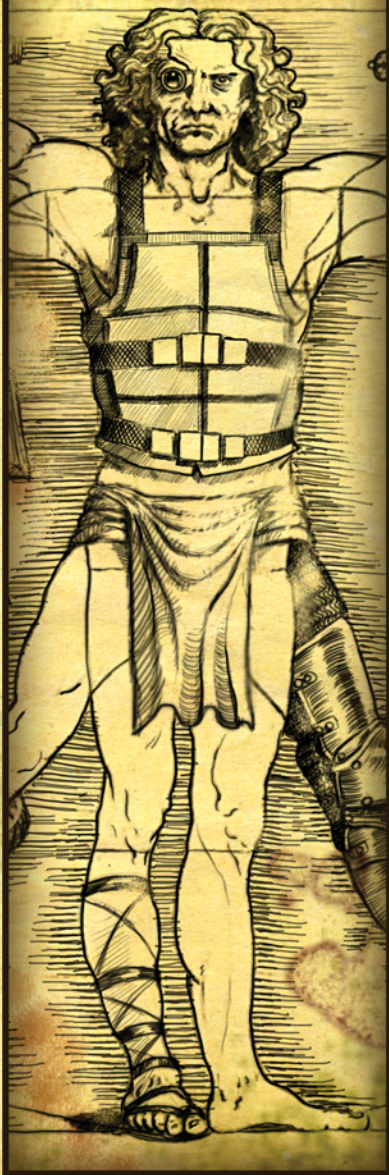


BASIC ROLEPLAYING

**BRP**

MONOGRAPH

#0376



# Val-du-Loup



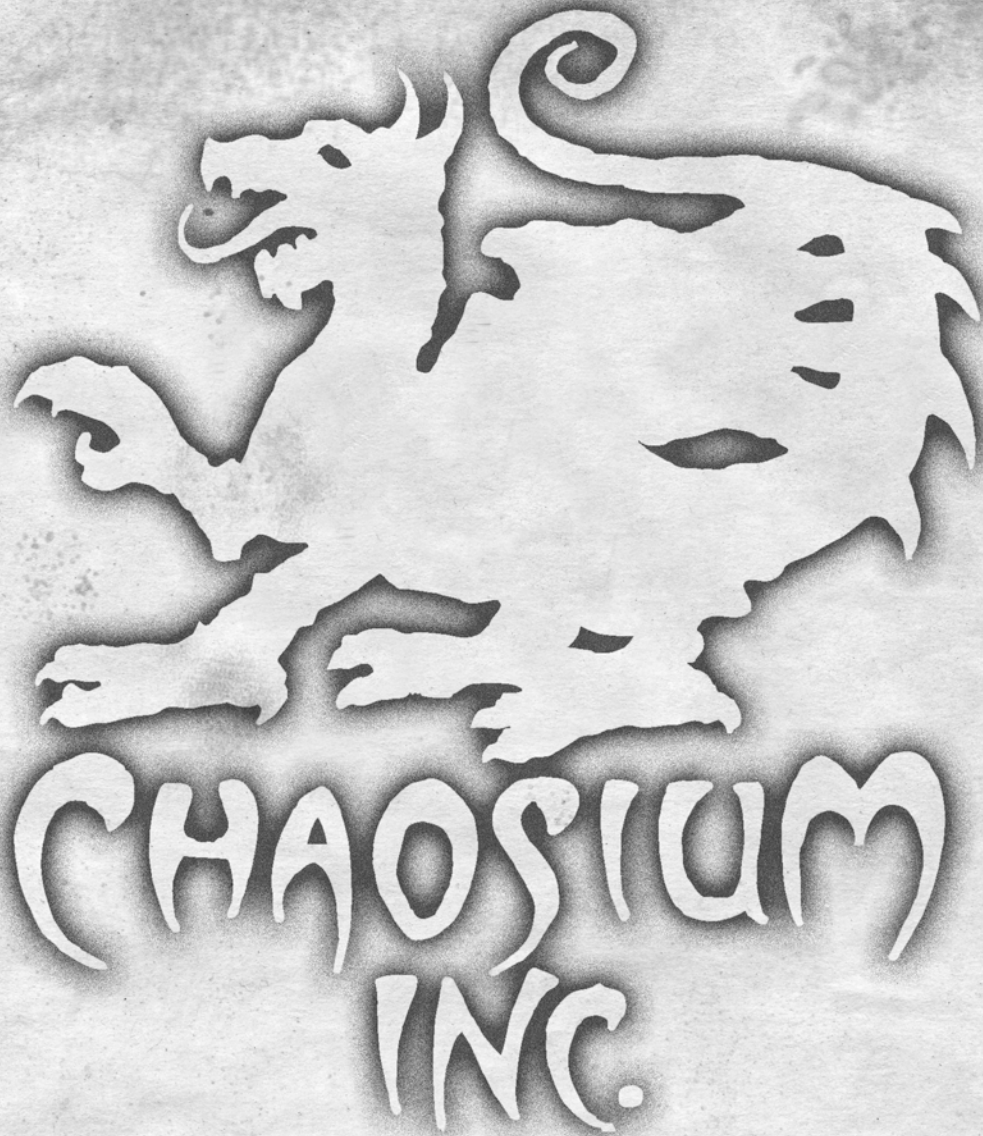
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## Adventures in the Heart of the Ardennes Forests







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# VAL-DU-LOUP

ADVENTURES IN THE HEART  
OF THE ARDENNES FORESTS



**by Guy Dondlinger**

**A medieval setting for the  
Basic Roleplaying System BRP**

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# INTRODUCTION

*Welcome to Val-du-Loup, the "valley of the wolf", deep in the heart of the vast Ardennes forests; a region lost somewhere in the North-Western reaches of the German Empire, a world far removed from glittering courts and notions of romantic chivalry. This is a region of forlorn castles and towns, perched on steep, inaccessible hilltops or hidden in dark narrow valleys. Danger lurks everywhere: beasts and monsters both human and inhuman haunt the woods, the hills and moors. Nobody can be trusted and you never know what your neighbor truly is.*

*Life in the Val-du-Loup is dark, gritty and yet heroic; and the supernatural is never far away.*

The Val-du-Loup setting described in these pages focuses on a relatively small, backward area of the Ardennes forests; a region of dense primal forest that stretched from what would be modern-day Belgium into France, Germany and Luxembourg. The descriptions detail the counties and baronies along the fictional river Loup, a place where the Church has made little inroads, and where Christian fervor clashes with the remnants of Frankish and Celtic traditions. It is a place of strife both internal and external, where barons feud for choice morsels of land while greedy princes - the Prince-Bishop of Liège and the Count of Luxembourg - attempt to lay their hands on one of the last independent regions left in the Empire. This is a place and a time where it takes heroes indeed to take on the challenges of a world in conflict.

The monograph is meant as a resource for playing BRP adventures in the Middle Ages, providing both a setting for and a primer on life in the Middle Ages to allow gamemasters and players to conjure up the background and the feel for adventures in a turbulent time in a turbulent place.

Two different time lines are proposed here: an Early Medieval setting using the 10th century, and a High Medieval setting using the end of the 12th cen-

ture / beginning of 13th century. Most descriptions have been written up so that they fit both centuries, but some entries are specific to one or the other time period.

As an introduction to the medieval world, there is the Middle Ages overview, with additional background chapters on knights, castles and medieval cities; and with regional timelines for the 10th and 13th century.

The Setting section comprises a gazetteer describing towns and other geographic sites of the region; maps are also provided. There are descriptions of personalities and of the main families. These descriptions are aimed at gamemasters and players alike.

The Character Creation chapter contains advice on how to apply the BRP rules to the medieval setting, and describes the possible professions for player characters, including a few not listed in the BRP manual. There is also a character sheet designed for medieval / fantasy campaigns.

The Gamemaster Section contains a medieval bestiary, as well as random encounter tables; the Secrets chapter provides information not generally known on personalities of the region. Additionally, there a list of secret and not-so-secret organizations, and statistics for the major NPCs.

For those wanting to use the setting for a *Call of Cthulhu* / *Cthulhu Dark Ages* campaign, there is an additional chapter on how to introduce Mythos creatures into the setting, and which NPCs to use in such a campaign.

Finally, you find two complete scenarios, two scenarios written up as two-page synopses and a whole bunch of story seeds.

Enjoy!





# PLAYER SECTION

## CHAPTER I: THE MIDDLE AGES



### THE MEDIEVAL WORLD

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*"Life was a door opening upon two black, unknown worlds – and how many races of men with their hopes and fears, their loves and their hates, had passed through that door – on their pilgrimage from the dark to the dark?"*

– Robert E. Howard, *The Dark Man*

### A Feuding World

The Middle Ages in Europe were a time when empires and kingdoms came into being, coalesced and grew bigger by swallowing smaller and weaker territories. From the shattered empire left behind by Charlemagne rose two main players, Germany and France, who laid claim to much of Western and Southern Europe. Later, a third force came into power, England, whose territories eventually ranged from Scotland to the South of France. The rulers of these three realms, together with the fourth great power, the Pope, determined the politics of much of the Middle Ages in Western Europe, forever schem-



ing and feuding to extend their possessions and to gain dominance over nominally independent states.

The wars between the rulers of nations were mirrored inside the kingdoms and the empire where local rulers - bishops, princes, dukes and counts - were engaged in continuous fighting to extend their power bases, to increase their wealth and to influence national politics beyond their own borders. The conflicts extended to the various family members who vied for control of the family domains. Brothers fought brothers, sons fought against their fathers, and husbands went to war against their wives.

Feuds between local nobles within a state was the most common warfare of the Middle Ages, and it is reflected in the typical image we have of that time: the strongly fortified castles and the knights in shining armor. Above all, however, it meant that people spent much of their lives exposed to fear and danger, and suffering the hardships of a world in constantly repeating wars.

## A Fading World

The Middle Age was a time when a profound shift of values took place. Where before the Church had tolerated at least grudgingly the superstitions that harked back to the "pagan" times, a newly found fervor among the nobles and the clergy lead to a vilification of everything deemed un-Christian. The old charms and remedies, the festivals and traditions which were meant to placate the forces of nature became demonized - that is, they were declared to be the work of the devil.

The upper echelons of the clergy and nobility understood that in order to control the masses, they had to control knowledge. Thus, it was forbidden to teach commoners to read and write, and every attempt was made to rood out the old knowledge. Healers and midwives were declared witches and accused of being in league with Satan; their work and their wisdom seen as sinful. The distinction between white and black magic was erased, all magic was now deemed evil. And so knowledge upheld through oral traditions for centuries was quickly fading, turning into a secret that would survive for a few generations more, preserved by but a few brave souls, but doomed to be forgotten eventually. The inquisition was still some time away, but it was already rearing its ugly head in the form of a spread-

ing intolerance that did away with all that the Church would not approve of.

And yet the supernatural was everywhere. Demons, werewolves, goblins, ghosts and dragons were real - even the Church did not deny their existence. And so the people of the woods found themselves between a rock and hard place: facing the very real dangers of the forest, they saw the very knowledge which helped them in their struggle to survive forbidden.

# MEDIEVAL SOCIETY

The social structure of feudal Europe was based on the concept of liege lord and vassals. Vassals swore obedience and loyalty to their liege lords, who in turn swore to protect those owing fealty to them. This extended from kings on down to bishops, dukes, counts and barons; and the relationship between noble landowners and peasants was regulated along the same line.





Vassalage meant that nobles had to provide armies when the higher placed nobles required them; in turn they could call on their liege lord's armies to defend them. Each noble had to provide a certain amount of knights and men-at-arms, depending on the extent of their territory and their wealth.

In medieval society, the hierarchy was less rigid than it would become a few centuries later. Vassals were not required to follow their lords blindly - for example, they could refuse to obey orders that went against their honor. Vassals also had the right to be consulted and heard before lords took their decisions, this was the basis for the councils of nobles set in place by the rulers.

Medieval society recognized three classes, the so-called estates: the fighting class (nobles and others who were allowed to bear weapons), the praying class (the clergy) and the working class (the peasants). Cities were granted extensive rights in the 11th century, which removed them from the control of the local lords. Burghers - city dwellers - can thus be seen as a fourth class of the High Middle Ages.

➔ See the chapter on **Knights** for a more detailed description of this special class of warriors; and also the entries on **Medieval Cities** and on **Castles** for more information on these.

## Kings & Counts

The most important players in this corner of Europe were Germany and France, who clashed often over contested territories like the Duchy of Lorraine and other choice domains. Starting with the 12th century, England (after its conquest by the Norman king William) played a major role in continental European politics. The pope in Rome always had a big say in European politics, making and unmaking emperors and kings (although at times, monarchs also marched their armies to the gates of Rome to force their will on the pope).

To begin with, both France and the Holy Roman Empire were but loose affiliations of largely autonomous territories, whose princes, bishops and counts fought for control of the kingdoms while defending their own independence. In Germany, where kings were elected by the nobles who represented the initial four tribes that made up Germany, alliances continuously shifted, deals were made and broken,

and wars were a common way to resolve issues - even if the solutions were often just temporary. Without the influence of a single dominating force (as was the case eventually in France and England), every local lord was free to devise his or her own ways of government.

Much of the real power thus lay with the local lords: the bishops, princes, dukes and counts. They maintained armies and owed the lands which they either administered themselves or gave as fiefs to minor nobles such as barons. Often enough, these minor nobles were free to run their fiefdoms as they saw fit, as long as they paid taxes and supplied soldiers when required.

Violence was an accepted way of life. Armed conflicts were a way of settling disputes, extending territories and solving questions of inheritance. Hostage taking for money or for political barter was accepted, as long as hostages were well treated and released when the ransom was paid.

## Peasants & Serfs

Peasantry was the lowest of the three estates that constituted medieval society. There were two types of peasants: freemen and 'villeins', i.e. serfs. Only about ten percent of the peasant population were freemen, the rest were serfs.

Freemen peasants paid rent to work on the lands that belonged to the landlords. Serfs, by contrast, were bound to their lord's land, and could not leave it without the owner's consent. Sometimes they owned a small plot of land which they could work for themselves, but on this they had to pay taxes, mostly in the form of food or goods. Kings taxed the nobles, and the nobles taxed the peasants, who were often enough driven to near-starvation because of it. In return, the peasants could expect their lord to protect them.

Peasants were not protected by any laws. Landowners could pretty much do to their peasants whatever they wanted. The Church tried to regulate this behavior by instilling certain codes of conduct ('no killing of peasants on Sundays and Holy Days'), but these were only moral standards, not laws. By contrast, there were plenty of regulations on what peasants could do and could not do: for example, peasants were only allowed to wear black, grey or brown clothes; all other colors were reserved for the nobility.

## Bishops & Monks

The clergy counted as the third pillar of medieval society. In itself, it was a heterogeneous group, ranging from power hungry bishops to erudite monks to poor parish priests.

Bishops and arch-bishops were very much a political and military force to reckon with. Over the centuries, these Church princes had built up estates and armies to out-rival those of the lay princes. Since they tended to follow the will of the Pope rather than the monarch's, clashes between the two parties were frequent. Sometimes, as in Liège, Church and lay powers were combined into a single domain; the ruler would bear the title Prince-Bishop. Bishops often held important ministerial posts in royal courts or belonged to the inner circle of the monarch's counsellors. Bishops were considered nobles of the second rank, just below the king.

Monasteries were the Church's main instrument in spreading and maintaining the Christian faith. In the 7th century, it had been mainly Irish and English monks who came to the Continent to christianize the Germanic tribes. Newly found monasteries became the basis for converting less accessible parts of the land such as the Ardennes forests. Over the years a large number of convents and monasteries were set up from where missionaries wandered off into the remotest parts of the woods to convert the last of the unbelievers. Monks travelled the length and width of Europe, preaching to nobles and to commoners and taking the Church's message into every forlorn part of Europe.

Monasteries were also centers of scholarly learning. The monks and nuns collected writings and works of art; and also produced them. Some monasteries became rich by selling artfully illustrated bibles. Many had additional income through vast properties, including peasant communities to work the land. All in all, monasteries were quite rich, even if the individual monk or nun was not.

In the 10th century, there existed only one order, the Benedictines; later, in the 12th century, other orders were founded, such as the Cistercian order, which strove to be self-reliable and refused to own lands or peasants; the mendicant Franciscan orders, who saw poverty as the ultimate virtue of a monk or nun; a concept that was almost deemed heretical at its outset; or the Dominicans, also a mendicant order of erudite monks whose main purpose was to

counter the heretic movements that began to attract large amounts of followers.

The 13th century also saw the birth of lay religious communities, mostly of women, who were called *beguines*, while their male counterparts were called *beghaines*.

Many monasteries were sponsored by worldly rulers, and were not above worldly politics. Abbots and abbesses were usually the younger sons and daughters of local lords. Whereas parish priests were controlled by the bishops, monasteries were not; so they became important pawns in the ongoing conflicts between bishops and lords.

It was members of the clergy - priests, monks and nuns - who acted as the tutors for young nobles, teaching them religion, history and how to read and write. Their influence on the noble class was thus enormous. This not only enabled them to raise nobles as god fearing, religious rulers, but they could also instill in them a moral code which was otherwise absent from medieval society. Thus, it was mostly the clergy who created and spread the chivalric code which became the moral backbone of the much vaunted knights.

All Catholic clergy was supposed to live a life of chastity. This concept took hold only late in the Middle Ages; certainly in the Dark Age, it was an ideal, not a law. Although eventually chastity was required by law for the lower ranks of the clergy, the upper ranks continued to have mistresses, wives and children.

➔ The entry on the **Abbey of Eonach** in the *Gazetteer* contains an example of a medieval monastery.

## Poets & Performers

The most popular form of entertainment at courts was the poetry recited or sung by minstrels. Minstrels were poets and composers, often in the service of a lord, although in later centuries, there was an increasing number of independent, itinerant minstrels. They wrote and composed their own poems, or reworked existing ones, and performed them to music. Many of their stories re-told the heroic exploits of the lords in whose service they were in, but many were also satirical in nature; while others told tales of faraway or imaginary places.





Bards were the older, Celtic version of this form of entertainer. In a society with only an oral tradition, bards were important in remembering and re-telling important events in easy-to-remember verse.



Troubadours appeared in the 12th century and replaced the minstrels at court. Their texts were directly linked to the chivalric movement whose virtues they extolled. Like minstrels, they performed their own works, but some also hired performers to do this. Troubadour competitions would be held during important social events at courts.

There were other types of itinerant performers, such as gleemen, who recited poetry and played music, performed skits, trained animals to do tricks, and who juggled. However, juggling was held in bad repute during the Middle Ages, and jugglers were often accused by the Church of witchcraft and base morals. Gleemen performed mostly for the common folk.

## Magic & Superstition

After the Frankish rulers converted to Christianity, it took several centuries before this new religion had trickled down to the common people and managed to oust the old gods and goddesses.

As hard as the missionaries tried, the newly converted folks never quite gave up their beliefs in and their reliance on magic and the supernatural. The old Germanic religion had tolerated and even fostered the beliefs in spirits and faeries, giants, mermaids and dragons; and people accepted as normal that certain men and women could tap the supernatural and possessed magical powers. The ones that clung the most fervently to the old beliefs were the inhabitants of the small towns in isolated regions such as the Ardennes. Cut off from the rest of the world, living deep inside the dark forests, these people saw magic around them on a daily basis; the forest was full of it, and so were their lives. The people were quite content to leave the monsters and faeries and magic users alone. But not so the missionaries and the nobles from outside: the giant woods were always a sore in the eyes of the pious lords and ladies, who often resorted to ordering that forests be cut down as a means of christianizing the lands.

The one area where people most often referred to magic was for healing. When potions and herbs did not work, people trusted in charms and enchanted relics. Even the Crusader King of Jerusalem and his counsellors turned to magic when his son Baldwin, who was later called the Leper King, developed the first signs of the illness during childhood.

However, as the old superstitions were turned into symbols of evil and magic was decried as the devil's work, it became increasingly difficult to exercise magic without paying for it with one's life.

# KNIGHTS

---



*"What more can a knight demand than fame in this world, and salvation in the next."*

-- Geoffroy de Charny, *Livre de Chevalerie*

## From Warriors to Nobles

At their origin, knights were professional, mounted warriors. This warrior class arose in Europe in the 9th century under Charlemagne, when new military tactics required large units of mounted fighters. These fighters needed to be wealthy enough to finance their own horses, weapons and armor; and they needed to be able to get away from home for long periods at a time - something which many nobles could not afford to do. Thus, common men (both free and unfree) with great fighting prowess were groomed to become knights. They were granted domains (including the people to tend the lands), not just as a reward, but also as a means to provide for them the funds they needed to finance their equipment. In the 10th century, knights were still mere professional warriors, by the 12th century, they had become a new noble class which was supposed to live by a strict code of honor: the chivalric code.

## The Chivalric Code

As the new class of warriors rose to prominence, the Church authorities put forward a moral code to regulate the brutal business of war. This code included regulations how the fighting class should treat the working and the praying classes (the peasants and the clergy): *"Protect the weak, defenseless, helpless, and fight for the general welfare of all"*. More importantly, this moral code set forth the ideals by which the warriors should live: honor, loyalty as a vassal, generosity as a lord, prowess on the battle field, and courteous behavior in society. Thus the chivalric code was born, and it is what set the knights apart from both other fighters and other nobles. It was first adopted in France, but it soon spread to other countries, such as England, Scotland, Spain, Portugal, and the western part of the German Empire.

Honor was the highest of these ideals, and dishonorable behavior could lead to loss of prestige, power and land; even to ex-communication. The moral code thus became also a means of keeping the knighted warriors in check.

Fame was another ideal, one which knights were ambitiously pursuing through war, travel and participation in tournaments. In order to gain fame, a knight needed to see and be seen.

The chivalric code also called for polite and cheerful behavior, elegant dress, moderation, well mannered speech, and a respectful attitude towards ladies.

Often, 'though, the chivalric code was only the theory. In reality, many knights were ambitious, power hungry and unscrupulous. The Middle Ages were a violent time: violence was the main way to settle disputes, enlarge territories and gain fortune and power. The chivalric code was put in place to cap the fighting class' readiness for violence, but often enough it failed to do so.

## On Becoming A Knight

At the height of the chivalric culture, those destined to become knights were already chosen when





still children. From age twelve, the boys were sent off to the court of other knights, to serve as squires and to be educated in warfare, religion, legends, reading and writing, even song and dance.

Knight-elects were promoted to knights through the ceremony of knighting. "Making a knight" was first mentioned in France in the 10th century, but a formal ceremonial process was only established in the 11th century. Initially, it involved slapping the candidate on the neck with the right hand, and giving him a sword-belt as a gift. Over the centuries, this ceremony was embellished: the kneeling candidate was stricken with a sword upon his back and shoulder, and was given not only a belt but also sword, shield, armor and expensive gowns. Knightings were coupled with religious ceremonies, such as high masses on holy days.

The Knights were a very heterogeneous class. Nobles from kings on down could become knights if they fought on horse back and adhered to the chivalric code, but common men could also work their way up through sponsorship and years of hard training with other knights. By the end of the 12th century, the title of knight could be passed from father to son through inheritance; thus the new noble class was born. Others, including commoners, could still become knights, but serfs and sons of clergy were then barred from knighthood. However, sometime in the 13th century, laws were passed so that only the descendants of a knight could become one, and only a monarch had the right to admit others to knighthood.

## Knights in Battle

When knights rode into battle, they did not do so as a unified company. Knights were individual fighters who never trained together. In combat, the two opposing cavalries would be set up in a long single line and start riding against each other in formation. Once battle was joined, the fight was one-on-one. Combatants vied to pick opponent from whom most could be gained: victorious knights could keep the spoils of war, i.e. the equipment and the horses of those fallen or beaten. Killing the opponent was less important than taking him prisoner. Prisoners were ransomed back to their families or their liege lords, and the more prominent the hostage, the more money could be asked for. Hostage taking was an accepted form of barter in the Middle Ages, and considered honorable as long as the hostages were

treated well. Commoners were not so lucky, since no money could be had from them, they were invariably slaughtered during or after the battle.



Sometimes, highly gifted fighters were given the specific task of eliminating or kidnapping prominent opponents; for this they were paid extra money. Alternatively, a prize would be set on capturing or killing specific opponents. Army leaders and other prominent warriors often resorted to carrying false coats of arms or inconspicuous armor in order to avoid being picked out from the crowd.

Knights did not ride into battle alone: each knight was accompanied by a small team of squires and knaves. They followed the knight into battle, carried his substitute weapons and shields. They were responsible for stripping fallen enemies of armor and weapons and for collecting stray horses. They also had to help their lord back into the saddle if he became unhorsed. Because squires were less well armed and armored than the knights, the death toll among these young retainers was extremely high.

A company of knights would often be supported by a company of light cavalry, the sergeants. The most dangerous foe a company of knights could face were archers, who often managed to slaughter many before the battle truly began.

## Equipment

Knights' armor remained largely the same between the 10th and the 12th century, up to the time of the crusades. To ride into battle, knights wore short-sleeved chainmail shirts, helmets that covered the head and nose, and a buckler. The crusades led to European knights copying the armor of the Arabic knights: hauberks (i.e. knee-length, long sleeved

chainmail shirts with a hood called *coif*), gauntlets, padded clothing under the armor, and on top of it a tunic bearing the knight's coat of arms, or the insignia of the order to which the knight belonged. The helmet now covered the whole face, with narrow eye slits and small holes for breathing. The buckler was replaced by the man-high kite shield, although later the size of this shield was again reduced to result in a smaller, triangular shield.

A knight would normally have with him three or more horses: one for riding, one trained for battle (a *destrier*) and one or more for carrying equipment. Knights would thus always need to be accompanied by squires and knaves when traveling.

## Have Lance, Will Travel

When the crusades began, joining them became a moral imperative for knights. In addition, crusaders could gain fame, territories and wealth in the lands of Outremer. By this time, traveling far had become a way of life for knights. These men became known as knights-errant. They could fight the Muslims in the Holy Land and in Spain; clash with the pagan tribes on the Empire's Eastern border, and travel to jousting tournaments and other social events throughout Europe. Some even fought *for* Muslim lords in Spain and Northern Africa.

## Tournaments and Jousts

Tournaments, where teams of opposing knights fought each other in mock battle, were a popular sport and part of every important social event. The two teams started in closed formation and rode against each other, then wheeled and started again, until the formation of one team was broken; after that, the battle continued on foot.

Until the 13th century, tournaments were fought with sharp weapons, and were dangerous sport: many knights ended up being stabbed or trampled to death. They were also chaotic affairs: squires and spectators got involved, pulling knights off their mounts and attempting to lay hands on the equipment and horses of the defeated.

Winners of a tournaments could traditionally keep the equipment of the losers, or ransom it back to them. These games were thus a way to get rich, and many knights undertook tournaments on a professional level. Knight-errants, alone or in teams, travelled from event to event, and those who were good could become rich fast; while those who kept losing might end up facing financial ruin.

Tournaments were also important stepping stones in a knight's quest for fame. They were seen as training for real battle, and they helped rulers single out promising young fighters whom they could hire to join their armies.

Women could attend tournaments as spectators from the 11th century on, and later became central to the event, as knights chose a lady present to fight in her honor.

Sometime in the 12th century, a new form of sport overtook tournaments in popularity: jousting. Jousts were mock battles between two knights and they were less chaotic and accident prone.



# MILITARY ORDERS

Military Orders were Christian orders of knight-hood whose original purpose was to serve in the Holy Land in the fight against the Muslims and to protect the pilgrims. The most significant orders were the Knights Templar, the Knights Hospitaller and the Teutonic Knights. The Knights of St Lazarus were a special order in that they included knights who had contracted leprosy.

These military orders were organized along the principles of a monastic life. Beside the noble-born knights, the Orders also comprised squires, clerks, ordained priests and other low-born members.



## Knights Templar



The Knights Templar, or "Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon", were one of the military orders founded in Jerusalem at the end of the 11th century to safeguard the Christian pilgrimage routes to Jerusalem. Officially recognized by the Pope in 1129, the Order received a good many donations; not just money but also land. Becoming increasingly wealthy and influential, the Order held territories throughout Europe and the Near East where they built castles and chapter houses. After the fall of Jerusalem, the Order concentrated its activities on Europe. Having been dispensed by the Pope from obeying local laws, the Order became a state within the state, and a thorn in the side of many a ruler as the Knights Templar with their powerful armies were subject only to themselves. At the height of their power, Templar houses were situated throughout Western Europe, from Scotland in the North to Portugal in the South. They were also the first bankers, lending out money from their considerable fortune to clergy and nobles, including various European kings.

In 1307, French King Philip IV (who was heavily indebted to the Order), in co-operation with Pope Clement V, had most members of the Order arrested, tortured, tried and burnt at the stake. The accusations leveled at the Knights included blasphemy, sexual relationships between the members of the Order, and veneration of the three-faced demon Baphomet. None of the accusations were ever proven, and those who confessed to the 'crimes' did so under torture. It is still today a matter of speculation to which degree the various charges were true or not. Certainly the presence of a three-headed figure sculpted on the facades of a great many Templar churches and castles lends credence to at least some of the allegations.

An additional mystery consists of the whereabouts of the Templar's vast fortune which disappeared without a clue during the turbulent time of the order's demise.

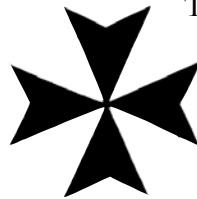
The Order was organized the same way monasteries were, with communal life reflecting monastic principles. Templar Knights had to be of knightly origin. Beside these noble-born men, the Order also comprised squires, clerks, sergeants and ordained priests. The Order's hierarchy included regional

Masters and a central Grand Master, always a French Knight.

The Knights' trademark garment was a white surcoat with a red cross.



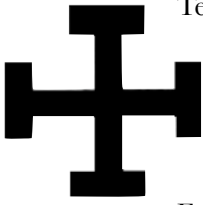
## Knights Hospitaller



The Knights Hospitaller were another military order founded in the Holy Land. Originally charged with caring for the wounded and sick, it later became involved in the defense of the Holy Land alongside the Order of the Knights Templar, with the two orders being rivals in vying for power. After the fall of the Templar Order, much of its property fell to the Knights Hospitaller.

Knights Hospitaller wore black surcoats with a white cross.

## Teutonic Knights



Teutonic Knights were a military order set up as the German counterpart to the mostly Norman/French Order of the Knights Templar, although they were less influential than the Templars.

Founded in the Holy Land in the 11th century, its members were mostly drawn from German aristocracy. Its headquarters was the famed castle of *Krak des Chevaliers*, a huge fortress which could house up to 2000 people, located in what is today Syria.

After the loss of the Holy Land, the Teutonic Knights launched crusades against the remaining non-Christian tribes in Europe, particularly in the Baltics. This culminated in the Order founding its own state, the *Monastic State of the Teutonic Knights*, or simply the *Order-State*, after they defeated the pagan Prussian tribes in the 13th century.

Teutonic Knights wore white surcoats with a black cross.

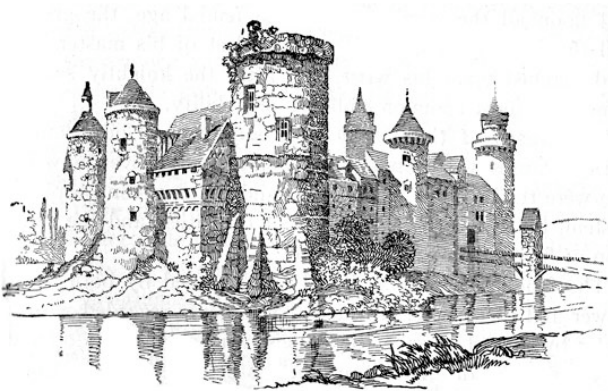
## Knights of St Lazarus

The Order of the Knights of St Lazarus was a minor military order. Originating in a leper hospital in Jerusalem, the Order later founded hospitals and hospices across Europe. Its task was to care for lepers and those suffering of other virulent diseases. In the Kingdom of Jerusalem, the enjoyed the special patronage of both King Baldwin IV (the Leper King) and of Saladin after he re-took the city.

During the Christian occupation of the Holy Land, knights who were discovered to suffer from leprosy were obliged to join the Order.

Its emblem was a green cross on a white background.

# CASTLES



sometimes fortified with stone or earth. Only the manor house itself might be built of stone and be a couple of stories high.

Around the year 1000, a major shift in the construction of the castles occurred. The wooden buildings gave way to stone ones, and a central square keep, now five to six stories high, served as the living quarter for the noble family. The entrance was no longer on the ground floor but one or two stories further up. One or more rings of stone ramparts, which included barbicans, bastions and turrets, surrounded the complex.

## The Evolution of Castles

Medieval castles as we know them came into existence around the year 900. That was the time when noble landowners moved their residence away from their country estates to strategically more defensible positions; i.e. away from the valleys and onto higher ground. At first, these castles resembled the old estates: a strung-out collection of low wooden buildings, surrounded by wooden ramparts which were

There were two basic types of castles: the motte-and-bailey of the flat lands, characterized by moats surrounding a castle set on an artificial mound; and the high castles, which were precariously perched on top of natural rock formations. In the Ardennes, high castles tended to be the norm. They were usually made of the grey slate stone predominant in the area. They were built so that on three of their sides, access was naturally impossible. Thus, only one side needed to be protected by ramparts, which in this





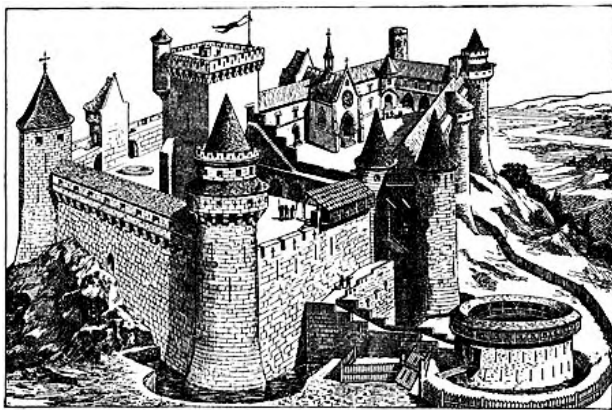
case were curtain walls, not ring walls, as they did not surround the whole complex.

The 12th century finally saw the construction of the 'palaces', new grand living quarters for the noble family. The keep was left to serve as a last refuge in case of war. One of major new features of the palace was the Great Hall which became the center of social and administrative life in a castle, and indeed the whole domain.

## A Surfeit of Castles

The 11th century was the time when knights rose to become a noble class of their own. This was accompanied by a proliferation of new castles. The new lords had the means and the needs for strongholds to defend their lands and to serve as a symbol of their newly gained status. At the same time, the regional lords, i.e. the counts, princes and bishops, supported the construction of new castles by knights in their service to strengthen the defense of their borders against their neighbors. Along these borders, castles were often built within line of sight of each other so that they could keep each other in check.

## Castle Components



During the High Medieval Age, a castle would typically include the following elements:

- ❖ the keep, also called donjon. Initially, they were square; later it was discovered that round towers were less vulnerable to catapult attacks. They sometimes occupied the centre of the castle ground or else the side that needed to be defended most.
- ❖ the manor ('palace') where the lord and his family resided
- ❖ the bailey, i.e. the inner courtyard
- ❖ outbuildings such as stables and living quarters for servants and retainers
- ❖ a chapel
- ❖ one or more rings or curtains of defensive walls, with bastions and battlements
- ❖ one or more drum towers, i.e. towers built into a wall
- ❖ a gate with a gate house and/or a barbican defending the drawbridge
- ❖ a well
- ❖ a dungeon, i.e. prison

## Life in Castles

Castles were the noble families' ancestral homes. They were built for military reasons, but also as symbols of status, power and wealth. Raising castles on elevated positions served a strategic purpose, and it made sure that a castle could be seen from far away. However, this also led to the lords and ladies being isolated from their subjects.

Castles were centers of administration, commerce, economic activity and jurisprudence. They were at the heart of the noble class' social life, and finally served as a refuge for the population in and around the castle in the many wars and feuds of the time.

Life in castles was not all pleasant. Only the richest of castle owners could afford glass; most castles went without it. In winter, windows were boarded up, meaning that no fresh air or sunlight was let in during the cold months.

To interrupt the monotony of castle life it became custom to entertain frequent visitors, to have musicians and minstrels perform and to organize social events such as hunts; or else to travel and to enjoy hospitality in castles and courts throughout the land.

# MEDIEVAL CITIES



The basic definition of a medieval city would be a town surrounded by city walls for protection. They usually grew as locations attached to a castle or a monastery, and in the early Middle Ages they were part of the domain of the local lords (or the monastery) and were subject to their rule. During the 11th century, cities evolved to become a political entity of their own. As citizens grew richer, they established their own structures (such as city councils) with which they could at least co-govern the city. Eventually, many cities were granted 'city charters', by which they could then govern themselves, and were subject only to the king's law. They had their own courts, and sometimes even their own laws. They also raised and paid an army to defend it, and kept strengthening their fortifications as cities became important pawns in the power struggles between the various kingdoms.

The vast majority of cities in the High Middle Age (about 95%) counted less than 2,000 citizens;

the rest counted up to 20,000 inhabitants. Only a handful of places like Paris, London, Cologne or Florence had a population of more than that. Many cities saw their population explode in the Middle Ages: London's population grew from 18,000 to 100,000 between the 10th and the 14th century. Paris, which eventually counted more than 200,000 citizens, was the most populous medieval city in Europe. Wars, fires and diseases would in later centuries reduce the population again below that of the High Middle Age.

With living space confined to the area within the ring walls, the density of the population was very high. Houses crowded in upon each other in unplanned chaos, and streets were narrow, dark, twisting, and stinking of sewage and offal. Cities were forever victims to fire and outbreaks of disease. They did, however, offer its citizens protection from enemy armies, and provided a greater social equality than was given in the lands ruled by nobles and clerics.

Access to citizenship was strictly controlled. A minimum income was required, women could often gain citizenship solely through their husbands or fathers, and some cities did not grant citizenship at all to Jews, while others granted and revoked access to Jews at their rulers' whims.

Cities were governed by city councils, made up of members of the city's most prominent families, traditionally merchants, manufacturers and city officials. Official city posts were often hereditary. Guilds regulated commerce and the manufacturing of goods.

Cities were at once removed from the surrounding country side and an intrinsic part of it. While being separate legal entities, the city and the country needed each other: the rural area provided the food and raw material for the city, while the city provided the space and the possibility to set up the markets for the rural population to sell, buy and barter. The most prosperous cities were those which were situated at important trading positions, on rivers or by the sea.





# RELIGIONS

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Roman Catholicism, as taught by the Pope and the Church authorities in Rome, held the quasi-monopoly of religions practiced in this part of Europe. Other Christian faiths, such as the Eastern Orthodox religion practiced in Byzant, were unknown in Western Europe.

Heretic movements like Catharism, which flourished in Southern France, cropped up from time to time. Wandering priests roamed the country side, preaching a Christian doctrine outside the traditional Church dogmas, and questioning the Church hierarchy, something the Church could not tolerate. Heretic movements were always violently repressed. The Cathar communities which existed in France and Spain for a few decades, were exterminated in a crusade in the early 13th century, and tens of thousands of people were slain.

A few heretic communities managed to survive underground, some would later on merge with the Protestant churches. If found out, heretics were burnt at the stake unless they repented.

From time to time, Jewish merchants visited the region or settled in the cities. At best, Jews were seen as exotic, at worst, as a danger to Christianity. Depending on the economic situation and the mood of their ruling classes, cities either welcome Jews or cast them out.

Muslims, commonly referred to as Saracens, rarely ventured outside the Muslim territories of Southern Spain, North Africa or the Near East. They were considered the greatest enemy of Christianity. However, a good many crusaders who came into contact with Saracens found respect for them, and it was not unheard of that Christian knights entered the services of Muslim rulers in Spain or in North Africa.

None of the pre-Christian religions survived the Dark Ages in this part of Europe. The gods of the Celts had been integrated into the Roman pantheon and survived the Roman occupation, but when the Frankish tribes invaded Western Europe, they drove out the Romans and the Celts and replaced their gods with their own. When the Frankish rulers converted to Christianity a few centuries later, the old Germanic gods were in turn abandoned.

However, even if the old gods were no longer revered, some were still remembered, such as the Frankish gods Wotan and Freia, or the Celtic gods Cernunnos and Arduinna. Moreover, superstitions and practices dating back to pre-Christian times were still observed, especially those related to fertility or hunting. Freia, for example, was thought to live in the spirit of black cats, which is why Church authorities went so far as to forbid the keeping of black cats, and any black cats that were discovered were burnt at the stake.

