lunch-time, the story is in all the newspapers: the body of her lover was discovered impaled upon a ten-foot iron spike, and torn at the throat as if by a wild beast. The woman is being held by police.

#### MORNING: A NOTE FROM MARIA

Miss Stagliani's maid delivers by hand a short letter to the investigators, thanking them again for their aid or sympathy, and formally inviting them to the funeral, and to visit her home (address given) while they are in Venice.

#### NOON

The canals rise, sluggish and choked. The water takes on a detestable look and stench. Just when the foulness cannot be born, once again the turn of the tide releases the worst of it into the Adriatic. As the tide turns, fresh flow-

ers start appearing in the street-side shrines to the Madonna and to St. Mark.

#### AFTERNOON

Visiting the eyewitness to the murder requires the agreement of several officials, none of whom seem to have anything to gain from agreeing to such a request. If the investigators do gain admittance, she proves to be violently insane. Successful Psychoanalysis and Italian rolls and several hours of time elicit a stream of gabble which loosely translates as "I have seen Satan," followed by a distorted description of Fenalik in action. Following this she attempts to chew off her tongue.

Learning about the murder from the police requires one or more successful Debate, Oratory, or Credit Rating rolls, or a bribe cleverly-enough handled that he who accepts feels a certain righteousness in accepting. The police report that the victim was hurled up onto and impaled by iron railings, ten feet from the ground; evidently the killer was crazed and of almost superhuman strength. Although horribly mutilated, the cadaver had been drained of blood. This important fact is being kept from the public. The lower ranks of both the vigili and the militi are distinctly uneasy about this part of the story, and rumors have started to spread.

#### NIGHT

That evening, a wave of excitement races through the hotel staff. Investigators learn that the statues in Basilico San Marco wept blood during the evening service, a miraculous omen witnessed by all present. Try as they might, however, investigators cannot confirm this with a first-hand account.

### Day Three

*Investigators probably spend the third day visiting the Gremanci doll-works.*

#### EARLY MORNING

Over café lattes and rolls, the investigators see in the newspapers the tale of a second grisly murder, that of a gondolier found torn to pieces in his boat. This time police are unable to contain the information, and the story openly states that the remains were drained of blood. Speculation appears in print concerning maniacs, evil occultists, and ghouls.

Seeing the investigators studying the story, their waiter confides that last night merrymakers saw Death poling a gondola down the Grand Canal. "My brother-in-law swears to this." That is true: his brother-in-law did see Fenalik out on a lark, but knows nothing more than he saw something horrible pole past at inhuman speed.

after only one roll has succeeded, they find only the pertinent one for 1797.

The documents are mainly daily ledgers, individual invoices and receipts, and matters of intermittent disbursement such as taxes, tithes, and donations, all written in archaic Italian in a variety of faint, crooked hands—so many dolls made, so much clay imported, so many artisans hired or let go, etc. Sebastiano or any literate Italian can read them, as can Italian-speaking investigators who receive successful Accounting rolls.

There are two items of interest in the accounts. The one for 1797 is comparatively easy to find, as the investigators know that this was the year that the Left Leg arrived in Venice. This entry notes that the Conte personally ordered the leg's acquisition. The second entry, revealing what he did with it, does not appear until 1810, 159 months later.

## Player Handout #15

### August, 1797

The earlier entry is listed under 'Sundry Expenses.' It lists an artificial leg bought from a French soldier. The soldier left with a new wooden leg and 100 lire. The clerk records this as an example of his master's generosity, and adds that the conte bought the limb because it was composed of some strange material—ceramic, stone, they could not tell—of unusual design.

## Player Handout #16

### November, 1810

It records that the leg of a statue in the courtyard of the Palazzo Rezzoniani (a noble's palace taken over by the Austrian invaders) was damaged by lightning, and that the Conte Gremanci was for unstated reasons ordered to replace it within twenty-four hours or face charges of treason; but, if he succeeded in making a new leg, he would be put on trial as a witch.

The workmen resigned themselves to the loss of their livelihood, but then a limb of the exact dimensions needed (of 'an odd ceramic cast') was found, and the Conte himself fixed it to the statue so cunningly that none could find fault in it. The Austrians, convinced by the earlier purchase record of this miracle, dropped all charges.