Throughout the centuries, people kept up their faith in the spirits of nature whom they believed to reside in rocks, lakes, brooks and trees. Often, these nature spirits became associated with, and replaced by, Christian saints, but the fundamental belief in the power of nature remained. A good example of this is Saint Quirin's Well outside Rocmort.

With Christianity came also the cults based on darker aspects of that religion: the demons and the fallen angels which the Church preached against. As practitioners of magic lost their traditional belief systems, they above all turned towards these shadier characters in the Christian pantheon.

# UNIVERSITIES

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Universities were born in the year 1200 in Paris, when a number of scholars and their graduates grouped together in what they called a *universitas*. This was basically a guild for scholars: a union to help defend themselves against the control that monarchs, clergy and cities exerted on education. The members of the *universitas* claimed for themselves the right to determine the curriculum of what was taught, to decide who could teach and what the qualifications of a teacher should be. Thus was born the first university.

The years 1200 to 1230 saw the founding of more spontaneous, self-administered universities throughout France, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Great Britain (Oxford and Cambridge).

Students came from the high nobility, the clergy and the urban *bourgeoisie*.

The basis for education were the 'seven liberal arts': grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, music, astronomy,

arithmetic and geometry. Some universities such as Bologna specialized in teaching law.

By 1230, the worldly and Church powers had re-established control over education: after this date, the right to set up universities reverted to the monarchs, cities and monasteries.

# A BIT OF HISTORY

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## Beginnings - Out of Rome

The first recorded history of the Ardennes is, like so much of Western Europe's history, Julius Caesar's account of how he invaded Celtic Gaul, of which the Ardennes were then a part of, being largely inhabited by the tribes known as the Belgae and the Trevires. Neither tribe put up much resistance to the Roman legions, and in fact welcomed them into their lands as they protected them from the German tribes who were readying themselves to push westwards over the Rhine river.

The *Pax Romana*, the centuries of peace under Roman dominance, started in 53 BC, and lasted until 476 AD, up to the demise of the Roman Empire.

In the 5th century, even before Rome fell to the German invaders, a group of Germanic tribes known as the Franks chased the Romans out of Gaul. The Franks brought with them their own traditions, religions and superstitions. The dwindling Christian faith introduced by Roman emperors during the fourth century did not survive, but in the sixth century, the Frankish rulers officially adopted the Christian religion. The Franks ruled a large empire then, covering most of what is now Germany and France. It reached its peak of power and extent under the reign of Charlemagne, who was crowned Emperor in 800, but his empire fell apart shortly after his death.

## The Birth of Kingdoms

A couple of hundred years after the death of Charlemagne, three kingdoms rose from the ashes of his empire: Germany, France and Burgundy.

The Germanic tribes inhabiting what would later become Germany elected their first king in 919. A

German identity established itself in 955 when King Otto I united the tribes to fight marauding bands of Hungarians. Otto subsequently was crowned Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire by the pope; this would later be the case for all German kings who would thus govern pretty much all of Italy and satellite kingdoms such as Burgundy. They had also conferred on them the title of "Defender of Occidental Christianity." German kings continued to be elected by a panel of seven prince-electors made up of nobles and bishops. The Pope had to nominally give his consent before crowning the Emperor but the kings were quick to march their armies on Rome if the Pope wasn't forthcoming with his blessing.

France arose out of the realm of West Francia, a kingdom established in the mid-9th century. In the 10th century, France, like Germany, was a kingdom split into greatly autonomous regions governed by local dukes and counts, and the authority of the king was strictly limited. Unlike Germany, however, the French king would soon become a strong central authority. Paris was established as the kingdom's capital under Hugh Capet, who was crowned king in 987; a fact which historians set as the beginning of modern France. French kings would, however, continue to be known as "King of the Franks" until the 14th century, only then they would carry the title "King of France."

The Kingdom of Burgundy was absorbed by the Holy Roman Empire in the 11th century and fell to France in the 14th century. The rival Duchy of Burgundy meanwhile continued to play an important role as a power monger between France and Germany, extending its territories into Belgium, France and the Netherlands; it fell to France only in the 16th century.





England starts to become a major player on the continent after the Norman Conquest of 1066, after which English kings extended their holdings in France by becoming Counts and Dukes of many of France's regions. At the height of its power at the

end of the 12th century, under Henry II (the father of Richard Lionheart), the English kings controlled territories that ranged from Scotland to the Pyrennees, the "Angevin Empire."



Map: Western Europe around 1200 AD

## Into the New Millennium - 10th Century Regional Timeline

- 954 Lothaire, aged 13, succeeds his father as King of West Francia, which later became France
- 955 Otto I, King of Germany, rallies the feuding German tribes against the Magyar invaders, beating and routing them in two battles.
- 962 Otto is crowned Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, becoming thus the first German Emperor.
- 963 Siegfried, a count from the Ardennes, builds a fortress on the site of an old Roman fort, *Lucilinburhuc*, which was to become Luxembourg, laying thus the foundation for the city and the county of that name. Siegfried is the first Count of Luxembourg.
- 967 Otto's son, Otto II, is crowned joint Emperor.
- 972 Notger becomes Bishop of Liège.
- 973 Otto I dies, Otto II now is sole King and Emperor
- 978 Lothaire of France tries to take Lorraine from the Germans. He nearly captures Otto II, and takes the imperial capital. In the autumn of the same year, Otto strikes back, invading France and laying siege to Paris, although he was later forced to retreat.
- 980 Peace between Germany and France. Notger, Bishop of Liège, is the first to be bestowed with the title of Prince-Bishop.
- 983 Otto II dies, his three year old son Otto III becomes King of Germany. The infant king's mother, Empress Theophanu, becomes regent, and thus the most powerful woman of the time.
- 986 Louis V, called the Indolent, becomes King of France; he dies a year later.
- 987 Hugh Capet is crowned King of France; his son Robert (the Pious) is later crowned associate king. Hugh Capet was Count of Paris, and under him, Paris became the capital of France.

- 991 Empress Theophanu dies. Her mother-in-law Adelheid becomes regent for the young German king Otto III.
- 996 Hugh Capet dies, Robert the Pious becomes King of France.
- 996 Otto III is crowned Holy Roman Emperor by his cousin, Pope Gregory V.
- 998 Siegfried of Luxembourg dies, he is followed by his son Henry.
- 1000 The Millennium comes, and the world doesn't end, despite the dire predictions of many.
- 1000 Notger builds a new cathedral in Liège.
- 1002 Otto III dies in Italy, probably of malaria, but possibly he was also poisoned. His son Henry II becomes King in 1002 and Emperor in 1014.

## Into the 13th Century

The end of the 12th century sees Western Europe and Christianity in a state of turmoil. In 1187, Jerusalem, which had been re-conquered from the Muslims some 100 years before, fell to Saladin's troops and reverted to Muslim rule. A new crusade, lasting from 1189-1192, led by King Richard Lionheart of England and King Philip II of France, failed to retake the city despite some early military successes.

After the failed crusade, Richard and Philip, the former friends and allies (and possibly lovers) went to war over the English possessions on the continent. Richard Lionheart was killed in 1199, leaving his brother John (who had already tried to usurp the throne when Richard was on crusade) and his nephew Arthur to fight for the English throne. Arthur gained the right to the English holdings in France, but in 1202, he was captured by John and mysteriously disappeared in 1203 while in captivity.

In 1196, the German Emperor Henry VI died of malaria while putting down a revolt in Sicily. His four year old son Frederick succeeded him as King of Italy; meanwhile in Germany, two rivals fought over the crown, Philip of Swabia and Otto of Brunswick. This pulled Germany into the Anglo-French war as England supported Otto and France allied with Philip.



In the County of Luxembourg, Henry IV (called the Blind) died in 1196, leaving behind a ten year old heiress, Ermesinde. The County became direct possession of the German Emperor, and Otto ruled as Count for a year. Eleven year old Ermesinde was named Countess in 1197, but effectively it was her husband who ruled the County. It was only when her second husband died in 1226 that she took over the reign herself.

In Liège, the Prince-Bishops changed on an almost yearly basis. When Bishop-Prince Raoul died on his return from the crusade in 1191, Albert of Louvain was crowned that same year and assassinated the next; the next two successors lasted but two years each, until one Albert de Cuyck lasted from 1195 to 1200.

Meanwhile, a new force was making its power felt throughout Europe: the Knights Templar. Originally a military order founded in Jerusalem at the end of the 11th century to safeguard the Christian pilgrimage routes to Jerusalem, it had become officially recognized by the Pope in 1129. The Order received a good many donations; not just money but also land. Becoming increasingly wealthy and influential, the Order held territories throughout Europe and the Near East. After the fall of Jerusalem, the Order concentrated its activities on Europe. Having been dispensed by the Pope from obeying local laws, the Order became a state within the state, and a thorn in the side of many a ruler as the Knights Templar with their powerful armies were subject only to themselves.

Another new economic power rose in Southern Europe, where the city state of Venice had grown immensely rich and powerful through the passage of men and goods bound for the Holy Land through the city, and through establishing trade with both the crusader and the Muslim states. In 1204, Venice seized Constantinople and established the Latin Empire of Constantinople.

Meanwhile in Spain, the *Reconquista*, i.e. the reconquest of the lands held by the Moors, which had began in the 8th century, led to the capture of Cordoba in 1236 and Seville in 1248. The only remaining Muslim territory, the Kingdom of Granada, became a vassal of the Kingdom of Castille, and even aided the Christian kings in fighting off Muslim uprisings.

Free Cities were another political evolution which started in the 11th century. Major cities were

granted city charters; this removed them from the control of the local nobles, and they were answerable only to the King or Emperor.

## Timeline 1187-1244

- 1187     Saladin takes Jerusalem
- 1189     Richard I (Richard Lionheart), becomes King of England
- 1189-1192 The Third Crusade, led by Richard Lionheart and Philip of France, recaptures Acre but fails to regain Jerusalem. Richard has almost 3000 Muslim prisoners executed. The German Emperor Frederic Barbarossa, who also joined the Third Crusade, drowns in a river in Asia Minor on his way to the Holy Land in 1190; plunging his army into chaos.
- 1192     Richard is taken prisoner by the German Emperor Henry IV. He is later ransomed back by his mother.
- 1197     The German Emperor Henry IV dies of malaria while putting down a revolt in Sicily. After his death, two rival kings emerge, Otto IV and Philip.
- 1199     Richard Lionheart is killed by a stray arrow; his brother John succeeds him on the throne of England.
- 1202-1204 The Fourth Crusade leads to the sack of Constantinople.
- 1202     John of England loses his territories in France.
- 1208     King Philip of Germany is murdered and Otto IV becomes sole King of Germany, and Emperor in 1209.
- 1209     The Albigensian Crusade, the fight to eradicate the heretical Cathars in Southern France, is launched; it lasts until 1244.
- 1212     The Children's Crusade begins and ends in misery.
- 1212     Frederick II, the son of Henry VI, aspires to the German throne.
- 1214     Philip II of France defeats the Germans and English at the Battle of Bouvines.



- 1215 Pope Innocence III issues the first anti-heresy laws and thus lays the foundation for the coming inquisition tribunals.
- 1215 Otto IV is deposed in Germany; Frederick becomes sole King (Emperor from 1220 on).
- 1215-1217 Civil War in England (the First Barons' War).
- 1216 John of England dies, he is succeeded by his nine year old son, Henry III.
- 1217-1221 The Fourth Crusade.
- 1223 Philip II of France dies; his son Louis VIII succeeds him.
- 1224 After their victory over the pagan Prussian tribes, the Order of the Teutonic Knights sets up its own state in the Baltics, the *Order-State*.
- 1228-1229 The Fifth Crusade; Jerusalem is retaken by Emperor Frederic.
- 1244 The second fall of Jerusalem.



# CHAPTER II: VAL-DU-LOUP

## INTRODUCTION

*"People of that time were basically forest dwellers. Wherever they looked they saw a tree line, and wherever they walked or rode, they crossed the forest, and often got lost on the way."*

-- Stéphane Gesbert, *Cthulhu Dark Ages*

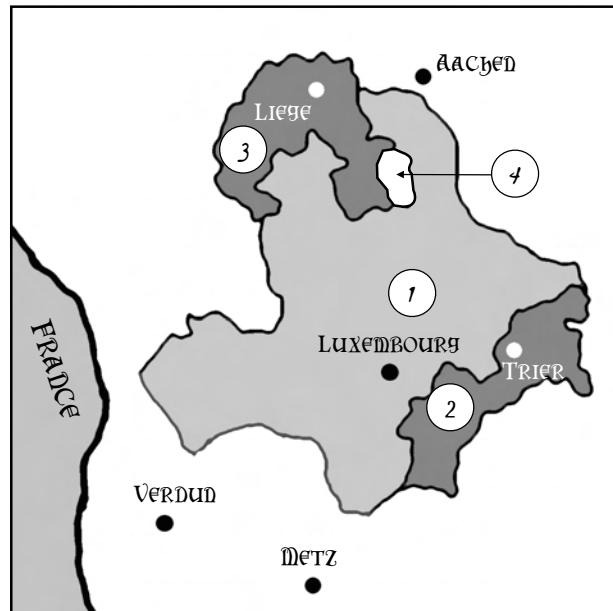
Val-du-Loup is a (imaginary) valley deep in the Ardennes woods. The Ardennes were one of vast primeval forests of Western Europe, covering steep hills, deep valleys and boggy plateaux, stretching from what is today Belgium into Luxembourg, Germany and France. The Romans named the forest *Arduenna Silva*, "wooded heights".

This is a backwards country, far from the centers of civilization; villages are few and far between, and cities are rarer still. Large parts of the population, although nominally Christian, cling to traditions originating in the old Germanic and Celtic beliefs; while some practice even older and darker religions left behind by foreign invaders. The Church is trying to gain control over this remote, deeply superstitious area by setting up more and more monasteries and churches, but progress is slow.

The Val-du-Loup, or Loup Valley, has always been a place of strife. Here, Celts fought the Germans and later the Romans, and the Roman armies clashed with the Germanic tribes only to be overrun by them. Later, invaders from as far away as Hungary ravaged the countryside, and even the Vikings sailed their boats up the rivers in order to pillage. At the end of the 10th century, the region is caught in the middle of the conflict that opposes Count Sigfried, who is consolidating his far-flung territories around his newly built stronghold in Luxembourg, and Notgar, the equally ambitious Prince-Bishop of

Liège. The conflict between the Luxembourg and Liège lasted well into the 13th century.

The map below shows the approximate location of the Val-du-Loup, wedged between territories belong to the Bishop-Prince of Liège and the Count of Luxembourg, in what is today's Belgium. It is here that the Ardennes hills reach their tallest heights.



The map above shows the following political entities:

- (1) The County of Luxembourg. The map shows the extent of the domains belonging to the Counts of Luxembourg, but this does not reflect its total size as the territories were far from contiguous.
- (2) The Bishopric of Trier
- (3) The Prince-Bishopric of Liège
- (4) Val-du-Loup

Much of Val-du-Loup is under the rule of Countess Sybill of Rocmort. Her domain lies

wedged in between territories belonging to the Count of Luxembourg on one side and the Prince-Bishopric of Liège on the other side. Sybill herself is a direct vassal of the German Emperor. Both of her neighbors are vying for control of her territory. Internally, she must compete with her brother-in-law, the Count of Sainspritz, for the regency of the territory which she inherited from her late husband.

South of Rocmort lies the County of Clève, one of the last truly independent enclaves, owing fealty neither to Emperor nor Count nor Bishop.

Meanwhile, even within the County of Rocmort, local barons are feuding over territories and fortifying their castles. Built of the grey slate stone predominant in the area, these strongholds are perched precariously on hilltops, accessible only by steep, easy to control paths. At the foot of the castles, serfs toil to grow food on sparse farm land.

The felling of trees is heavily regulated and can only be undertaken by permission of the Countess. Few open spaces exist within the woods; most of the farmland lies in the region around Eonach and along the Herbenoir river. The majority of villagers are serfs; farmers, craftsmen, hunters and foresters bound in service to the local lords. The few merchants that live in the area reside in the city of Rocmort and the town expanding around the abbey of Eonach.

Val-du-Loup lies close to the linguistic divide between the Romance and the Germanic languages. Most of its inhabitants use the Langue d'oil (or Old French) and Frankish, an Old High German dialect.

The Ardennes forests are infamous for their large population of wolves (generally referred to as „the plague“). The Loup river takes its name from the French word for wolf.

## The RULING FAMILIES

Politics among nobles were family games. Making sure that there are suitable heirs, increasing the size of their lands and securing peace through propitious marriages, all this was part of the wheeling and dealings between the powerful families of the Loup valley.

The following is an overview of the most influential families in the valley.

### Rocmort

- ❖ Current head: Countess Sybill de Rocmort.
- ❖ Seat: Rocmort Castle.
- ❖ Liège Lord: the German King.
- ❖ Coat of Arms: a crowned griffin.

### Countess Sybill



The only daughter of a Lorraine count, Sybill was married to the Count of Rocmort when she was thirteen. He died when she was twenty, and her father (together with other nobles) arranged another marriage to the then Count of Sainspritz, Hainault. Hainault ran both counties until his death on the battlefield some five years later.

After his death, Sybill decided not to remarry and she began to rule Rocmort and Sainspritz by herself, a fairly unheard-of position for a woman. This led to a military stand-off between her and her brother-in-law, Arnault, who claimed both counties for himself. Following the intervention of the Emperor, it was decided that Sybill should become Countess of Rocmort and Arnault become Count of Sainspritz, but that he was to swear fealty to the Countess, as was Aran de Vaguerre, newly elevated from Baron to Count. The Emperor became liege lord for the whole valley. Faced with the prospect of invading imperial troops, Sybill and Arnault grudgingly choose to abide by the Emperor's decision.

As Countess of Rocmort, Sybill owns most of the lands in the Val-du-Loup; and by order of the Emperor, the other two Counts in the valley are her vassals and swear loyalty to her. She is thus the first among equals. She has chosen as her coat-of-arms the griffin, representing valor and strength, set over the green and black of the Ardennes forests. Her motto is *Deo Volente*, "by the will of God."

Sybil is head-strong and an authoritative figure, as she has to be in this man's world. She is also very pious, to the point of intolerance towards any pre-Christian traditions and superstitions. She is funding





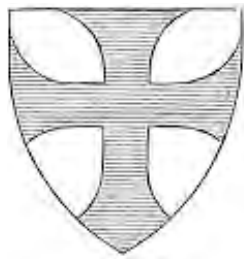
several new monasteries in remote areas and encourages the monks to go out and push for the removal of all pagan traditions.

In these uncertain times, she has had to fight several wars already, most against the Count of Luxembourg or his vassals, but also some against the Prince-Bishop of Liège; others further afield at the bequest of the German Emperor, her liege lord. While she does not ride into battle herself, she has overseen the planning and has proven herself to be a great strategist.

She is in her mid-thirties and has two teenage sons, Edouard and Henri from her first husband; and a daughter, Ermesinde, from her second husband. As tradition warrants, she is not overly involved in the education of the children, leaving this to her dedicated staff. Her oldest son, Edouard, has recently been sent off to the Count of Vaguerre for further training; while Ermesinde is living in a nunnery near Sainsprit.

## Sainsprit

- ❖ Current head: Arnault de Sainsprit.
- ❖ Seat: Castle Hauberc.
- ❖ Liège Lord: Countess Sybill.
- ❖ Coat of Arms: a cross.



The County of Sainsprit is situated in the broad Herbenoir valley, which is more fertile than the Loup valley and provides much of the grain for the Val-du-Loup region; making the Counts of Sainsprit the richest family in the region.

Recently, Sainsprit has frequent border clashes with the Chevalier d'Inodin over the fertile territories in the Herbenoir valley.

The Sainsprit family members are:

- ❖ Count Arnault de Sainsprit, one of the members of Sybill's Council of Nobles
- ❖ Countess Clothilde, his wife
- ❖ Arban de Sainsprit, their son (vanished and presumed dead)
- ❖ Émerault, their daughter, who at 14 is one of the more sought-after brides in the region

- ❖ Abbot Petronius of Munoit Abbey, Arnault's younger brother.

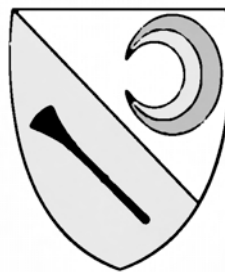
## Arnault, Count of Sainsprit

Arnault is middle aged but still fit, a veteran of several wars, relatively cultivated and very arrogant. He employs a great many people in varied jobs, but makes sure that they are the 'proper' sort: good Christians, good at what they're doing, and loyal to Sainsprit first and Rocmort second.

Arnault is member of Countess Sybill's Council of Nobles, but the two seldom agree. The old animosities remain, and Arnault suspects Sybill (or one of her family) of being behind the disappearance of his eldest son, Arban. The young man vanished a few years ago and no trace of him was ever found, despite a frantic search by the Count. His daughter Émerault, who is fourteen, is his declared successor, although the Count has not given up hope of finding Arban again, or of fathering another son. Meanwhile, Arnault is holding off the frequent proposals he receives to betroth his daughter to the sons of some of the most renowned noble houses of the Kingdom.

## Vaguerre

- ❖ Current head: Count Aran de Vaguerre.
- ❖ Seat: Castle Basbois.
- ❖ Liege lord: Countess Sybill.
- ❖ Coat of Arms: crescent moon and trumpet.



Count Aran de Vaguerre has become the third most important political figure in the valley. Only recently elevated from Baron to the rank of Count by the Emperor himself, he has sworn fealty to the Countess Sybill, as the Emperor required him to, and so far he has proven a loyal ally to Sybill.

Aran's daughter Isabelle is Sybill's lady-in-waiting; while his brother Reynault is a prospective constable for the County of Rocmort. The County of Vaguerre is large and prosperous, and Aran has been building up an army to rival that of Rocmort and Sainsprit.

## Aran, Count of Vaguerre

Aran is a born politician: intelligent, arrogant, a schemer and tactician. As a member of Sybill's Council of Nobles, he has gained a great influence in shaping the politics of the County, and is pushing for a more aggressive stance against their neighbors whom he sees as being too disrespectful of Rocmort's borders. He is less concerned with the spiritual well-being of the county's citizens, and has little tolerance with the Countess' endeavors to push Christianity into the last forgotten corner of the Ardennes (an opinion he doesn't make public, but nonetheless shares with a select few of his fellow nobles).

He sees himself as a political strategist, and would like his brother Reynault take over the role of military strategist, pushing aside the Countess' constable, Roger de Padin.

Despite his age - he's in his mid-fifties - he appears energetic and physically active. He is known and feared for his uncontrollable fits of anger, which have led him to kill in blind fury. He is tall and powerfully built, and a master swordsman, thanks to the lifelong training he received from his mentor, Pieter von Schakel. He's also a formidable rider, and many see in him a true knight.

Aran has had two sons, both of whom died, one of a sickness when an infant, the other one more recently on a hunting accident. Aran's wife Agnes died when giving birth to Isabelle.

## Isabelle de Vaguerre

Daughter of Aran, Count de Vaguerre. She is a lady-in-waiting in the service of the Countess Sybill de Rocmort, and her father's spy at court.

She is headstrong and sly, and every inch her father's daughter. She reports every fact of Sybill's personal life back to her father.

Isabelle is extremely loyal to her father and obeys his commands to the word. She considers herself his heir, although she knows that her father doesn't see it that way, and that he is likely to marry again in order to have more sons. The knowledge of this is putting her loyalty to great tests. So far, she isn't questioning her duty, however.

Isabelle is, like her father, tall and very good looking. She has long black hair and a fair, almost albino-like complexion - a sign of great beauty. She is

highly educated, reads and writes and speaks several languages; she is also an experienced archer and rider. She appears very devoted to Isabelle and has been taking on greater responsibilities in the household and in the education of Sybill's teenage sons, much to the annoyance of Dictus, the chamberlain.

## Reynault de Vaguerre

Younger brother of the Count of Vaguerre, and his Constable. A formidable warrior and knight, he is a veteran of many wars and a great military strategist. A rigid believer in law and order, he is known for meting out just but harsh punishment to anyone disobeying laws or behaving against principles of chivalric behavior; a thankless task in a lawless region such as this.

He is a true and loyal supporter of his older brother Aran, and like Aran he believes that he would make the better Constable for the County of Rocmort.

Reynault never married. Both he and his widowed brother are among the more coveted bachelors in the whole Ardennes region, but neither one appears ready to tie the knot.

# LESSER FAMILIES

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## Beaufort

- ❖ Current head: Baron Roland de Beaufort.
- ❖ Seat: Castle Beaufort, near Trou-du-Loup.
- ❖ Liege lord: Count of Vaguerre.
- ❖ Coat of Arms: a wolf.



As a barony, Beaufort is rather poor, seeing that not much farm land is available up here. Most of the inhabitants are foresters, fishermen or hunters; the latter having a reputation for being skilled wolf hunters. Beaufort is also renowned for having the highest density of wolves in the valley, and attacks by wolf packs on travelers are

frequent. Not surprisingly, there are frequent rumors about werewolves haunting this part of the woods.

Roland de Beaufort is the nominal head of the Beaufort clan, but everyone believes his wife, Baroness Arina, to be the real power behind the throne; while the role of her mother, Lady Nara, who also resides in castle Beaufort, is both unclear and unsettling to most outsiders. Arina recently gave birth to a boy, Richard.

## **Roland and Arina, Baron and Baroness of Beaufort**

Beaufort is the barony to which much of the land along the upper Loup river belongs. Roland is quite old, and Arina quite young, but for all their obvious differences they get along well. A few years ago, Arina attracted the attention of the old Baron whose offer she accepted when he proposed to her. Roland, whose first wife died without bearing him a heir, already believed himself to be the last of the Beauforts. Thus he is overjoyed in having found both a beautiful wife and a heir, Richard; and he is quite content in letting his wife and her mother run the barony.

Roland is an old man, experienced in the ways of the world, and not easy to fool. He knows he is being manipulated by his wife to do her bidding, but he has reached a stage in his life where he doesn't care, seeing that they both have a common goal in making sure that their son will inherit more land and more power than they presently own. Physically frail, Roland nevertheless has kept a sharp mind; and in dealing with the outside world, Arina is happy to let him take centre stage; she knows him to be a shrewd negotiator. In all decisions regarding the Barony, Roland is happy to let his wife have her ways.

It is under Arina's rule that the barony has been beefing up its defenses. The castle has had a moat and second ring of walls installed lately. They have hired mercenaries for their army and instituted the draft for all men living on their lands. At the same time, Arina is trying to turn stark Castle Beaufort into a more luxurious home. Increasing taxes, she has used the additional income to acquire goods and personnel more befitting a Baroness. At the same time, she has also shown herself to be a courageous leader as she herself has led her army on skirmishes with cantankerous neighbors or daring raiders (although she tends to stay away from the fighting proper).

It is an open secret that Arina is a witch, and a member of the Last Covenant. She has sworn to the Church (and more specifically, to Father Aramé) that she has cut all ties with the covenant, and has denounced her old ways as wrong and sinful, whereupon she was pardoned and declared a good Christian; but people in Beaufort and Trou-du-Loup don't believe any of those claims. Father Aramé is keeping an eye on her, and has sworn the local priest, Father Claude, to report any suspicious activity on her part; but so far, she has failed to display any sign of her meddling in the forbidden arts.

## **Lady Nara**

Nara is the mother of Baroness Arina of Beaufort. Born a commoner, she moved into Castle Beaufort along with her daughter after Arina's marriage to the Baron. Nara used to be a castle servant, tending the Baron's gardens, and making an additional living by selling potions and herbs for all kinds of ills, real or imagined. Some claim that she kept her best charm for the Baron whom she made fall in love with and marry her daughter.

Nara used to be liked well enough in the village, but since becoming the Lady Nara, she has turned haughty and arrogant. She now refuses to exercise her old trade and has stopped treating the ills of the common townspeople. She does lend her services to the few noble ladies who call upon her - but not many do call, as most fellow nobles find the Beauforts very common indeed, not the sort to hang out with. So basically Nara is liked by very few people, just like her daughter. But Nara likes things that way - it gives her a kind of fool's freedom that very few women enjoy.

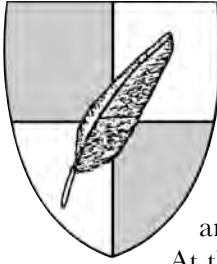
She is getting old but is still going strong. Her fancy dresses do not quite succeed in hiding the strong frame and the tanned skin of a woman used to hard physical labor and to the outdoors. She is enamored with her grandson and is intent on raising the boy *her* way, and that includes teaching him about the old ways. Nara is one of the few people in the County to still venerate the old Celtic gods which very few people remember.

## **Roifâ**

- ❖ Current head: Baron Jehan de Roifâ.
- ❖ Seat: Roifâ Manor.



- ❖ Liège Lord: Count de Sainsprit.
- ❖ Coat of Arms: a feather.



Bernard de Roifâ, Jehan's father, was the younger of the two sons of the Sieur de Roifâ. He entered the Benedictine monastery in Rocmort at an early age and became one of the most devout and studious of the congregation.

At the age of 25, he left Rocmort and travelled through Western Europe all the way down to Catholic Spain. When venturing into the Caliphate of Cordoba in order to re-convert locals who had become Muslims, he was caught and made a prisoner. He was later taken to Cordoba where he spent several years doing hard labour in a quarry. While a prisoner, he kept requesting writing materials so that he could pen a letter to his brothers in Rocmort; and it was thus that he came to the attention of the local Caliph. One of the Caliph's men learned that Bernard was a well-read man who knew both Latin and other languages. Bernard was transferred to the Caliph's household. Henceforth he worked for the Caliph, helping with the correspondence and teaching the ruler's men French and Latin. In return, he was allowed to study Arabic, ancient Greek and the Koran. He had access to texts by Greek philosophers whose works had disappeared in Western civilization. He became fluent in Arabic and eventually became a specialist in translating Latin and Greek texts into Arabic.

Eventually, Bernard converted to Islam, although to his dying day he refused to discuss his motivations for doing so. It did gain him his freedom, and from then on he worked as a paid secretary to the Caliph. He eventually married a local Spanish woman and they had a son, Jehan.

After Bernard had spent some twenty-five years in Spain, word reached him that his elder brother had died childless, and that Bernard had inherited his brother's lands. With the Caliph's blessing, he took his wife and son back to Val-du-Loup.

Bernard, now middle aged, returned to his homeland to find himself an outcast - a renegade monk who had abandoned his faith. Soon, however, his curious fate became known in the region, and scholars and local lords became interested in him and his abilities to understand so many languages. He was invited to stay at monasteries and courts all over France and the German Kingdom. He started

working for monasteries, translating old texts from Greek or Arabic into Latin. He also wrote a series of philosophical and historical treaties of his own. Soon, he had found a handful of promoters who allowed him to live quite comfortably. As he wished to keep a certain amount of independence he preferred not to stay permanently at the different courts or monasteries but remained living in his manor in Val-du-Loup.

It was at home, however, that he was the least respected. The abbey of Munoit in Rocmort, to whom he initially belonged, never forgave him for converting to Islam. With the support of the Prince-Bishop of Liège, the Abbot used all his influence with the rulers in Rocmort to have the renegade monk chastised by local authorities and nobles, including his own liege lord, the Count of Sainsprit. The Roifâs became outcasts in their own homeland.

The only exception was the independent-minded abbey of Eonach, which became one of Bernard's, and later Jehan's, steady employers. It was in large part due to these two men that the Abbey claimed its fame for having one of the greatest collections of ancient and precious texts in Christendom. In return, the Abbey acts as the Roifâs' protector, making sure that no persecution takes place.

The years of manual labour had left Bernard thin, wiry and strong and he had gained permanent tan, which in those days was considered a sign of the lower classes. He died at the age of 60. He never refuted his newfound faith and also raised his son Jehan as a Muslim.

The Roifâ manor features an impressive library of original books collected by both Bernard and Jehan. It also includes copies of many of the texts translated by the two over the years. Additionally, they have assembled a thick catalogue referencing important tomes kept in monasteries throughout Europe. Jehan has a strict policy of not lending out books. He pays well in money or services to gain new books or scrolls.

*[Note: if researching sorcery spells in Jehan's library, the INT multiplier for learning the spell is 2 for characters literate in Latin, and 3 for characters literate in Arabic.]*

The Roifâ household is as unorthodox as Jehan himself. Being an outsider, he gathers other outcasts around him: scholars as well as travelers, adventurers and runaways of both sexes; and usually also a fair number of artists, bards, and entertainers. Thus the Roifâ household is a good rallying point for a band



of enterprising adventurers who do not quite fit the mold of medieval society. Jehan has a constant need of armed guards, clerks, gamekeepers, gardeners, translators, illustrators and entertainers. He hires anyone as long as he feels that he can trust them.

The most prominent of the constant members of the Roifâ manor are:

- ❖ Abdul, the old majordomo, originally from the Spanish Caliphates
- ❖ his wife Anna, a Christian, also from Spain; she oversees the household staff.
- ❖ Grigor, a Hungarian, the (aging) captain of the household guard.

## Jehan, Baron de Roifâ

Jehan, Sieur de Roifâ, a typical scholar, pale and overweight. He is also completely bald. Like his father before him, Jehan is a widely known scholar and translator of Arabic texts. And as such is a frequent guest in monasteries and noble courts throughout France, Northern Italy and the German Empire, but as a Muslim continues to be an outcast at home. Even though he lives a secluded life, Jehan is willing to help any persons who come to him for help. He may even undertake to teach individuals to read and to write - an act which is illegal, as only the clergy and the aristocracy is allowed to be literate.

# OTHER NOBLES

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## Sybill's Council of Nobles

The Council of Nobles is a group of noblemen who assist the rulers in governing their domains. They are nominated by the ruler; apart from the four Court officials who are always on the Council (and whose title is hereditary), it is entirely up to the ruler to determine how many members there are, and who it is to be.

The five Court officials are:

**The Seneschal:** He is nominally the replacement for the Countess as head of state whenever she is too busy in politics abroad or is for whatever reason not interested in governing the County. The

Seneschal also presides over the Noble's Court of Justice which has to judge all crimes or claims involving nobles. Count Arnault de Sainspritt currently holds this post.

**The Chamberlain:** The Chamberlain is the head of the household, organizing the daily life at court. At the same time he receives the petitioners and visitors to the castle, screening them before they are led to the Countess. The post is hereditary and has been in the Rochefort family for a few generations. Dictus, the current holder of the title, has skillfully used this prerogative to extend his own power, and it is widely known among nobles that a few coins in Dictus' pockets are likely to open the doors to the Countess much more easily. Dictus may have overdone it though, there are rumors that his days at Court are numbered, and that the family of Rochefort may lose the title of Chamberlain. Should this happen, feuds between the Rocheforts and their successors are almost inevitable.

**The Standard Bearer:** A largely ceremonial post which bears little responsibility but many privileges, this title has been granted to the family of Laroche for their continued support for the Counts. The family of the Barons of Laroche have always been very influential in Rocmort, and although they may not always have been the most honest of men, their loyalty towards their liege lords has earned them pardons again and again. The current Baron, Rougeard, is no exception, although his patience is often tested as his own hawkish views tend to clash with the pacifist tendencies of the Countess.

**The Marshal:** Originally this post denoted the supervisor of the horse stables, but later was modified to describe the commander of the ruler's cavalry. The post is held by Sieur Guillaume de Maccard (detailed below).

**The Constable:** the commander-in-chief of the Count or Countess' army. This post is currently held by Roger de Padin (see below).

Apart from these permanent positions, the current Council of Nobles also includes more nobles and clergy from all parts of the country, including the Count of Vaguerre; as well as Petronius, the abbot of the Munoit abbey.

## Sieur Roger de Padin

Sieur Roger de Padin is the Constable, i.e. the commander of Countess Sybill's army, and a mem-

ber of her Council of Nobles. He also oversees her clandestine group of investigators, the *Hubertus Chase*.

He's a very smart man and not afraid to tackle issues head-on. He's extremely devoted to Countess Sybill - some say he is quite enamored with her. He has made more than a few enemies, and there have already been several attempts on his life.

### **Guillaume de Maccard**

De Maccard is the Countess' Marshal, that is, the commander of her cavalry. He is an unscrupulous, not very likable zealot of a man; but also an inspired military strategist.

De Maccard is the main force behind the Countess' drive to eradicate the last vestiges of paganism by force. He has no scruples to sacrifice innocents in order to achieve his goal. Of all the Countess' men, Guillaume is the most reviled.

### **Rougeau de Laroche**

The Laroche family traditionally holds the post of Standard Bearer on the Council of Nobles. Their power and their wealth does not stem from the lands they hold (a manor and some farmlands outside Rocmort), but the posts they've been holding for generations, and the influence they have gained in the process. It is well known that Rougeau is a man to be friendly to if one wants to catch the Countess' ear.

### **Baron Pieter von Schakel**

Pieter and Sigur von Schakel were two brothers who had been in the service of the Count of Vaguerre for many years; Pieter, a soldier who eventually ended his career commanding the Count's troops, and Sigur, an ex-priest who was something of a 'spiritual' adviser to Vaguerre. Five years ago, the Count made Pieter a Baron and granted the brothers a barony of their own, albeit a small and rather poor one.

There, Sigur lived a reclusive life while his brother tried to keep up the lifestyle he had got used to at the Vaguerre court by becoming a robber baron. Sigur died a few years ago. Pieter lives with his men, some maids and the children (all daughters) he sired on the maids in a run-down mansion in the

middle of the forest, cut off from any of the main roads.

A very strong bear of a man, short tempered and a brute, he is much feared by his men and his servants. He has spent his life in the shadow of his brother Sigur, and that seemed all he ever wanted, but it may also explain much of his bad humor. It is with a certain pride that he took on the title and lands conferred to him by the Count de Vaguerre, even if the fiefdom is small and poor.

The barony was cut from the lands of the Baron de Beaufort, and the two have never been easy neighbors, even if a peace of some sort was forced upon them by the Count of Vaguerre.

### **Bernard de Sigeur, a Master of the Knights Templar**

(for use in a High Medieval Setting)

Provincial master of the Knights Templar, head of the Templar's chapter house in Epeedor. A seasoned warrior, survivor of the battle of Hattin and the fall of Jerusalem, and by all accounts an intelligent, wise man. Tends to keep his thoughts to himself, which has earned him the nickname Hermit. Overcautious at times, he has ordered the cloister of Epeedor to be heavily fortified, a fact which has earned him the distrust and ire of his direct neighbors.

The rest of the Knights Templar living in Epeedor see in him a father figure, vacillating between over-protectiveness and a certain impatience with the lack of maturity of some of his young knights.

### **Vasco da Silva, a Knight Templar**

(for use in a High Medieval Setting)

Vasco is a young man of Portuguese origin. For years he was a knight in the service of various rulers in Portugal and Spain until he joined the Knights Templar and went to Jerusalem to help in the defense of the Crusader Kingdoms. He was ordered to Europe a few years ago together with Bernard de Sigeur and other fellow knights to set up the provincial chapter house of Epeedor in the Ardennes.

Despite his relative youth, he is recognized as an authority figure by his fellow knights, and their Mas-



ter, Bernard de Sigeur. He is prone to a certain recklessness, on the battlefield and off, which is why Bernard has yet to promote him to Marshal, which he would like to do.

What others see as recklessness is, for Vasco, a more complex and more troubling state of mind. In battle, or in other stressful situations, his mind tends to "wander", and he perceives himself as someone else, the ghost of a hero from times past who takes over his soul and his mind and controls his actions and his thoughts. Lately, Vasco has been seeking help, and with the blessing of Bernard, he has been seeing a person not officially tolerated by the Church or by the Order. When meeting with this mysterious helper, the young knight makes sure that he travels unseen once he enters the Black Heart. His frequent solitary outings have raised the suspicion of his fellow knights and others as well, and have earned him the nickname *Ghost Knight*.

## Gerald Augur, an Unfree Knight

Gerald is a 'minister', i.e. an unfree knight, in charge of Castle Gardeloup. Gerald Augur is a veteran warrior who has been in the service of the Counts of Sainsprit for all of his life. He is an experienced army commander, maybe not a very imaginative one, but bright and reliable. He is getting on in years and the long years on the battle field are beginning to take their toll - he's not quite the energetic warrior he once was.