#### THE TRAIL UNCOVERED

The investigators now know the Left Leg went to the Palazzo Rezzoniani in 1810. In the meantime, though, it's time to look at what's happening in town.

# Events In Venice

**S**TARTING FROM THE DAY of the investigators' arrival, Venice endures a series of Fenalik-induced traumas. Use these as a backdrop to the search for the Left Leg.

Each daily entry is sub-divided into day and night, and is prefaced by a prediction as to how the investigators spend that day.

### Day One

*Investigators wake in their Venice hotel. They probably spend the first day getting settled and oriented, and making plans for local inquiries.*

#### DAY

The canal waters take on a distinctly noxious oiliness, until the turn of tide freshens them.

#### EVENING: GEORGIO CALLS

Georgio Gasparetti turns up at the investigators' hotel. He has just come from a tryst with Maria Stagliani; she told him where to find the investigators. He is extravagantly grateful for their so-far negligible aid, and wishes to ask

the powerful signors how he should conduct himself in the present situation.

If they like, he takes them for a night walk through the alleys and across the canals, stopping at a cafe in the Campo San Angelo for coffee and cakes. He takes them out again to admire the sea mist as it drifts over the lagoon and shrouds Venice with its vaporous breath.

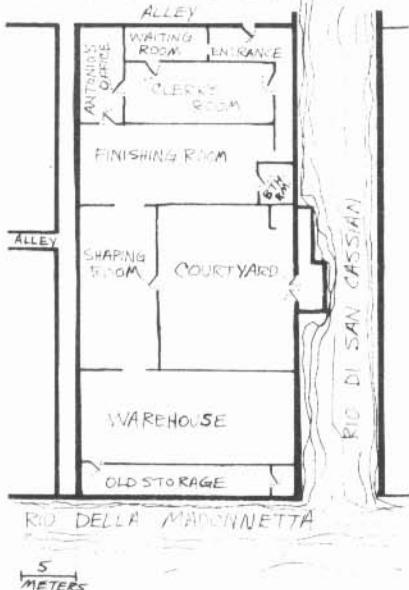
He declares his love for Maria and, if allowed, pours out his heart. The Staglianis are old Venetian blood, and her father was proud, and refused his consent to Gasparetti's proposal.

Georgio hoped by hard work and dutiful attention to wear down his opposition, but this hope was dashed by the murder of the elder Stagliani. That Maria's father was murdered, he has not doubt, for it was done by Rossini or his Blackshirt thugs. But what can you do, he says with a



Georgio Gasparetti

# Gremanci Doll Works



## THE WORK ROOMS

The first, the Finishing Room, contains two ranks of hand-driven sewing machines and lathes. Six elderly staff are hard at work fitting body parts, inserting eyes, and sewing the soft doll bodies. They nod briefly and politely to the investigators before returning to work. Completed dolls line the walls, as do prosthetic limbs, and completed body parts for mannequins. Cold blue china eyes surround them, staring and unblinking.

The second room is the Shaping Room. It contains the kiln for firing the ceramic doll heads and limbs, bolts of uncut bleached cloth for their bodies, stuffing, and so on. Three youngish men work here. Sebastiano's desk is here also, a small one crammed into a corner from where he oversees deliveries.

## THE OLD STORE ROOM

This is the longest room in the building, taking up all the back wall of the works, except for the vault area. The walls are packed with dolls, stacks upon stacks, naked, clothed, soft-bodied, china-bodied. The ceiling is thick with bat-like clusters of artificial limbs; legs and arms, bodies and heads, hung from hooks. Great loops of limbs are slung together like onion strings. As investigators move through the clutter, they can spot ancient limbs

hanging side by side with modern ones. Spotless dolls which say "Mama" when squeezed are next to dolls half-eaten away by time—dolls with dust filming their merciless blue glares. Careless movement tumbles stock, dolls and limbs cascading around them.

Sebastiano follows, beaming proudly and insisting the whole thing is perfectly catalogued. It is not.

## The Vault

A musty, damp vault reeks of the canal which runs beneath. It is locked (STR 15), and both key and lock are very rusty. It takes a STR against STR 15 roll and plentiful machine oil to wrench the key around in the lock. The vault has not been opened since the present system of record-keeping commenced in 1890.

The canal behind undercuts the back of the building, and creaks, gurgles, and moans in the night. Its tidal rise and fall causes the vault door to persistently stick closed; roll versus STR 16 to open. If the roll is missed, it is impossible to open from the inside for the next hour or so, until the tide changes.

The corridor of the vault is only one person wide; on either side is deep dark wooden shelving which sags with damp and the weight of thousands of fat brass tubes. Each tube bears Roman numerals signifying the record or records it contains, keyed to year and month, but not century. Some months earn but a single tube; busy or complicated months may earn ten or twelve tubes. All the records are long since hopelessly out of order. Spiders and rats scuttle away into the depths of the shelving. Damp grime and mold lies thick across the threshold and furs the shelves and tubes. Researchers rapidly ruin their clothes.



*The Caretaker*

## THE GREMANCI RECORDS

They will have to wade through these records for at least a day, and probably several. Sebastiano, initially somewhat disheartened, is soon again whistling tunes from popular operettas, and keen to oblige them as a translator.

No more than two people can usefully search the vault at any one time. At the end of each day's search, allow each investigator to receive either a halved Spot Hidden roll or a halved Library Use roll. When both investigators receive successes on the same day, they have found both relevant tubes. If the investigators give up



*Sebastiano Grimanci*

### CONTE ALVISE GREMANCI

Sebastiano Gremanci knows the family legends about the founder of the works, which he cheerfully relays to the investigators if they ask, as an after-dinner tale. This information can also be found in other sources—histories of Venice if investigators specifically look up the Gremanci family, guidebooks which relate it as a pictur-esque legend, or gossip from the local campo, since Venetians have long memories.

Reputedly Conte Alvise Gremanci, who gained control of the business in the late 1700s, was a sorcerer. People superstitiously regarded his dolls as magic-imbedded containers for his victims' souls. It was said that he made dolls modeled after political enemies, defaced the dolls by burning them or sticking pins into them, and then the enemies thus represented would die or suffer terrible agonies.

Il Conte also made automatons, singing birds, and moving mechanical people, with such craft that they seemed alive. The superstitious declared that he used magical arts to bring them to life. The invading French at the end of the 18th century were the first to recognize the excellence of the Conte's artisans, buying gifts for children and mistresses. His dolls were in every fashionable Parisian nursery in the early 1800s.

### The Doll Works

If the investigators failed to hit it off with Antonio, they will have to break in to take a look around. Entrance after hours is best done via the padlocked doors (STR 25). There is an elderly, superstitious watchman who patrols every two hours and spends the rest of his time drinking cheap red wine in his watchman cubby house, in the corner of the warehouse delivery area.

But the rest of this section assumes that Sebastiano shows the investigators about; unlucky investigators must learn from other sources what he would have said. The factory consists of the anteroom, Antonio's office, a large clerical room, work rooms, a warehouse, a courtyard, the watchman's room, the vault, and old storage room. Of these, only the work rooms, old storeroom, and vault have significance; the rest are not described.



*The Doll Maker*

family friends from the campo, and the investigators get their own group of low-life Venetian thugs, most of whom, while very jolly and friendly, are more vicious when provoked than the Blackshirts.

#### GEORGIO GASPERETTI

He is Maria's hot-headed and idealistic young lover, whose affections she fully returns. Gasparetti is handsome, athletic, romantic, and Italian. He is not too bright, but he means well. His story is told below in the sub-section "Georgio Calls."

## The Gremanci Family

**T**HIS SECTION'S POSITION assumes that the investigators are prompt and successful in their inquiries, but keepers should be mindful that the succeeding Events section may work in conjunction with that presented here.

Gremanci is a reasonably common name; twenty households of that name are listed in the Venetian electoral rolls.

Investigators might get a few through the telephone service, but most families have no telephone. The post office will know of more, but many get no mail regularly. Church baptismal and marriage records will show many, but the churches of Venice are multitudinous, and many names repeat. Records of birth are good, if a hospital or doctor participated in the event, not always likely.

Investigators may have to go door-knocking, or burrow through city records and tax rolls to get much done. All the Gremancis are more or less related, but some have not spoken in generations, and the existence of at least one impoverished line has been entirely forgotten by the rest. Of the Gremancis who answer at a knock, some are friendly, some are very suspicious indeed.