As an unfree knight, Gerald is tied to the Count of Sainsprit and his lands, unable to make a living elsewhere or to retire if or when he would like to. Gardeloup is Gerald's to administer, and he makes a good living from doing so, being entitled to a large share of the surrounding land's income, but this late in life, Gerald is earning to become a freeman. Arnault, the current Count of Sainsprit, has promised to set him free, 'once the tensions with Hauterre are over and done with.' A day which Gerald fears may never come; on the contrary: Gerald expects the border clashes to escalate into an outright war any day now, realizing that he and his men will be in the thick of it when that happens.

## King Schadai

Schadai is the leader and self-proclaimed king of a tribe of gnomes. He lives with his extended family in the underground remains of a Roman villa close to an abandoned and forgotten ore mine. Most members of the king's tribe live in the mine, and it is quite impossible to say how large the King's following really is.

The self styled king looks like a wise and bent old man; physically weak and with a constant cough. His mind is sharp as ever: seemingly a very erudite person who has read many texts in all sorts of languages, he loves to talk philosophy and especially to deconstruct the writings of the old Greek authors. There is no denying, though, that Schadai is physically weak and possibly dying.

His subjects, who seem to limit themselves to his tribe, speak of him as a man of great valor, a lion amongst gnomes; who over the years has protected his people from fiendish goblins and from human alike. Schadai has several sons, one of whom is likely to follow him as king, but they tend to be overindulgent and well-fed, and rather lazy; apart from the youngest son, Kadai, who is quite clever and alert, but displays tendencies towards a rather ruthless form of tyranny. His older brothers claim that he is in fact a changeling, a human who was raised in their midst instead of their brother.

# ASSORTED CLERGY

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## Father Aramé de Saint Desmere

An imposing figure, Father Aramé, tall and heavy, likes to travel in stately Church garments of purple and red, high upon his steady black mare. He is the envoy of the Prince-Bishop of Liège, sent to the farthest reaches of the Val-du-Loup forests to take care of his Excellency's flock and to keep an eye on the remote clergy whom the Church suspects of being tempted to stray off the Good Lord's path. In short: Father Aramé is the Bishop's watchdog who travels throughout the country to check up on local

priests to make sure they stick to the scriptures, lead a pious and celibate life and keep their parishioners in check. Father Aramé's appearance in a village is usually the source of great concern, with the villagers not trying to show their nervousness as they take down lucky charms, hide the black cats in the closet and turn out more numerous than usual to mass.

Father Aramé never misses an occasion to give a stern and frightening sermon in the local church, to where serfs and masters alike are summoned to listen to Aramé's dark predictions of the sombre fate that awaits those that show little faith and fail to pay their taxes. Father Aramé makes it clear who the enemies of the Church are: those that follow the heathen ways and put their trust in superstitions rather than in the Lord's prayers. All who use charms are witches, and witches are but the agents of Satan, out to destroy the work of God.

Father Aramé is a dangerous man: his justice is often wanton and not always motivated by faith. He currently inhabits a mansion south of Rocmort which he took over after condemning its previous owner to ex-communication and exile on trumped up charges of heresy. He is vain and arrogant, and attracted to all symbols of power and wealth.

The envoy's guard is made up of twenty well armed and armored soldiers, led by a sergeant called Alan, a good man who has a hard time hiding his discontent at being bullied around by the priest.

## Venerius, Abbot of Eonach

Venerius is a man aware of the power he wields. Driven by a fervent faith, he is a great supporter of Countess Sybill's drive to eradicate paganism once and for all from these regions. Under his supervision, monasteries and convents are being set up all over the Val-du-Loup region, which he views as the last outpost of barbarism in the Holy Roman Empire. He is a skilled diplomat he knows how to deal with nobles, common folk, and a City Council that respects the monastery's power but also likes to run the city on its own. He also knows how to handle the Counts of the region, who, for all the support they give the monastery, are not above trying to lay their hands on choice pieces of the monastery's lands.

More delicate is the power struggle with the Bishop-Prince of Liège, who is the nominal head of the clergy in Val-du-Loup, while Abbot Venerius sees himself as the true head and shepherd of the parish

priests throughout the County. On his order, envoys from the monastery make regular rounds to check up on the local clergy and make sure they stick to Church regulations. They often have to contend with Father Aramé who sees the monks as rivals, not allies.

Venerius is a man with large power, but he never abuses it - he uses it strictly within the terms of his responsibility, which is to spread and strengthen Christianity. He is neither corrupt nor looking for personal material gains, although he does enjoy his comforts and luxuries.

The abbot is a large man with a regal stature. He can be pompous in official ceremonies or humble and jovial among peers whom he considers his equals. He's proud and at times quick to anger, but he's also a skilled diplomat who has settled more than one row between feuding noblemen.

## Brother Marco

Brother Marco is a young monk in his middle twenties, who left his native city Florence as a 15 year old, traveling the far and wide of the Mediterranean coast before joining the Order. Today, in his mid-twenties, he is one of the most accomplished fleecers in the region, collecting the sheep, goat or more rarely calf skins out of which the monks create the parchments on which the Eonach Bibles are written. He regularly wanders from town to town, offering his services in return for animal hides to take back to the monastery; he also serves as a middleman for selling finished parchments to monasteries and convents all over the country.

Because of his travels, Brother Marco knows more about the outside world than most of his fellow brothers. He has become intrigued with some of the pagan rituals he has encountered, and tries to learn as much as possible about the old "art" of healing. Although he is sympathetic to the old ways, he still refrains from dabbling in magic as this would bring him in conflict with his order. In his mind, he has yet to reconcile the magic that he observes with his faith, without doubting the power of the former and the truth of the latter.

## Godwine the Hermit

Godwine is an erudite monk, the former abbot of a monastery in the British isles, who became disillu-

sioned with the Church's politics and the wealth they accumulated instead of helping the poor. Leaving his monastery, he travelled the length and width of Europe before settling down in a hermitage on the banks of a small lake in the depth of the forest. He tends his garden and meditates, and from time to time receives guests and dispenses worldly and religious counsel. He exchanges herbs and vegetables from his garden for fowl and deer.

Godwine speaks a number of languages and is an expert in theology, philosophy and history. As a critic of the Church, he has encountered the wrath of Father Aramé (who hasn't?) but enjoys the patronage of the monks of Eonach. One of his more frequent visitors is young Brother Marco, who teaches him Italian, and in return, learns from him the wisdom of the philosophers of old.

## **Agnes, Mother Superior of Saint Clarissa**

Mother Agnes is a deeply devout and highly intelligent woman. As the oldest daughter of a French bishop, she is used to giving orders and being in control. She is efficient and generally just, but has little tolerance for incompetence and is feared for her temper which flares time and again. This temper has earned her the nickname 'Mother Dragon' within the religious community.

Her monastery, Saint Clarissa, lies in the Froideau valley, in the middle of the troubled region between Hauterre and Sainsprit.

# The COMMON FOLK

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## **Henricus Porticus**

Henricus Porticus was born Henry, and his family's nickname was "of the Gate" as for generations they were the keepers of the key to the south gate of Rocmort. But these days it has become fashionable to latinize names, and so Henry became Henricus, and "of the Gate" became Porticus. Henricus is the third member of his family (after his uncle and

grandfather) to hold an influential position on the Council. A very influential position in fact, as the Porticus family is one of the richest families in the city of Rocmort with enough capital amassed to buy power and thus to generate even more wealth. Henricus is an ambitious man; and his aims surpass by far what he considers feasible within the constraints of the Council, and so he has begun to spread his wings, setting himself as a merchant and a trader in exotic goods, securing for himself several exclusive contracts with the city to bring in foreign goods at vastly exaggerated prices.

The fact that he was never one to refuse a loan to anybody who might later be of use has started to pay off of late. Already he is controlling one baron who is hopelessly indebted towards him, and with whose help he has acquired a large plot of land and all those who live on it. And now Rougeau de Laroche, one of the most influential member on the Council of Nobles, has been discretely enquiring about the possibility of receiving a loan; which Henricus has promised him, on condition that Rougeau gets him into favors with the Countess - and a position at court for one of his may relatives.

For a while Henricus was also the City Judge (judges are always named from among the members of the City Council). When he heard rumors that the Court frowned upon his custom to always declare justice in favor of who was the richest ("an outright lie," he used to joke in private, "I never favored the richest of the two parties - only the one that paid me the most"), he had the good sense to resign from his post ("for health reason") before his political career was ruined.

On the Council, Henricus considers himself tough and just - just towards his equals, tough towards those below him. He is never quick to pardon, unless it serves his purpose, and the fact that he is generally hated among the population does not trouble him unduly. He is not a superstitious man, but two things have started to bother him: the fact that he can never venture into the valley at night without meeting one of those cursed black hounds, and the fact that Enigmaticus, the wizard that he sometimes employs for shadier purposes, keeps uttering ominous warnings of undead spirits that wait for him "somewhere out there".

Physically, Henricus is rather overweight and continuously short of breath. He hates to travel and rarely leaves the city. He has enlisted his own small



militia to serve as his bodyguards, and employs a small army of clerks who run his errands for him.

## **Thomas de Foro, a City Judge**

As the city judge of Rocmort, Thomas de Foro treads a thin line between the Countess' wishes, the pressures of his peers on the City Council and his own desire to see justice done. Succeeding Henricus Porticus, whose disdain for the common people was almost proverbial, Thomas has earned much support "from below" for his impartial judgements. At the same time, though, he finds himself exposed to the ire of the City Counselors, chief among them his all too influential predecessor. A city wide rumor has it that the de Foro and Porticus clans have started their own little war for control over the city, one fought with assassins, poisons and slandering.

## **Dierkinn the Inn Keeper**

Dierkinn's tavern lies right by Rocmort's southern gate; he is renowned for his culinary talents not only among travelers but also among locals - noble and common folk alike. Apart from running the most frequented tavern in the city, he is often invited to stay at various castles and cook for the lords' and ladies' pleasures. Dierkinn is a tall, extremely thin young man, and very ugly indeed. He tries to hide his bad skin under a thick layer of white powder, and covers his thin hair, which only grows in patches on his scalp, with a wig. On the whole, his appearance is more ridiculous than frightening.

Dirkinn is a constant source of gossip about anyone he does not work for; however, he is very discrete about all the lords and ladies that he cooks for. Some claim that this is the secret of his success. But those who have eaten of his food know better. There is definitely no finer cook in the valley than Dirkinn the Ugly.

## **Enigmaticus, a Town Wizard**

Enigmaticus likes to think of himself as the official town mage. His neighbors think mostly of him as a pest, but he comes in handy sometimes for getting rid of poltergeists, rats and bed smells, and thus he is widely tolerated. City officials have requested his services before, and in return they keep an eye on

him, playing down his magical abilities whenever a church official thinks him dangerous.

Everyone knows that the wizard is walking a thin line - one of these days, he may fatally incur the wrath of a religious zealot, and the City Council no longer be able to protect him.

## **Serena the Hermit**

A few miles upriver from where the Froideau brook flows into the Loup river, at the bottom of the Blackrider Cliff (a rock along the brook where on certain nights the shadow of a galloping knight can be seen moving across its side) stands an old shack where Serena lives. With her grey hair and withered face, her erstwhile beauty can only be guessed, and her Southern origin is no longer obvious. She is regarded as something of a holy woman, guarding a small chapel dedicated to Saint Beatrix of the Cold Waters. She is also known to have visions, granted to her by her saint, as she claims. Although people take her for slightly crazed, they often visit her when they need counsel or help. Serena has a special talent for finding people lost in the woods. She often displays a certain bitterness when people come to thank her for having found their beloved - "I can find anyone but my own love" she keeps saying.

When Serena was a young girl in Spain, she met Ludwig, a young German knight who was fighting against the Muslims in Cordoba. The two fell in love and married after she converted to Christianity. He soon left for his old home, promising to send for her soon; but he never did. Finally, tired of waiting, the young girl spent years of wandering through Europe until she finally made it to Clève castle where her husband claimed he lived - only to find the castle belonging to someone else. None of the locals were able to tell her who her husband might be, and to this day she has not found him.

Blackrider cliff was the place that Ludwig had told her about - it was his favorite hangout as a child, he used to say. So Serena put up quarters there, fixing up Ludwig's old shack and the old decayed chapel, and under the guise of the chapel warden continues to live under the cliff.

Serena has never really embraced the Christian faith, and what had first been a show to be accepted as Ludwig's wife became a show to stay alive. Pilgrims to the chapel and grateful locals whom she helps out with her "visions" bring her food, as do

foresters, hunters, wolf leaders and other frowned upon individuals whom she helps when help is needed without asking questions. The forest helps her too, she knows, but she also realizes that one day the forest will ask its toll for keeping her safe and alive. And one day, she fears, that saint and that god in whose name she has been claiming to act may exert their vengeance. But maybe before that happens, she will have found Ludwig.

Slowly, without anyone ever making a conscious decision, Serena became the leader of the Last Covenant. The other women simply came to rely on her council and her guidance, and although she rarely leaves her hermitage, she is kept informed about what goes on in the villages and towns in and around Val-du-Loup.

## THE NEIGHBORS

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### Clève

- ❖ Current head: Count Elbert.
- ❖ Seat: Castle Clève.
- ❖ Liege Lord: none.
- ❖ Coat of Arms: lion rampant.



County Clève would not be a special county were it not for the fact that it remains one of the last independent enclaves within the German Kingdom - one of a handful of nobles who have not sworn fealty the Emperor.

Castle Clève is nested precariously on a high rock above where the narrow and twisting rivers Loup and Froideau meet.

The Clève family includes Count Elbert and his wife Beatrix and their twin sons, Konrad and Rainer, now in their early twenties. The Clèves also have a teenage daughter, Muriel, who is currently residing in a nunnery near Liège.

### Count Elbert of Clève

Elbert is a man in his early fifties, he is getting old, but is still a man to be reckoned with. He is a pious man but not overly zealous. Elbert has close ties to the Lords of Vianden, another independent County on Luxembourg's eastern border, as well as to the Bishop of Trier, the Count of Luxembourg's traditional enemy throughout the years. It cannot be denied that these links have much to do with the fact that no open attempt to take over Clève has been started by Count Siegfried.

### Countess Beatrix of Clève

Elbert's wife Beatrix used to be a member of the Last Covenant, but has kept her distance from her fellow witches once she married Elbert. Beatrix has more than once used her skills to help townspeople and farmers, and as a result she is regarded as something of a saint by the locals, who think of her little tricks as miracles (as does her husband).

### Konrad and Rainer of Clève

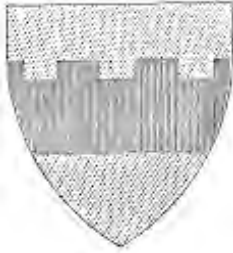
Elbert and Beatrix have two sons, twins, Konrad and Rainer, now in their early twenties. Elbert and Beatrix have decided to keep secret who of the two is the firstborn (Rainer is) and promised that the most worthy will be the heir. Rainer, who inherited some of his mother's sorcerous talents, intuitively knows that he is the firstborn. He is the least liked by his father, although his mother favors him. Knowing that he may be the loser in the contest with his brother, he has contacted Arnold de Laroche, one of the most influential members on the Council of Nobles in Rocmort. Arnold has promised Rainer military help if after Elbert's death Clève should fall to Konrad if Rainer gives up Clève's claim for independence and becomes a vassal of the Countess of Rocmort. Rainer has agreed to this trade but insists that he will not move against his father.

Konrad on the other hand is determined to keep Clève independent. Although he possesses his father's physical fitness and knack with weapons, he has only little of the old man's diplomatic skills - he is rash and often acts without thinking, a character flaw which has on several occasions created strife between the Clèves and their neighbors.

## Hautterre

- ❖ Current Head: Count Philippe
- ❖ Seat: Castle Hauterre
- ❖ Liege Lord: The Prince-Bishop of Liège
- ❖ Coat of Arms: a tower.

### Count Philippe de Hauterre



The Count de Hauterre is potentially the most dangerous external foe of the County of Rocmort. The ambitious nobleman is a schemer and a tactician, and an avid empire builder. While the County of Hauterre is rather vast, it's not exactly a rich domain, seeing that it lacks farmlands. Philippe therefore has had his eyes on the fertile Herbenoir valley for a while now, and the signs are there that he is preparing to go to war over it with the Count de Sainsprit.

At the same time, however, he has started entreaties with Sainsprit, going so far even to negotiate a marriage between their adolescent children, Émerault and Hughes. It's anybody's guess whether this is an elaborate ruse or whether Hauterre is sincere.

Some think Philippe is stalling for time while he tries to win the support of the Prince-Bishop for this endeavor. Specifically, he would like the Bishop to engage the services of the Chevalier d'Ascalon in mounting a dual attack on the independent territory: Hauterre forces from the South and Montfort forces from the North. With Rocmort and Sainsprit beleaguered, the fate of the counties of the Herbenoir valley would be sealed. So far, however, the Chevalier d'Ascalon has refused to be drawn into an attack on Rocmort. The mercenary knight has built a reputation for being a masterless knight for hire, and he prefers his battles to be fought far from his own domains.

Philippe is increasing the pressure on the Prince-Bishop to get the go-ahead for an invasion of Sainsprit. The Emperor, who is the Countess' liege lord, is currently busy keeping his possessions in Southern Italy under control, and the Count wants to use the monarch's absence to fulfill his plans.

The Count de Hauterre is a man in his fifties. He's large of build, with erstwhile muscle turning to fat. He was an expert fighter and rider, but his many battle wounds have left him a physical cripple: he's lost his left eye in battle, his shield arm is paralyzed and useless, and he's been lame since his right knee cap was crushed by an enemy's battle hammer.

Philippe deems himself a good Christian, but at the same time he is full of old superstitions; he's also full of pent-up rage, which he takes out on his wife, children and servants. His current wife Isidore is his third, and this is his longest lasting marriage to date. She married him at age thirteen, bore him his first son, Hughes, at age fifteen. She is now twenty eight but looking forty and has born him one child a year, only four of which lived beyond a few days.

## Inodin

- ❖ Current Head: Chevalier Godefroi d'Inodin
- ❖ Seat: Castle Inodin
- ❖ Liege Lord: Count de Hauterre
- ❖ Coat of Arms: lion crawling.

### Chevalier Godefroi d'Inodin



As a knight, Godefroi rules a territory within the County of Hauterre, west of Sainsprit.

Godefroi is known to be a cold hearted, scheming knight with little regard for life. He is a strong and powerful warrior, and resembles his coat-of-arms, a lion, in more ways than one. He is used to getting his ways, more often than not through sheer physical force and brutality. He is feared and hated by his enemies and allies alike, and by none more than by the peasants and serfs working his lands.

Godefroi has gathered the largest army of any noble in the valley, hiring mercenaries from near and far.

### Mathilde d'Inodin

Mathilde is the Chevalier's young wife, his fourth. He likes to marry his brides young, and he also buries them young; none of the girls lived to be older than twenty three. Mathilde is seventeen and has



been Godefroi's wife for two years, during which she has had to put up with constant beatings and brutal sex. She has so far born him no children, and she is afraid that before too long this will prove to be her death sentence.

Mathilde is outgoing and eager for company. She likes to have minstrels and entertainers around her, and dreams of leading a similar life of freedom

## Montfort

- ❖ Administrator: Chevalier Edouard d'Ascalon
- ❖ Seat: Castle Montfort
- ❖ Liege Lord: the Prince-Bishop of Liège
- ❖ Coat of Arms: three crosses.

### Chevalier Edouard d'Ascalon



Edouard, the Knight of Ascalon, is the master (but not the owner) of Castle Montfort, deep in the Black Heart of the Ardennes. Edouard is a knight who fights wars for a living. His *demesne* (domain) includes little farm land and provides only basic income.

Instead, he earns his living through fighting, either for the Prince-Bishop of Liège, or for any one else in the Empire who hires his services. He has assembled a relatively small but highly effective army of experienced mercenaries, riders and foot soldiers alike; feared for their mastery in arms and the quality of their weapons and armor. Additionally, he has created a squadron of lightly armed, fast riders who serve as scouts, skirmishers and messengers

*13th century setting:* Edouard is a former Knight Templar who returned from the Holy Land a few years ago with a group of loyal, experienced warriors, survivors of the battles against Saladin's armies. Edouard was granted Castle Montfort by the Prince-Bishop of Liège. While the territory formally belongs to the Counts of Cracfer, Edouard does not owe fealty to the Count. It is rumored that he is one of the richest knights in the region, and that he hoards riches which he brought back from the Holy Land. There is a lot of speculation, though, just why Edouard left the Knights Templar, and why, despite this, he is favored by the Bishop-Prince.

*Dark Age setting:* Edouard is a former minister, i.e. unfree knight. A few years ago, he has been granted Castle Montfort and its territories by the Prince-Bishop of Liège. The reasons for this are not known - and give rise to much speculation: either the Chevalier has rendered great services to the Bishop-Prince, or else he knows something that the Bishop wants to keep quiet. Others assume that the Chevalier and his men have been posted so close to the border of Rocmort in order to prepare an attack on the County.

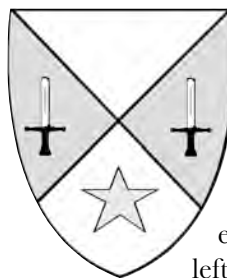
Edouard is liked well enough by the (few) people living on his land: taxes are relatively low, and he does not require the menfolk to serve in his army. People are wary of his soldiers, 'though, and stay clear of them - especially the women.

Edouard is known to be tolerant of the old traditions and doesn't share Rocmort's religious zeal. This has led to a small influx of peasants and escaped serfs from Rocmort leaving their belongings behind and starting a new life in Montfort.

Edouard is a physically imposing figure, tall and broad-shouldered. As a veteran of many wars, he wears innumerable scars. He's also literate and rather well educated, has an outgoing nature but has little tolerance for fools. He's in his middle years, wears his hair and beard cut short, and has a permanent tan from spending many years under the Mediterranean sun.

## Cracfer

- ❖ Current head: Count Guillaume de Cracfer
- ❖ Seat: Castle Cracfer
- ❖ Liege Lord: the Count of Luxembourg
- ❖ Coat of Arms: broken swords and star.



Cracfer used to be, like Clève, one of the last remaining truly independent counties in the Ardennes region; that is, until the Counts of Luxembourg laid their eyes on the domain. At the end of a long, exhausting war that left much of Cracfer's lands ruined, any a great many of his people dead (including both of his sons), the Count of Cracfer surrendered to the forces of the Count of Luxembourg and his allies, which included the Countess Sybill.



# HISTORIC FIGURES

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The Count of Crafer is slowly repairing his domain, getting the planting going and rebuilding the burnt out hamlets and his own castle.

Guillaume is full of anger and desire for revenge. He wishes nothing more than to pay back those whose troops brought so much misery over him and his people, starting with the Countess. However, he knows that in seeking revenge, he is bound to plunge his land to renewed warfare and chaos. Which is why he is looking for a way to settle his scores without recourse to war.

The Count of Crafer used to be a powerful and cunning warrior, but the loss of his sons has left him slightly unbalanced, with a tendency to give in to blind fury rather than relying on strategy.

Crafer's coat-of-arms device used to be a griffin, but since his defeat, Guillaume changed its symbol to a that of two broken swords in memory of his two dead sons.

## Von Bless

- ❖ Current head: Baroness Mildred von Bless, as regent for her minor son Johan.
- ❖ Seat: Castle Haubach.
- ❖ Liege Lord: Count of Luxembourg
- ❖ Coat of Arms: a dragon.



The Bless barony is located east of the lands of the Count of Vaguerre and Count of Clève. The old baron, Egon, provoked border feuds with both Counts in the past, but Mildred, his wife and current ruler, has recently made a deal with the Count of Clève, betrothing Johan to Muriel, the daughter of the Count of Clève, in return for peace and a possible alliance against Rocmort and Sainsprit, should the need arise.

## The Prince-Bishop of Liège

Liège is ruled by a Prince-Bishop, a ruler with both secular and religious powers. The domain is referred to as a Prince-Bishopric. Liège is part of the Holy Roman Empire but enjoys a great amount of independence.

Notger, who became bishop of Liège in 972, was the first to be named prince-bishop in 980. He ruled until his death in 1008. Balderic II succeeded him.

In the 13th century, the Prince-Bishops changed on an almost yearly basis. When Bishop-Prince Raoul died on his return from a crusade in 1191, Albert of Louvain was crowned the same year and assassinated the next; the next two successors lasted but two years each, until one Albert de Cuyck managed to hang on to the title, and life, from 1195 to 1200.

## The Counts of Luxembourg

Luxembourg's founding goes back to 963, when a rich nobleman named Siegfried, a descendant of the Counts of the Ardennes, who owned a large number of spread-out territories in the region, bought a piece of rock on which were nestled the remains of a small Roman castle. The rock was called Bock, and the castle was referred to as Lucilinburhuc, the "small castle". In the years to come, Sigfrid built a large, luxurious (for those times) castle and it became his main siege as he fortified and centralized his belongings, which soon were known as the County of Luxembourg; Sigfrid thus being the first Count.

Throughout the Middle Ages, the Counts of Luxembourg meddled well and often in the politics of the Holy Roman Empire, helping to make and unmake Emperors, striking and breaking alliances and fighting a large number of wars; some of the Counts even became Emperors themselves.

Through contracts, marriages and battles, the country grew, and in the 13th century its territories extended by far its present day borders, reaching into what today is Belgium, France and Germany. Its



Nothern part was made up of the Ardennes; the part around the city of Luxembourg was low rolling hills, largely cleared of woods to make way for farmland, while the southern part (which today belongs to France ) was a large featureless plain.

Siegfried I was Count until his death in 998. Siegfried's wife was purported to be the mythical Melusina, although more reliable historic sources say he married someone called Hedwige.

List of later counts: Henry I, Henry II, Gilbert, Conrad I, Henry III, William I, Conrad II.

Henry IV, called The Blind, who died in 1196 left behind a ten year old daughter, Ermesinde. The

County became a direct possession of the German Emperor who ruled as Count for a year. Eleven year old Ermesinde was named Countess in 1197, but effectively her husband Theobald was the actual ruler. It was only when her second husband died in 1226 that she governed in her own name. She did so until her death in 1247.

➡ More personalities are described in the Gazetteer section under the entry of the location where the reside.

# GAZETTEER

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This section describes, in alphabetic order, the main and/or most interesting places in the greater Val-du-Loup area. The list is not exhaustive.

Refer to the map at the end of this chapter for the exact locations of the places listed below.

## A

### Ardennes

The Ardennes were one of the giant forests in Western Europe, stretching from what is today Belgium into Luxembourg, Germany and France. The region consists mostly of steep hills, deep valleys and boggy plateaux. The Romans called the forest *Arduenna Silva*, "wooded heights".

## B

### Castle Basbois



Adjacent to Eonach Abbey, and within line of sight, is the formidable Basbois castle, situated on a boggy plateau overlooking the Loup valley. This is the home of Count Vaguerre and his family. The castle has been heavily fortified since the end of the 10th century (one of the first in the region to be rebuilt in stone), with several walls and a huge impregnable donjon.

Within line of sight lies the sunken castle of Marvert.

### Castle Beaufort

Castle Beaufort, home of Baron de Beaufort, lies on the banks of the river Loup, on the Northern end of the Loup valley. It is one of the rare castles in the region to feature a moat. Built on the slopes of a sharp rising hill, its lower part is surrounded by a moat underneath the lower walls, while its keep has been set on top of the peak. The castle is as stark and forbidding as the region. Here, the Loup river twists through a deep dark canyon before crashing down into the seemingly bottomless chasm that gave the town of Trou-du-Loup its name.

Roland and Arina of Beaufort are the masters of the castle; they are vassals to the Count of Vaguerre.

### Becblanc

The name of a place south of the town of Trou-du-Loup where the Loup river comes spurting out from an opening in the rock face. In Trou-du-Loup, the river falls into a chasm and disappears underground.

Legends have it that the underground part of the Loup river consists of a vast cave system that extends underneath much of the hills of Western Val-du-Loup, but the opening to the cave system is not known. It is generally believed that the Loup's exit from Becblanc might be a doorway to the caves. As of yet, no single man has managed the climb the treacherous rocks beside the waterfall to find out; although quite a few daring souls have died trying to do so.

### The Black Heart

The region east and north of the river Loup. It is an area of near-impenetrable primeval forest, where the canopy of the tall trees is so thick that it prevents the sunlight from touching the ground. The terrain is one of steep, overgrown inclines and bramble choked gullies, crisscrossed by brooks and animal trails.

The Black Heart is feared for its abundance of wolves and other wild animals. There are few dwell-

ings within this part of the forest, and hardly any roads worthy of that name.

# C

## Clève (County & Castle)

Independant County to the Southeast of Rocmort. For more on the the castle and county of Clèves, see the entry on the Clève family, in *The Neighbors*, above.

# D

## Dentpourrie (Ruins)

A tower of black stone, repudiated to date back to Roman times. The tower is cracked but still standing; the roof is gone, as are any ceilings or staircases inside.

The original 20m (60ft.) high structure was doorless, with windows set at the topmost part only. There is no indication how access to the tower was done in olden days.

The tower sits on top of a rock overlooking the river Loup. There is a sheer drop to three sides of the ground, and a narrow path leads up on the fourth, gradually sloped side. Parts of the ramparts that surrounded the terrain still remain.

Rumors exist that the tower existed way before the Romans came to these parts, and that in fact it was built by an ancient race that had come from the west, from beyond the ocean.

Some bas-reliefs on the inner walls have survived the centuries, although the more obscene ones have been systematically destroyed. The place seemed to have been a location for deprived rites better not mentioned.

The tower is shunned by locals, and the clergy has forbidden anyone to even approach the derelict tower.

## The Dying Farm

Lepers are a common sight in these days. They are outcasts, never allowed to enter cities or to approach people. They roam the countryside or hang out outside the city gates, begging for food or old clothes. If they encounter other people, they have to announce their presence, either through shouting or through ringing a bell. When people give them food or clothing, they put them down at a safe distance from the beggars. Most of the lepers are clad in simple gowns made from old garments discarded by other people, and wear bandages made up of rags. Most of them veil their faces, some because the disease has so disfigured them that no person could bear to look at them, others because they wish to remain anonymous, mostly to protect their families as the families of lepers are often shunned as well. Some people claim that leprosy is a punishment from God for those who sinned, even though this is not a view officially held by the Church.

The Dying Farm is a hospice for lepers, run by Eonach Abbey, and located well outside the city limits, off one of the main roads. It consists of a main building, in which several dormitories, a community room and a kitchen are located, as well as stables where hens and pigs are kept. A vegetable garden is located behind the house. A small altar underneath a giant oak is sometimes used for mass (but not often - no priest willingly spends more time with the lepers than needed). The whole farm is surrounded by high walls. The gate is made of sturdy wood, but it isn't locked. Anyone can leave the farm of their own free will (but will not be allowed into the city, unless accompanied by the monks), and anyone who wishes to enter the farm can do so as well. No sane or healthy person does so, however. Food and other gifts are usually deposited at the gate.

The hospice is run by two monks who couldn't be any more different from each other: Brother Wilhelm and Brother Philippus.

The Dying Farm's current inhabitants include:

**Brother Wilhelm**, an aging monk born in one of the Eastern border regions of the Empire. He has travelled the far and wide of Europe and has seen much in his lifetime, wars and plagues and famine and all, but he still manages to remain cheerful. He is well versed in medicine and grows herbs to heal all kinds of wounds and diseases. None of his herbs can heal the lepers, however, and so he does his best to make his patients' remaining life as easy and painless



as possible. He has been working here now for over 15 years, and so far shows no sign of having contracted the disease. "It's because I laugh at it", he often claims, possibly referring to Brother Philippus' grim view of leprosy and of human destiny.

**Brother Philippus**, about 30 years old and as narrow minded as he is pious. For him, lepers are sinners who for some reason or other have incurred God's wrath. If he has decided to live at the farm and help these people, it is not out of altruistic feelings. Rather, he sees this as punishment for himself, for the sinful thoughts that he cannot shake - Philippus finds himself thinking of women more often than his conscience allows.

While doing his duty he is usually short tempered and in a foul mood. Where Wilhelm treats the lepers with compassion, Philippus shows only disdain. That he himself can catch the disease does not occur to him. Wilhelm keeps the young monk around for one reason only: he is a hard worker and a good carpenter, and manual labour has made him quite strong, and those skills are very welcome at the farm.

**Marthe of the Moors** is a healer who couldn't heal herself. Originally from Marvert, and purported to be the town's local witch, she has seen the disease cripple her more and more to the point where the once independent-minded woman had to seek refuge with the brothers.

**Maria the Hag**, an old crow with no face but intact hands and feet, as foul-mouthed as they come, especially when Brother Philippus is around. If the monk admonishes her, she points to her missing ears, and feigns deafness. She has been here for a long time and has seen a good many people pass through the hospice – from princes to paupers, she knows all their stories, and many a secret about them, too. She's not one to tell, so she says as she spits on the floor, "but the poor soul is dead, so there's no harm in repeating what he said..."

Old **Frederic** is also quite old and he has seen much of the world before he came here to die. As a beggar he travelled much of the Empire, and most of it on crutches too, ever since both his feet died off. He knows the lands and he knows the people, and in his youth when he could still wield a sword, he came across many a supernatural beast as well. He loves telling stories, especially those involving maidens and beasts.

**Edmont** is a young man who has lost both legs from the knee downwards and is carted around by

**Peter**, a young pig-herd, who recently developed the disease. Some think that Edmont is of noble birth. He denies it, but his manners are just too dandy for him to be of common birth.

**Merat** is a fugitive, a wanted murderer, who is hiding away in here until the hunt for him is called off. He is being accused of killing a hermit (he claims it was self defensive and that the hermit was a werewolf). He constantly wears a bandage around his face; observant characters may notice that the rest of his body is strangely unblemished.

## E

### Epeedor

Epeedor is the name of an island, a mound of solid earth, that lies in the middle of a swamp formed by the Froideau brook. According to legend, the mound is the barrow of an ancient king purported to be the last ruler of a people that lived here before the arrival of the Celts. The king is said to be buried under the mound wearing silver armor and a golden sword; hence the name of the mound: Epeedor, from *épée d'or*, golden sword.

In the early 9th century, the dry patch of land became the site of the oldest monastery in Val-du-Loup region. Eventually, a town of the same name grew up around it.

In the 9th century, and well into the 10th, Magyars (Hungarians) invaded much of Western Europe and ravaged the villages and farms wherever they went. Their savage ways of slaying and sacrificing people, which included eating them, is what made them become known as the legendary Ogres (see also the entry in the Bestiary). At the end of the 9th century, a Magyar horde found the Froideau valley and plundered both the town and the cloister of Epeedor. Most of the villagers and monks were slain, and the monastery and surrounding dwellings burnt. Later, the Bishop of Liège's troops came to the rescue and slaid the invaders, at a great cost to their own numbers.

The soldiers were horrified at the scenes of carnage they found: villagers and monks brutally killed and dismembered, their blood and innards smeared on the monastery walls. Bits of roasted, partially

eaten human remains lay scattered around the camp fires; while a trench contained the remains of the dismembered corpses of monks and villagers.

The few surviving locals buried their dead in the monastery graveyard; while the dead invaders were thrown in a mass grave just the monastery walls. And although the survivors tried to go back to a normal life, they couldn't: nightmares and visions of hellish rites and sacrifices invaded their sleep, and many went half-mad. Finally, monastery and town were abandoned and the survivors went to begin a new life a great many miles away, in the town of Perfosse, located on the edge of the Black Heart.

For several centuries, Epeedor remained a best-to-be-avoided ruin. People spoke of it in hushed tones: for many, the crimes committed there were the deeds of the devil and his demons; while others believed that the madness lay not with the invaders, but with the one buried in the mound: the legendary Last King who had taken revenge on those who had dared disturb his rest.

In the late 12th century, a group of Knights Templar, freshly returned from the Holy Land after the fall of Jerusalem, requested to be given the deserted valley on what had become the border between Hauterre and Sainsprit. Neither Countess Sybill nor the Bishop-Prince of Liège objected to the knights taking possession of the maligned piece of Earth.

The knights templar hired a great many workers to build a chapter house for their Order. They razed the old ruins, and in the style of their order, erected a great building that was both cloister and fortress. It is composed of one central keep, with four minor keeps arranged like a cross around it. There's also a grand church on the North end of the compound, and a great many stables and outbuildings. Tall ramparts surround the grounds, while two stone bridges (parts of which can be raised if required), one on either side of the fortress, make for easy access for riders and carts across the swamp.

In all, there are now nineteen knights living in the Chapter House, together with over a hundred sergeants (light cavalry) and other men-at-arms, as well as squires, servants, craftsmen and priests. A French knight, Bernard de Sigieur, heads the house under the title of Provincial Master.

Since the compound is all but closed to outsiders, a great many speculations have started to arise as people ponder what goes on behind the high walls.

Why had the Order a Chapter House erected in this cursed land? Why the secrecy, why the fortifications? Fortifications against which enemy? Why are only men, and no women, allowed to enter the compound? What are the strange geometrical symbols carved on the walls, above doors and windows? Is that strange three-faced head above the Eastern gate really the demon Baphomet? And how many riches do the Knights hoard?

From time to time, groups of Knights leave the fortress, riding off towards an unknown destination somewhere beyond Hauterre. This, too, has led to intense speculation. And why are there always exactly thirteen knights heading these outings?

And then sometimes, one single Knight rides off by himself, making his way deep into the Black Heart, where invariably his trace is lost, as if the forest had swallowed him whole.

## Eonach Abbey and Town

### History

The history of the Abbey of Eonach goes back to the 8th century when a pious Frankish noblewoman called Agathe built lodgings for English and Irish monks who came to christianize Western Europe. Before long, the hostel became a monastery, and the center of the monks' missionary effort in the Ardennes. From early on, the monks of Eonach enjoyed the favors of the local nobility and their monarchs. Many made land donations to the monastery so that it became one of the largest landowners in the country. From Eonach, missionary monks left to convert the "heathen" population of the most out-of-the-way settlements in the Ardennes forests and beyond. Young nobles and clergymen from many parts of the Empire came, and still come, to Eonach for their education.

At some point in time, the Abbey began to specialize in the creation of ornate and richly illustrated bibles. Monks who were renowned artists and scribes joined the monastery, and soon Eonach bibles were desired items all over Europe, and their fame even reached faraway Byzanth. In the process, the Abbey became very rich.

Some of this wealth the Abbey uses to buy and restore ancient texts from all over the known world, most notably ancient Greek, Persian and Arabic

texts from the Spanish caliphates or from Northern Africa. Many of these texts are translated by the brothers into Latin, copies of which are circulated to other notable European monasteries.

By the tenth century, Eonach has become a centre of culture in an otherwise backwards, seemingly uncivilized country. The monastery teaches not only fine arts but also crafts like bookmaking, masonry and carpentry. Over the last century craftspeople and farmers have settled around the monastery and Eonach grew into a sizable town. Wealthy merchants found their niche in the monks' wheeling and dealings with the rich and famous of the Empire and set up shop in town, increasing its riches. The town now sports many buildings in the finest architectural tradition of the times.

The abbey's enormous wealth, its power and influence, has led to an all-out rivalry between the Abbey and the Prince-Bishop of Liège. The Countess of Rocmort is siding with the abbey, tilting the balance of power their way - for now.

Agathe, the abbey's founder, is buried inside the monastery grounds. She was eventually declared a saint, and a pilgrimage in her honor takes place every year.

## Set-Up

### The Library

Over the centuries the monks have gathered a great number of texts of all sorts, ranging from philosophy to medicine and scientific treatises, but also including writings on alchemy and other shunned practices. Brother Heraldus, the librarian, is the only one who has an overview of the collection, which is kept in an not very orderly fashion in the well insulated basements under the church. Access to the texts is strictly reserved for monks, outsiders can only get to certain tomes with the abbot's permission. Students at the monastery are allowed access to any books that are not deemed dangerous for their faith and well being; books on magic, occult or pagan matter are not allowed to be handed out to lay persons.

*[Note: if researching sorcery spells in the abbey's library, the INT multiplier for learning spells is 2 for characters being literate in Latin, Ancient Greek or Arabic.]*

### The Infirmary

The monks of Eonach run a hospital where brothers skilled in Medicine and First Aid look after the wounded and the sick. They treat the rich as well as the poor, albeit in two different wards. The infirmary consists mainly of a few large dormitories with a great many beds; and some smaller rooms where the high born can be treated in privacy.