Eventually the investigators track down the right Gremanci clan, among whose ancestors is one Conte Alvise Gremanci, a notorious 18th century sorcerer and automaton-maker. For every day spent door-knocking or re-



Antonio Gremanci

cords-burrowing, allow a luck for the searcher with the highest POW. A success locates the right Gremanci. These Gremancis run a family firm situated in Venice for more than three centuries.

The right Gremancis can also be found in a tourist guide which details the legend of Conte Alvise and recommends his descendants' wares; similarly, a successful luck roll locates the reference.

## The Doll Makers

The building is of stone, built in the 14th century. Its prosperous facade contrasts with its down-at-heels companions in the campo—a shoddy tourist map-and-bookshop, a fly-ridden cafe, and industrial buildings of pungent odor and uncertain use.

The anteroom to which the investigators are ushered is furnished with prickly, slippery horsehair sofas and antimacassars, their doilies damp with hair oil. The display cases lining the walls exhibit historic Gremanci dolls, mannequins, and the prosthetics sideline launched during Napoleon's Italian campaign.

#### ANTONIO GREMNCI

The present head of the family, Antonio Gremanci, is an elderly, thin, shrewd, dusty-looking man, who appears to have fossilized about 1890. He does not speak English. His office is lined with enormous, leather-bound general ledgers whose spines are dated in various spidery hands for several hundred consecutive years. He listens politely to the investigators' story (oratory roll, halved if speaking through an interpreter).

If the investigator receives a failure, the elder Gremanci believes they are deliberately lying to him and, after a brief tour of his works, shows them the door. To proceed further, they will have to break in at night (see below).

If the Oratory roll succeeds, Gremanci rings the bell atop his desk, and asks his clerk, a man as elderly and fossilized as Antonio) to bring in Sebastiano. Once Sebastiano Gremanci, a nephew, appears, the elder Gremanci puts the investigators in his nephew's hands and dismisses the matter from his mind.

#### SEBASTIANO GREMNCI

The nephew is plump and jolly man, in his early fifties. He speaks English well. He happily adopts any friendly investigator, invites him or her home for dinner, introduces his wife and eight children, etc., and is cooperative and curious. He and his family are good sources concerning the hysteria that soon sweeps Venice.



*Portrait of Papa (Giovani Stagliani)*

canal. She casts about, sights the investigators, and begs their assistance.

The intervention of well-dressed, rich-looking foreigners interrupts the disagreement. Georgio vanishes. Rossini gives the investigators an evil look; he blusters, asking for their names and addresses. Shown passports, his Blackshirts take copious and laborious notes.

If the investigators make no offer to see her to Venice, Miss Stagliani reluctantly boards Rossini's launch in order to prevent further commotion; before she does, she asks the investigators which hotel they are staying at, so she can take them to see the sights of Venice—if they have no rooms, she suggests the Gritti Palace, not far west from the Piazza San Marco. She murmurs thanks for their intervention. In truth, Rossini intends to do nothing except take Maria to her father's house. She is safe with him for the next few days, but she does not like him.

If the investigators offer to escort her home, she accepts, explaining to Rossini and his Blackshirts that these foreigners are friends of her late mother's—Rossini does not even trouble to summon up a look of polite interest in this ploy.

On the way to her house, Maria Stagliani offers her thanks and explanations. She declares both her love for Georgio and her loathing of Alberto (he is forty, and fat, and his breath stinks—worse, he spends time with occultists). By the time they reach her door, her anger has faded

into tears for her father and for herself, and she flees into the house with a brief and inarticulate farewell.

## Principal Parties

### ALBERTO ROSSINI

Rossini is a sleazy sort, desperately attracted to the beautiful Stagliani; while his macho code forbids any action against her until after her father is buried, afterward this girl of good family will need protection—and what stronger man is there in Venice than he? After the funeral he will abduct and marry her before her relatives (now mostly Milanese) can intervene.

The first time the investigators want something from the government, Rossini turns out to be the person in charge of what they are interested in.

Aside from the Fascist party, he is also ambitious in local occult circles, though he has no effective occult power or knowledge.

Rossini's Blackshirt henchmen are thugs of two sorts. Three are uneducated, gufawing brutes good for following orders and collecting their pay; they leave offerings at the campo shrines, spit over their shoulders, and make signs to avert the evil eye. Rossini plays upon them with his make-believe occult; they will be equally impressed or worried by investigators who do the same.

The other sort of Blackshirts are university students of good family, possessing energy and intelligence but lacking in perspective and wisdom. With Mussolini, they dream of an Italy as mighty in world affairs as once was Rome; the Christian and the occult they count of as equal superstition, though crediting the Church with an important role in Italian family morality.

Their expenses met by the State, these Blackshirts lounge about in groups of six to ten unless tailing investigators, which they do singly or in pairs. Their shadows lurk menacingly in the background over the next few days, scribbling information and intimidating people with whom the investigators communicate. They won't attack investigators unless provoked.

If the investigators go to the Gremanci doll factory prior to the Stagliani funeral, the Blackshirts attempt to intimidate Sebastiano Gremanci. He reacts by contacting



*Alberto Rossini*

during the off-season winter months. If investigators choose to make their own way, they become lost. Venice is small, but confusing: lost investigators can wander for hours.

Two parties wait for Maria Stagliani at the rail station. There are six Fascists (five younger thugs identifiable by their black shirts), led by a pudgy bureaucrat in a suit. The six approach her first, and the man murmurs insincerely, professing sorrow and endearments, then attempts to lead her and her maid into a government motor launch for the

short ride across the lagoon to the islands. He is Alberto Rossini, a man important in the Venetian Fascist party.

Also waiting for Stagliani is a handsome young man of fiery temper who watches from a distance (Spot Hidden to notice him), and seethes. He intervenes when it becomes clear that Maria prefers not to get into the launch. He races to her defense. She calls him *Georgio*, and begs him not to get involved. The Blackshirts loom threateningly. To Maria's evident distress, they are about to drag off Georgio, beat him up, and dump him in a

## Venice

**V**ENICE IS A CITY built on islands in a salt lagoon. It is best known for its canals, the largest and most important of which is the Grand Canal. The Grand Canal and islands immediately surrounding it, collectively called the Rialto, form the center of the city. Ship and train link Venice to the mainland. The rail junction is at Mestre.

The city's population dipped during the Great War, and is presently about 160,000; with the construction of the new port of Marghera by the Mussolini government, the number of residents will increase to 207,000 in 1928. The island portion of Venice measures about four kilometers east-west, somewhat less north-south.

The main form of transport is by boat: motor launch, vaporetti, and the famous gondolas. The vaporetti are steam-driven water-buses, seating many passengers and plying set routes. The gondola is the equivalent of a water taxi, long and narrow (32' x 5') with a high stern and prow, and a curtained cabin for the comfort of the passengers, all poled by a gondolier (pl., *gondoliere*). A small gondola seats four to six; a large gondola seats eight.

Venice also has many alleys and lanes, some so narrow an umbrella cannot be opened in them; the maze of secluded courtyards, bridges, archways, tortuous passageways, dead ends, quaysides, and dark overhung back streets is made doubly confusing by the system of street numbering. The city is divided into six districts, and

each district numbers its houses from 1 to 5,000. Only locals know where one district ends and another begins. There is only one true piazza (square) in Venice, the Piazza San Marco. All other squares in Venice bear a less-distinguished term, campo. The Piazza San Marco fronts the Grand Canal, the Doges' Palace, and St. Mark's Basilica, this last arguably the wealthiest and most ornate cathedral in Europe.

The basilica (Basilico di San Marco) holds the mummified body of its namesake, St. Mark, stolen from Alexandria in 828 A.D. The structure is inordinately rich in marble, tapestry, velvet, and precious metals—plunder and donations accumulated over centuries. Any wall not covered by gem-encrusted mosaics is ornately carved and gilded, as are many of the statues and pillars. Ceilings are pictures. Floors are marble inlaid and inset. The Pala d'oro, the retable of the high altar within which rest St. Mark's remains, alone is encrusted with 1300 great pearls, 400 garnets, 90 amethysts, 300 sapphires, 300 emeralds, 15 rubies, 75 balas rubies, 4 topazes, and two cameos.