### The Treasury

The monastery does not spend its wealth to buy luxury goods - all but the abbot and the prior live in relative simplicity - but donations from nobles and cities often include precious items, such as golden cups, candelabums, gold coins, richly decorated church gowns and even swords. While some of more ornate pieces are kept on display in the church, most items are locked in a vault under the monastery grounds. Only two people, the abbot and the prior, have keys to the vault.

### The Scriptorium

In the dark and perpetually cool basement of the monastery, a special room has been set up where the artists among the monks are doing their work. Here scribes reproduce in flowery letters the bible or more mundane texts such as biographies of saints and kings, while painters illustrate them with miniatures or full page paintings. The monks work standing up and in complete silence. The air in the room is stale and smells of oils and pigments used in the paints.

### Sainte Agathe's Grave

In the middle of the monastery grounds is a simple grave decorated with a cross hewn from a Standing Stone that was once sacred to the Celts. In Agathe's time, it was still credited with magic powers, and Agathe herself had the obelisk remade into a cross to symbolize the passage from the pagan age to the Christian age.

Rumors have it that the cross contains the spirit of a murdered Celtic wise-woman called Sybille, the founder of the Celtic Covenant during the Roman occupation. Those rumors also have it that if the stone is removed from the monastery grounds, it would recapture its old magic qualities, and Sybille's spirit would be freed.



## The Monks of Eonach

### Abbot Venerius

Abbot Venerius is described in the **Personalities** chapter.

### Brother Heraldus

Heraldus is the librarian of the monastery. A small stooped man of advanced age, he has a hard time focusing his thoughts, except if books are being discussed. In any conversation he is likely to quote book after book, always in Latin of course. Player characters who try to talk to him should have a minimum Latin score of 20% to be able to follow his conversation.

### Brother Marco

Brother Marco is described in the **Personalities** chapter.

### Brother Timoteus

Timoteus is a young monk, who as a child was deposited at the monastery's doors; raised by the brothers, he is today, at age 27, the monastery's most skilled bible illustrator. His work is renowned throughout Europe, although his name is not - as a monk he is supposed to remain anonymous and share his fame with the whole community of his brethren. Although loyal to the monastery, he has, of late, started to become restless: he begins to think that it would benefit his art - and thus the monastery's fame - if he were to travel around and experience more of the world. Whenever he raises the issue with his superiors, he is quickly discouraged - all the inspiration a man ever needs, so he is told, is given to him by God - a man's worldly experience matters little.

## F

### Froideau

A tributary of the river Loup. The Froideau marks the border between the County of Sainsprit in the North and Hauterre and Clève in the South. To the North, the stream is shallow and broad, but South of Guardeloup, its bed narrows and its pace

quickens before it flows into the Loup river at the foot of Castle Clève.

## G

### Castle Gardeloup

Fort on the border between Sainsprit and Hauterre, manned by Sainsprit troops to hold off Hauterre and Liège troops. The fort is run by Gerald Augur, a minister, i.e. an unfree knight, on behalf of the Count de Sainsprit.

Castle Gardeloup is a rather small, brooding fortress on a hill, hovering over the Froideau brook, where it guards the bridge over which the main road from Rocmort and Sainsprit to Castle Inodin and Hauterre crosses.

With the tension between Hauterre and Sainsprit escalating constantly, Gardeloup holds a central strategic position as it guards the road that an army of either county would have to take to advance on the enemy castle. The castle is bursting at the seams as its population has vastly increased with new troops both from Sainsprit and Castle Rocmort who have been posted here.

### The Graveyard of Heroes

The Graveyard of Heroes is the name given to a series of caves which contain the graves of ancient heroes. The shallow man-made caves are located in three small canyons emanating from the deep bed that the Loup river has dug into the rock south of Becblanc. Some of the ancient heroic warriors have been buried on their horses; riders and mounts having been propped up by wooden constructions and magic spells. Most of the caves have long since been looted of riches, except for a few which are presumably protected by magic.

The graves are not typical for Celtic burial rites, leading some to speculate that the graves are from an older, pre-Celtic civilization.



# H

## Castle Haubach

Home of the Baron von Bless' family.

## Castle Hauberc

The seat of the Count of Sainsprit, this elegant and state-of-the-art castle, with its strong fortifications and French influenced palace perches on a hill overlooking the broad Herbenoir valley and the fertile farm lands that provide the wealth of the Sainsprit family. The castle is meant to outshine both sprawling Castle Rocmort and the dour looking but impregnable Castle Basbois.

## Hauterre

County in the Prince-Bishopric of Liège, bordering on Sainsprit. Hauterre lies West and South of Sainsprit.

Current lord: Philippe de Hauterre.

## Herbenoir River

Tributary of the river Loup. The Herbenoir flows through woods and fertile fields; its valley is broader than the Loup valley and thus better suited for agriculture.

# I

## Inodin

A *demesne* (domain) within the County of Hauterre. Ruled by the Chevalier d'Inodin.

# L

## Loufort

Loufort is a hamlet which lies on the banks of the small Noireaux lake, in lands belonging to the Sainsprit family; just off the forest road leading to Sainsprit castle. The town is relatively well off, its people living on fishing and on raising pigs, goats and hens, hunting & foresting, and farming a small area of land by the lake. East of the lake lies the desolate hamlet of Noireaux and the lands belonging to Baron von Schakel.

## Loup River

The river Loup has its source deep in the Ardennes mountains. For much of its course, it winds its way through deep narrow chasms.

At the foot of Castle Beaufort, the river falls into a deep, fathomless chasm that gave its name to the town of Trou-du-Loup, meaning 'Wolf Hole'. It then flows underground until it resurges in a great waterfall, Becblanc (White Beak). South of the the town of Rocmort, the waterway becomes navigable. It passes by the abbey and town of Eonach, and later by the castles of Clève and Hauterre. Thus, the seats of the three major power houses in the region are located on the river. The Loup eventually ends its course when it flows into the larger river Meuse.

# M

## Marvert

Name of the swamps adjacent to Castle Basbois, and of a town in the proximity of the castle. The so-called Sunken Castle lies in the heart of the Marvert swamp.

## Montfort

Name of a *demesne* and castle, deep in the Black Heart. The domain is administered by the Chevalier d'Ascalon, a vassal of the Prince-Bishop of Liège.



The castle sits atop a mound in the middle of the thickest part of the Ardennes forests, a forbidding and isolated place where few travelers venture. There are few people living in Montfort: a few isolated hamlets exist throughout the forest, with the largest population living at the foot of Castle Montfort itself, in the town that has come to be called Basmont.

Recently, small numbers of villagers from Rocmort have crossed over into Montfort to make a new living here. Many are fleeing the religious intolerance of the Rocmort nobles and the persecution of old traditions now deemed evil.

## Munoit Abbey

Munoit Abbey was the first monastery founded in the city of Rocmort, some two hundred years ago. Run by Benedictine monks, it is considered to be a sort of family monastery for the Counts of Rocmort. Traditionally younger sons of the family become abbots and priors there, and they make sure that the voice of the lords and ladies of Rocmort are also heard in Church politics. In return, the Abbots of Munoit have a seat on the Council of Nobles.

The monastery is located on a small plateau underneath the castle and is linked by a direct road to the back gate of the castle walls. The monastery itself is made up of a large number of buildings and is itself fortified. Apart from the plateau it also owns lands in the valley as well as stretches of the Loup river, with exclusive rights to fishing and to erecting mills. The monastery also has the jurisdiction of those people who live on its lands, and they are the only ones who have the right to run a school.

The current Abbot is Petronius, the younger brother of the Count of Sainsprit, and a rival of Countess Sybill, whose favors have therefore turned to the Abbey of Eonach instead.

## D

### Noireaux

A lake east of Loufort. Also the name of a hamlet on the eastern shore of the lake. It is a poor, run down place, and not a little spooky, being inhabited

by dour-looking foresters. Strangers are not made welcome and are likely to find plenty of trouble.

It seems that the most of the town's population consists of women. Visitors will most likely encounter Berthe, a very feisty and outspoken local (a for-ester herself, like her husband), and Getrude the Innkeeper.

## O

### Ogre's Run

Several years ago, residents of Trou-du-Loup stumbled upon a family of ogres living in a cave next to the bed of the river Loup. They chased the couple and their small son down the narrow path which runs beside the river, eventually catching and killing all three of them. The twisting footpath along the Loup river has since been known as Ogre's Run.

## P

### The Paganfield

This graveyard is really only a plot of land outside the town walls of Eonach in which those who are not considered proper Christians are buried, or rather, dumped. Most of those buried here are heretics, witches and professed unbelievers; but also murderers and worse sinners.

The graveyard is not on consecrated ground, and the burials are not performed as part of a religious ceremony; which makes them vulnerable to violations by various predators who might normally be deterred by religious rituals - such as ghouls and werewolves.

# R

## Rocmort



### Castle Rocmort

Castle Rocmort is the oldest castle in the valley. Built by the Counts of Rocmort on the ruins of an ancient Roman fort, it has gone through many alterations and re-constructions. Sitting on a plateau overlooking the Loup valley and the city of Rocmort, with steep approaches to all four of its sides, it counts as impregnable, second only to the more recent Castle Basbois. It's main feature, visible from afar, is the giant, impressive keep which has led minstrels to claim that it has been built by giants.

Castle Rocmort is larger than any of the other castles in the region, 'though not necessarily the most elegant or luxurious. It is a sprawling site, with many outbuildings, and home to a large amount of court officials, servants, bureaucrats and men-at-arms. Countess Sybill, her family and retainers occupy the

main keep. A third set of curtain walls is presently being added to shelter the additional stables and other outbuildings.

### The City of Rocmort

Rocmort can be called the only medieval city in Val-du-Loup. It is laid out on three levels. Perched on top of the rock and towering over the valley looms castle Rocmort. On a plateau slightly below this lies Munoit Abbey. The town itself stretches along the twisting river, with dwellings becoming poorer the closer you get to the water.

The castle and the abbey are located on the eastern shore of the river, on cliffs overshadowing the valley. The town has spread to the flatter western shore. The poorer dwellings are located either right on the river bank, where they are prone to flooding; or are pressed against the rocks where the sun seldom reaches. Some dwellings at the foot of the castle have even been hewn directly into the rock.

Richer families have established their homes on the gentle slopes of the western shore.

The city's fortifications have recently been strengthened, with stone ramparts replacing the wooden palisades. One tier of walls surrounds the castle and the abbey, a second tier encircles the town, bridging the river. Three bridges cross the river Loup, only one of which is wide enough for carts to pass. Here, a toll must be paid for any non-local mercantile cart or ship to pass.

From Rocmort on down south, the Loup river is navigable, even though the water flows fast and tends to be treacherous. On rare occasions, boats from as far as Liège travel up the Meuse and the Loup to bring in goods. Mostly, though, it's local fisherman who bring in their catch, or masons who bring in building stones from quarries down-river, on boats that are pulled by oxen trotting on a path along the shore. There is a weekly market in town to which farmers, fishermen and local crafts people come to buy and sell.

The town's narrow, uneven streets are busy, crowded and filthy. Men-at-arms from the castle and the city guard are ever present, gathering in boisterous groups from which locals have learned to stay away from.

A splendid new Gothic church is being built in the merchant's quarter across from the river, funded by the Prince-Bishop to spite Countess Sybill.



The rich Munoit Abbey with its large library frequently attracts scholars from other parts of Europe, but few of those visitors venture down into the city. The same can be said of the noble visitors to the castles; at best their servants or soldiers make it down into the taverns at the foot of the hill.

Beside the Christian festivals, two events mark the social calendar of the population: the yearly horse trading festival which takes place in autumn; and carnival, which is held in mid-winter. Both festivals attract visitors from all over the region.

The city is governed by a City Council, an assembly of representatives of the most prestigious families. The most notorious members are Henricus Porticus and Thomas de Foro, who is also the city's judge. Abbot Patronius is also a member, as is Guillaume de Maccard as the representative of Countess Sybill. There have been recent endeavors by the city's richest families to remove the city council from the Countess' influence.

## Roifâ Manor

Roifâ Manor originally consisted of a large wooden structure housing both the Roifâ family members and their servants and also including the stables. Built on a promontory with three steep inaccessible sides and only one accessible one, the mansion had only been minimally fortified by a wooden palisade across the access road to the grounds. After Bernard returned from Cordoba, he had important alterations made to the place. He built for himself and his family a stone mansion, or villa (some say, he really built it for his books and scrolls), and new wooden housing for the servants. The stables were relocated further down the hill. The wooden palisades were replaced by stone walls that completely surround the grounds. A single gate controls access to the grounds. The manor includes a Muslim prayer room, but Bernard also built a chapel by the gate for his Christian staff.

Jehan has had very little construction done, but the newly found fervency of many members of the Catholic church frightens him, and he plans to strengthen the manor. From his travels abroad he has brought back plans to make improvements to his home, such as adding a keep and an inner ring wall, and replacing all wooden buildings by stone edifices. He has yet to embark on this ambitious construction work.

# S

## Saint Quirin's Well

This well, which flows out of a tiny cave in the rock at the bottom of the Loup valley near Rocmort is renowned for its powers in healing the lame. The cave itself, which features a crude statue of the saint who gave the well its name, is decorated by dozens of crutches left behind by those who were cured by bathing in the water. Pilgrims come here from all over the country, and once per year there is a festival honoring the saint.

The belief in the well's special powers predate the Christian era. The Franks believed that the well had its origin deep in faerie caves under the rock, and that a powerful, benign spirit inhabits the water. These old beliefs are still held true by local townspeople, despite the Church's preaching. On certain nights, they claim, faeries can be seen moving in and out of the cave as they venture further out into the town, always keeping close to the rock. On these excursions the faeries often cause mischief, and sometimes take with them items unknown in their world, more out of curiosity than for the worth of these items.

## Sainsprit County

The County of Sainsprit is situated in the broad Herbenoir valley with its many farms which provide much of the grain for the Val-du-Loup.

## The Sunken Castle of Marvert

The Vaguerres' former manor house was built on an island of seemingly solid earth in the middle of a boggy plateau overlooking the Loup river. In the middle of the 10th century, the then Baron de Vaguerre decided to fortify the manor house and built a donjon, but once the stone keep was erected, the foundation proved too unstable to hold the weight. Ever since, the tower has been sinking further every year, its interiors filling up with bog water and mud.

The sunken castle has a reputation for being haunted: hell hounds and ravens are said to patrol the grounds, and on foggy nights, the Oaklord (an





Eternal Hunter, see the Bestiary) leads his silent charge on a Wild Hunt.

When the old folk recount the legend of the Oak-lord, they tell a different version of how, and why, the castle sunk beneath the moor...

# T

## Trou-du-Loup

Trou-du-Loup is a small village in the remote northern part of the Loup valley. Literally meaning "wolf's hole", the name derives from a nearby chasm into which the river Loup drops. Between here and Becblanc, the river runs underground. Locals say that it flows under the earth for twenty-four hours, a measurement taken from the time it takes for a person or an animal who falls into the chasm in Trou-du-Loup corpse to be washed out dead at Becblanc.

The location and the town have always had a sinister reputation, down to the beginning of time. Every people which settled in the Loup valley believed that from this spot the river drops down into whatever hell they happen to believe in. Many legends surround the hole: demons and fairies are reputed to flit in and out of there; and Eternal Hunters like Hellequin burst forth out of the chasm to take up the Wild Hunt. Roman mercenaries believed that a strange foreign god they called Sodaqui could be reached from here. Human sacrifices were (some say *are*) being made by throwing people down into the abyss. This kind of reputation has attracted its share of strange people who come to live in the town or its environs. Trou-du-Loup has known more witches and warlocks than is normal even for this isolated part of the world.

The town lives in the shadow of the chasm: the air is filled with the constant roar of the water cascading down into the fathomless depths. The houses are strung like a thin chain along the border of the river; the church has been built as close to the chasm as was deemed safe.

Castle Beaufort lies in close proximity to the town, and the castle's inhabitants have contributed to the dark reputation. The barons of Beaufort have always been rumored to be practitioners of black magic, and the current baron and baroness make no exception.

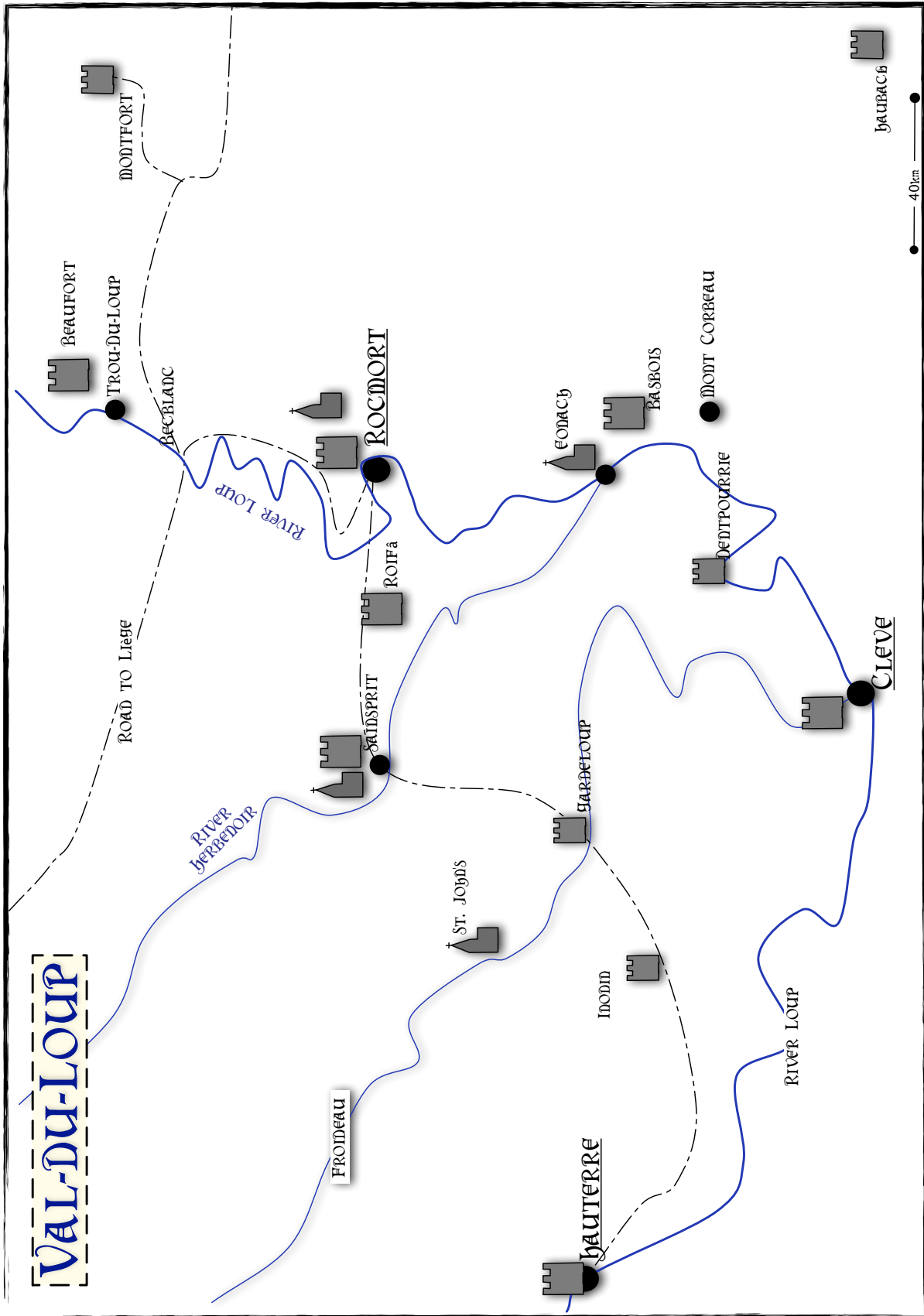
Once a year, during winter solstice, the town celebrates a particularly wild version of the carnival. As in many other towns, the festivity's highlight is the crowing of the King For a Day. If there happen to be visitors in town, it is custom to choose the king from one of their numbers. For reasons as yet unexplained, a large number of these Kings For a Day end up disappearing into the abyss. The general response to any inquiry is, "*Oh well, too much to drink...*"

## Carnival

the origins of carnival go back to pre-Christian times. Although later associated with the period of Lent, it was originally held around the winter solstice. It was a time for people to dress up and celebrate in a wild, uninhibited manner in order to chase away the ghosts of winter. For several days, all the town's inhabitants disguise themselves as demons, beasts and other monsters while others mock the high and mighty by appearing as caricatures of the nobility. This was the only time that the common folk were allowed to wear the colorful garb of the high-born - by law, peasants were normally limited to brown or grey clothing.

The highlight of the festival was usually when the King or Queen for a Day was chosen - often the village idiot who was then dressed up as a monarch and paraded around town.





Map: Val-du-Loup

# CHAPTER III: CHARACTER CREATION

## CHARACTER TYPES

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To create a player character, choose any of the methods described in the BRP manual. The following sections give a few rule precisions as to skill adjustments for the specific time periods, professions to choose and other considerations to create a believable Medieval character.

### Suggested Skills

The following skills and skill specialities are recommended for use in this medieval setting:

Appraise, art, bargain, brawl, climb, command, craft, disguise, dodge, drive (horse or mule cart), etiquette, fast talk, fine manipulation, first aid, gaming, grapple, hide, insight, jump, knowledge (see below for limitations), language, listen, literacy, medicine, melee weapon, missile weapon, navigate, parry, perform, persuade, pilot (boat or ship), repair, research, ride, science (see below for limitations), sense, shield, sleight of hand, spot, status, stealth, strategy, swim, teach, throw, track.

**Knowledge:** academic lore, blasphemous lore, folklore, group [Celts, Germans, Arabs, Turks, Templars, Clerics, Nobles...], history (max. 30%), law, linguistics (max. 30%), occult, philosophy (max 30%), politics, region, religion, streetwise. Characters with an Arabic background may also know Accounting. For a High Medieval setting, increase the allowed maximum scores to 50%. The base chance

is generally 01%, except for the knowledge of the home region, which is EDUx5.

**Science:** astronomy (max. 30%), botany, mathematics (max. 30%), zoology (max. 20%). For a High Medieval setting, increase the allowed maximum scores to 50%. The GM may allow characters with an Arab background to ignore the maximum skill rates as scientific knowledge was more evolved in the Arab world than in Medieval Europe. The base chance for Science is 0%.

**Repair:** only Mechanical, Plumbing or Structural apply. To repair weapons, use Structural; to repair armor, both Mechanical and Structural will do.

### New skill specialities:

**Etiquette (Chivalric Code):** how to behave according to the virtues defined by the chivalric code, which calls for polite and cheerful behavior, elegant dress, moderation, well mannered speech and a respectful attitude towards ladies - important skills for a knight of the High Medieval period. The base chance is EDUx1%.

**Knowledge (Heraldry):** identifying the coat of arms of the various noble families, not just of a region but of the whole kingdom and beyond.

**Knowledge (Natural World):** knowledge about the flora and fauna of a familiar region. This skill replaces the Natural History skill from the BRP manual, where it is alternately used as a Knowledge or Science specialty. The base chance for this knowledge is EDUx1.



**Insight (various animals):** the skill to understand and to handle animals, both domestic and wild. Specialities are either domestic animals (no further specialization required) or a type of wild animal (wolf, bear,...). At the GM's discretion, the skill may be extended to those supernatural creatures which are more frequently encountered, such as goblins or black hounds. The base chance for insight into domestic animals is 15% and 01% for wild animals.

## Female Characters

If trying to remain close to the restricted role of women in Medieval times, playing a female character may prove to be challenging.

The women enjoying the greatest freedom in these days were the noble-born. Although often treated as a commodity to be married off for political or financial reasons, strong minded noble women managed to free themselves of these social restraints, as can be seen in the example of the Countess of Rocmort, who resisted all pressure from her family after the death of her husband, and who is now sole ruler of the County.

While women would definitely not be allowed to be priests, soldiers or warriors, any other profession should be open to them.



## Literacy and Languages

For this setting, I suggest that the Literacy skill is used. Keep in mind that most people of the Middle Ages were unable to read or write. These skills were reserved for nobles and clergy, and it was actually forbidden to teach anyone outside these classes to read or write. Anyone choosing the literacy skill should have a suitable background.

For an Early Medieval setting, anyone playing a Scholar or Teacher should give his or her character either a noble or a religious background. For later time periods, scholars, teachers and students may belong to one of the independent urban universities.

Val-du-Loup lies close to the linguistic divide between the Romance and the Germanic languages. Most of its inhabitants use the Langue d'oil (or Old French) and Frankish, an Old High German dialect. For simplicity's sake, the text refers to these languages as French or German.

Local characters should choose one or the other of these as their native language, and assign a beginning score of EDUx3 to the other one.

Educated characters would certainly also know Latin.

## Magic

Most people using magic did not study it as such. Spells were handed down from one generation to the next within a family or a close community. Spells would have a direct bearing on the casters' professions or their background (such as healers or midwives using the Heal spell, or hunters using Sorcerer's Eye).

Since most people of that time were illiterate, people using sorcery could obviously not keep a grimoire. Thus, all the spells that a non-literate character knows are kept in his or her memory.

## Status

Use the following table to determine the social rank and wealth limit based on the character's Status rating.

Status	Rank	Wealth Rating	Wealth Cap
01-15	Serf (Unfree)	Destitute	Poor
16-39	Lower Class	Poor	Average
40-49	Middle Class	Average	Average
50-75	Lower Nobility / Upper Urban Class	Affluent	Affluent
76-95	Upper Nobility	Wealthy	Wealthy
96-100	Monarchy	Wealthy	Wealthy

The description of professions that follows lists the applicable social rank for each profession. Some professions, such as assassins, hermits or criminals fall outside the typical social ranking.

## PROFESSIONS

The following is a list of recommended professions. Most have been taken from the BRP manual but adjusted for the Medieval setting. A few, such as Knight and Wolf Leader, are new.

### Assassin

Assassination is merely politics by another name. You kill the high and mighty, the crooked and the corrupt, the honest and the good - as long as the price is right. Your employers are noble lords and ladies, Churchmen and wealthy city dwellers who need to get rid of political rivals, greedy siblings or crooks whom the law can't touch.

You might even belong to the *Hashashin*, that mysterious sect of Persian origin that gave the profession its name (see side entry nearby).

*Wealth:* Average to Affluent, usually Average.

*Skills:* Dodge, Hide, Listen, Spot, Stealth, and five of the following: Brawl, Disguise, Grapple, Fine Manipulation, Melee Weapon (any), Missile Weapon (any), Ride, Throw, Track.

*Social Rank:* any.

### Hashashin

The *Hashashin* were an Islamic sect who trained sleeper commandoes adept at infiltrating enemy positions and assassinating military leaders and other opponents. The word assassin is (probably) derived from *Hashashin*.

The sect reached its pinnacle of power during the time of the crusades when they ran their own state. They occasionally allied with the crusaders and are believed to have undertaken assassinations for the Knights Hospitalier and for Richard Lionheart; but they also assassinated important crusaders such as Raymond of Tripoli if these became dangerous for them.

They worked primarily using daggers, seeking to fulfill their tasks without loss of additional lives.

The word *Hashashin* is said to be derived from the word *hashish* (cannabis) as it was believed that the killers acted while entranced by the drug, a questionable claim given the feats which these men were capable of.

### Beggar

You survive by begging for money and food. The cities close you out, so you roam the country side, braving the dangers of the woods mostly unarmed. Bad hygiene and disease have marked you, and most people find you repugnant, even if you manage to appeal to their sense of Christian charity.

*Wealth:* Destitute.

*Skills:* Bargain, Fast Talk, Hide, Insight, Knowledge (local region), Listen, Persuade, Sleight of Hand; and two of Brawl, Knowledge (Natural World), Knowledge (Occult), Spot, Stealth, Melee Weapon (Dagger).

*Social Rank:* unfree, lower class.

### Clerk

At a time when most laymen do not know how to read or write, noble lords and rich merchants entrust you with their correspondence and their record-keeping.



As the name implies, you most likely have a clerical background, i.e. you are a monk, nun or priest; or possibly an impoverished nobleman who has to work for a living.

*Wealth:* Poor to Affluent, usually Average.

*Skills:* Etiquette, Knowledge (Heraldry), Language (Own), Literacy (Latin), Persuade, Status; plus four from: Appraise, Bargain, other Knowledge, other Languages, Research, Ride.

*Social Rank:* lower class to lower nobility.

## Craftsman

You might be a blacksmith, a carpenter or a boat maker. You sell your goods in the market place or your own small shop, unless you are forced to use them as tax payment to your landlord. You may be a free man in a village or the city, or a serf on a farm or in a castle.

*Wealth:* poor to average, usually poor. Even while poor, you may have in your possession several self-made expensive tools.

*Skills:* Appraise, Bargain, Craft (any two), Fast Talk, Insight, Knowledge (Natural World); plus three out of additional Crafts (multiple), Knowledge (multiple), Repair (Mechanical and/or Structural) or Fine Manipulation.

*Social Rank:* Unfree to Middle Class, usually Lower Class.

## Criminal (incl. Thief)

You are outside the law, by design or by bad luck. You may be a thief working alone in the city, or part of a band of way layers and robbers hiding in the depths of the woods; you may even be an impoverished noble turned robber baron working out of his or her derelict castle.

*Wealth:* Poor to Affluent, usually Average.

*Skills:* Dodge, Hide, Stealth; and any seven of the following: Appraise, Bargain, Brawl, Climb, Etiquette, Fast Talk, Fine Manipulation, Gaming, Grapple, Insight, Jump, Knowledge (local region), Listen, Melee Weapon (any), Missile Weapon (any), Ride, Persuade, Sleight of Hand, Spot, Throw.

*Social Rank:* any.

## Entertainer (Minstrel, Troubadour, Gleeman)

You are a wandering poet and performer, traveling from castle to castle and market place to market place to play your music and recite your work and to compete in competitions. You may be in the service of a local noble family, paid well to entertain and to flatter the lords and ladies with your songs. But instead of flattery you may prefer to write satire, and instead of appealing to the high-born, you provide such 'base' entertainment as juggling or playing rowdy skits to entertain the common folk.

➔ See the entry on **Poets & Performers** in the Middle Ages chapter for background information on this profession.

*Wealth:* Poor to Average, usually Average.

*Skills:* Fast Talk, Fine Manipulation, Insight, Perform (any two); and any five of Art (multiple), Disguise, Etiquette, Knowledge (multiple regions), Language (multiple), Listen, Perform (multiple), Persuade, Sleight of Hand and Throw.

*Social Rank:* Lower Class.

## Explorer

You have made it your life's work to seek out the unknown regions of Europe and beyond: the pagan Norse countries, the vast primeval forests of Europe, the Levant, North Africa or the isles off the Western and Northern shores.

*Wealth:* Affluent.

*Skills:* Climb, Language (other), Language (own), Persuade, Ride, Spot; any four of the following: Knowledge (Natural World or multiple regions), Fast Talk, Melee Weapon, Navigate, Swim or Track.

*Social Rank:* Middle Class to Upper Nobility.

## Healer, Midwife

You know the secrets of plants to heal people and to ease their pains.; you help women give birth, and you peddle potions, poisons and cures for all sorts of ills, both physical and mental. You are the village's

central authority on charms and curses for all occasions.

Many people think of you as a witch or a warlock - even if you don't use magic, they believe you do. Increasingly, the Church is getting suspicious of you and your knowledge, and that is not a good thing.

*Wealth:* Poor to Average, usually Poor.

*Skills:* First Aid, Insight, Knowledge (Child Birth), Knowledge (Natural World), Listen, Spot; plus four more from: Insight (Animals), additional Knowledge specialities, Medicine, Persuade, Science (Botany), Teach.

*Social Rank:* Unfree, Lower Class.

## Hermit

You live in seclusion, far from society in hidden-away place in the forests, mountains or desert. You went to live there to get away from humans or to be closer to God; or because there is a price on your head. You may live by yourself, but you may also live in a community of like-minded men and women. You live off what you can scavenge from nature, but sometimes people bring you gifts of food or clothing. Generally, people think of you as crazy or holy or both.

*Wealth:* Poor.

*Skills:* Craft (one appropriate for wilderness survival), Hide, Insight, Listen or Spot, Knowledge (Natural World), Knowledge (Religion or Occult), Persuade, plus one other.

*Social Rank:* Not applicable.

## Knight

In the tenth century, a knight was a professional, mounted warrior; by the 12th century, he was a low ranked nobleman who could inherit the title by birth right. Some knights travelled far and wide, throughout Europe, the Near East and who knows where else.

The three options below are for creating a knight during the Dark Ages, i.e. before the chivalric code became the knight's codex to live by; the High Medieval knight who enjoyed long years of training and adheres to the chivalric code, and finally the knight-errant who prefers adventure to being the lord of his castle.

The Dark Age knight characteristics can also be used to play a knight of the later Medieval Ages who does not care about the chivalric code, and who sees no value in learning much beyond being victorious on the battle field and in the tournaments.

Since questing for fame is an important part of a knight's life, the status skill can be used to measure the amount of fame garnered by the player character.

**Optional Rule:** The Gamemaster may determine that beginning characters do not start as knights, but as squires. They are sponsored by a knight and will be awarded their knighthood in a grand ceremony after fulfilling a series of quests and assignments, and by gaining a minimum of expertise in the most important knightly skills: fighting with sword and lance, and etiquette.



## Dark Age Knight

*Wealth:* Poor to Affluent, usually Average.

*Skills:* Brawl, Dodge, Melee Weapon (any three), Ride, Shield; and three of the following: Grapple, Knowledge (one or more regions of Europe), Language (others), Missile Weapon, Thrown Weapon, Spot, Track.

*Social Rank:* Unfree to Lower Nobility.



Independent of their wealth, Dark Age knights start with a horse, the weapons they are proficient in, chain mail armor (byrnie) and a shield.

## High Medieval Knight

*Wealth:* Average to Wealthy, usually Affluent.

*Skills:* Command, Dodge, Etiquette (chivalric code), Literacy (Latin), Melee Weapon (Lance), Melee Weapon (Sword), Ride, Shield, Status; and three of the following: Knowledge (Heraldry), Knowledge (Occult), Knowledge (Religion), Language (other, usually Latin or French or both).

*Social Rank:* Lower Nobility to Monarchy

Independent of their wealth, High Medieval knights start with a horse, full chain mail armor (hauberk, gauntlet etc.), sword, lance and shield; the basic equipment for performing in tournaments and jousts.

## Knight-Errant

*Wealth:* Poor to Affluent, usually Average.

*Skills:* Brawl, Dodge, Melee Weapon (Lance), Melee Weapon (Sword), Ride, Shield, Status; and three of the following: Etiquette (chivalric code), Knowledge (one or more regions of Europe or the Near East), Knowledge (Heraldry), Language (Latin, French, Arabic, others), or any other weapon.

Independent of their wealth, knight-errants start with a horse, full chain mail armor, sword, lance and shield; the basic equipment for performing in tournaments and jousts.

## Knight Templar or Other Knight of a Military Order



Knights Templar, Knights Hospitaller, Teutonic Knights and Knights of St Lazarus are members of religious military orders founded in the Holy Land in the 11th century; they are described in more detail in the Middle Ages chapter.

To play a member of one of these orders, use the following statistics:

*Wealth:* Affluent to Wealthy, usually Affluent (this reflects the Order's wealth and not necessarily the knight's own). Knights have access to chain mail armor, the weapons they are proficient in and at least one horse.

*Skills:* Dodge, Etiquette, Knowledge (Religion), Literacy (Latin), Melee Weapon (Sword), Ride, Status; and three of the following: Brawl, Knowledge (Occult), Melee Weapon (Lance), Missile Weapon (any), Perform(Oratory), Language (other, usually Arabic or French or both).

*Social Rank:* Lower Nobility to Monarchy.

Knights Hospitaller and Knights of St Lazarus can also choose from Medicine or Knowledge (Natural World).

Note that it is also possible to play other members of a military order, such as clerks, priests, soldiers (men-at-arms, sergeants) or squires (young nobles aspiring to become a knight).

## Laborer

Your physical strength and skills are required to build the massive castles and to maintain roads, bridges and city walls.

*Wealth:* Destitute to Average, usually Poor.

*Skills:* Climb, Craft (any), Drive (Cart), Brawl, Grapple and five others from Appraise, Craft (any), Fine Manipulation, Gaming, Repair (Mechanical) or Repair (Structural).

*Social Rank:* Unfree, Lower Class.

## Merchant

You make a living peddling your wares in the market place or touring the land with your goods. You may even travel to far off lands to buy the exotic materials you sell to the noble lords and ladies.

*Wealth:* Poor to Affluent, usually Average. If you play a traveling merchant, you require one or more carts, horses or mules, and if you are wealthy enough, even a few armed men to guard your treasures.

*Skill:* Appraise, Bargain, Insight, Fast Talk, Knowledge (Business), Persuade, Status; and three of the following: Command, Drive (Cart), Knowledge (Region), Navigate, Melee Weapon (any) or Ride.

*Social Rank:* Lower Class to Upper Urban Class.

## Monk, Nun, Beguine or Beghaine

You have taken your vows and are now part of a religious community that is self-sufficient and whose members are called upon to do all kinds of activities, from the more mundane menial tasks to the artistic and intellectual. As a monk or nun, you may be a carpenter or a fleecer and also read Greek philosophy texts; you tend the garden and milk cows, and also illustrate bibles and write learned texts on botany.

*Wealth:* monks or nuns are allowed little if no personal property, but they have access to the possessions of their order. Their wealth level thus depends on the wealth of their monastery. In the 10th to 12th centuries, most monasteries are affluent. Mendicant orders like the Franciscans only appear in Europe in the 13th century. Mendicant orders are Poor.

*Skills:* Fast Talk, Insight, Knowledge (Religion), Language(Own), Literacy (Latin), Perform (Ritual); and four of the following: any Art, Craft, Knowledge, Language(other) and/or Science as appropriate for the time; as well as Command, Research, Status or Teach.

*Social Rank:* Lower Class to Monarchy.

To play a beguine or beghaine, use the same statistics as for a monk or a nun. These members of lay religious communities (see inset below) are more likely to possess supernatural powers than members of the stricter religious orders.

### Beguine and Beghaine

Beguines were female members of lay religious communities who lived together much like nuns, dedicating their lives to prayer and work, but without taking the vows. These communities began in the early 13th century. Some Beguinages numbered their members in the thousands; many of these women had been left widowed or orphaned because of the Crusades. Their members came from all social classes. As the idea of mendicant orders spread throughout Europe, beguines also turned to begging in order to earn their livelihood.

Eventually, many beguines ran afoul of the Church when they turned towards mysticism or sympathized with heretic movements like the Albigenses; and a large number of them ended up at the stake for charges of heresy. In the 14th century, the Pope ordered a crackdown on the beguines, and most communities either dissolved or were absorbed into mainstream mendicant orders such as the Poor Clares. They were eventually rehabilitated in the 15th century.

Beghaines were the male version of the Beguines. They were less frequent than their female counterparts.





## Noble

You have been born into wealth and the ruling class, you have a title, lands and farmers to work your land. Unless of course you are the seventh son of a seventh son, in which case you may have a title but precious little to show for it; so that your best bet is to go adventuring abroad, maybe even to the Holy Land.

*Wealth:* Poor to Wealthy, usually Affluent.

*Skills:* Bargain, Command, Etiquette, Language (own), Language (other, probably Latin or French), Literacy (Latin or French), Melee Weapon (any), Missile Weapon (any), Ride and Status. Noble ladies would be skilled in Art rather than fighting with a Melee weapon.

*Social Rank:* Lower Nobility to Monarchy

## Occultist

You are a student of obscure secrets, hidden lore and magical power, believing in the influence and supremacy of supernatural forces. You either do this in order to use these forces, or in order to combat them. You are likely to have either a scholarly, clerical or noble background.

*Wealth:* Poor to Wealthy, usually Average.

*Skills:* Insight, Knowledge (History), Knowledge (Occult), Knowledge (Religion), Language (Own), Literacy, Research (Books or Old Manuscripts); plus two out of additional Languages or Literacy specialties, or skills befitting your monastic or noble background.

*Social Rank:* any.