Venice contains many magnificent libraries and museums. The Biblioteca Marciana, for example, houses over 550,000 printed volumes and 13,000 manuscripts, many rare and valuable. The architecture of this edifice, the former mint, echoes Constantinople but is also gothic in the extreme; gargoyles litter every available corner and waterspout. The ar-

chives of the Republic, though damaged by fire, are held in good order at the Franciscan monastery at the Frari.

There are a number of excellent hotels in Venice. Deluxe hotels include the Gritti Palace, the Daniel (a favored haunt of literateurs and statesmen) and the Cipriani (famed for food and peace). Also available are semi-self-contained bed-and-breakfast flats, pensione.

Venice had a long and proud history, but was finally vanquished by Napoleon in 1797. Shortly after, the city became part of the Austrian Empire. Despite her grandeur, both real and legendary, Venice has long since fallen into decay. But the cultural tangibles of her past glory are everywhere manifest; the living city is also a living museum.

## The Character of the Weather

Venice in winter is cold, still, and vaporous. Days of rain, rain, rain, and fog alternate with spells of sunny brilliance, when ice crackles on the fringes of the canals. Nights are tomb-like, the houses wrapped in shrouds of mist, lit only by occasional somber pools of lamplight. You can walk for miles at night and hear nothing but the echo of your own footsteps, the sad slapping of water on a tethered boat, the distant clang of a fog-bell, or the deep boom of a steamer at sea. In Venice, on a foggy winter's night, it feels like day will never come.



Maria Stagliani

stalk the alleyways, to engage destitute gondoliers to pole him along the canals at the ebb of the tide, nor to engage in a few unduly picturesque murders. His murderous feast leashes general panic in the city.

In London, Dr. Smith told the investigators that the Gremanci family might possess the leg. The investigators should follow this lead; see "The Gremanci Family" below, and subsequent paragraphs.

In the "Love In Venice" sub-plot, Maria Stagliani (young, recently bereaved, well-off) returns to Venice. Two suitors await—Alberto Rossini, a corrupt government official, and George Gasparetti, a young idealist. Miss Stagliani does not know it, but her father was murdered by over-zealous thugs under Rossini's command, angered after the father refused his consent to Rossini's proposal of marriage. These are the rising days of Fascism, and there is no investigation. The events stemming from this, part tragedy and part farce, involve the investigators while they are in Venice.

The section "Events in Venice" describes happenings as the investigators are busily following the trail; track the days, and describe the mood of the city accordingly.

## Death, and Love

The story of Maria Stagliani has nothing whatsoever to do with the investigators' search for the simulacrum.

At Milan an attractive young woman, dressed in black and veiled in mourning, boards the Express. She is Maria Stagliani. Weeping and occasionally sobbing "Papa, papa," she clutches a silver locket and a lace handkerchief patently inadequate to its task. A sober woman in late middle-age, her maid, accompanies Stagliani.