## Peasant

As a farmer you form the backbone of medieval society, yet you have little to show for it. Living in a hovel on land which you may or may not owe, you work long and hard days plowing, sowing and reaping. Whatever you do not use to feed your family and to pay as tax to your lord, you sell or bargain in the market for meagre rewards.

*Wealth:* Destitute to Average, usually Poor.

*Skills:* Bargain, Craft (any), Knowledge (Natural World), Listen, Spot, and any five of the following: Brawl, Drive (Cart), Fine Manipulation,

First Aid, Insight (Animals), Repair (Mechanical), Ride, Track.

*Social Rank:* Unfree, Lower Class, rarely Middle Class.



## Physician

You have made it your calling to treat the injured, sick and otherwise unhealthy (including the animals), using skills gained through extensive training and study. You are expert at treating diseases and wounds with poultices and potions, but also at pulling teeth and amputating limbs.

If you have an Arab background, or have studied among the Arabs, you may even be a practiced surgeon.

*Wealth:* Poor to Affluent, usually Average.

*Skills:* First Aid, Knowledge (Natural World), Medicine, Persuade, Literacy (Arabic, Greek or Latin), Science (Botany); plus four more of the following: Insight, Language (Other), Literacy (Other), Spot and Status.

*Social Rank:* Middle Class to Upper Urban Class.



## Priest, Rabbi or Imam

Your faith and belief in a religion has led you to the calling of the priesthood, and you spend your time preaching and worshipping God. You may be assigned to a church, synagogue or mosque, or you travel about, preaching your gospel in the market squares. If your gospel is not the Catholic Church's, preaching may get you into trouble sooner rather than later.

*Wealth:* Poor to Wealthy, usually Average.

*Skills:* Fast Talk, Insight, Knowledge (Religion), Language (Own), Literacy (Latin, Hebrew, Arabic or other language required to read your Holy Book), Perform (Oratory), Perform (Ritual), Persuade, and two of the following: Knowledge (Occult), Knowledge (Philosophy), Language (Other), Listen, Research, Status or Teach.

*Social Rank:* Lower Class (village priest, traveling preacher, mendicant monk or nun, rabbi), Middle Class (urban priest, monk or nun, castle chaplain), Lower Nobility (abbot, abbess), Upper Nobility (bishop), Monarchy (pope).

## Scholar



Study and learning define your life and you specialize in one or more fields of knowledge, eagerly seeking out all there is to know about your domain.

*Early Middle Ages:* You most likely have a noble or clerical background, else you probably wouldn't know how to read or write. You had your basic education at a monastery, then spent many years re-

searching the old scriptures to increase your knowledge.

*High Middle Ages:* You are a graduate of one of the universities in France or Italy, having been taught in one of the seven liberal arts, law and/or theology.

*Wealth:* Poor to Affluent, usually Average. If you are a monk, the wealth rating reflects your monastery's Wealth rating, not your personal one.

*Skills:* Language (other, normally Latin), Language (own), Research; plus seven out of any appropriate Art, Knowledge, Language, Literacy or Science skills, plus Perform, Persuade, Teach or Status.

*Note:* those who have undergone formal training would have been schooled in the following specialties: Art (Music), Knowledge (Linguistics), Literacy (Latin), Performance (Oratory), Science (Astronomy) and Science (Mathematics).

*Social Rank:* Middle Class to Monarchy.

## Serf (Freed or Escaped)

You used to belong to a noble lord, who freed you or from whom you ran away. You worked in the fields, in the household and in the stables. You know several crafts, but most of all, you know how to stay out of trouble. Your most precious possession is your letter of freedom, whether it's real or fake.

*Wealth:* Destitute.

*Skills:* Brawl, three Crafts, Dodge, Fast Talk, Hide, Listen, Sneak, and one other skill as personal speciality.

*Social Rank:* Unfree

## Servant

You are employed as a helper or servant in a castle or in a rich merchant's city mansion. You may be a stable hand or a scullery maid, or responsible for your lord's weapons and armor; you may even get to travel whenever your lord or lady takes to the road.

*Wealth:* Poor to Average, usually Poor.

*Skills:* Craft (any), Etiquette, Hide, Listen, Stealth, and any five of the following: Bargain, Drive (Cart), First Aid, Insight, Knowledge (Heraldry), Knowledge (Region), Language (Other), Persuade, Repair (Structural or Mechanical).

*Social Rank:* Unfree, Lower Class

## Shaman

You are a tribal magician, skilled in contacting the spirit world and lending advice and aid to those who seek it. You follow the traditions of the old Celtic or Germanic tribes, and have access to their secret knowledge which was passed down from generation to generation. You most likely have the ability to use magic.

Of course, what you do is outlawed, and you need to practice your art in secret. Death or worse awaits you if you are found out.

*Wealth:* Poor to Average, usually Poor.

*Skills:* Art (any), Hide, Insight, Knowledge (History), Knowledge (Occult), First Aid, Listen, Perform (Ritual), Perform (Trance), Persuade.

*Social Rank:* n/a.

## Soldier



You are a professional soldier, charged with the defense and safety of your county, castle, city or employer. Depending on your background, rank and status you may be:

- ❖ A militiaman guarding a city.
- ❖ A common man-at-arms: a spearman, crossbowman or archer in the service of a noble.
- ❖ A serjeant at arms, that is, someone of low nobility who usually backs up the knights in battle as heavy or light cavalry (but sometimes also as a professional infantryman); and last but not least often serves as a bodyguard to kings and high ranked nobles.

*Wealth:* Poor to Affluent, generally Average.

*Skills:* Brawl, Climb, Dodge, First Aid, Melee Weapon (One), Shield; and four of the following: Command, Gaming, Grapple, Hide, Language (Other), Listen, Jump, Melee Weapon (any), Missile Weapon (any), Navigate, Repair (Mechanical or Structural), Ride, Spot, Stealth, Strategy or Throw.

*Social Rank:* Lower Class, Middle Class for serjeants.

## Spy

You are skilled in subterfuge and infiltration, entering countries, cities and castles under cover, finding out secrets and reporting back to your employer or to other interested parties willing to pay.

*Wealth:* Average to Affluent, usually Average.

*Skills:* Dodge, Climb, Fast Talk, Hide, Listen, Spot, Stealth, and three of the following: Brawl, Disguise, Etiquette, Grapple, Insight, Knowledge (any), Language (Other), Language (Own), Melee Weapon (any), Missile Weapon (any), Navigate, Ride, Swim, Throw or Track.

*Social Rank:* any

## Tribesman

You're a Viking or a marauding Magyar, or a member of one of the pagan Prussian tribes to the east of the German Empire; maybe even a nomad from the deserts of North Africa or the Middle East.

*Wealth:* Poor.

*Skills:* Dodge, Grapple, Hide, Knowledge (Natural World), Melee Weapon (any one), Spot, Throw, Track; and two of the following: Brawl, Climb, Craft (any), First Aid, Listen, Jump, Knowledge (Occult), Missile Weapon (Bow), Language (Other), Navigate, Pilot (Boat), Ride, Shield (Buckler), Stealth or Swim.

*Social Rank:* any within the tribe; lower class as far as the rest of the medieval world is concerned.

## Tale Keeper / Bard

In an age where reading and writing is restricted to a privileged few, oral literature plays an important role, be it in the form of songs and poems, or as so-called "old women's tales" that village elders tell the younger generations at night when families huddle

around the fire. The stories thus told are often the vehicles for knowledge to be passed on in an easy-to-remember way from person to person and from generation to generation.

Some people specialize in gathering this knowledge and serve as counselors to a village or a farming community. The tales they learn and remember give them insight into all sorts of casual knowledge, be it about faeries, monsters and legends, or different regions; or in certain cases also more formal knowledge such as history, politics, philosophy and medicine, occult and magical lore.

In Celtic tradition, this role was played by bards: men who collected old songs, poems and stories, remembered them, performed them to music and passed them on to other generations.

The tale keepers do pretty much the same, except they do not put the stories to music, or recite them in verse form; they tell the stories by mimicking speech and sounds.

Tale keepers and bards must be good at listening as they try to expand their knowledge whenever possible, even if it is simply from tavern gossip. And they must also be good story tellers, as this is how they spread their knowledge.

**To play a tale keeper, choose:**

*Wealth:* Destitute to Average, usually Poor.

*Skills:* Insight, Knowledge (any), Language (Own), Listen, Perform (Recite) and Teach; and four from the following: Art (Write Music), Perform (Musical Instrument) or more Knowledge and Language skills.

*Social Rank:* Lower Class

Tale keepers may increase their Knowledge skills as a direct result of their adventures, if these have to do with one of their fields of interest, by making a successful Experience roll against that Knowledge skill. In other words, if the adventure involves chasing an occult item, then the Tale Keeper's Knowledge (Occult) increases at the end of the adventure, if the corresponding experience roll is successful.

## Wolf Leader

Wolf leaders are a feared and enigmatic type of creature: men and women who have an uncanny knack at bonding with wolves, and are always seen in the company of these feared beasts. They are widely

distrusted, and most of them live in isolated places in the depths of the forests. For most people it is hard to believe than a "normal" sort of person can have any say over wolves, and wolf leaders are thus widely credited with supernatural powers.

It is anyone's guess what makes the wolf leaders safe around wolves who are notorious for being untamable. Some claim that they have the same demonic powers as wolves are said to have; others believe that they are sorcerers who charm the animals to do their bidding, or who possess magic items with which to tame the ferocious beast. Whatever their nature, wolf leaders were certain to use magic in one way or another, and it is better to be wary of them.

All of these theories are somehow true to one degree or another. Some wolf leaders are werewolves, and their kinship with wolves leads them to adopt them, rather than humans, as companions. A few are sorcerers who knew the right spells, or who have magic items like flutes and harps which mimic those spells.

Above all, however, wolf leaders possess an empathy with wolves, which is based on understanding and trust rather than command. In some cases, a wolf leader is simply someone with enough courage to get hold of wolf pubs, and the patience to raise and to train them.

Most wolves are untamable, so a general empathy with wolves is not enough to get them to do one's bidding - some type of magic or supernatural power is required for this. People possessing these talents can usually communicate with wolves and also share some of their traits, such as excellent sight and smell, stealth etc. Wolves normally accept these persons as one of their own.

Wolf leaders rarely live an ordinary life among fellow humans: they are mistrusted and feared wherever they venture with their animal companions, or wherever their nature is known. Most of them are therefore loners who prefer to live alone in the wilderness.

To ensure their own safety, many wolf leaders play up to their image, making themselves and the wolves out to be more dangerous than they really are, assuming (rightly) that the more people fear them, the greater their chances are of being left alone. This strategy backfires at times, as wolf leaders make welcome scapegoats whenever a community needs one. The fact that a few wolf leaders use wolves for shadier purposes, such as attacking travel-

ers in order to rob them, does nothing to improve people's opinions about them.

### Playing a Wolf leader

You live an isolated life in the deep woods, in the company of your tamed wolves. These animals came to you when you fed them in the long winter months, or you raised orphaned cubs by hand. Because you hold mastery over these wild beasts, people are wary of you as they suspect you of being a sorcerer or a werewolf or both.

*Wealth:* Poor.

*Skills:* Craft (any), Insight (Wolves), Listen, Spot, Knowledge (Natural World), Navigate, Track, Sneak, two weapon skills appropriate for hunting.

*Powers:* The powers listed below are appropriate for controlling wolves, and one or more should be taken as a starting power. Since spells generally last only for short periods of time, mutations or psychic powers are more useful.

- ❖ *Magic spells:* Control Wild Animals (similar to the Control spell, but it works only on one sort of wild animal per spell. The power cost is 3 per level), Speak to Mind.
- ❖ *Mutations:* Pheromone, Speech Mimicry.
- ❖ *Psychic abilities:* Empathy, Mind Control, Telepathy.
- ❖ *Sorcery spells:* Summon Beast, Wolf Vision (similar to the sorcery spell Bird Vision, the power point cost is 3).

*Social Rank:* n/a.

You have 1d3 wolves who accompany you wherever you go.

### Woodsman

You brave the dangers of the vast forest to hunt wild animals and other menaces; or you fell and burn trees to produce charcoal. You may have been granted a license by the noble lord to go about your business, or you may be doing this in a clandestine manner. Or possibly you patrol the forests in order to stop poachers and unlicensed woodcutters.

*Wealth:* Destitute to Average, usually Poor.

*Skills:* Climb, Hide, Listen, Navigate, Spot, Stealth, Track, and three of the following: Insight (Animals), Knowledge (Natural World or Region), Melee Weapon (usually Spear), Missile Weapon (Bow or Spear), Ride, Sense.

*Social Rank:* Lower Class.

### Writer

*For use in the High Middle Age only.*

You are a poet, working on your great epic poem, a retelling of the King Arthur saga maybe; or one about your own exploits. You have to make a living, so you travel the lands, reciting poetry to the common and the high-born, while listening to their tales and songs in order to weave them into your own master piece.

*Wealth:* Poor to Average, usually Poor.

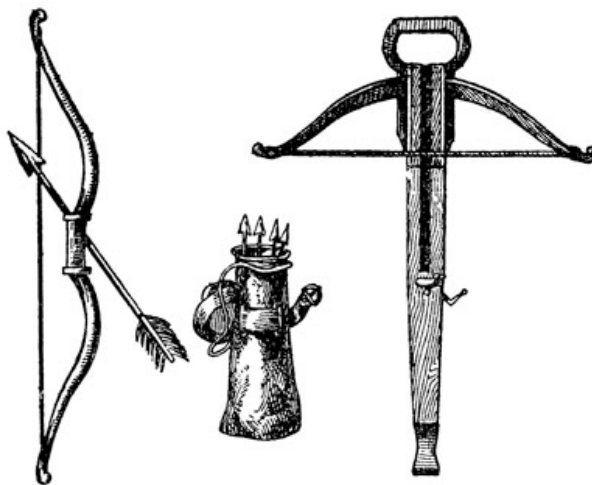
*Skills:* Art (writing), Insight, Language (own), Listen, Literacy (French); plus five of the following: Fast Talk, Knowledge (Folklore), Knowledge (Region); Language (Other), Persuade, Perform (Musical Instrument), Perform (Recite), Ride, Status.

*Social Rank:* Lower Class.

## EQUIPMENT

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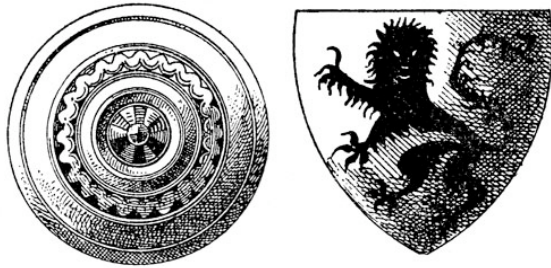
### Weapons



Most of the weapons listed under primitive or historic weapons can be used (with the exception of Asian weapons or ancient ones like the trident).

Soldiers and knights typically used swords and spears, mounted fighters also used lances. The typical weapon of city militias was the pike.

Shields in use were the buckler and the half or full shield, and from the 12th century on, the kite shield. Bows, javelins and crossbows were used as missile weapons.



## Armor

A High Medieval Knight would typically wear a hauberk, i.e. a knee-length chain mail shirt with long sleeves, augmented by a mail hood, the *coif*, and mail *chausses* covering the legs. This ensemble corresponds to the Chain armor described in the BRP manual.

The hauberk came into use during the crusades. Before that, knights and other fighting men wore short-sleeved, waist-length chain mail shirts without hoods, called byrnie. Byrnies were cheaper than hauberks, and continued to be worn by common foot soldiers throughout the Middle Ages.

Typically, leather padding was worn underneath the chain mail, and a surcoat bearing the knight's coat-of-arms covered the armor.

Full plate armor was not used until the late 14th century. From the mid-13th century on, single pieces of plate armor were worn to protect elbows, knees and shoulders.

The table below lists the statistics for the byrnie.

<i>Name</i>	<i>AP</i>	<i>Random AP</i>	<i>Burden</i>	<i>ENC</i>	<i>Skill Modifier</i>	<i>Fits Size</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Value</i>
Byrnie	6	2d4	Moderate	15.0	-15% to Physical skills	+2	2	All but legs and head	Average





# BASIC ROLEPLAYING

Medieval / Fantasy Setting

<b>NAME:</b> _____		<b>CHARACTERISTICS &amp; ROLLS</b>				<b>HIT POINTS</b>				
Race _____	Gender _____	<b>STR</b> _____	Effort _____	_____ %	<b>Major Wound</b> _____					
Height _____	Weight _____	<b>CON</b> _____	Stamina _____	_____ %	<b>Dead (- )</b>					
Description _____	Age _____	<b>SIZ</b> _____	Damage Bonus _____	_____ %	<b>00 01 02 03 04 05</b>					
Distinctive Features _____	Move _____	<b>INT</b> _____	Idea _____	_____ %	<b>06 07 08 09 10 11</b>					
Religion/Gods _____	Move _____	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>POW</b> _____	Luck _____	_____ %	<b>12 13 14 15 16 17</b>					
Profession _____	Wealth _____	<b>DEX</b> _____	Agility _____	_____ %	<b>18 19 20 21 22 23</b>					
Social Rank _____	Handedness _____	<b>APP</b> _____	Charisma _____	_____ %	<b>24 25 26 27 28 29</b>					
Coat of Arms _____		<b>EDU</b> _____	Know _____	_____ %	<b>30 31 32 33 34 35</b>					

## SKILLS

<b>COMMUNICATION</b> bonus (____)		<input type="checkbox"/> Repair Structural (15%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Navigate (10%) _____ %
<input type="checkbox"/> Bargain (05%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Command (05%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Sleight of Hand (05%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Research (25%) _____ %
<input type="checkbox"/> Disguise (01%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Etiquette (05%) _____ %	<b>MENTAL</b> bonus ( ____)	<input type="checkbox"/> Sense (10%) _____ %
<input type="checkbox"/> Fast Talk (05%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Language, Own (EDU*5) %	<input type="checkbox"/> Appraise (15%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Spot (25%) _____ %
<input type="checkbox"/> Languages, Other (00%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Perform (05%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid (30%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Track (10%) _____ %
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Gaming (INT+POW%) _____ %	<b>PHYSICAL</b> bonus ( ____)
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Status (00%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge (var%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Climb (40%) _____ %
<input type="checkbox"/> Teach (10%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Literacy (00%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Dodge (DEX*2%) _____ %
<b>MANIPULATION</b> bonus ( ____)	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Medicine (05%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Drive Carriage (10%) _____ %
Art (05%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Science (00%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Hide (10%) _____ %
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Craft (05%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy (05%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Jump (25%) _____ %
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Fine Manipulation (05%) _____ %	<b>PERCEPTION</b> bonus ( ____)	<input type="checkbox"/> Pilot Boat (25%) _____ %
<input type="checkbox"/> Repair Mechanical(15%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ %	Insight (var%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Ride (05%) _____ %
	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> People (05%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Stealth (10%) _____ %
	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Dom. Animals (15%) _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Swim (25%) _____ %
	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ %	<input type="checkbox"/> Throw (25%) _____ %
	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ %		<b>COMBAT</b> bonus ( ____)
	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> _____ %
	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> _____ %
	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ %		<input type="checkbox"/> _____ %

## WEAPONS

Weapon Type	attack	damage	range	attacks	length	hand	HP
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____ %	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____ %	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____ %	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____ %	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Brawl (25%)	_____ %	1D3+db	touch	1	close	1h	n/a
<input type="checkbox"/> Grapple (25%)	_____ %	special	touch	1	close	2h	n/a

## ARMOR

Armor Type	Value		
_____	_____		
_____	_____		
_____	_____		
_____	_____		
Shield Type	Parry	dam	HP
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____	_____

**PLAYER:**

Character Sheet for Medieval Campaigns

# GETTING CHARACTERS INVOLVED

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There are of course many ways for playing characters to hook up and get started on adventures in Val-du-Loup. One of the easiest methods to get the characters involved is via an authority figure, such as a local noble or an abbot, who hires them for various tasks.

Here are a few suggestions:

- ❖ Characters are either in the service or are guests of Jehan de Roifâ. Jehan, being an outsider, likes to gather other outcasts around him: scholars, travelers, adventurers and runaways of both sexes; and usually also a fair number of artists, minstrels and entertainers. Thus the Roifâ household is a good rallying point for a band of enterprising adventurers who do not quite fit the mold of medieval society. Jehan has a constant need of armed guards, clerks, gamekeepers, gardeners, translators, illustrators and entertainers. He hires anyone as long as he feels that he can trust them. Note that Jehan is a Muslim and believes in the same God as Christians do; while he does not mind anyone who believes in other gods at his court, he will ask them not to publicly display their 'pagan' faith.
- ❖ Another noble who constantly hires personnel is Arnault de Sainsprit. The Count is one of the richest men in the County and his court rivals that of the Countess of Rocmort. Anyone working for him, or staying with him and his family, must have a more traditional background: fellow nobles, merchants, knights, priests or monks; or else men-at-arms, craftspeople, foresters, hunters etc. who are in his employ. His wife also like minstrels around her, and although he hates the foppish bastards, he is willing to put up with them for her sake. As a good and pious Christian, he insists that all his guests and employees attend Sunday mass.
- ❖ The monks of the Abbey of Eonach have a constant need for officers and men-at-arms as well as craftsmen. Translators, illustrators etc. normally come from the ranks of their own, that is, are normally monks, but they also employ a militia to safeguard the monastery.
- ❖ Countess Sybill of Rocmort, worried at the constant (if not increasing) occurrences of supernatural incidents in the Vale, has set up a clandestine order, the *Hubertus Chase*, to investigate and resolve those incidents. The group is lead by her High Constable, Roger de Padin. He does not want his regular militia involved and thus hires scholars, theological experts, soldiers, spies as well as local experts (such as hunters or merchants) or skilled fellow nobles to make up this investigator group. It is on his behalf that they travel the land and investigate all sort of incidents, not merely the supernatural.
- ❖ Master of the Castle: one of the playing characters is a minor noble - a knight or baroness, for example; and the remaining characters are in the service of or are sworn to him or her. The noble playing character has a castle to call home, as well as land and peasants to provide a modest income and to support a life of adventuring and warfare. The wealth rating of this playing character "trickles down" to the other PCs in the form of weapons and equipment that they are given as their remuneration. Adventures can be built around life as a medieval nobleman or -woman: peasants and serfs staging a revolt, getting drafted into the latest local war, the castle besieged by the neighbors, etc.



# GAMEMASTER SECTION

## CHAPTER IV: BESTIARY

*When God created sheep, the devil created the wolf. When God created the dog, the devil created the fox.*

-- Proverb from Brittany

The following is a compendium of creatures which can be encountered when adventuring in Val-du-Loup. They range from the terrible and fierce to the wise and beautiful. Many animals and other creatures are hostile, but some also have also proven to be friends to humankind.

### ANIMALS

The animals listed below are commonly found in Medieval Europe. Most are already detailed in the BRP manual, the entry [BRP p. XX] refers to the page number of the 2008 BRP edition.

#### Bear

In the Middle Ages, brown bears were still common throughout Western Europe.

[BRP p. 334]

#### Boar

Boars are usually associated with ferocity and a will to destroy. It is commonly believed that boars are demon possessed or even the incarnation of the devil. They are credited with evil intentions as to the destruction and the havoc that they wreak.

Female boars are known to be particularly aggressive when accompanied by their litter.



<i>Char.</i>	<i>Roll</i>	<i>Average</i>
<b>STR</b>	3D6+4	14-15
<b>CON</b>	2D6+9	16
<b>SIZ</b>	2D6+6	13
<b>INT</b>	5	5
<b>DEX</b>	2D6	7
<b>POW</b>	2D6	7
<b>Move:</b>	10	
<b>Hit Points:</b>	13	

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Armor:** 3 point Hide

**Attacks:** Tusk 45%, damage 1D8+1Db (impaling)

**Skills:** Dodge 55%, Sense 50%, Stealth 35%

**Traits:** Aggressive: 40%, brave 80%, curious 40%.

## Dog

Dogs are described in the BRP manual on page 335.

Dogs were mostly used for hunting or for guard duty. The skills listed below are those of dogs trained for that purpose.

**Armor:** 1 point fur

**Attack:** Bite 45%, damage 1D8+1/2db (bleeding)

**Skills:** Dodge 35%, Listen 75%, Sense 90%, Swim 70%, Spot 60%, Track 80%.

## Fox

The fox is reputed to be a sly, intelligent creature. Peasants consider it bad luck to see a fox in their fields. While people appreciate the animal hunting rabbits and rodents, they are less pleased when a fox cleans out the hen house or does away with geese and ducks.

Foxes hunt alone although they live in extended families. They grow the size of a small dog and have keen senses of smelling and hearing. They are also good climbers and live in burrows. They feed on rodents, rabbits, fowl, worms, berries and carcasses.

One of the earliest European novels, the *Roman de Renard*, written in the 12th century, features a fox as the main character, depicting him as both a hero and a scoundrel, which reflects the common view of this animal that was both admired and despised.

Char	Roll	Average
<b>STR</b>	2d6	7
<b>CON</b>	3d6+3	13-14
<b>SIZ</b>	1D6+1	4-5
<b>INT</b>	7	7
<b>POW</b>	2d6	7
<b>DEX</b>	2d6+6	13

**Move:** 11

**Hit Points:** 9

**Damage Bonus:** -1D4

**Armor:** none

**Attack:** Bite 45% damage 1D6+1/2 db (bleeding); there is a 20% chance that the fox carries a disease of POT 2d10.

**Skills:** Climb 35%, Dodge 55%, Jump 65%, Listen 65%, Sense 90%, Track 70%.

## Hawk

Hawks, falcons and eagles are the main predatory birds of the European forests and mountains. The European hawks are generally referred to as buzzards.

[BRP p. 336]

## Horse

[BRP p. 336]

## Snake, Venomous

[BRP p. 338]

## Wisent (Bison)

The European bison, also referred to as wisent, resembled the North American bison but was smaller in size. In most of Western Europe, the animal became extinct by the 11th century, except in the Ardennes, where it survived until the 14th century.

Char	Roll	Average
STR	4D6+20	24
CON	2D6+12	19
SIZ	3D6+18	28-29
INT	4	4
DEX	2D6	7
POW	2D6	7
Move:	12	
Hit Points:	23-24	
Damage Bonus:	+2d6	

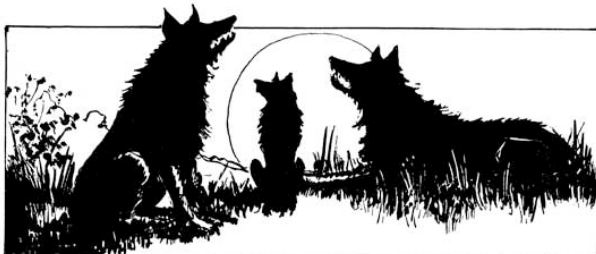
Natural Armor: 5 point hide

Attacks: Head Butt 55%, 1D10+1Db (knockback)

Skills: Dodge 25%, Perception 40%, Sense 55%

Traits: Aggressive: 20%, brave 60%, curious 20%.

## Wolf



The vast forests of the Ardennes are home to a large population of wolves. In fact, they were so numerous that words like "the plague" were used to refer to them. Always a bane to travelers, the steadily decreasing size of the forests made them even more dangerous; as hunger drove them more and more often out of the woods and into the villages to attack humans and cattle alike.

Wolves were a very tangible part of medieval rural life. In the Ardennes, they were so common and so dangerous that at one point they were declared "public enemy number one". Special laws were passed that permitted nobles to draft men from the villages in order to hold massive wolf hunts. The villagers were required to comb the woods and chase the animals into wolf traps: thinly covered, spike-filled holes where the trapped animal could be easily exterminated. The villagers were usually badly armed, so this was an extremely dangerous undertaking for them. Hunters who managed to kill a wolf customarily made the round of the nearby villages and towns, presenting the corpse of the animal to the townsfolk and collecting small gifts from them. Later, the hunter would nail the paws or the head of the beast on their front door - being a wolf-killer carried with it a certain prestige, even if the material gains were meagre.

There is no other animal around with so many superstitions attached to it as the wolf. In some places, people would not even pronounce its name for fear of attracting the beasts, calling them "dogs of the night" or "grey-foot" instead. Wolf fangs were worn around the neck for protection, and children were taught special prayers to recite at night lest a

wolf comes and takes them away. Not surprisingly, wolves were often credited with demonic powers or thought to be in league with the devil.

In some regions of Europe, people believed that hunting and killing wolves was not a wise course of action as it could attract the fury of other wolves. This led to court hearings being set up whenever a wolf attacked a person or cattle in the area; and only if the wolf was declared guilty, a hunting party was sent out to capture the beast. When caught, it was officially executed - sometimes even by hanging.

Refer to the BRP manual on page 340 for statistics.

# LEGENDARY CREATURES

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## Black Hounds

Black hounds appear at first like normal black dogs. People who venture close enough to such a beast notice startling differences: some animals seem to have horns on their forehead and have a fiery gleam in their eyes; some can increase their size to that of a bull, while others may change into fog or into ravens.

While the legends make little distinction between the various breeds of black hounds, they can basically be broken down into two categories: the demon hell hounds and the spirit shadow hounds.

## Hell Hound

Hell Hounds are demonic creatures of flesh and bone who serve other demons or undead, such as vampires. Although they resemble Shadow Hounds, small differences exist. The most noticeable features are their red glowing eyes and the horns on their forehead. Unlike Shadow Hounds they cannot change size; they are, however, infinitely more aggressive than their spirit counterparts. They are predators, and like vampires and other undead, they need to feed on the living to sustain themselves.

Hell Hounds are always bound to a master, who may be a demon, an undead or a human. In gen-



eral, these are creatures like Eternal Hunters or vampires, but humans have also learned to bind these hounds, using the correct Summon (Contact) spells. When a Hell Hound's master dies, they choose a new one - with or without their consent.

<i>Char.</i>	<i>Rolls</i>	<i>Average</i>
<b>STR</b>	3d6+6	16-17
<b>CON</b>	3d6+10	20-21
<b>SIZ</b>	2d6+6	13
<b>INT</b>	4d6	14
<b>POW</b>	6d6	21
<b>DEX</b>	4d6	14

**Move:** 13

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Armor:** 2 point hide

**Attacks:** Bite 90% damage 1D6 +1Db + automatic Muddle (as per the spell of the same name)

**Skills:** Track 99%

**Spells:** multiple, mainly Fear, Become Spectral, or Compel (Human).

**Demonic Powers:** breath fire, absorbs 1 point of magic or sorcery cast against it, absorbs 1 HP from an attacker if it is attacked with a melee weapon, and others.

## Shadow Hound

According to the legends, these large beasts are often found sleeping in narrow places such as small lanes, on bridges or inside the city gates, completely blocking these locations. Sometimes they lie across the step of people's front doors; or a whole pack of hounds blocks off an entire road. When people try to chase them away, they do not move. When people try to step over them, the dogs suddenly come to life and start chasing the frightened folk until they end up with their nerves in tatters, especially if the creature changes into a monster, grows vastly taller or starts breathing fire down the fugitives' neck. The dogs never attack, however, and if hurt, change into a raven or fog and simply fly away.

While it may seem that these black hounds only create mischief at random, some people believe that they actually act with a purpose, and that they like to frighten people who have some dark secret to hide,

or some unatoned guilt on their hands. Some folks even claim that black hounds are but the guilty conscience of people, appearing in this shape to haunt sinners at night.

Shadow Hounds are creatures of Limbo and are literally made of shadow. While their appearance is generally that of a large dog, their substance seems to shift depending on the light, and they have no fixed countenance. They can easily shift shape from a mastiff to a bull to a raven. Sometimes they sport attributes such as horns, two tails or two heads.

Shadow Hounds are independent creatures and not necessarily evil; some may even be called 'good', such as those who haunt criminals. However, Shadow Hounds can be summoned by sorcerers who know the right spells and made to commit deeds which are against their basic nature.

<i>Char.</i>	<i>Rolls</i>	<i>Average</i>
<b>SIZ</b>	2d6	7
<b>INT</b>	3d6	10-11
<b>POW</b>	6d6	21

**Move:** 11

**Damage Bonus:** n/a

**Attacks:** n/a

**Skills:** Track 99%

**Spells:** Call Darkness, Fear, Mesmerize, Curse (Power or Appearance), and others

**Power:** a shadow hound can grow up to size 18 at will, increasing its size by +1D6 points each round. The cost is 1 power point per 2 additional points of size.

## Cockatrice



The cockatrice is a reptilian monster thought to be a survivor from ancient, prehistoric times, just like dragons and wyverns. A cockatrice looks much like a wyvern, that is, it has a reptile body with clawed wings and two legs, but has a rooster's head instead of a snake head; and the added

ability of turning humans into stone upon eye contact.

Unlike wyverns, the cockatrice is a solitary animal and tends to fight other creatures of its species. Cockatrices have even been known to attack their mirror image when seeing themselves in a reflective surface.

<i>Char.</i>	<i>Rolls</i>	<i>Average</i>
<b>STR</b>	4d6+6	20
<b>CON</b>	7d6	24-25
<b>SIZ</b>	4d6+6	20
<b>INT</b>	2d6	7
<b>POW</b>	4d6+6	20
<b>DEX</b>	3d6	10-11

**Move:** 4/11 (flying)

Hit Points: 22

**Damage Bonus:** 2d6

**Armor:** 8-point thick skin

**Weapons:** 1 x Bite 65% damage 3d6 +1Db, 2 x Claws 55% damage 1D6+1Db

**Skills:** Dodge 65%, Fly 100%, Sense 70%, Spot 60%, Track 55%, Transfix 65%

**Powers:** a cockatrice has the following powers:

- ❖ **Petrification:** anyone who makes eye contact with a cockatrice risks turning to stone. This is a sorcery spell that costs 6 power points, and a successful POW vs POW roll is required. The cockatrice uses its *Transfix* skill to catch the potential victim's eye, the opponent may evade with a successful *Dodge* roll. Anyone turned to stone does not die immediately but survives in this state for a while, losing 1D6 Hit Points per hour. During that time, the spell can be reversed through appropriate magic like *Undo Sorcery*.
- ❖ Additionally, a cockatrice may know multiple magic spells, as per GM choice.

## Demon

The Greek and the Romans believed that demons were supernatural beings situated somewhere in between the gods and humankind, mischievous maybe but not necessarily evil. This belief held until the Middle Ages, when the demon were described as

insubstantial, evil spirits who can materialize as flesh-and-blood creatures, and who can possess and control living creatures - humans and animals alike. In turn, they can also be invoked and somewhat controlled by human witches and warlocks.

As so often in medieval lore, co-existing theories tended to contradict each other. The Fallen Angels were also described as demons, and so were the Nephilim, the offspring of Fallen Angels and of human women - a theory which contradicts the definition of demons as spiritual beings. Some scholars therefore argue that demons are the disembodied spirits of dead Nephilim.

In the late medieval period, whole books were written to define the hierarchies of demons and to name the most important ones; alternatively Baal or Lucifer were named as the rulers of the demons. Other named demons are Azazel (a Fallen Angel) and Baphomet.

The most often reported type of demon to haunt humans were the incubi and succubi, which are described below.

Medieval people also believed many wild beasts to be demon possessed, especially boars, wolves and large hounds. The Wild Hunt consisted of demon hunters (Eternal Hunters) accompanied by packs of demon beasts who hunted down humans.

Wild creatures not known to the Medieval folk were also categorized as demons.

The Catholic Church branded all the old Gods and pagan spirits as demons who are intent on seducing people away from the path of Christian righteousness.

Demons such as Azazel, Baphomet or any other of the named and numbered creatures from the bible or the medieval bestiaries are major demons. Their direct, physical interference on Earth is extremely rare and it takes very powerful sorcerers to summon them. They like to seduce and influence humans, much as Baphomet is believed to have seduced the Knights Templar away from their holy mission. Major demons also have the power to cause plagues and natural catastrophes such as floods or storms.

Lesser demons manifest as humans (such as the succubi or incubi described below), or as wild beasts or monsters. Others possess individual humans or beasts, taking over their mind and their body.

## Incubus And Succubus

Incubi and the succubi are demons in male and female form respectively who have intercourse with humans of the opposite sex. Incubi, the male shapes, try to father children on the women they lie with, often using semen stolen from men by the succubi. Most demons apparently have a sexual preference, appearing exclusively in male or female shape, but some demons are bisexual and take on either shape, seducing humans of both sexes.

Incubi and succubi either seduce their victims by their great beauty or by magic, or else they visit their targets when these are asleep and have sexual intercourse with them. By doing so, they drain energy from their victims in order to sustain themselves. This leads to recurring nightmares, prolonged ill health and even death for the hapless victims.

Children born to women after being raped or seduced by incubi were either totally human if the semen used was stolen from a man, or were demons themselves if the incubus used his own semen to get the woman pregnant. There is a 50% chance that children born from this sort of intercourse are incubi or succubi themselves.

Char	Roll	Average
<b>STR</b>	4d6	14
<b>CON</b>	4d6	14
<b>SIZ</b>	2d6+6	13
<b>INT</b>	4d6	14
<b>POW</b>	3d6+6	16-17
<b>DEX</b>	3d6+6	16-17
<b>APP</b>	21	21

**Move:** 10 (12 flying)

**Hit Points:** 13-14

**Armor:** none

**Attacks:** Grapple 80%

**Skills:** Climb 70%, Dodge 50%, Fast Talk 60%, Fly 75%, Hide 55%, Insight 65%, Persuade 60%, Stealth 65%

**Sorcery spells:** as per GM choice and demon's POW and INT scores. Suggestions: Cloak of Night, Midnight, Moonrise, Muddle, Pox, Sorcerer's Sureness, Sorcerer's Beauty, Sorcerer's Vitality, Undo Sorcery, Weave Nightmares, Witch Sight.

### Special powers:

- ❖ **Drain energy:** these particular types of demons gain great dominance over their target through sexual intercourse. While doing so, the demons drain 1D6+2 hit points and 1D6+2 power points from their victim every night (they have a tendency to visit their targets night after night over sometimes prolonged periods of time). The drained hit points and power points are added to the demon's scores. Additionally, the victim does not naturally recuperate any previously lost hit points or power points during that night (i.e. doesn't heal naturally because he or she doesn't rest properly).
- ❖ In order to seduce a person, the demon attacks with APP vs. INT - failure causes the victim to befriend the creature and to lie with it. All attempts by the demon to seduce a person whose sexual preference does not correspond to the demon's chosen gender are of level *difficult*.
- ❖ regenerates 1 hit point per combat round until dead.

## Dragon



Dragons are seen as the ultimate evil, relics from a time before time when many such evil creatures roamed the Earth. They are generally rare but at least one is known to exist in the Loup valley, in the Black Heart, the stretch of uninhabited primeval forest covering steep hills and dark valleys which lies to the Northeast of Beaufort.

Dragons are described in the BRP manual on page 341.

## Elementals



It was only in the 15th century that an alchemist called Paracelsus put a name to the various elementals. What he described in scientific terms were phenomena which were known by other names to the people before that.

Depending on where you live, elementals of one type or another are more or less frequently encountered.

The giant forests of the Ardennes are home to the undines (water elementals), who live in the ponds of the deep woods, or at the source of the streams which crisscross the forests. Sylphs, air elementals, are seen less frequently, and there are

no reports of salamanders (fire elementals) being encountered.

Gnomes, who, according to Paracelsus, are earth elementals, are probably the most widespread of these creatures. For the people of the Middle Ages, gnomes were fairies.

Elementals are described in the BRP manual. An alternative version of gnomes is given below.

## Eternal Hunters

In forests as deep and wide as those in Val-du-Loup, hunting is a way of life. While most hunters are decent people, it seems that a fair number of

nobles know as little restraint in hunting as they do in everything else. And if the stories are to be believed, some hunters are evil beyond imagination: cruel, bloodthirsty men who show a complete disregard for animals and humans alike and who often spill as much human blood as they do animal blood.

For the most wicked of these creatures, the forces that govern the afterlife, whoever those forces might be, seem to reserve a quite cruel and sarcastic fate: after their death (often the result of a hunting accident), the hunters are compelled to come back again and again to haunt their old hunting grounds. These creatures are variously called Eternal Hunters, Mad Hunters or Headless Hunters. Eternal Hunters can be undead creatures like the Oaklord, demons such as Hellequin, or gods such as Wotan or Nyarlathotep. They ride equally sinister steeds and are often accompanied by other undead, by fairies, demons or demon-possessed animals such as boars and wolves. This is called the Wild Hunt.

Stories of Eternal Hunters are told all over the country, and although they are always similar, they are never identical. There is not one form in which these undead return: some look just like normal humans dressed in hunting garb, others are headless, while others carry their head under their arm or have it turned backwards. Some are just skeletons, others seem to be burning alive. Some are on foot, but most ride large black satanic horses that leave burning hoof prints on the ground. Some are undead, while others are demons. They are almost always accompanied by large black hounds whose howling can be heard throughout the whole region. It is said that the whole forest is in uproar whenever the Eternal Hunters are out. One or two female Hunters have also been known to exist.

Hunters appear by day as well as by night. They attack travelers and domestic animals, such as cattle and horses, but their favorite prey are other hunting parties. Suddenly appearing out of the shadows, the undead and their infernal companions chase their victims to exhaustion. Some Hunters leave it at that, but others are not content until they have killed, often leaving behind heavily mutilated bodies. Kidnappings are also reported, whereby it is generally believed that the victims were taken off to the land of the dead by the hunters, and often re-appeared later as members of the Wild Hunt.

Wild Hunts are unpredictable: at times, they pick their targets at random, at other times, they chase down specific persons. Demons such as Hellequin

are often hunting down sinners to take their souls back to hell.

Eternal Hunters are one of the most feared horrors of the forests. Luckily for the locals these creatures are always bound to a certain area (their previous hunting grounds), and these areas are avoided by all who know and believe the tales.

Two examples, the Oaklord and Hellequin, are provided under **Unique Creatures**, below.

## Fairy

The term fairy refers to a good many different kinds of creatures who are far from being a uniform group. In size, they can range from tiny (pixies) to huge (trolls). Their character and their attitudes towards humans vary greatly. The term also includes creatures whose domain is limited to special regions, such as the leprechauns of Ireland and the dwarves of the Norse sagas.

The most common types of fairies in the Ardenes are the gnomes, goblins and kobolds, all of whom are detailed in separate entries.

## Fireboar

Fireboars are huge black boars who are generally considered to be demons. They have a tendency to suddenly appear out of thin air, and to attack and kill, and often devour, unwary travelers and hunters. They are also known to devastate fields and gardens, and even whole stretches of forests.

It is their favorite mode of attack which earned them their name: when attacking, they stampede through the campfires of the travelers, thereby setting themselves ablaze. Magically protected from the flames, they use their burning fur as an additional weapon to harm their opponents.

The beasts are impervious to hunger and sleep - if they chase someone up a tree, they just patiently wait below for days, until the unfortunate person weakens and finally drops to the ground. Fireboars never seem to tire and are known to have outlasted horses in a day long chase.

*Char*    *Roll*    *Average*

**STR**    3D6+6 16-17

**CON**    2D6+9 15

**SIZ**    3D6+3 13-14

**INT**    7 7

**DEX**    3D6 10-11

**POW**    3D6 10-11

**Movement:** 12

**Hit Points:** 14-15

**Damage Bonus:** +1D6

**Natural Armor:** 3 point hide

**Attacks:** Fire attack (see demonic powers below) 65%, damage 2d6; Tusk 65%, damage 1D6+1Db

**Skills:** Dodge 55%, Perception 50%, Stealth 45%, Strategy 40%, Track 35%

**Demonic Powers:** Impervious to fire, fire attack (sets itself aflame by running through a fire, then causes 2d6 damage to all those within melee range), generates 1 Hit Points per combat round until dead, makes agonizing screams continuously, breathes 3D6 fire once per combat (3-meter range, must have set itself on fire before)

## Goat-Man of Val-du-Loup

Goat-men are Nephilim that are particularly active in the upper Loup valley. They have human bodies, but their heads and legs are those of goats and rams, as are their horns and tails. They are agile and fast, and their goat-legs give them good purchase for climbing. They tend to be vicious and aggressive, especially when encountered in groups. If encountered individually, they try to be sly and seductive. Some of them have the looks that let them get away with it.

One remarkable thing about goat-men is their very exposed and noticeable male genitalia. They are sexually extremely active beasts who terrorize communities by attacking, raping and killing at random.

From the look of things, all goat-men seem to be male, but this is not quite true. Some members sport both male and female sexual organs, and it is these hermaphrodites who bear the offspring. While being



also sexually active as males, they do not sire children.

Despite the frequent rapes of human women, no mixed blood children have been born, which is at least a small consolidation to the hapless victims.

Because goat-men are so heavily identified with sexual prowess and aggression, the term *goat-man* is often used for men who display too much of an appetite for sexual activities.

Over the past years, there have been a number of women burnt at the stake because they were rumored to have sought intercourse with goat-men. People generally believe goat-men to be demons.

In other cultures and in other times, these goat-men are known as satyrs or fauns.



Char.	Rolls	Averages
<b>STR</b>	2d6+6	13
<b>CON</b>	2d6+6	13
<b>SIZ</b>	3d6	10-11
<b>INT</b>	3d6	10-11
<b>POW</b>	3d6	10-11
<b>DEX</b>	4d6	14
<b>APP</b>	4d6	14
<b>Move</b>	10	
Hit Points	13	

Damage Bonus: 0

**Attacks:** Short Sword or Short Spear 60% damage d6+1+1Db, Claws 55% damage d6 +1Db

**Armor:** fur 1 + leather vest 3

**Skills:** Climb 70%, Jump 80%, Sneak 70%, Track by smell 70% (only if mutation includes animal snout)

**Special skill:** High Jump - goat-men can jump to a height equal to their SIZ with a successful Jump roll.

Typical **Mutations:** Horns, goat legs, tail. There is a 50% chance of another mutation, and 30% of a fourth mutation.

**Traits:** aggressive: 50%, brave 80%, communicative 80%, honest 50%, scheming 70%, seductive 80%

## Goblin

The name *goblin* applies to a bunch of fairy races, so the description and the attributes associated with them vary greatly, and sometimes even contradict each other.

By all accounts, goblins are ugly and mischievous, even if they are not outright evil. They steal, play tricks, ride domestic animals to death, make milk go sour, cause nightmares and frighten travelers.

Their height ranges from infant to grown human being, and they seem to possess a variety of powers: shapeshifting into animals, inflicting nightmares, turning invisible and raising the dead.

They are generally described as resembling old, ugly men, with thick black or grey hair covering their brows.

Goblins are also said to steal human babies and to leave goblin babies in their stead - the dreaded changelings.

Goblins are considered the ugly cousins of gnomes and kobolds.

<i>Char</i>	<i>Roll</i>	<i>Average</i>
<b>STR</b>	1D20	10-11
<b>CON</b>	1D20	10-11
<b>SIZ</b>	1D4+4	6-7
<b>INT</b>	2d6+6	13
<b>POW</b>	1D20	10-11
<b>DEX</b>	3d6+6	16-17
<b>APP</b>	1D6	3-4

**Move:** 8

**Hit Points:** 8-9

**Damage Bonus:** none

**Armor:** 1 point Hide or Soft Leather; possibly +3 to +5 hard leather or old discarded chain armor

**Attacks:** Brawl 50% damage 1D3 +1db, Short Spear 80% damage 1D6+1+1db, Short Bow 60% damage 1D6+1+ ½ db, Dagger 45% damage 1D4+1+1Db

**Skills:** Climb 65%, various Crafts (blacksmithing, carpentry, ...) 55%, Dodge 80%, Hide 90%, ; Knowledge (Occult) 40%, Language (Goblin, Gnome) 85%, Language (Human) 55%, Spot 50%, Sense 75%, Stealth 90%.

**Sorcery spells:** cloak of night, curse of sorcery, invisibility, liken shape, muddle, rat's vision, weave nightmares.

**Traits:** aggressive: 80%, brave 65%, curious 80%, honest 25%, scheming 60%.

Note: these statistics have been adapted from the *Dreamlands* manual.

## Ghost

Violent deaths are a frequent occurrence in this backward region of the world. This may explain why there seem to be so many ghosts around. They haunt castles, or specific parts of castles such as keeps or dungeons, but also churches, caves and glades.

While there are many different types of ghosts, two categories are prevalent: the malevolent hags and the benevolent white ladies. Both are ghosts of dead wronged women.

Hags tend to either scare off people, or lure them on with promises of rich rewards, often leading them to their death. A particular trait of hags is to cause nightmares in people.

As the name implies, White Ladies appear as beautiful women, shimmering in a white light. They materialize to warn off careless adventurers, and have been seen to cry over the bodies of those who didn't heed their warnings.

See the BRP manual for details on Ghosts.

## Ghost Horse

There are stories of ghostly horses running wild through the woods of Western Europe. All kinds of powers and characteristics are ascribed to them. Sometimes they appear as just shy, at other times they seem to be demonic and aggressive. People who have tried to ride them found themselves dragged off into the depths of the woods, never to be seen again. They may be black or white, and sometimes they appear headless.

Mostly, ghost horses appear riderless, but sometimes they are summoned as mounts of Eternal Hunters or carry witches and warlocks. It is also believed that ghost horses are in the service of the forest itself and help protect it.

The Church warns of ghost horses who tempt children into climbing onto their backs and disappear with them into the vast forest, or drown them in the dark lakes.

<i>Char.</i>	<i>Roll</i>	<i>Average</i>
<b>SIZ</b>	4d6+12	26
<b>INT</b>	2d6+6	13
<b>POW</b>	4d6+4	18
<b>APP</b>	5d6	17-18

**Move:** 14

**Hit Points:** not applicable

**Damage Bonus:** none

**Armor:** n/a

**Attacks:** n/a

**Skills:** Dodge 75%, Hide 65%, Language (Human) 55%, Persuade 65%, Spot 60%, Sense 60%, Stealth 60%. The communications skills are applicable when it uses its Telepathy power, see below.

### **Powers:**

- ❖ **Ghostly Combat:** use a POW vs. POW roll. The losing combatant loses 1D3 power points per round.
- ❖ **Ghost Steed:** the horse can take on concrete form, strong enough to carry one or more riders. The total SIZ of the riders may not be greater than the POW of the horse. The horse may carry the rider(s) for a while, costing it 3 power points per half an hour of riding. The riders are unable to fall off, despite the speed and erratic running of the horse. Anyone wanting to get off must succeed at a POW vs. POW roll, to be repeated every 30 minutes.
- ❖ **Telepathy:** a ghost steed can use telepathy to speak to a human. The communication skills listed above are applicable for this type of communication only.

**Traits:** aggressive: 30%, brave 60%, curious 40%.

## **Giant**

The vast primal forests of Western Europe are able to hide many creatures which are commonly thought to have died out a long time ago. One of those is the race of giants, so prevalent in the time of the ancient Greeks and Babylonians. There are several theories as to the origins of giants, but one of them is that they are Nephilim, i.e. the descendants of the Fallen Angels and of human women. The Nephilim are described in their own section below.

Giants generally live alone or in small clans, and while not being overly aggressive, they are known to sneak up on lost travelers, whom they capture and presumably eat.

Some of the giants are reported to be one-eyed cyclops, similar to the ones from the ancient Greek tales.

Giants are described in the BRP manual on page 344.

## **Gnome**

Gnomes come in all forms and shapes. Living in isolated tribes, they often have distinct local characteristics which set them apart from tribes in other regions. The alchemist Paracelsus describes gnomes as being earth elementals. That may be the case in

other parts of the world, however, the description of the local tribes, based on eye witness accounts, shows that the local gnomes are an independent, self-organized people, who widely resent magic users summoning them for selfish purposes. For all intent and purposes, these gnomes seem to belong to the realm of the fairies, not the elementals.

Gnomes are, as is widely known, very small. They are often described as men and women with faces whose skin has the color of the earth they live in - brown, ochre, red or yellow, with noses that resemble flower bulbs and hair that resembles the roots of grass. Gnomes have a liking for shiny treasures - especially golden ones. Humans who have been to their underground living quarters speak of rooms filled with gold, jewels and diamond studded ornaments, often in the style of the kings of old - Romans or Celts or Franks.

Gnomes are generally well disposed towards humans, but humans do not always recognize this. They often envy the gnomes their riches, and malign them for being reclusive and secretive, even if in reality gnomes are inclined to help humans. Many poor or unfortunate people have found that gnomes came to bring food, plow their fields, heal their livestock or fix up their homes; and in many of the poorer rural areas, gnomes are well liked and highly regarded.

Existing underground structures, such as ancient burial mounds from Celtic and pre-Celtic times, serve as homes to the little creatures, but their favorite dwelling places are the buried Roman villas and temples where many riches can be found. Quite often they use still intact household wares and furniture, and even new items which they produce have a distinctive Roman aura about them.

Little is known about the social structure of the Gnomish people, but there is one King Schadai who holds court in a large Roman villa together with his extended family and clan. He is described in the **Personalities** chapter.



<i>Char.</i>	<i>Roll</i>	<i>Average</i>
<b>STR</b>	2d6+3	10
<b>CON</b>	2d6+3	10
<b>SIZ</b>	1D4+4	6-7
<b>INT</b>	2d6+6	13
<b>POW</b>	3d6	10-11
<b>DEX</b>	3d6+6	16-17
<b>APP</b>	4d6-3	11

**Move:** 6

**Hit Points:** 8-9

**Damage Bonus:** none

**Armor:** 1 point Hide or Soft Leather; possibly +3 to +5 hard leather or old discarded chain armor

**Attacks:** Brawl 50% damage 1D3 +1Db, Dagger 45% damage 1D4+1+1Db; Short Sword 35% damage 1D6+1+1Db

**Skills:** Appraise 55%, Climb 45%, various Crafts (blacksmithing, mining, ...) 55%, Dodge 75%, Hide 65%, Language (Gnome) 85%, Language (Human) 55%, Spot 60%, Sense 60%, Stealth 60%; possibly multiple Knowledge (archeology, art history, group (Romans or Celts), region) or Science skills (botany, geology).

**Traits:** aggressive: 10%, brave 60%, curious 80%, greedy 65%, honest 75%, scheming 50%.

## Javelin Snake (Jaculus)

When you come to a lake or a pond deep in the forest, and you carefully scan the treetops, you have a good chance of seeing the jaculus: snakes, more colorful and larger than normal, who wear a golden crown on their head and who shoot spear-like from tree to tree, which is why they are called Javelin Snakes. On a sunny day, if you are quiet and patient, you may even observe them as they plunge into the lake where they like to swim and laze around in. When they do so, they take off their crowns and place them on rocks along the shore of the lake.

Javelin snakes, who live in tribes far away from human settlements, are not generally dangerous, but when humans become tempted to steal the crowns that they found lying by the water, they experience the wrath of these little creatures. Jumping, almost

flying from tree to tree, the snakes are as fast as humans and they almost always catch a thief. Like dragons, to whom they are related, they can spit fire. More dangerous however is their power to call and command serpents, especially the venomous kinds. And if those who steal a snake's crown make it back to their home and think themselves safe, they will soon find their house infested with serpents, and unless they agree to give back the crown, they sooner or later end up dead, bitten by one of the deadly beasts.

Jaculus have two weaknesses: they cannot cross large flowing bodies of water such as rivers, streams or wide shallow brooks; and if ever a snake goes three days without its crown, it goes into such a frenzy that it ends up killing itself, usually by smashing its head against a rock.

<i>Char.</i>	<i>Rolls</i>	<i>Average</i>
<b>STR</b>	2d4	5
<b>CON</b>	2d6	7
<b>SIZ</b>	2d4	5
<b>INT</b>	7	7
<b>POW</b>	3d6+5	15-16
<b>DEX</b>	3d6	10-11
<b>Move</b>	6 (10 when flying through trees)	

**Hit Points:** 12

**Damage Bonus:** -1D6

**Attacks:** Breathe Flame 70%, 1D5 fire damage per level (cost: 3 power points, as per *Flame* spell). If maddened, the snake can use this attack 2x per round.

**Armor:** none

**Skills:** Dodge 75%, Climb 90%, Jump 80%, Sneak 90%, Track 70%

**Magic:** Summon (Serpents)

## Kobold

Kobolds are diminutive fairies (one to two ft in size) who visit, and even inhabit, human dwellings. They like to stay invisible and come out at night, either to help with domestic chores or to do mischief. Humans like to invite kobolds into their homes and wooden carvings of kobolds are placed outside dwellings in order to attract these helpful and protective creatures.



Kobolds have a variety of powers, from turning invisible to shape shifting completely or partially into animals such as foxes.

The name suggests that kobolds are related to goblins, if so, they are the friendly cousins of the goblins.

In Northern Europe, kobolds are also known to live onboard ships where they help the sailors in times of distress.

Char	Roll	Average
<b>STR</b>	1D5	3
<b>CON</b>	1D10	5-6
<b>SIZ</b>	2	2
<b>INT</b>	2d6+6	13
<b>POW</b>	1D20	10-11
<b>DEX</b>	3d6+6	16-17
<b>APP</b>	1D10	5-6

**Move:** 11

**Hit Points:** 4

**Damage Bonus:** -1D6

**Armor:** none

**Attacks:** none

**Skills:** Climb 95%, Dodge 110%, Hide 120%, Language (Goblin, Gnome) 85%, Language (Human) 55%, Spot 70%, Sense 85%, Stealth 120%.

**Sorcery spells:** cloak of night, curse of sorcery, invisibility, liken shape, muddle, rat's vision.

**Traits:** aggressive: 10%, brave 55%, curious 90%, honest 75%, scheming 60%.

## The Little People

*"They are known variously as Turanians, Picts, Mediterraneans, and Garlic Eaters. A race of small dark people, traces of their type may be found [...] among the Basques of Spain, the Scotch of Galloway, and the Lapps.*

[...]

*I saw plainly stunted bodies, the gnarled limbs, the beady reptilian eyes that stared unwinkingly, the grotesque, square faces with their inhuman features,*

*and the shimmer of flint daggers in their crooked hands. [...] Whatever they were, they were of living substance."*

*The Little People*, by Robert E. Howard.

Legends have it that when the Celts invaded Western Europe, survivors of the defeated aboriginal people withdrew into subterranean caves, or hid in the depths of the vast primeval forests. From their hideouts, they ventured into the world of the conquerors to seek revenge and cause mayhem. Living in isolation, they inbred and thus degenerated into dwarfish, misshapen creatures. Over the years, the Little People became associated with goblins and other fairies, and magic qualities were ascribed to them. In the British Isles, they are also called the Children of Danu, the Tuatha Dé Danann, the forefathers of the Daoine Sidhe.

Although the concept of the Little People is prevalent in Great Britain, it is known throughout Western Europe. Basically, the Little People were believed to be the remnant of a pre-Celtic Neolithic people of Central Asian origin, although modern research (based on the flux of domesticated animals) suggests that their culture originated in Southwest Asia.

Theories diverge whether the Little People were one people throughout Europe, or whether the term applies to a number of different pre-Celtic peoples.

The Little People feature heavily in the works of Arthur Machen and Robert E. Howard. Machen describes his Little People as mysterious magical creatures akin to the fairies. At first, Howard equated the Little People with his version of the Picts, the diminutive savages that have been causing trouble from the ages of Kull and Conan down to the Roman times. In *The Worms of the Earth*, Howard has Bran Mak Morn, the last King of the Picts, enter into an agreement with the degenerate remnants of the mysterious and sly Serpent People during the Roman occupation of the British Isles. From then on, the Picts withdrew underground and became the degenerate beings described in the quote above; some of them mixing with the Serpent People and becoming even more inhuman.

In later stories, under the influence of H.P. Lovecraft, Howard revised this theory to claim that it was the Picts who drove an earlier, 'mongolian' race underground who then became the Little People.



In *The Lost Race*, a story set in the Dark Ages, Howard paints a slightly more sympathetic picture of some of the still pure-blooded, but already degenerated Little People:

*"Scarce above four feet stood the tallest, and they were small of build and very dark of complexion. Their eyes were black; and most of them went stooped forward, as if from a lifetime spent in crouching and hiding; peering furtively on all sides. They were armed with small bows, arrows, spears and daggers, all pointed, not with crudely worked bronze but with flint and obsidian, of the finest workmanship. They were dressed in finely dressed hides of rabbits and other small animals, and a kind of coarse cloth; and many were tattooed from head to foot in ocher and woad. There were perhaps twenty in all".*

Howard did not relate his Little People to the fairies: for him, they were beings of flesh and bone, and while they include the odd sorcerer or witch (some of which can shapeshift into wolves by donning wolf skins, as related in *The Lost Race*), they are not inherently magical creatures. Their strength lies in numbers: they seldom venture outside their underground habitats alone, they are always encountered in large groups. Their armor and weapons correspond to that of the pre-Bronze Age cultures.

While Howard's specific description of the Little People applies only to the British Isles, it is conceivable that a similar fate befell the pre-Celtic tribes in other parts of Europe. Over a thousand years of inbreeding and living in dark caves certainly would cause many genetic defects, and without contact with the outer world, their culture would remain at the Neolithic level. The statistics below are based on this assumption.

Since the Little People and goblins occupy pretty much the same space, it is hard to see how the two could co-exist. Most likely, one race would push the other out, so that only one can be found in a given region.

The lost, vast underground cave system in the Val-du-Loup represents an ideal hiding place for a lost, degenerate tribe of stone age warriors. People attribute sightings of them to goblins, not suspecting that an even more sinister group of diminutive fiends is living right underneath them. Maybe they are responsible for the random kidnappings of young girls throughout the region?

The Picts have come to worship their last king Bran Mac Morn as a god; they call him *The Dark*

*Man*. Many of the Little People have, however, turned to ancient dark gods such as Tsathoggua and Gol-Goroth.

Char	Roll	Aver.
<b>STR</b>	2D6	7
<b>CON</b>	3D6	10-11
<b>SIZ</b>	1D6+2	5-6
<b>INT</b>	2D6	7
<b>POW</b>	2D6+6	13
<b>DEX</b>	2D6+6	13
<b>APP</b>	1D4	2-3

**Move:** 10

**Hit Points:** 8

**Damage Bonus:** -1D4

**Attacks:** Flint axes 65% damage d6+1+1Db, flint knives 45% damage d4+1Db

**Armor:** none

**Skills:** climb 70%, dodge 80%, knowledge (blasphemous) 55%, sense 80%, stealth 90%.

**Mutations:** coloration (white), decreased characteristics (size and appearance), keen sense (smell & touch). Some may also have the mutation *venom*.

**Sorcery spells:** cloak of night, fury, liken shape, muddle, rat's vision, sorcerer's hammer, sorcerer's speed, ward and others.

Little People suffer -25% penalty on all physical and sensory skills when in broad daylight.

They always appear in groups of at least 2d10+10 warriors, accompanied by 1D4-1 sorcerers or witches. Characters with POW of 16+ know 2d3 spells.

## Oakbeast

Oakbeasts are the spirits of the trees that are released when a tree is felled. Most of these spirits are inoffensive creatures that do little more than mourn the death of the tree that housed them for so long. But just like humans, tree spirits can be good or bad, and those that are bad sometimes materialize as Oakbeasts, which are nothing else than undead trees. Their shape is vaguely humanoid: the size of a

child, they walk on two legs and have two arms. Their body looks like an old gnarled tree, and their fingers are shaped like claws that resemble long splinters of wood. Oakbeasts do not appear at random, just like human ghosts, they are tied to a place or they have been sent or summoned back from the "dead" for a specific purpose.

Oakbeasts become more and more frequent as larger parts of the forests are being cut down.

*Char. Roll Average*

**SIZ** 2d6+3 10

**INT** 2d6+6 13

**POW** 4d6 14

**APP** 2d6 7

**Hit Points:** -

**Damage Bonus:** -

**Armor:** -

**Attacks:** Ghostly Combat POW vs. POW as per BRP manual page 343.

**Powers:** as per GM choice, based on ghostly powers described in the BRP manual.

**Skills:** Sense 60%, Stealth 100%

## Ogre

Ogres are the descendants of a race of tall people that came from Hungary in the 9th and 10th century to raid the lands of Western Europe (there were 47 recorded expeditions into Germany, Italy and France between 899 - 970), and the name "ogre" is derived from the term "Oighours", meaning Hungarians.

When the invading armies were beaten back, pockets of surviving Oighours became isolated and hid in the deep forests of Western Europe. To survive, these barbaric warriors reverted to eating human flesh and drinking human blood. Descendants of these warriors still live in the large forests of Europe, still hunting humans down for food.

Ogres are tall, lithe and agile. Their physical appearance ranges from revolting (with open sores and welts on their skin) to stunning. The ugliness is not due to the cannibalism, however, but to inbreeding and bad hygienic conditions.

Ogres still adhere to their ancient, pre-Christian faiths, and there are a number of shamans and sorcerers in their midst.

These exist a number of rumors concerning Ogres, which may or may not be true:

- ❖ Ogres are extremely ugly. Their skin is covered in vermin infested boils. Sometimes, their faces are nothing but raw flesh.
- ❖ Ogres command wild animals such as boars and bears, and use them to scare humans away from their hiding places.
- ❖ Ogres are man-eating giants.
- ❖ Some ogres are all but indistinguishable from humans, and while they prefer to live isolated lives, nothing prevents them from mingling with humans while secretly prying on them.
- ❖ A number of ogres can keep their cannibalistic instincts at bay.

In Val-du-Loup, an army of 300 or more of Oighours was cornered in the woods around Trou-du-Loup. Before battle began with the German King's troops, they faded away into the forests. Some speculate that the marauders found the entrance to the vast underground cave system rumored to exist beneath Trou-du-Loup; others believe that they simply split up and retreated into the depths of the Black Heart where their descendants still live.

Several years ago, residents of Trou-du-Loup stumbled upon an Ogre family living in a cave next to the bed of the river Loup. They chased the couple and their small son down the narrow path which runs beside the river, eventually killing all three. The path has since been known as Ogre's Run.

### Ogres as playing characters:

Choose any background and profession. Ogres tend to live either in the woods, on the fringes of society, as hunters, foresters or peasants; or they are well integrated into communities, where they tend to be merchants, craftsmen or cooks.

<i>Char.</i>	<i>Roll</i>	<i>Average</i>
<b>STR</b>	2d6+6	13
<b>CON</b>	2d6+3	10
<b>SIZ</b>	2d6+9	16
<b>INT</b>	2d6+6	13
<b>POW</b>	2d6+6	13
<b>DEX</b>	2d6+6	13
<b>APP</b>	4d6-3	11

**Hit Points:** 13

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Armor:** 1 point Hide or Soft Leather; possibly +3 point natural armor

**Attacks:** Brawl 70%, damage 1D3 +1Db (+1D6 for Natural Weapon mutation), Spear 65%, damage 1D6+1+1Db; Spear (thrown) 75%, 1D6+1+half db

**Mutations:** as per GM choice. Mutations are all minor and may include Allergy, Disease Carrier (infection is contracted through an ogre's bite), Metabolic Improvement, Metabolic Weakness (addiction to human flesh), Natural Armor, Natural Weaponry: Teeth, Pain Sensitivity, Pheromone, Sensitivity: human flesh.

**Skills:** Climb 75%, Dodge 55%, Hide 65%, Spot 60%, Stealth 60%, Track 70%

Note: the skills above are those typical for bands of ogres living as hunters or brigands in remote parts of the woods. Ogres integrated into society would have the typical skills of their professions.

## Werewolf

If wolves are the most feared of all the animals in the forest, werewolves are the most dreaded and loathed of all the supernatural beasts that haunt the Ardennes. Wherever there are a large numbers of wolves, there are also many werewolves, and the Ardennes forests are no exception. These creatures are feared not only because of their strength and their sheer invulnerability, but because anybody can turn out to be such a monster. Anyone, anywhere, can be a werewolf - your next door neighbor might be one, the parish priest or your liege lord, or that weird looking stranger that just came into town. Men and women, young and old, nobody is above suspicion. It

is this fear that causes a general wariness of strangers in the villages and hamlets.

One reason why werewolves are so loathed is that they kill only for the joy of killing. Unlike animals and or other monsters, werewolves do not kill for blood or sustenance: they kill because they can. For many, werewolves embody the evil that lies dormant in most, if not all of us; only in werewolves, it breaks out every so often, willingly or unwillingly. Some embrace this and become evil; others fight it as best they can, mostly without any success.

Stories suggest that this form of lycanthropy can have multiple causes, and multiple triggers. Some turn into wolves against their will during nights of the full moon; others at a time when they feel strong emotions such as anger or pain. Others can control the urge and release it only when they want to change shape. Some must resort to magic items in order to shapeshift, mostly belts or cloaks made from werewolf hide.

Lycanthropy is seen as a disease that is transmitted when the victim is bitten by a werewolf; but it is also passed from parents to children.

Werewolves are described in the BRP manual, and statistics can be taken from there.

As stated in the manual, werewolves are resistant to all forms of physical attacks except for attacks by fire and weapons of silver. Additionally, it is also widely believed that werewolves have an aversion to wolfsbane, a purple-flowered plant. On top of the powers listed in the BRP manual, allergy to wolfsbane may be added as an *averse mutation*. It can strike werewolves either in a minor or a major form.

The earliest stories denoting the werewolves' vulnerability to silver appear only in the 17th century, so the gamemaster may decide that player characters in the Middle Ages know nothing of this weakness.

## Other Werecoatures

While werewolves are the best known and most feared of all shape-changing creatures, there are plenty of stories of men and women changing into all kinds of creatures; this includes boars, goats, snakes and even rabbits.

Wereboars were very rare, but one local legend tells of a prince who lived as a boar by day and as a man by night. Thus he had the best of both worlds:



roaming around free in the woods by day, and laying with his wife by night.

Probably one of the strangest legends around concerns rabbit women: at some point in time, apparently without any reason or ulterior motive, some women decide that they are better off running around as rabbits. If it wasn't for the occasional one being shot - and of course promptly turning back into a woman, albeit a dead one - their secret would never be known. Rabbit women are no menace to anyone and have no special powers. Of course it may be argued that in a society as restrictive as the medieval one, hopping around as a rabbit may provide greater joys than the fate of a working woman.

## White Stag or Great Stag

The stag is animal that has been sacred to many cultures, from the Celts on down through Roman times to the Middle Ages, and many myths surround it. Believed to be a magic animal, the White Stag, often called the King of the Forest, not only speaks the tongue of the humans, but often watches over humans and warns them of dangers that await them in the forests. Sometimes it serves as an oracle, or a messenger from the gods. It is considered a portent of fertility, and seeing a White Stag venture out of the forest and into the fields during wintertime is considered a good omen for the richness of the crops in the year to come.

The stag is not only a figure of "pagan" myths, even the Church recognizes it as a holy animal - it is often viewed as a messenger from God, an embodiment of Christ's virtues and sufferings, and sometimes even as a temporary reincarnation of a saint.

In pre-Christian myths, the sacred stag was described as a great white animal; in Christian legends it appears with a cross between its antlers. In some cases it may also wear jewelry, such as golden chains, around its neck. Its role in both myths is fundamentally similar - it often appears to counsel or help travelers, or to lead those on a quest to their goal.

But although the animal is sacred, it is not above being killed by humans who often value its blood for its magic and protective powers, and its antlers for the prestige it brings to the lucky hunter. Tribal leaders, knights and kings have sought and found the fame that comes from hunting down a sacred stag.

In the Middle Ages, both myths co-exist, and it is highly likely that one and the same stag may appear in two different shapes, depending on the person seeing it, and what they believe in.

<i>Char.</i>	<i>Roll</i>	<i>Average</i>
<b>STR</b>	3d6+6	16-17
<b>CON</b>	2d6+6	13
<b>SIZ</b>	4d6+12	26
<b>INT</b>	16	16
<b>POW</b>	3d6+6	16-17
<b>DEX</b>	3d6+6	16-17
<b>APP</b>	19	19

**Hit Points:** 19-20

**Damage Bonus:** +2d6

**Attacks:** Antlers 90%, damage 1D6+3+1Db (impaling)

**Armor:** 3 point natural armor

**Skills:** Dodge 55%, Hide 45%, Sense 55%

**Magic:** Heal, Liken Shape, Undo Sorcery.

## Witch Tree

Many people believe that the forest has a mind of its own, one that resents the intrusion of humans and is angered by the felling of trees. If the forest is indeed a sentient being, then the witch trees can be seen as extensions of its mind.

Witch Trees are not necessarily malicious, but they are wary of intruders, and if they are encountered in areas where trees were felled, they may be angry or even frenzied. Others may appear calm and wise.

These semi-sentient creatures can communicate with humans through telepathy. A human may use the same power, or similar spells, to open communication with a living tree. If the tree attempts communication, a character must a successful Idea roll to pick up the message.

Living trees are rooted in the earth and do not move, but depending on their build, they can sway and reach a fairly wide area.

A tree has 2d4+4 attacks per round, which corresponds to the number of branches they can use in combat. 2d3 trees may combine their attacks.

Combatants have two options when fighting a witch tree:

- ❖ Fight the branches, using attack, parry, dodge, grapple etc. If a branch takes more than 10 hit points of damage, the branch is cut off.
- ❖ Attack the tree's stem. The tree dies if its hit points are reduced to zero (in effect, it tumbles).

<i>Char.</i>	<i>Rolls</i>	<i>Average</i>
<b>STR</b>	3d6	10-11
<b>CON</b>	3d6+10	20-21
<b>SIZ</b>	20+2d10	31
<b>INT</b>	3d6	10-11
<b>POW</b>	3d6+6	16-17
<b>DEX</b>	2d6	7

**Hit Points:** 41-42

**Movement:** 0

**Damage Bonus:** +1D8

**Attacks:** Branch 45% damage 1D8 +1Db (impaling); Grapple 65%

**Armor:** Branch 1 point bark; Stem 3 point bark

**Skills:** Sense 99%

**Powers:** multiple psychic powers, at the Gamemaster's discretion.

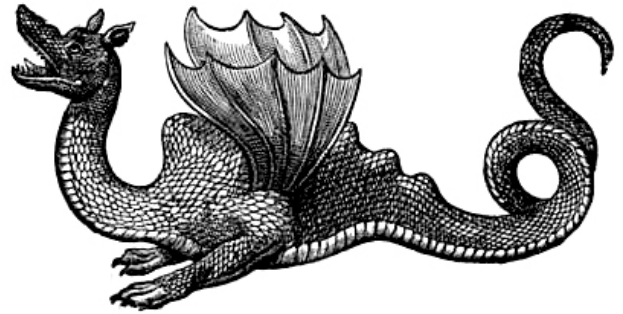
## Wyvern

Wyverns are considered the smaller cousins of dragons. While being reptilian like the dragons, they are much smaller (the size of a large horse), with two (instead of four) bird-like legs and wings that have claws at their tips; and unlike dragons, they do not

breath fire. Their long tail is equipped with a venomous sting. Wyverns feed on livestock and cattle, horses and the occasional human.

Some legends claim that wyverns wear a ruby on their forehead.

Wyvern tend to live in groups in remote mountain areas.



<i>Char.</i>	<i>Rolls</i>	<i>Average</i>
<b>STR</b>	4d6+12	26
<b>CON</b>	2d6+12	19
<b>SIZ</b>	4d6+12	26
<b>INT</b>	2d6	7
<b>POW</b>	4d6	14
<b>DEX</b>	2d6+6	13

**Move:** 13 (flying)

**Hit Points:** 23-24

**Damage Bonus:** +3d6

**Armor:** 8-point thick skin

**Attacks:** 1 x Bite 65% damage 3d6 +1Db, 2 x Claws 55% damage 1D6+1Db, Tail Sting 65% damage 1D6+1Db + poison POT 12

**Skills:** Dodge 55%, Fly 100%, Sense 70%, Spot 60%, Track 55%

**Powers:** may have multiple spells as per GM's choice

**Traits:** aggressive: 70%, brave 60%, curious 80%.

Note: this entry has been adapted from the BRP Creatures monograph.



# UNIQUE CREATURES

## Baphomet the Three-Faced Demon

Baphomet is a demon whose name first entered the chronicles during the trials of the Knights Templar when they were accused of worshipping this idol. While descriptions of the demon vary, a common motif found on the remains of many Templar houses is that of a three-faced head. This insignia was believed to be a representation of Baphomet. It was only in later years that Baphomet was described as a horned, goat-headed figure.

Baphomet is a Greater Demon. See the BRP manual for appropriate statistics.

## The Black Prophet

An enigmatic figure who wanders the woods and appears from time to time in remote villages, mostly in the middle of the night. He blesses new-born children to lend them the strength and the wisdom of the forest; a blessing which, according to common belief, either makes the children stronger or kills them. He also predicts the future, both for individuals or for the whole communities. While he is not associated with any known religion, he is generally considered to be a pagan, representing the forest with all its strength and cruelty. The Church has denied his existence, but stories of sightings of him still circulate. If the stories are true, he must be hundreds of years old as the stories go back for generations.

The Black Prophet is generally described as being clad in the black robes of a monk, with a hood shading his face, which has never been seen by any mortal.

## Hellequin

The Hellequin is one of the Eternal Hunters haunting the forest. He is described as a black-faced demon, who leads other demons, undead creatures and beasts on a Wild Hunt, called in this case the *Maisnie Hellequin*. He mostly preys on people considered to be evil.

Hellequin's Wild Hunt was at the origin of a yearly festival held around the winter solstice during which people disguised themselves and generally celebrated in a wild, uninhibited manner: carnival.

Hellequin is the precursor of the Harlequin, the colorful, anarchic clown figure from the *Commedia dell'Arte*.

Hellequin is a demon. When on the wild hunt, he rides a demon steed and is accompanied by other minor demons, by various fairies and by hell hounds.



(Illustration: early Harlequin mask used for plays, modeled after the demon Hellequin.)

**STR** 13   **CON** 16   **SIZ** 13   **INT** 17

**POW** 22   **DEX** 17   **APP** 7

**Hit Points:** 15

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Move:** 10 (14 using spells)

**Attacks:** Grapple 45%, Spear 70% damage  
d10+1+1Db; Spear (thrown) 55% damage  
d10+1+ ½ db

**Armor:** 2 point thick hide

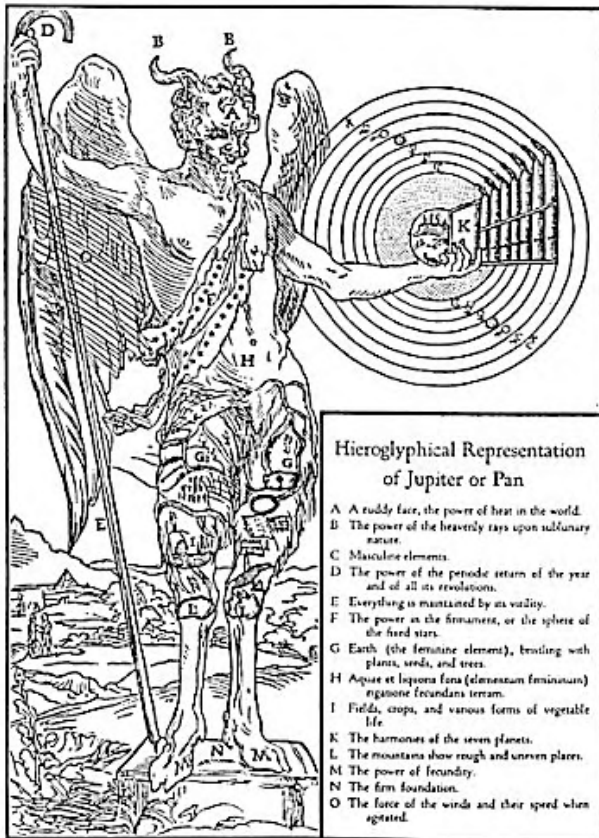
**Skills:** Brawl 55%, Command 60%, Climb 65%,  
Dodge 50%, Fast Talk 40%, Hide 50%, Listen  
60%, Perform 45%, Persuade 60%, Sense 65%,  
Spot 60%, Stealth 25%

**Sorcery spells:** Muddle, Midnight, Pox, Sorcerer's  
Leap, Sorcerer's Speed, Summon Demon,  
Summon Elemental

**Demon powers:** never surprised, hypnotic pattern  
on clothing (Idea roll or be stunned for 1D3  
rounds), regenerates 1 hit point per round,  
makes agonizing laughter constantly.

## The Horned One

In general, the term Horned One refers to all kinds of horned gods and demons throughout history; such as Cernunnos, Azazel, Baphomet, the Greek god Pan or the Hindu god Pashupati. Some cults also believe the Horned One to be the avatar of the ancient god Nyarlathotep.



Most of these supernatural beings are associated with the forest, wild animals and hunting, as well as male sexuality. Other names for the Horned One are The Hunter, The Horned God or The Horned Man.