Perhaps offered a friendly smile, or a fresh handkerchief, Miss Stagliani ex-

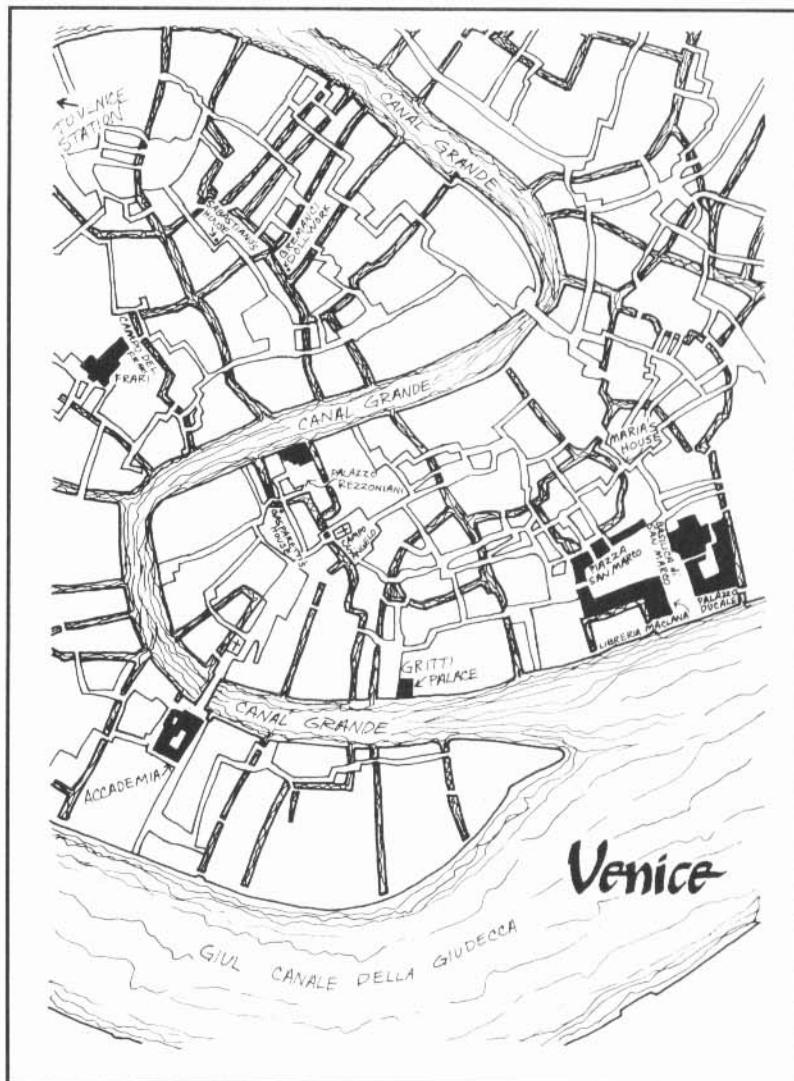
plains in excellent English that her father has died suddenly at home in Venice while she was visiting relatives. She has cut short her holiday and is returning. She shows them a portrait of Papa in her locket. Papa is a not-so-elderly gentleman; his name was Giovanni Stagliani.



Maria's Maid

### AT VENICE STATION

The train pulls in at 5:05 P.M. It is already dark. Investigators can hear distant bells from the many campanili. A successful Listen roll recalls the bells from dream Lausanne. Porters from all major hotels are at the station, eagerly awaiting custom



**IBRISA, Age 48, Wife-Nurturer Aspect**

STR 30	CON 100	SIZ 10	INT 16	POW 25
DEX 17	APP 12	HP 55		

**BABAYAGA, Age 78, Grandmother-Judge Aspect**

STR 30	CON 100	SIZ 7	INT 16	POW 35
DEX 17	APP 7	HP 54		

**TEN DARK YOUNG OF SHUB-NIGGURATH**

For additional information, see the dark young entry in the Cthulhu rulesbook.

**Damage Bonus:** +4D6.

**Weapons:** Tentacle (4 per round) 80%, damage 4D6 + STR drain

**Armor:** none, but personal handguns, shotguns, spears, etc., do only 1 point of damage each (2 points on an impale) because dark young are made of non-terrene material. Clubs, knives, fire, crashing automobiles, etc., do normal damage.

**Skills:** Hide in Woods 80%, Look for Food 75%, Sneak 60%.

**Spells:** Call Shub-Niggurath, Contact Shub-Niggurath, Create Gate.

**Sanity Loss to See:** 1D3/1D20 ordinarily.

	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	POW	HP
One	44	17	44	12	21	31
Two	46	18	42	21	21	30
Three	41	19	46	19	27	33
Four	41	20	47	19	20	34
Five	43	15	44	17	16	30
Six	38	20	47	17	18	34
Seven	39	17	46	15	19	32
Eight	41	19	43	15	22	31
Nine	42	15	43	13	21	29
Ten	43	16	42	13	19	29

**BABA YAGA'S FLOCK**

These statistics represent any flock which Baba Yaga takes control of, rather than individual birds. Each round the flock attacks each investigator; roll each attack separately. As birds die, reduce the number of attacks.

**Weapon:** Pecks and Rips 30%, damage 1D3

**Skills:** Cluck Menacingly 100%, Dodge 40%.

**Sanity Loss to See:** 0/1.

STR 25	CON 5	SIZ 50	INT 1	POW 10
DEX 8	HP 50 (1 per chicken)	Move 8/10 flying		