Additionally, the term Horned One is used to denote a creature that is sometimes glimpsed in the woods. Described as a large, powerfully built man with giant horns (or more rarely antlers), he is said to hunt and devour (and often rape) humans once he takes up their scent. Many consider this manifestation to be an avatar of any of the gods or demons mentioned above.

In Britain, the legendary wizard Merlin was also associated with the figure of the Horned One.

In pre-Christian times, the Horned One was considered neither evil nor good: he was a force of na-

ture, like any of the wild beasts out there. The Catholic Church, however, identifies the Horned One with Satan, reducing all these pagan gods into this one entity while turning it into a manifestation of evil, which is called down to earth by the supposedly black magic of witches and warlocks.

In game terms, the earthly manifestation of the Horned One may be either an angel (i.e. an emissary of a divine power), a major demon or a demigod; depending on one's religious point of view.

**STR** 26    **CON** 33    **SIZ** 19    **INT** 20  
**POW** 26    **DEX** 15    **APP** 20

**Move:** 11

**Hit Points:** 26

**Damage Bonus:** +2d6

**Armor:** 6 point natural armor

**Attacks:** Claws 110% (2x per round) damage 1D6+1Db (bleeding); Head Butt 95% damage 1D3+1Db (crushing), Horns 80% damage 2d6+1Db (impaling)

**Skills:** Brawl 110%, Dodge 60%, Grapple 110%, Sense 90%, Stealth 60%

**Powers (mutations):** Hybrid (minor; either bull, goat or stag hybrid); Natural Armor (major), Natural Weaponry (Claws; minor); Natural Weaponry (Horns; major); Pheromone (fear, pot 4d6); others.

➔ Note: Chaosium's *Malleus Monstrorum* manual gives an alternative, more powerful definition of the Horned Man as an avatar of Nyarlathotep.

## Melusina

Melusina is a mythical figure, a feminine creature associated with sacred springs and rivers. She is usually depicted as a woman who has a serpent or fish body from the waist down. She is also sometimes depicted as having wings or two tails.

The wife of Siegfried, the first Count of Luxembourg, was called Melusina, and she is credited with raising the castle of Luxembourg in one night. There are other, similar tales of women with magic powers called Melusina in other places throughout this corner of Europe. Typically, the legend runs thus:

*"The fairy Melusina married Count Sigfried, under condition that he should never attempt to intrude upon her privacy. She bore the Count many children, and using magic, she erected for him a magnificent castle in but one night. They lived in great harmony and happiness until one day, the prying husband broke the conditions of their union when he concealed himself to behold his wife in her having a bath and turning into a mermaid. When Melusina discovered the indiscreet intruder, she transformed into a dragon and departed with a loud cry of lamentation, and was never again visible to mortal eyes. She remains, however, the protectress of her descendants, and her wailing can be heard at night from the ramparts and the turrets of the castle which she built."*

An alternative legend has it that Melusina, upon being found out, disappeared into the rock, from where she re-appears every seven years, long enough only to make a stitch in a death shroud she is knitting. Should she complete the death shroud, the castle and the city will crumble to dust.

In the more rural areas, the Melusina appears as a very beautiful woman, bathing in pools in the deep of the forests. Like mermaids, she entices men to follow her into the water, and may cause the death by drowning of men who follow her call. It is thus that she has appeared to inhabitants of the Val-du-Loup.

Sometimes, however, she entices men to marry her. While she works magic for her husband, she claims for herself privacy on certain days so she can turn into a mermaid while bathing. Usually, the descendants of these unions are described as having somewhat monstrous features, such as over-large ears, eyes which do not match or faces that are not symmetric. If her husband does not respect her privacy, she disappears back into the wilderness.



**STR** 14    **CON** 16    **SIZ** 11    **INT** 16  
**POW** 18    **DEX** 12    **APP** 21

**Move:** 10 as a human, 12 swimming in mermaid form, 4 when on land in mermaid form.

**Hit Points:** 14

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Armor:** none, but invulnerable to normal attacks.

**Attacks:** Grapple / Drowning 50%.

**Skills:** Dodge 75%, Grapple 50%. Knowledge (Blasphemous Lore) 80%, Sense 50%, Swim 120%.

**Powers:** Control (Human Male), Breath of Life, Bounty of the Sea, Liken Shape, Muddle, Summon Water Elemental, Ward, plus others as the GM sees fit.

**Special Power:** shapechange between a human and mermaid form.

## The Oaklord

The origins of this Eternal Hunters go back to the then Baron de Vaguerre, who was known not only for his passion for hunting, but also for his lust for women. A great many village and servant girls got raped by him, so that he was as feared as the wolves and others monsters of the forest. One day the Baron's wife, who for many years suffered his crimes in silence, threatened to denounce him to their liege lord. The Baron just laughed and had her brought into the forest where he let his dogs loose on her, chasing her to death. He then had her cut into pieces and fed to his unsuspecting guests at a great feast which he threw that night.

Legend has it that on that very night, while the Baron and his guests were sitting at the table and eating and drinking away, the castle sunk into the ground, burying the Baron and all the others with him. The area where the castle once stood is now a swamp, Marvert; only the top part of the keep still rises above the mire.

And from that time on, every so often, the Baron appears out of the marshes, astride his huge grey horse and accompanied by a pack of black hounds. The undead baron is dressed in the fine clothing of a nobleman, and at first glance, he looks almost human - if it wasn't for the wooden head upon his shoulders, a horrible mask with fangs and horns,

much like the statues of gargoyles that adorn the great cathedrals. This has led people to nickname him the Oaklord.

The Baron then leads his charge in a wild hunt, choosing the first hapless victim who crosses his path. It is only when he has chased his victim to death that he disappears back into the swamp from whence he came. Unlike the other Eternal Hunters, the Oaklord hunts in silence, as do the beasts that accompany him - and hence, they are a lot more dangerous and creepy than the other wild hunts. When hunting, he rides a silent ghost steed and is accompanied by ghost riders (wraiths) and by shadow hounds.

And it is said that on the nights where the Baron comes out to hunt, his castle rises out of the swamp, and laughter and shouting can be heard from within, as if a great feast was under way...

**STR** 15 **CON** 17 **SIZ** 14 **INT** 14

**POW** 18 **DEX** 15 **APP** 8

**Hit Points:** 16

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Move:** 10

**Attacks:** Spear 75% damage d10+1+1Db; Spear (thrown) 65% damage d10+1+ 1/2 db, Grapple 55%.

**Armor:** 2 point leather armor

**Skills:** Brawl 55%, Command 60%, Dodge 50%, Hide 50%, Listen 60%, Sense 65%, Spot 60%, Stealth 80%

**Sorcery spells:** Muddle, Midnight, Sorcerer's Leap, Sorcerer's Speed, Sorcerer's Sureness, Summon Ghosts, Summon Shadow Hounds.

**Powers:**

- ❖ **Regeneration:** Unless decapitated, the Oaklord regenerates 1D3 hit points per round.
- ❖ **Undead:** like so many other undead, the Oaklord cannot be killed. If his hit points are reduced to 0, his body turns to wood and crumbles, but his spirit flees into limbo (or wherever ghosts reside). It is then only a matter of time before he re-appears with a new body.

The Oaklord hunts in the company of 2d6+6 wraiths (ghosts, BRP p. 342) and 1D6 shadow hounds. He rides a smoky grey ghost horse. Ghost

horses and shadow hounds are described in the *Legendary Creatures* section, above.

## ... And the Forest Itself

Many legends attribute a mind and a consciousness to the forest itself. A forest can be menacing and dangerous, or helpful, or simply playful and mischievous. Mostly, its behavior can be classified as defensive. Many people think of the forest as a sleeping serpent, and take care not to awaken the dangerous beast. Those who remember the old gods see in the consciousness of the forest a manifestation of the goddess Arduinna, after whom these region was named (see the entry in *The Almost Forgotten Gods*, below).

The forest's conscious mind manifests itself in trees that take on the appearance of men or women, walls of thorns that spring up to block the passage of unwanted intruders, plants that make wanderers drowsy so that they lose their way and end up walking in circles, or phantom voices that mock human speech. The forest also commands witch trees, oakbeasts and ghost horses to do its bidding.

It is said that at times the forest even takes on the physical shape of someone or something that wanders around at night and knocks loudly on trees, and each tree that it knocks on is designated as being under its protection. The creature has never been seen, only the loud thumps on the trees can be heard in the nearby villages. Anyone felling such a tree is certain to incur the wrath of the Forest.

**INT** 18 **POW** 42

**Hit Points:** n/a

**Damage Bonus:** n/a

**Move:** 0

**Attacks:** none directly, but the Forest may command any number of witch trees or oakbeasts to attack.

**Skills:** Sense 120%

**Powers:** the Forest possesses any number of psychic powers. It can create visual, aural and olfactory illusions, command witch trees and summon oakbeasts and ghost horses.



# OF FALLEN ANGELS AND THEIR BREED

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This section provides background information on the Nephilim, the Fallen Ones, which are the legendary offspring of Fallen Angels and of human women, a number of which have made their home in and around the Val-du-Loup.

Normally, Nephilim live in the cities and regions of the world where power concentrates: in Byzanth, Jerusalem, Rome and Cairo; more recently they have discovered the growing cities of London and Paris. For various reasons, however, fate in the shape of Roman mercenaries has brought Nephilim blood into the Val-du-Loup, and their descendants still live in this forsaken valley.

Nephilim genes normally lie dormant and under normal conditions, Nephilim are indistinguishable from humans, but sorcerous spells can awaken what is called the Strain, i.e the genes. From Roman times

on, Nephilim mages, in the guise of the Black Prophet, have been casting spells on the new-born babes, with the result that a good many of the descendants of the prolific Roman mercenaries of Nephilim origin have developed mutations and other superhuman powers. Today, the most powerful of these Nephilim, the Count de Vaguerre, reaches for power in the region - and beyond. More of this in the **Villains** chapter to follow.

The entries below detail the Fallen Angel Azazel, the progenitor of the race of Nephilim prevalent in the Val-du-Loup, the Nephilim itself (including tips on how to play a Nephilim), and a few creatures attached to the Nephilim legends. Note that the goat-men and the giants listed under the *Legendary Creatures* section above are also of Nephilim blood.





## Azazel

*And Azazel taught men to make swords and knives and shields and breastplates; and made known to them the metals [of the earth] and the art of working them; and bracelets and ornaments; and the use of antimony and the beautifying of the eyelids; and all kinds of costly stones and all colouring tinctures.*

From the *Book of Enoch*

Azazel is the name of one of the Fallen Angels, the *Bene' Ha' Elohim* or "Sons of Gods", who initially came to Earth to observe the evolution of the human race (hence the other names attached to them, the Watchers, or *Grigori* in Greek) but then disobeyed the commands of the Gods and intervened in human affairs by teaching the early human tribes warfare, science, magic and the use of cosmetics. The Fallen Angels lay with human women, and their offspring were the Nephilim, the 'Fallen Ones', who were in turn described as heroes or as monsters.

The Gods did not take lightly to this act of rebellion, and they sent their warrior angels to capture and exile the Fallen Angels and to kill their half-human offspring. In the end, they sent the Great Flood to kill off the Nephilim for good.

Azazel and the other Watchers were banned from the earthly realm, either to another dimension or to the far reaches of space. But as far removed from Earth as they may be, the Watchers can still interfere in human affairs. They still have their followers, the descendants of the Nephilim who survived throughout the ages, and who keep alive the memory and the worship of their ancestors. The Watchers act through the Nephilim, and even use the strongest of them as avatars.

Like all *Bene Ha' Elohim*, Azazel was basically a non-corporeal, god-like being who could take on any shape or form when materializing on Earth. The most recurring shapes ascribed to the angels were those of androgynous looking men, beings of light, or winged bird-like creatures. It is possibly the synthesis of these three appearances which has led to the common Western depiction of angels as winged beings of great beauty.

Azazel also appeared as a satyr-like creature. He is the original Horned One, and has been associated with representations of the Horned God throughout the ages, from Pan in Greece, Shamash in Babylonia, Cernunnos in Celtic Myths and Elbis in the Koran down to Baphomet in the 13th century, the latest

public recording of his appearance on Earth. In the Old Testament, Azazel is also named as being the master (or guardian) of the *Se'irim*, the goat demons detailed elsewhere in the Bestiary.

The following statistics describe an earthly, man-like form of Azazel, corresponding more closely to the typical perception of an angel. Use the statistics for the Horned One (see **Unique Creatures**, above) for Azazel in a satyr-like form.

**STR** 33   **CON** 33   **SIZ** 15   **INT** 24  
**POW** 36   **DEX** 19   **APP** 26

**Move:** 10 (13 flying)

**Hit Points:** 24

**Damage Bonus:** +2d6

**Armor:** 10 point radiance

**Attacks:** Broadsword, Shield

**Skills:** Art (Cosmetics, Painting, others) 85%, Brawl 110%, Craft (Blacksmithing, Metallurgy, others) 100%, Dodge 100%, Flight 110%, Grapple 110%, Knowledge (various Religions) 100%, Science (Astronomy, Chemistry, Mineralogy, Physics, Warfare, others) 110%, Sense 90%, Strategy 100%, Teach 90%.

### **Powers:**

- ❖ **Divine Radiance:** an enveloping radiance of light provides 10 point armor against all forms of injury.
- ❖ **Flight**
- ❖ **Healing Touch / Killing Touch:** angels can heal or kill humans at the touch of a finger. For each power point invested in the power, one hit point is either added to or subtracted from the target's hit points depending on the angel's will.
- ❖ **Invisibility:** Azazel can become invisible at will, as per the super power, with ½ his POW in levels, at the cost of 3 power points per level.
- ❖ Other super powers as required.



## Nephilim, the Fallen Ones

The term Nephilim is the name given to the offspring of the Fallen Angels and the humans they mated with, and it is also given to the descendants of these original Nephilim.

The Nephilim were variously described as heroes or as monsters. Thus, in Genesis it reads:

*"That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. [...] There were giants in the earth in those days; and also afterward, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bore children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown". (Genesis 6:1-4)*

while the Book of Enoch describes them thus:

*"And they became pregnant, and they bare great giants, whose height was three thousand ells: Who consumed all the acquisitions of men. And when men could no longer sustain them, the giants turned against them and devoured mankind. And they began to sin against birds, and beasts, and reptiles, and fish, and to devour one another's flesh, and drink the blood. Then the earth laid accusation against the lawless ones".*

When the Gods sent their hosts of warrior angels to banish the Watchers, they also had them hunt and kill the Nephilim. The Gods even caused the Great Flood to cleanse the world of these monstrous creatures. But, as later scriptures from several cultures testify, the Nephilim survived. Thus Moses and the Israelites, upon their return to Israel from Egypt, came upon a race of tall, slender-necked people, which they take to be the descendants of the Nephilim:

*"And there we saw the Nephilim, the sons of Anak, which come of the Nephilim: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."*

## Nephilim Today

The Nephilim lived on, and through the ages, they became the template for many of the monstrous creatures in Middle Eastern and European cultures, such as giants, titans and human-animal hybrids; as well as the basis for the demigod heroes of Greek, Babylonian and other legends.

Over time, though, the superhuman and the monstrous aspects of the Nephilim retreated, that is, they were no longer visible; the genes lay dormant. These dormant genes are called the Strain. Some Nephilim and humans know how to awaken the Strain, mostly through magic, but also through trance and hypnosis. In some parts of the world, the spell is cast on every new-born so that he or she may develop Nephilim powers if they have Nephilim blood in them.

Awakened Nephilim may mutate into various forms, depending on the type of Strain that they carry. Some become heroic in mind and physical stature, are handsome and charismatic and become great leaders and warriors. Others turn into monsters, growing various animal features, a result of the early Nephilim laying with beasts as well as men. Some can pass as normal humans, while others have to hide away lest they be killed as were the monsters of old. For various reasons, the descendants of Azazel often display goatish characteristics. While some sport small, unobtrusive horns or stubby tails, others carry great ram horns or walk on goat legs. An extreme case are the goat-men, who have both goat legs and a goat head. The legendary satyrs are likely to be descendants of Azazel.

The same variety occurs with respect to the intelligence of these creatures, which can range from bestial and barely sentient to absolute masterminds.

There exists a certain hierarchy within the Nephilim ranks. At the bottom are the Rephaites (the Shades), the smaller beast-like creatures (beast-like either in body or in mind, or both); above them the Emim (the Terrors), also beast-like but taller, stronger and more intelligent. Then come the Zamzummim (the Strong), tall, powerful almost-humans who make cunning officers and leaders, and the Awwim (the Devastators), their "shock troops". The top tier then is made up of the Gibborim (the Mighty), superhuman in body and above all mind, and the Anakim (the Long-necked), the priest cast.

The greatest concentration of Nephilim occurs in Mesopotamia, the birthplace of their race. Outside that region, they tend to gather close to the centers of power where they effectively intervene in human affairs while staying in the background. In ancient times, this was Babylon, Egypt, the Greek city-states, Rome. After the fall of Rome, they drifted towards Constantinople or back towards Baghdad and Mesopotamia. The coming of Islam threw the Nephilim society there into chaos. In the same way

that Christianity did away with ancient beliefs in Europe, Islam did the same wherever it spread in the Near and Middle East, driving the Nephilim clans back underground.

As new power centers are emerging in Europe, such as the German Empire, France, England and the Vatican state, these places attract powerful Nephilim lords, while lesser Fallen Ones drift towards the more provincial places of power.

## Playing a Nephilim

Initially, Nephilim have the same statistics as humans, so the same rules for character creation apply. What makes the Nephilim special is the amount and degree of angelic (or demonic) mutations and psychic abilities that come to the fore over time.

Mutations and psychic powers should be applied according to the rules defined in BRP manual and according to the level of play (normal, heroic etc.) that the GM wants to run. See also the rules for creating characters with more than one power type, on page 88.

The following should be kept in mind when designing a Nephilim character: in a world as intolerant as the European Middle Ages, it is difficult for anyone not looking human to mingle in society. Wherever Nephilim live in great concentration, they are able to set up a parallel society where strange looking individuals have a place. But outside these centers, only those Nephilim can openly move around who can pass as human and hide their otherness.

As mentioned above, a certain caste system has established itself over the years in Nephilim society. The social hierarchy is based on genetic markers and the purity of the Nephilim Strain, however, the distinction isn't always cut and dry. In general, the more powerful castes have more powerful psychic talents and less physical mutations.

All characters with psychic powers start with Divination. This power lets them get in touch with their ancestor, the Fallen One from whom they descend; and likewise their progenitor can get in touch with them. Nephilim growing up outside their cultural centers like Baghdad or Jerusalem have no direct knowledge of their history and background. However, characters with at least 30% in Divination have a sense of who and what they are as they tap the common Nephilim consciousness.

Basically, the following guide lines apply:

- ❖ the Emim, the Terrors, feature a number of minor, beast-like mutations. The goat-men fall into this category.
- ❖ the Awwim, the Devastators, sport a number of mostly minor, combat oriented mutations; possibly also one or the other major mutation. The Awwim are mostly warriors. In game terms: beginning characters start with mutations only, but may add psychic abilities later.
- ❖ the Zamzummim, the Strong, feature a few mostly minor mutations, which are physical in nature ('though not necessarily animal-like), and one or the other psychic ability. Zamzummim are the most widely represented. In game terms: characters have mutations and psychic abilities on the same level.
- ❖ the Gibborim, the Mighty, are the leaders and generals. They have almost no mutations, but command extensive psychic abilities. In game terms: beginning characters start with psychic powers; at the player's choice, they may have one or two mutations that do not give them an advantage in terms of game play (a tail, or a strange coloring, for example).
- ❖ the Anakim, the Long-Necked. They are the sorcerers among the Nephilim, with access to powerful magic. The most powerful of them would also have psychic abilities, while many of them have minor or major mutations that grow more numerous as they grow old. In game terms: at the player's choice, beginning characters start with sorcery, or with sorcery and psychic abilities at the same level. Mutations develop later in play.

Note: the Rephaites, i.e. Shades, are so beast-like that they do not make for good playing characters due to their low INT level.

Even though Nephilim hierarchy is mostly caste-based, it does allow for exceptions. Awwim may rise to be generals, and Zamzummim can end up being mighty political leaders.



## Se'irim, the Goat Demon

The Se'irim ("hairy ones") are goat-like demons, known both in Jewish and in Arabic scriptures. They dwell in the wastelands of this world from whence they can be summoned. They have thin long but muscular arms ending in claws, a goat head covered in black fur with large, dangerous horns, while their powerful legs end in claws that give them a good grip for climbing up vertical surfaces. Traditionally the servants of the Fallen Angel Azazel, they can also be summoned by his descendants to do their bidding.

<i>Char.</i>	<i>Rolls</i>	<i>Averages</i>
<b>STR</b>	2d8+8	16
<b>CON</b>	2d8+8	16
<b>SIZ</b>	2d8+4	11
<b>INT</b>	4d6	14
<b>POW</b>	2d10	11
<b>DEX</b>	4d8	18
<b>Move:</b>	12	

**Hit Points:** 13-14

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Attacks:** Claws (2x) 55% dam d8+1Db, Horns  
45% dam 2d6+1Db

**Armor:** 1 (natural)

**Skills:** Climb 99%, Dodge 60%, Hide 70%, Jump  
90%, Sneak 75%, Spot 70%.

**Demonic powers:**

- ❖ Move in Shadow: in shadowy areas, the demon's Hide and Sneak skills are *easy*.
- ❖ Run like the wind: the demon can move very fast over very long distances, covering twice the normal daily distance of a horse.

# FOREIGN CREATURES

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The creatures described in this section are not native to the Val-du-Loup or the neighboring regions, but they have been known to come visiting from time to time.

## Elves

Ancient central and Western Europe myths suggest that various types of elves used to live in many parts of the continent. By the Middle Ages, elves are only known in two locales: in Ireland & Scotland, (the Daoine Sidhe); and in the Norse countries. Both types of elves are detailed below.

## Daoine Sidhe

The Sidhe (pronounced: *shee*) are the elves of Ireland and Scotland, the descendants of the divine Tuatha Dé Danann. The Sidhe live in the Other-

world, a world parallel to ours, where time flows differently. The Otherworld touches on our world in certain places, and elves, as well as other fairy creatures, are able to cross over into the human world in these magical places (next to special lochs or woods, for example) at certain times (dawn and dusk being best, and the solstices even more so).

The Sidhe appear in Ireland and Scotland only, but from time to time isolated elf wanderers make it down south.

Daoine Sidhe are obviously non-human - people refer to their alien looks as *féy*.

The movie *Hellboy II - The Golden Army* gives a good representation of what the Sidhe may have looked like.

<i>Char</i>	<i>Roll</i>	<i>Average</i>
<b>STR</b>	2d6+2	9
<b>CON</b>	3d6	10-11
<b>SIZ</b>	2d6+3	10
<b>INT</b>	3d6+6	16-17
<b>POW</b>	3d6+6	16-17
<b>DEX</b>	3d6+3	13-14
<b>APP</b>	4d6-2	12

**Move:** 11

**Hit Points:** 10

**Damage Bonus:** none

**Armor:** 1 point soft leather or 3 point hard leather

**Attacks:** Longbow 65% damage 1D8+1+½db (impaling); Short Spear 55% damage 1D6+1+db (Impaling).

**Skills:** Dodge 70%, Hide 65%, Knowledge (Otherworld) 45%, Language (Gaelic) 40%, Language (Sidhe) 85%, Listen 55%, Sense 85%, Spot 65%, Stealth 70%, Track 65%.

**Powers:**

- ❖ Daoine Sidhe can open portals to the Otherworld without the use of a particular spell, by rolling POWx5, adjusted as follows:  
*Normal* difficulty level if the spell is cast at dawn or at dusk, or on nights of the full moon.  
*Easy* difficulty level if the spell is cast during the summer and winter solstice nights.  
*Difficult* at all other times.
- ❖ Like most fairies, the Daoine Sidhe are allergic to iron. Add the major adverse mutation Allergy(Iron).
- ❖ The Sidhe are very long lived. Barring accidents or violence, they can grow several centuries old. Add the major mutation Metabolic Improvement (Enhanced Life Span).
- ❖ Most Sidhe know a number of either Magic or Sorcery spells. Typical magic spells include Change, Control, Dark, Illusion, Light, Perception, Protection, Ward. Typical Sorcery spells are Cloak of Night, Curse of Sorcery, Liken Shape, Midnight, Moonrise, Muddle, Sorcerer's Beauty and Sorcerer's Eye.

## Norse Elves

Many centuries ago, lore about elves was widespread throughout all the lands of the Germanic tribes, suggesting that back then, the elves lived in many parts of Western and Central Europe. However, by the Middle Ages, only the Norse tribes in the Scandinavian countries still know about the old race: sometime during the Dark Ages, the elves retreated to the remote Northern parts of Europe. In continental Western Europe, the term *elf* has become synonymous with fairy, and the elves as a distinct people are no longer remembered. There are some tales, however, of isolated elf individuals, so possibly these magic beings still visit here from time to time.

*A local Ardennes legend tells the story of how an elf became enamored with a local girl who did not reciprocate his feelings. Still the elf came to visit her every night. The parish priest, in whom she confided, gave her the advice to eat plenty of onions and beans with her evening meal. So she did, and when the elf came to visit her, she couldn't quite keep her bodily gases to herself. This left the elf's sensitivity so badly shaken that he left in flurry, never to return.*

Norse elves are described as magic beings of great beauty who live in forests and other remote areas. Unlike the Sidhe, these elves do not look alien - they can pass as regular, albeit very beautiful, human beings. There are tales of elves marrying humans without their spouses suspecting it. Their mixed-blood offspring mostly turned out to be either great heroes or terrible villains. In the old Norse sagas, half-elves rose to become kings and queens of both the human and the elven kingdoms.

Northern Elves are associated with nature and nature spirits.

J.R.R. Tolkien took his inspiration for the elves of Middle Earth from Norse mythology. Thus, Northern Elves are a lot closer to the elves of Tolkienesque fantasy than the Daoine Sidhe.





<i>Char</i>	<i>Roll</i>	<i>Average</i>
<b>STR</b>	2d6+2	9
<b>CON</b>	3d6	10-11
<b>SIZ</b>	2d6+6	13
<b>INT</b>	3d6+3	13-14
<b>POW</b>	3d6+6	16-17
<b>DEX</b>	2d6+6	13
<b>APP</b>	2d6+6	13

**Move:** 10

**Hit Points:** 11

**Damage Bonus:** none

**Armor:** 1 point soft leather or 3 point hard leather

**Attacks:** Longbow 65% damage 1D8+1+½db (impaling); Short Spear 75% damage 1D6+1+db (Impaling).

**Skills:** Arts (several) 45%, Climb 65%, Dodge 60%, First Aid 45%, Hide 55%, Knowledge (Natural World) 65%, Language (Norse) 40%, Language (Elven) 85%, Listen 55%, Medicine 45%, Navigate 60%, Science (Botany) 55%, Sense 70%, Spot 65%, Stealth 75%, Swim 60%, Track 80%.

**Powers:**

- ❖ Norse Elves are very long lived. Barring accidents or violence, they can grow several centuries old. Add the major mutation Metabolic Improvement (Enhanced Life Span).

- ❖ Elves are invariably described as being very beautiful. Add the major mutation Enhanced Characteristic (Appearance).
- ❖ Northern Elves being related to nature spirits, other mutations are possible: Speech (Mimicry) to communicate with animals, Luminescence (elves were often described as beings of light), Coloration etc. As an alternative, these nature related powers can also be drawn from spells rather than mutations: conjure elemental, light, lightning, speak to mind and others.

## Ghouls

Ghouls are rather rare in these parts, but they have been spotted. They tend to visit the Paganfield as it is a unconsecrated graveyard, but they have also been seen feeding off corpses lying unattended in the wilderness, showing a particular fondness for lepers.

Ghouls are described in the BRP manual on page 343.

## Vampire

Vampires are not native to the Ardennes, but the great forest is so reminiscent of dark and haunted Transylvania that a few nostalgic vampires visit this place from time to time.

[BRP p. 348]

# The ALMOST FORGOTTEN GODS

The following is a list of the few deities that are still remembered and venerated by a few folks in the Val-du-Loup.

## Arduinna

Arduinna was the Celtic goddess of the Ardennes forests, represented as a huntress riding a boar. The Romans assimilated the figure into their goddess Diana, the goddess of the hunt and wild animals.

**Cults:** none. A few lone worshippers remember her, and pray to her before undertaking a journey through the vast forest that bears its name.

## Cernunnos

Cernunnos is the Horned God of the Celts, and is depicted most often as a man with antlers holding snakes, who are sometimes ram-headed, and accompanied by stags and other horned animals. He is

the god of fertility, and represents the fertility of the forest and its beasts. Because of his association with wild animals, he is also called the "Lord of Wild Things", or the "Lord of the Hunt."

The deity was revered widely, from Northern Italy to Britain, and also by the Treveri tribe who inhabited this part of the Ardennes forest. Representations of Cernunnos may be found until well into the Middle Ages, suggesting that the worship of this god survived at least until then.

**Cults:** none which worships Cernunnos directly, although there is at least one cult that worships the Horned God in all His aspects.



## Nodens

Nodens is the Celtic god of healing, the sea, hunting and dogs. Known as Nuada in Ireland, he

was considered the first king of the *Tuatha Dé Danann*, the pre-human race of people from which the *Daoine Sidhe*, the elves of Irish lore, evolved.

He is also known to inhabit the Dreamlands where he is worshipped as an Elder God, the master of the nightgaunts. He is often called upon to aid against Nyarlathotep.

**Cults:** none. A few individuals who remember the Celtic gods may venerate him as the God of Healing and Hunting.

## Wotan (Odin)

Wotan, also known as Odin, is the Germanic god of war and of the dead. He is the original Lord of the Wild Hunt, and the Bringer of Storms. He is also reputed to be a shapeshifter.

His insignia is a raven and/or a spear.

**Cults:** Wotan is sometimes remembered by warriors and hunters, and some werewolves venerate him as their creator.

## Freia

Freia is the Germanic goddess of beauty and fertility, love and marriage. Her spirit is supposed to live in the shape of black cats, which is why the Church at one point forbade the keeping of such animals.

Freia is probably the most often remembered of the old gods, and to a degree, veneration of the Virgin Mary and of Freia have merged into a cult of a 'Mother goddess'.



# RANDOM ENCOUNTER TABLES

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The tables below can be used to generate random encounters during adventures. Roll on it either once or twice per day, or whenever there is a lull in the action.

The description lists the number of creatures likely to be encountered; obviously this number should be adapted to the strength of the player characters' party.

The description also provides several character traits that can be rolled against to determine what happens during an encounter. The *aggressive* trait can be used to see how likely the creatures or personalities are to attack (the roll can be *easy* if the PCs are in a visible minority, or *difficult* if the PCs

are stronger or more numerous). The *brave* trait can be used to determine if creatures or persons stand and fight or run, *curious* to see if they are likely to approach the adventurers to find out who/what they are, *honorable* to see if agreements are respected, *scheming* to see if they have an ambush planned or have an ulterior motive; *inquisitive* to determine if they demand answers from the adventurers, and *suspicious* to see how likely they are to believe the adventurers.

Roll D100 on table 1 to determine the type of encounter, then go the appropriate tables below and re-roll as instructed.

## Table 1: Encounter Type

### 1D100 Encounter Table

1- 60	common encounters, table 2
61-80	uncommon encounters, table 4
81-97	rare encounters, table 4
98-99	go to the special character encounters, table 5
100	go to the special creature encounters, table 6

## Table 2: Common Encounters

### 1D10 Encounter

1	1D2 bears with 1D4-1 cubs. Traits: aggressive: 33% (66% if accompanied by cubs), brave 80%, curious 60%.
2	2d4+2 boars. Traits: aggressive: 40% (80% if accompanied by their litter), brave 80%, curious 40%.
3	A flock of 10+2d10 raven. Traits: aggressive: 50%, brave 40%, curious 80%. There is a 50% chance that the raven gather around a corpse of either an animal or a human.
4-5	A pack of 3d6+6 wolves. Traits: aggressive: 40% (80% in the winter when food is scarce), brave 90%, scheming 70%.
6	2d6+6 thugs. Use the Thugs entry from the BRP manual. Traits: aggressive: 90%, brave 60%, communicative 40%, greedy 80%, honest 10%, scheming 80%. There is a 25% percent chance that the thugs work for the Brotherhood of the Raven.
7	3d6 soldiers. There is a 10% chance that the soldiers are not supposed to be in the area. Traits: aggressive: 50% (90% if they are not supposed to be in that area), brave 80%, communicative 50% (10% if not from around there) , honest 60% (10% if not from around there), scheming 10% (60% if not from around there).

- 8 1D6 woodsmen (hunters or charcoal makers). Traits: aggressive: 10%, brave 90%, communicative 30%, honest 80%.
- 9 1D3 merchants with 2d6 guards (soldiers). Traits: aggressive: 10%, brave 80%, communicative 80%, greedy 50%, honest 80%. There is a 30% chance that the merchants are from a foreign country, and a 10% chance that the merchants are Jewish.
- 10 Peasants on their way to or from the market. Traits: aggressive: 10%, brave 60%, communicative 60%, honest 90%. There is a 10% chance that they have been traveling for some time and are out of food.

## Table 3: Uncommon Encounters

### 1D10 Encounter

- 1 1D3 venomous snakes. Traits: aggressive: 20% (80% if surprised), brave 40%, scheming 30% (the snakes drop down from a tree or hides in high grass).
- 2 2d10 wisent. Traits: aggressive: 25%, brave 60%, curious 40%.
- 3 1D3 ogres. Traits: aggressive: 50%, brave 50%, communicative 75%, honest 50%, scheming 70%, seductive APPx5% (use highest APP of the group).
- 4 1D4 werewolves. Traits: aggressive: 80%, brave POWx5% (use highest POW of the pack), communicative 50%, honest 50%, scheming 60%, seductive highest APPx5%.
- 5 A lone wolf. Multiply all wolf stats by 1.5. Traits: aggressive: 60%, brave 90%, curious 60%.
- 6 The local lord and his entourage of 2d20+10 soldiers. Use traits according to the lord's character description.
- 7 A wolf trap. A bleeping goat is tethered to a pole. In front of it, a hole in the ground has been dug, and its bottom filled with spikes; the top has been camouflaged with a leaf covered net. It takes a successful *Spot* roll to see the hidden trip.
- 8 1D6 lepers. Traits: aggressive: 10%, brave 50%, communicative 50%, honest 75%.
- 9 A Knight Errant. Traits: aggressive: 50%, brave POWx5%, communicative 50%, honest 50%.
- 10 20+2d10 pilgrims on their way to a holy site. There is a 20% chance that they come from very far away, and a 20% that they are en route to a place very far away. Traits: aggressive: 20%, brave 80%, communicative 50% (30% if not from around there) , honest 80%, starving 30%, religious fanatics 20%.

## Table 4: Rare Encounters

### 1D100 Encounter

- 1-5 2d10+10 javelin snakes (jaculus). Traits: aggressive: 10%, brave 90%, scheming 75%.
- 6-10 2d3 Hell Hounds. Traits: aggressive: 90%, brave 90%, scheming 70%.
- 11-15 2d3 Shadow Hounds. Traits: aggressive: 10%, brave 90%, mischievous 85%.
- 16-20 a water elemental (undine). Traits: aggressive: 10%, brave 40%, communicative 80%, honest 75%, seductive 80%.
- 21-25 an air elemental (sylph). Traits: aggressive: 15%, brave 40%, communicative 70%, honest 80%, seductive 60%.
- 26-39 2d10 gnomes. Traits: aggressive: 10%, brave 70%, communicative 50%, greedy 65%, honest 75%, scheming 50%.
- 31-35 2d10 goblins. Traits: aggressive: 80%, brave 65%, curious 80%, honest 25%, scheming 60%.



- 36-40 1D3 fireboars. Traits: aggressive: 80%, brave 80%, scheming 40%.
- 41-45 2d6 goat-men. Traits: aggressive: 50%, brave 80%, communicative 80%, curious 30%, honest 50%, scheming 70%, seductive 80%.
- 46-50 A Hag. Traits: aggressive: 10%, brave 30%, communicative 80%, honest 70%, scheming 80%.
- 51-55 A White Woman. Traits: aggressive: 10%, brave 30%, communicative 80%, honest 90%, scheming 20%, seductive 50%.
- 56-60 1D3 ghouls. Traits: aggressive: 30%, brave 70%, communicative 30%, honest 30%, scheming 75%.
- 61-65 2d6 oakbeasts. Traits: aggressive: 70%, angry 90%, brave 90%, communicative 80%, honest 90%.
- 66-70 2d4 witch trees. Traits: aggressive: 10%, brave 100%.
- 71-75 A wolf leader with 2d3 half tame wolves. Traits: aggressive: 40%, brave 80%, communicative 20%, honest 80%.
- 76-80 A White Stag. Traits: aggressive: 10%, brave 80%, communicative 80%, honest 90%.
- 81-90 2d3 spies for one of the neighboring lords. Traits: aggressive: 10%, brave 90%, communicative 20%, honest 10%, scheming 40%.
- 91-93 3d6+6 marauders. In the 10th century, marauders are likely to be vikings (see BRP manual) or left-over Magyar invaders (use the Tribal Warrior entry from the BRP). In the 12th/13th century, the marauders would be deserters from regular armies or disenchanting, homeless crusaders returned from the Holy Lands (use the soldier entry from the BRP manual). Traits: aggressive: 80%, brave 80%, communicative 50%, greedy 80%, honest 10%, scheming 50%.
- 94-96 1D3 hermits. Traits: aggressive: 05%, brave 90%, communicative 20%, honest 90%.
- 97-99 2d10 escaped, starving serfs who are hiding in the woods. Traits: aggressive: 30%, brave 60%, communicative 50%, honest 60%.
- 100 A heretic priest and his entourage, preaching heresy and accusing the Church of being corrupt. Traits: aggressive: 20%, angry 75%, brave 80%, communicative 80%, honest 70%.

## Table 5: Special Character Encounters

### 1D10 **Encounter**

- 1 Sybill de Rocmort and 50+1D50 of her men-at-arms. Traits: aggressive 01%, brave 80%, communicative 30%, inquisitive 40%, suspicious 30%.
- 2 Father Aramé and 10+1D10 of his militiamen. Traits: aggressive 03%, brave 60%, inquisitive 80%, communicative 60%, honest 70%, suspicious 70%.
- 3 Serena and a few of her fellow witches of the Last Covenant are holding a rite; not black magic, but possibly a weather spell. Traits: aggressive 01%, brave 60%, communicative 30%, honest 40%, suspicious 90%.
- 4 Odo de Lionnoir, the robber baron from the County of Clève and d10+1D10 of his thugs. Traits: aggressive 80%, brave 90%, communicative 50%, greedy 80%, honest 20%, suspicious 90%.
- 5 Merat, a psychotic killer with a liking for shiny things. Traits: aggressive 60%, brave 50%, communicative 50%, greedy 90%, honest 10%, suspicious 99% (call it paranoid). He gives off a pheromone that makes others aggressive towards him.
- 6 King Schadai and 20+1D10 of his gnomes. Traits: aggressive 25%, brave 40%, communicative 60%, greedy 80%, honest 60%, suspicious 70%.
- 7 Count Aran de Vaguerre. Roll d10: on 1-3 he travels alone; on 7-10 he travels with 20+1D10 of his men-at-arms. Traits: aggressive: 25%, brave 90%, communicative 30%, honest 50%, inquisitive 80%



- 8 Godefroi d'Inodin. Traits: aggressive 70%, brave 90%, communicative 60%, honest 10%, inquisitive 90% if in Hauterre / 10% if in a different county, suspicious 85%.
- 9 Dierkinn the Innkeeper, an ogre and gourmet chef. Traits: aggressive 50%, brave 80%, communicative 80%, honest 20%, starving for human flesh 25%
- 10 Henricus Porticus, a rich merchant who wants to be richer still; with d10+10 of his men-at-arms. Traits: aggressive 20%, brave 60%, communicative 80%, greedy 80%, honest 20%, scheming 60%.

## Table 6: Special Creature Encounters

### 1D100 Encounter

- 1-10 1D3 wyvern. Traits: aggressive: 70%, brave 70%, curious 80%.
- 11-20 A cockatrice. Traits: aggressive: 90%, brave 80%.
- 21-30 A ghost horse. Traits: aggressive: 05%, brave 50%, curious 50%.
- 31-40 A giant. Traits: aggressive: 50%, brave 90%, communicative 40%, curious 50%.
- 41-50 A minor demon, such as an incubus or succubus. Traits: aggressive: 60%, brave 80%, communicative 90%, curious 80%, honest 10%, seductive 90%.
- 51-60 The Black Prophet. Traits: aggressive: 40%, brave 90%, communicative 60%, honest 50%, scheming 80%.
- 61-70 Melusina. Traits: aggressive: 01%, brave 50%, communicative 90%, curious 80%, honest 60%, seductive APPx5%.
- 71-75 Hellequin and his wild hunt, consisting of 2d6+6 hell hounds and 2d6-2 minor demons. Traits: aggressive: 100%, brave 80%, unrelenting 80%.
- 76-80 The Oaklord and his wild hunt, consisting of 2d6+6 shadow hounds and 2d6-2 skeleton warriors. Traits: aggressive: 100%, brave 90%, unrelenting 80%.
- 81-85 A group of 2d5 Norse Elves. Traits: aggressive: 10%, brave 90%, communicative 50%, curious 80%, honest 50%, seductive highest APPx5%.
- 86-90 1D10 Daoine Sidhe. Traits: aggressive: 20%, brave 90%, communicative 20%, curious 70%, honest 50%.
- 91-95 The Horned One. Traits: aggressive: 80%, brave 90%, communicative 10%.
- 96-98 A vampire. Traits: aggressive: 90%, brave 90%, communicative 80%, curious 90%, honest 30%, seductive APPx5%.
- 99-100 A dragon. Traits: aggressive: 90%, brave 90%, communicative 70%, curious 80%, honest 01%.



# CHAPTER VI: MYTHOS BESTIARY

This chapter is designed for gamemasters wishing to play *Call of Cthulhu* adventures set in the early or high Middle Ages. Below is a compendium of Mythos creatures which fit such a setting.

All the creatures have been taken from the *Call of Cthulhu* or *Malleus Monstrorum* manuals; please refer to these books for more details and statistics. I limited the selection primarily to creatures from the works of H.P. Lovecraft and Robert E. Howard.

When describing the mythos creatures for this setting, I adopted a different approach to the one taken in the *Cthulhu Dark Ages* manual, where mythos creatures are equated with real-world legendary creatures. As I see it, mythos creatures and legendary creatures co-exist as separate, if sometimes similar, beings. Mythos creatures remain apart from Earth's fauna, being alien, reclusive and generally rare. Sometimes they are mistaken for similar earthly creatures (after all, from a safe distance, a nightgaunt looks a lot like a dragon or a wyvern) but overall, these alien, other-dimensional creatures are too rare to have entered the human consciousness in the form of legends and myths. They are the subject of forbidden lore, of secrets held within the confines of cults and black magic circles.

## INDEPENDENT AND SERVITOR RACES

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### Byakhee

An interstellar race in the service of Hastur. They may be summoned by his followers.

Byakhee are utterly alien looking and are not likely to be confused with earthly creatures. Generally taken to be demons.

### Dark Young of Shub Niggurath

A race serving Shub-Niggurath, they act as her proxy, accept human sacrifices in her name and devour unbelievers. Looking like jelly-like, slimy tree-things, they resemble monstrous witch trees.

### Dimensional Shamblers

An independent race of dimensional travelers who may appear either at random, or in the service of a god or a great old one. Looking like a cross between an ape and an insect, they would mostly be taken for a demon if perceived by the medieval folk.

### Fungus, vile

A parasitic life form, neither plant nor animal. Alien in nature, it came to earth in the remote past and survives in the primeval forests of Earth.

## Hunting Horrors of Nyarlathotep

The hunting horrors resemble flying black serpents and are generally mistaken for small dragons or wyverns. They serve Nyarlathotep who sends them on various errands, mostly to terrorize the local population.

## Inbreds, a.k.a Martense Kin

Modern scholars apply the name *Martense Kin* (after a New England family that inbred over generations) to families that have devolved back into a primate state after centuries of inbreeding, with family members ending up becoming monstrous ape-like creatures. The same phenomenon may be encountered in the heart of Europe's large primeval forests, where small remote communities are completely cut off from the outside world. Here, inbreeding has been going on for centuries, unhindered by the morality of social or religious taboos, to produce the same ape-like creatures encountered centuries later in the remote New England hills.

In most cultures, inbred communities are considered a blasphemy, and from the Celts on down any such families would be completely obliterated if found out. The annals of the monks of Eonach document at least five such devolved communities that have been discovered in the Black Heart region over the last centuries.

## Leng, Men of

This race of men originates in the Dreamlands, but since Leng also reaches into our dimension, it is not unthinkable that Men of Leng cross over into our world. With their horns and prominent teeth, they can easily be mistaken for goat-men, i.e. satyrs or fauns. They are an independent race and may just have a look around, or else they may be fleeing moon-beasts who try to enslave them.

## The Little People

See the **Bestiary**, above.

## Mi-Go

An alien race that have been setting up mining colonies in remote parts of Earth throughout the centuries. Mi-Go look utterly alien and are not mistaken for other creatures.

## Moon-Beasts

Although residing primarily on the moon of the Dreamlands, they are said to also have a colony on the moon of the waking world. They sail down to Earth in their masted ships and hunt humans in order to enslave them. Their landing parties may include other enslaved creatures such as Men of Leng.

Medieval men or women being hunted by the toad-like creatures and their horned soldiers would believe that a demonic wild hunt was out to get them.

## Nightgaunts

These creatures usually reside in the Dreamlands, but since they serve Nodens, who in the Middle Ages is also still venerated in the waking world, they can be summoned by their master or his followers to do their bidding in the waking world as well.

Nightgaunts can be mistaken for dragons and other winged monsters.

## Rat People

These small, hairy humanoids look like a cross between a rat and a man, and dwell underneath cities and castles, or in the hollow spaces between the buildings. If encountered, they are believed to be just another race of fairies, possibly goblins.

## Rat Things

Rat-like creatures with human heads, created through black magic by the followers of Nyarlathotep and Shub Niggurath. Like rat people, they are commonly mistaken for a race of fairies because of their diminutive size.

## Scions of Tsathoggua

The children of Tsathoggua look like enormous winged and tentacled toads who guard the access to N'Kai where Tsathoggua (or Sadoqua, as he is called in this part of the world) resides. They accept sacrifices for him and act as his hunting beasts.

If encountered, these enormous creatures are usually taken to be major demons.

## Worms of the Earth

The degenerate descendants of the once proud Serpent People have devolved to a near-snake state. Although primarily at home in the British Isles, pockets of the snake-like creatures can be found in other parts of Europe as well.

# GODS AND GREAT OLD ONES

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Despite its remoteness, many cultures have passed through this part of Western Europe: pre-Celtic stone age people (the ancestors of the Little People), the Celts, the Romans and their mercenaries from all over the Roman Empire and beyond; Franks, marauding Hungarians and Vikings. Many of these cultures left behind traces in the cultural and religious make-up of the region, and thus it is quite conceivable that any of these groups left behind the veneration of one or more Outer Gods, Elder Gods or Great Old Ones. Here is a selection of possible deities for cultists to worship.

## Gol-Goroth

*"There are many gods in Bal-Sagoth, but the greatest of all is Gol-goroth, the god of darkness who sits forever in the Temple of Shadows.[...] youths and maidens die at the waxing and the waning, the rising and the setting of each moon, before Gol-goroth, on whose altar a fresh human heart forever throbs!"*

-- Robert E. Howard, *The Gods of Bal-Sagoth*

As related by Robert E. Howard in *The Black Stone*, there lived somewhere in the hills of Hungary,

a strange race, a mixture of Magyars and an ancient Mongolian people. These mountain dwellers worshipped an ancient creature, the toad-like Gol-Goroth, who appeared to them on top of a column of black stone on midsummer nights, when human sacrifices were performed in his name. In the 16th century, the Turkish invaders exterminated most of these mixed-blood villagers and slew Gol-Goroth - or his then incarnation on earth.

Long before that, in the 9th century and well into the 10th, Magyars invaded much of Western Europe, pillaging and ravaging wherever they went. Among the invaders were many members of the strange mountain dwelling people. They brought with them their old religion and their worship of Gol-Goroth. After the Magyars were defeated by the German King's armies, many of the marauding bands were left behind and ended up hiding away in the depths of the vast forests where they continued to harass villagers and travelers. These savage warriors with their ways of slaying and sacrificing people, which included eating them, gave rise to the name and to the legends of the man-eating Ogres. To this day, Ogres continue to worship Gol-Goroth and to sacrifice (and subsequently eat) humans in his name.

## Nodens

The Celtic god of healing, the sea, hunting and dogs. Known as Nuada in Ireland, he was considered the first king of the *Tuatha Dé Danann*, the pre-human race of people from which the *Daoine Sidhe*, the elves of Irish lore, evolved.

Also known to inhabit the Dreamlands where he is worshipped as an Elder God, the master of the nightgaunts. He is often called upon to aid against Nyarlathotep.

**Local Cults:** none. A few individuals who remember the Celtic gods may venerate him as the God of Healing and Hunting.

## Nyarlathotep

This Elder God mingles more in human affairs than ever before. He walks the woods as the Horned Man and lets himself be worshipped by believers who see in him a reincarnation of their old gods Cernunnos or Wotan. As the Black Man, he appears to witches who believe they conjured up

Satan; and as the Horned Man, he leads undead hunters on a Wild Hunt. He is not discreet in his appearances, quite the opposite: he makes sure he is seen and heard all around. It's as if it his intention to make the Church aware of his followers, and to provoke the inquisition.

**Local Cults:** Nyarlathotep has no cult that venerates him, but sorcerers and adherents to pre-Christian faiths venerate his avatars, believing them to be the gods of old or the devil. The self-proclaimed "town wizard" of Rocmort, Enigmatiscus, has recently turned towards Nyarlathotep for help in boosting his fledgling career as a professional wizard; knowing full well that a deal with Nyarlathotep comes with a price attached.

**Servants:** Nyarlathotep commands hunting horrors and hell hounds which follow him in the Wild Hunt.

## Shub Niggurath

The Black Goat of the Woods is worshipped by covens of witches practicing black magic. The cult is not as strong here as in some parts of France, but a few isolated believers exist and even have infiltrated the Last Covenant. On certain nights, her Dark Young can be glimpsed walking the woods.

**Local Cults:** none. One of the members of the Last Covenant, the Baroness Arina of Beaufort, has been a secret worshipper of Shub-Niggurath for years.

## Tsathoggua / Sadoqua

Roman mercenaries from the Averoigne region in France introduced the worship of this Great Old One to the Val-du-Loup. In the early days of the Roman occupation, the entrance to the vast cave system which is formed by the subterranean stretch of the Loup river (between Beaufort and Becblanc) was still known; albeit only to a few: Celtic druids kept a tight lid on the secret. Then somehow, Roman mercenaries, followers of the Great Old One once worshipped in fabled Atlantis, turned up at the entrance. To the surprised druids they announced that it was their god Sadoqua who led them here, as the cave system leads to N'kai where Sadoqua resides. The mercenaries managed to

convert the druids to their ancient faith, and they joined forces in forming a new cult.

In rituals attempting to invoke the hidden god, they sacrificed young women and men by throwing them down the abyss at Trou-du-Loup. It was this practice that let to the foundation of the Celtic Covenant by a group of wise women who joined forces with the Roman invaders in order to capture and ultimately kill the mercenaries and the converted druids. Since then, the cult is believed to have stopped existing, and the location of the secret entry to the cave system has been lost. To this day, however, the Last Covenant is convinced that human sacrifices to Sadoqua are ongoing: it is the only way to explain the large number of young people who wash up drowned at the Becblanc waterfall.

**Local Cults:** Sadoqua is venerated by a small group of individuals, descendants of the few druids who survived the culling by the Roman army; they are partially responsible for the ritual killings suspected by the Last Covenant.

Additionally, a tribe of the Little People which has been hiding away in the above named underground cave system is worshipping the Great Old One. Both groups are unaware of each other.

# THOSE WHO KNOW

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The following individuals from the Val-du-Loup have at least some knowledge of the Mythos:

- ❖ Jehan de Roifâ: he has been translating Arabic scriptures most of his life, and during that time he has encountered all sorts of writings on the Mythos, including the remains of long lost and forbidden tomes.
- ❖ The abbot and the librarian in the abbey of Eonach. The monastery's library contains a modest amount of writings on the Mythos, some of which have been translated by Bernard and Jehan de Roifâ. These blasphemous tomes are not made available to other monks or to outsiders - only the abbot and the librarian have knowledge of their existence. Young Brother Marco has recently been informed



about the existence of some of the forbidden scriptures and is trying to secretly locate them.

- ❖ The Last Covenant was originally set up to combat human sacrifices committed by druids worshipping Tsathoggua. Most of the members of the covenant have a passing knowledge of the Mythos.
- ❖ Enigmaticus, Rocmort's self styled town mage. The scholar and wanna-be mage has come across old manuscripts from which he learned much forgotten and forbidden lore, and this includes ways to contact Nyarlathotep. He has made a Faustian deal with the god: he has bartered his soul for more and greater powers. So far, Nyarlathotep has not come to claim his due, but Enigmaticus is preparing for the day of reckoning - hoping still to find a way to cheat his way out of their covenant.
- ❖ Arina, Baroness of Beaufort, is a worshipper of Shub Niggurath. Her Mythos knowledge stems from a tome given to her by the Count de Vaguerre, a French copy of the *Teachings of Azazel* (see below). The book contains much information about the Nephilim - but also about the Elder Gods and the Great Old Ones.
- ❖ The Count de Vaguerre has a fairly good knowledge of the Mythos, but he is not a follower of any of the ancient gods - on the contrary, he knows he will eventually have to move against the cultists of these alien gods if he wants to establish the reign of his master, Azazel.

## MYTHOS TOMES

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### The Teachings of Azazel (From the Book of Enoch)

The textx entitled *The Teachings of Azazel* were once part of the *The Book of Enoch*, a collection of writings in Ancient Ethiopian attributed to Enoch, the great-grandfather of Noah; although they were probably written by a series of authors over the course of several centuries. Parts of the *Book of*

*Enoch* have found their way into the bible. One part of the scriptures, the *Book of Watchers*, contains information on the Fallen Angels and the Nephilim. Another part, the *Book of Dream Visions*, contains Enoch's vision of the past and future history of Israel. Other parts of the writings provide astronomical teachings, introduce a solar calendar, tell parables and finally also relate apocalyptic tales about the end of the world.

The *Visions of Azazel* were originally part of the *Book of Dream Visions*, and relate Enoch's astral encounters with the Fallen Angel Azazel, who relates to Enoch many of the blasphemous secrets about humanity's gods: the existence of the "*gods of the outer hells that guard the feeble gods of earth*" (i.e. the Outer Gods). He also led Enoch's astral projection to the hiding places of several of the Great Old Ones in forgotten corners of the world. All this Azazel did to spite those gods who had cast him into the darkness underneath the earth after he transgressed with human women.

Someone, at some point in time, decided that the contents of the *Teachings of Azazel* were too blasphemous and removed the corresponding chapters from the *Book of Enoch*. However, at least one copy in Aramaic survived the attempted purge, and rare translations of it in Arabic and Greek are known to exist. One such Arabic version has found its way into the possession of the Count de Vaguerre, and has been translated by Bernard de Roifâ (Jehan's father) into Latin and partially into French.

Beside the general visions, the texts also include spells taught to Enoch to contact some of the gods, most notably Nyarlathotep and Shub Niggurath.

Sanity loss for reading the book is 1d6/2d6; Cthulhu Mythos +15 percentiles; Knowledge (Nephilim) is +10. It takes 40 weeks to study. The spells include several Contact spell, Summon/Bind spells for creatures associated with the Outer Gods, plus the Elder Sign spell and other warding spells.

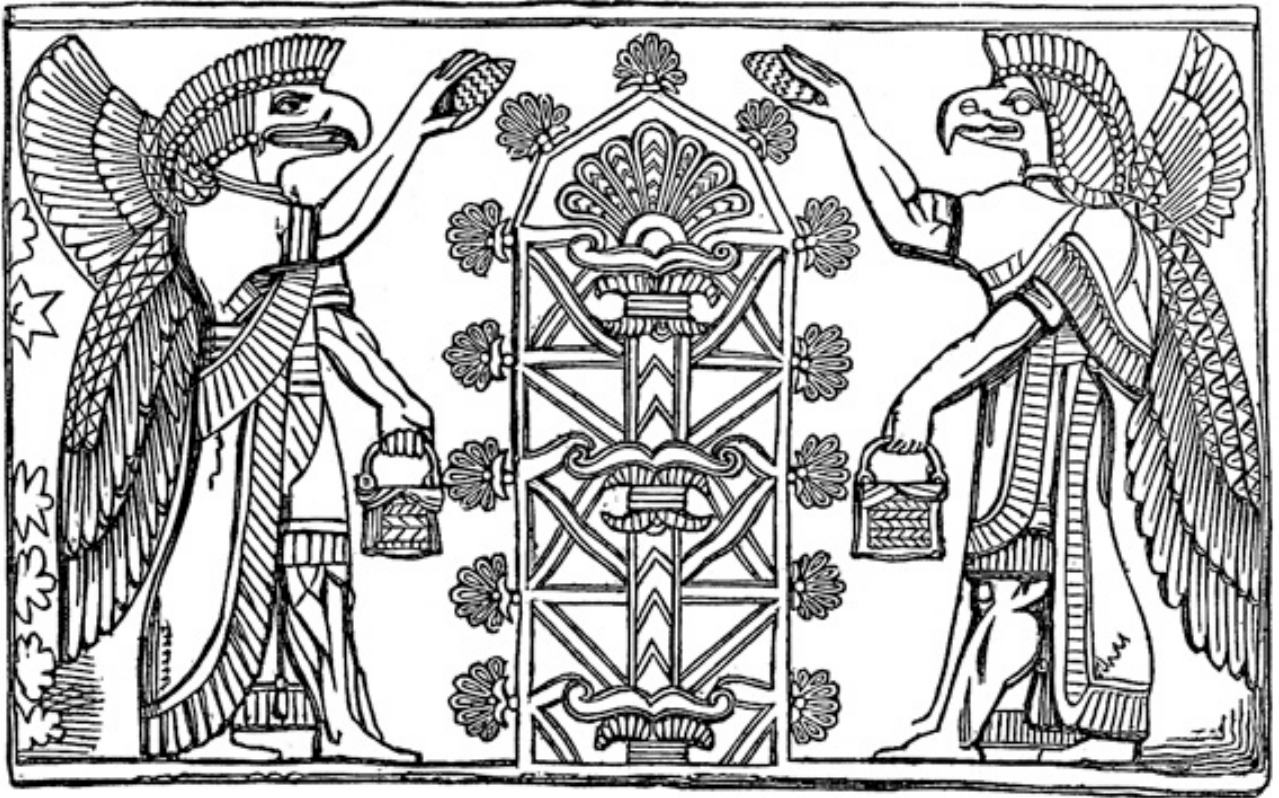
The French translation made by Bernard de Roifâ is incomplete, having been purged by the Count de Vaguerre. A good many spells are missing, as are most of the most expletive descriptions of the Outer Gods. The statistics for the French version are:

Sanity loss 1d2/1d6; Cthulhu Mythos +5 percentiles; Knowledge (Nephilim) +5; 10 weeks to study.

## Other Tomes

The Abbey of Eonach has laid its hands on several forbidden tomes, or at least on parts of them, among them an annotated version of the *Book of*

*Black Rites* by an Egyptian high-priest, Luveh-Keraph (cf. *Cthulhu Dark Ages*); and parts of the 9th century Latin translation of the *Liber Ivonis*.



# CHAPTER VII: SECRETS

This section is aimed at the Gamemaster. It includes background information on secret organizations and cults and reveals secrets about a number of the personalities of the Valley.

## VILLAINS

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This section contains background information on personalities which serve as villains in the Val-du-Loup setting. Most of these individuals are described in the **Personalities** section, but in here may be found more, generally secret, details about them. The statistics can be found in the section following this one.

### Count Aran de Vaguerre

Aran de Vaguerre is a Nephilim, the most powerful and ambitious of the Fallen Ones in the region. He is likely be the toughest opponent the adventurers may encounter in Val-du-Loup. The question is whether they will ever come face to face with him as the Count is a schemer who operates from behind the scenes.

It is Vaguerre's belief that he is destined for great things - maybe even becoming Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. His strategy is three-fold: set himself up as the most powerful noble in the County, marry the Countess Sybill, and from there move his way up through the ranks of the German Empire. Once he is in control of the County's politics, he will end the relative peace that Sybill has maintained with her neighbors, and extend, through wars, the County's borders by incorporating the neighboring counties. Clève is first on his list.

Vaguerre is a schemer and manipulator, and as the leader of the Circle of the Horned One (see **Secret Organizations**, below), he has his minions set up throughout the region to meet challenges posed by any opponents. The adventurers may meet the Count and never realize that he is plotting to usurp control of the County and throw the region into a time of prolonged, terrible warfare.

There is little chance of connecting the Count to any of the crimes committed on his orders. For that matter, there have been very few crimes as such - not yet. At the worst, his name can be linked to the not-quite correct behavior of his vassals: Roland de Beaufort has been involved in minor border feuds with his neighbor Baron de Valmort; while Pieter von Schakel harasses his own villagers, rapes village girls and taxes his peasants to near starvation. This behavior is not against any law (although it is frowned upon by the neighbors), nor is it done on the orders of the Count, but Vaguerre tolerates it as it lays the foundation for the turmoil he intends to create in the region in order to facilitate his eventual grab for power.

Vaguerre's network extends into the households of the most powerful lords in and around Rocmort, and even into other organizations like the Brotherhood of the Raven (via the Sieur de Beaufort) and the Last Covenant (via Arina of Beaufort and Lady Nara). Ultimately, he himself has garnered one of the most powerful positions in Rocmort by becoming the most vocal member of Countess Sybill's Council of Nobles.

For the future, the Count has planned more direct actions: he knows he has to get rid of his political rival, the Count de Sainsprit, as well as Sybill's experienced but overly cautious constable, Sieur Roger de Padin. And once he sets himself up as Sybill's third husband (or maybe even before that), her two sons will have to make way for his own future sons to become heirs.

Close aids to Aran are his brother Reynault and his daughter Isabelle, a willful and sly girl who has managed to gain the trust of her mistress, the Countess Sybill.

Reynault de Vaguerre is a warrior and a military strategist, he leaves politics and plotting to his brother and his niece.

The Count experiences recurring visions which he believes are granted to him by his ancestor, the Fallen Angel Azazel. There is one recurring, powerful prophecy which he deems crucial to his own destiny. In it, he sees three figures fated to play a major role in his future:

- ❖ The child warrior: a young man, so he believes, who will become his champion, a powerful warrior to lead his armies, and allow him to establish the military might he requires for his plans.
- ❖ The mute messenger: a man or a woman who has the ear of Azazel, and who will be speaking in His name.
- ❖ The shadow queen: a young women destined to rise to great political power. There is nothing in the visions to indicate who this might be, but Vaguerre is convinced that the woman is his own daughter Isabelle, who he sees as the influential wife of one of Europe's most powerful men, and the real power behind the throne - and why not the imperial throne itself?

Unfortunately for Vaguerre, only a few of his agents are Nephilim like himself: some of his officers are, as are most of his senior staff running the castle and the estate; and he has managed to put together a squadron of Awvim. He employs a good many spies, some of whom are Zamzummim. Apart from that, he makes use of goat-men or other Emim whenever they suit his needs.

Vaguerre has recently funded a contingent of knights and men-at-arms to travel to the Holy Land. The troop is led by Vaguerre's brother Reynault. Vaguerre's intention is to make contact with local Nephilim (Jerusalem being one of the Nephilim hot spots, next to Baghdad and Cairo), and hopefully recruit a few to aid him in his endeavors to gain greater worldly power. His brother doubts the outcome - from the scant reports they have had from the Holy Land, the Nephilim have enough on their hands to survive in the power struggles going on in Jerusalem, and he suspects that Reynault wanted to get him out of the way for a reason or another.

Another of the Count's quests which has failed so far is his search for a Champion to lead his troops (Champions are powerful Nephilim with a large amount of pure Strain). The Champion would be the ultimate Nephilim fighter and commander of his troops, destined to bring him the military power he craves in order to set himself up as the de-facto ruler of Rocmort.

Vaguerre is also the current Dark Prophet (see also the Unique Creatures section in the **Bestiary** chapter), a role he took over from his mentor Siegur von Schakel, the man who awakened the Strain in him. Now the Count roams the land in the guise of the black-clad monk, "blessing" new-born babes in an attempt to bring out any potential Nephilim traits in them. There is a fair chance that adventurers may encounter him in this guise.

## The Beauforts

More than just Vaguerre's henchmen, Roland and Arina de Beaufort are his most loyal, and most versatile, supporters. Both play key roles in other organisations that Vaguerre hopes to usurp for his purposes: Roland de Beaufort is an esteemed member of the Brotherhood of the Raven, which Vaguerre manipulates to stoke up tensions between Rocmort and the neighboring counties; Arina, meanwhile, is a member of the Last Covenant, as is her mother, the Lady Nara.

Both women believe in Count Vaguerre, but for different reasons. Nara is one of the few individuals left who actually believe in the old Celtic deities like Cernunnos; and she sees her faith reflected in Vaguerre's propagation of the belief in the Horned One. She believes that if the Count comes to power, the old gods will be returned their rightful places.

Arina on the other hand has more profane aims. She knows that she, and maybe her husband, are bound for great power in the shadow of the Count and his Nephilim cohorts. She doesn't share his religion, but she does share his bid for power and glory, and intends to be a part of it.

Roland on the other hand is only pulled along by the scheming of the two women who have taken over his household; although he, too, basks in the attention that the Count is suddenly paying to his barony that for so long lay forgotten in the isolated and forsaken part of the northern Loup valley.

## Godefroi d'Inodin

Godefroi is the leader of the Brotherhood of the Raven, a loose affiliation of minor nobles who for a while now have been stirring up trouble in the border regions between the various counties.

Godefroi is a cold hearted and scheming, with little regard for life. He is a strong and powerful warrior, and resembles his coat-of-arms, a lion, in more ways than one. He is used to getting his ways, more often than not through sheer physical force and brutality. He is feared and hated by his enemies and allies alike, and by none more than the peasants and serfs working his lands.

All his scheming and back-stabbing has left him constantly looking over his shoulder: he knows that he can trust no-one, just like no-one trusts him. He knows that at any time, anyone can attempt to stab that dagger in his back.

Godefroi has gathered the largest army of any baron in the valley, with most of his men recruited as mercenaries. With these well trained and well armed warriors, he terrorizes the valley in the guise of the Brotherhood of the Raven.

## Count Philippe de Hauterre

The Count de Hauterre is potentially the most dangerous external foe of the County of Rocmort. The ambitious nobleman is a schemer and a tactician, and an avid empire builder. While the County of Hauterre is rather vast, it's not exactly a rich domain, seeing that it lacks farmlands. Philippe therefore has had his eyes on the fertile Herbenoir valley for a while now, and is preparing to go to war over it with the Count de Sainsprit. The Chevalier d'Inodin is laying the ground work, raising tempers in the border region, with the ultimate goal of provoking an incursion into Hauterre territory by the Count de Sainsprit, which would then be responded with the full force of the Hauterre armies. While the Chevalier d'Inodin and his Brotherhood of the Raven are mounting attacks and incursions into Sainsprit territory, Philippe has started entreaties with Sainsprit, even going so far as to negotiate a marriage between their adolescent children, Émerault and Hughes.

At the same time, Philippe is trying to win the support of the Prince-Bishop for this endeavor. Specifically, he'd like the Bishop to engage the services of the Chevalier d'Ascalon in mounting a dual attack on the independent territory: Hauterre forces from the South and Montfort forces from the North.

Philippe is increasing the pressure on the Bishop to give the green light for an invasion of Sainsprit. The Emperor, who is the Countess' liege lord, is currently busy keeping his possessions in

Southern Italy under control, and the Count wants to use the monarch's absence to fulfill his plans.

## Lesser Villains

### Baron Egon von Bless

Officially, Egon von Bless is dead. In truth, he has been, for several years now, living as a recluse in his castle - ever since it became impossible for him to hide the leprosy which he had contracted years ago. Egon and his wife decided to pretend that the Baron died so that he would not be forced to hand over the lands to his liege lord, as was the custom of the day.

His wife Mildred and her Marshall now manage the domain; and outsiders only get to see these two. She receives visitors, holds audiences and presides at public hearings. Their Marshall, Rob Roggen, leads the army, seconded by seventeen year old Johan von Bless, the only surviving son of the Baron.

As far as popular opinion is concerned, the Baron has been done away with by his wife - and her lover, that scheming Marshall of hers.

Egon von Bless had always been a powerful man, a skilled fighter and tactician, and an empire builder at that. The little barony which he inherited from his father soon proved too small for him. Through his marriage to Mildred, through wars and deals, he tripled its surface and its income. He believes he ought to be Count, but for now, he is paying fealty to the Counts in Luxembourg, with whom he has an arrangement: as long as he keeps sending knights and soldiers to their wars, they let him do as he likes in his little corner of the world.

He had known for years that he had developed leprosy, ever since several of his limbs became insensitive to pain. When the first physical symptoms appeared, he was able to hide the disease for a while. When finally his face was afflicted, he could no longer hide the fact. He retreated into the heart of his castle, to which only his wife, his son, Marshall Roggen and two trusted elder servants have access. Egon is still running the barony, together with his wife and his Marshall, and at the same time priming his son to take over the reign.

Egon is heavily disabled by the disease - his face is virtually destroyed, with large holes where his nose and mouth used to be, covered in scabs and wisps of long red hair - to a stranger he appears like a down-

right monster. He keeps his appearance hidden under shrouds of linen when in company of the few people who visit him. Although a physical cripple, and barely able to talk, he is mentally fit.

## **Dierkinn the Ugly**

Dierkinn the Ugly, the most renowned cook and tavern keeper of the whole valley, has a secret: he is an ogre. A descendant of Hungarian raiders, his forefathers did not join the ogre tribes as they withdrew into the Black Heart, but instead moved to Rocmort and began a settled, bourgeois life.

Dierkinn's specialty is game such as deer, pheasant or rabbit, but he is not above using an occasional dog, cat or rat as ingredient. As long as his customers do not know what they are eating, they enjoy it. He can keep his lust for human flesh under control, but after so many days passed without it, he can abstain no longer. Ridding himself of his wigs and powders, he hunts for human prey in the forest. In some cases he gets into such a frenzy that he simply attacks the first person to cross his pass. Having killed the person, he carries the corpse home and turns it into the loveliest of stews and meat pies, not only for his own enjoyment, but for his customers' as well.

## **Odo de Lionnoir, a Robber Baron**

Odo likes to think of himself as a defender of the poor. He likes to rob off the rich and give to the poor - from time to time. He also likes to live well and thus does need *some* funds for himself.

Odo was a knight, who for a long time fought in the service of this noble or that noble throughout the Empire and even down in France. He got paid well, but never enough. So recently he took it upon himself to increase his funds by being his own master. He and his band took lodgings in the castle of the Baron de Lionnoir, and when he died, wife- and child-less, Odo's merry men took over his castle. Now Odo calls himself Lionnoir, and so far nobody has challenged his claim, especially not the Count of Clève, who is nominally the liege lord of Lionnoir. The Count and Odo have an understanding: Odo does what he does as long as he does it over in Rocmort territory.

Despite being a veteran of many wars, Odo is only in his mid-thirties. He is a formidable warrior and a skilled rider, as are most of his band. They commonly waylay nobles and itinerant merchants

along the forest roads in Rocmort or in neighboring counties, but not in Clève. They do indeed give a part of their booty to needy villages, but keep enough to themselves to live in comfort.

As Baron de Lionnoir, Odo's coat-of-arms is a black lion; but when out on a robbing spree, he and his men wear unmarked red surcoats.

## **Merat**

Merat is a highly unbalanced thief, drifter and murderer. He wanders aimlessly through the region, kills and steals when he needs to without a shred of remorse.

Merat claims that he is acting in self-defense. He finds himself attacked by strangers for no reason, and when he kills, he is convinced that he is doing the right thing, that all these people are monsters inside: they may look like normal human beings, but they are demon-possessed, and they are out to get him.

Merat is a Nephilim of the Zamzummim caste. He is not aware of this. Two small horns are growing on his forehead, which he consistently tries to saw off, leaving bloody wounds. He emits a strong pheromone that provokes rage in people nearby, and provokes them to attack him. Thus his claims that he acts in self-defense are somewhat true.

The man is rather skilled at what he's doing, and mostly he's been getting away with it. Recently, he murdered a hermit in the hermitage where Brother Godwine lives. The monk saw the young drifter, whom the hermits had taken in and given shelter, fleeing the scene of the crime. Godwine alerted the militia of the Count of Sainsprit, and the hunt for Merat is now on.

Merat has now taken refuge in the Dying Farm, the leper hospice run by the monks of Eonach. He wears bandages around his face, as many lepers do, but the bandages hide the wounds which he self-inflicts as he tries to get rid of his mutation.

## **Enigmaticus, a Wanna-Be Mage**

Enigmaticus, born Edgar de Han, is a one-time novice and scholar, whose fondness for money has led him down a treacherous path. His studies led him to ancient Greek manuscripts that contained dark blasphemous secrets. From these ancient tomes, he learnt some spells, and although he never became





very proficient in casting magic, he set himself up as a town mage with services to hire. People request his services to get rid of poltergeists, rats and other vermin, or to find lost cattle or even lost children. His results have always been mixed, though, and this has led to a serious dent in his reputation. Recently, he has been able to make deals with the god Nyarlathotep. In return for a future service yet to be named by the god, Nyarlathotep has helped Enigmaticus in finding a couple of lost children (discovered drowned in Loup river), and rooting out a witch who had been casting the pox on a local nobleman (the woman was burnt at the stake, where she died cursing Enigmaticus and his 'dark lord').

## SECRET ORGANIZATIONS

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### **The Brotherhood of the Raven**

The Brotherhood of the Raven is a congregation of local barons and knights whose goal is to spread chaos and discontent in order to advance their own very mundane goals, which basically consist in extending their territory or keeping local communities in check. The group has been responsible for multiple attacks on traveling merchants, on local barons, on farms and villages. They murder and pillage as strikes their fancy, and display an unusual amount of cruelty in doing so. They like to appear as the Wild Hunt, taking pleasure in hunting their prey before doing the killing.

The attacks led by the group may appear random, but there is a method behind the murders and the pillaging. Most of those killed were political or territorial rivals of one or the other of the Brotherhood's members. The pillaging is organized whenever the members are in need of funds, or they are undertaken for strategic purposes, such as to punish potentially rebellious communities or to enforce a tighter rule on the population in the aftermath of a seemingly random attack. The group has managed to build up a terrible reputation over the last few months, its name becoming a synonym for terror.

The Brotherhood includes several nobles, some from Rocmort, others from Clève and Hauterre, as

well as a bunch of mercenary warriors in the service of one or the other of the barons. Their leader is Chevalier d'Inodin, whose lands lie in the County of Hauterre, itself part of the Prince-Bishopric of Liège; bordering on lands of the Count de Sainsprit. Most of the mercenaries participating in the raids are in his employ. Another high ranking members is the Baron de Beaufort.

The group's insignia, the Raven, is a roundabout reference to the old Germanic god, Odin, or Wotan, as he was called in these parts. While none of those involved is an actual follower of Frankish gods, they find inspiration in the tales of this deity who is credited with being an instigator of wars and of wild hunts, and a bringer of victory.

The raiders appear dressed in black, wearing the insignia of a red raven on shields and sur-coats. Helmets hide their faces, and if ever a member of the raid gets killed or wounded, his comrades always carry him away. So far not a single member of the Brotherhood has been identified. Local nobles have a general suspicion that the group is based in Hauterre, but all endeavors by Count Philippe of Hauterre to find the culprits have been fruitless. Obviously, the fact that he has put the Chevalier d'Inodin in charge of the troop set up to root out the raiders has not helped the matter.

### **The Circle of the Horned One**

Calling the Circle of the Horned One a cult would be an exaggeration, but the Circle is a religious grouping of sorts. In fact, it unites men and women who all venerate one aspect or the other of the Horned One: Cernunnos, Nyarlathotep, Baphomet or Azazel. The Circle does not hold common rituals, nor does it maintain places of worship. Its members do, however, support each other, and above all, work together in their common goal to bring back the reign of the old gods.

Vaguerre, the Circle's leader, has set up a network of more or less influential nobles and commoners. Chief among his agents are his own daughter, Isabelle, who is a lady-in-waiting for the Countess Sybill. Others include the Baroness de Beaufort (and by implication her husband, the aging Baron), her mother Lady Nara; one of the sons of the Count of Clève; as well as Baron Pieter von Schakel, who, together with his brother Siegard, was the Count's mentor. Vaguerre himself uses the mythology as an

instrument of control, without being a real believer himself. While he does venerate Azazel as his ancestor, he does not worship him as a deity.

Many of the members of the Circle have adopted the Count's faith in Azazel, others like von Schakel and Lady Nara stick to old Celtic deities like Cernunnos and Ardennae. Others, such as Konrad of Clève, are in it for political reasons; while they swore an oath on the Horned One, they have not embraced the mythology. They do, however, recognize Vaguerre as a man destined for great power, which they hope he will share with them.

## The Last Covenant

The original Celtic Covenant was founded by a group of wise women in the first years of the Roman occupation of Gaul. At the time, Roman mercenaries had brought into the country strange and sometimes terrible beliefs in old and best forgotten deities. A group of Celtic druids converted to one such cult, and it was to combat this cult - and to stop its members from sacrificing young girls - that a group of wise women founded the Covenant. The fight between the two organizations lasted for a decade, but in the end, the male cult was rooted out and most of its members killed by the Romans.

The Covenant became very popular after that, especially with women, but also with the population at large, who saw the Covenant's members as their protectors. Even Roman women came to call upon the services of the Covenant, and even joined them, or opened their own branches.

Typical members of the Covenants included healers, midwives, oracles and other magically gifted priestesses (especially followers of the Roman goddess Diana). They were active throughout the Ardennes and beyond. Using appropriate spells, they detected baby girls with magic talents. Usually with the mothers' co-operation, they took the girls away and raised them as sorcerers but then integrated them back into the local communities. Over the years, the Covenant became an important counterweight to the male-only druid clergy of the Celts.

At its peak, the Covenant ran its own schools and had a formal hierarchy, together with chapter houses throughout the Ardennes and other places of Gaul.

All this came to an end when the Franks invaded the lands, driving the Romans out. This Germanic

tribe who had been a bitter enemy of the Celts dismantled all possible Celtic centers of power, and that included the Covenant. Its members were killed, its buildings destroyed and its belongings burnt- including its many grimoires and learned writings on magic.

Many surviving members of the Covenant fled into still-Roman Western Gaul or to the British Isles. Others remained behind and continued to work as before, but unobtrusively so. The women lived in their villages, continued to work as healers and midwives, and met irregularly with their fellow sorceresses. They taught little girls whenever possible, and started writing new grimoires from the spells they remembered. There was little hierarchy, apart from a recognized regional leader. One woman would occupy the role of the tale keeper, charged with learning and remembering (and eventually) teaching the oral lore that made up the collected knowledge of centuries.

Members of the Covenant meet at irregular intervals, and in varying places; mostly at public occasions such as markets and fairs. Meetings are communicated through signs in the Covenant's own secret language.

Today's members of the covenant almost all practice the Christian faith. That does not prevent them from also offering small gifts to the old gods, among them Arduinna, the goddess of the Ardennes forests, who is venerated as an impersonation of the forest itself. The Virgin Mary and other female saints are also frequently venerated by the members of the Covenant.

Members of the Last Covenant in Val-du-Loup are:

### Serena the Hermit

Serena is the Covenant's de-facto leader. She is described in the **Personalities** chapter.

When Serena was young, she married a young nobleman who claimed to be Louis de Tagore, who left her soon after their marriage. When Serena travelled to the Val-du-Loup, she found that no such person exists. Many years later, she is still searching for this Louis. In reality, Louis is Egon von Bless.

## **Rianna, the Witch of Loufort**

Rianna comes across as the village gossip, and a flirt, but that is her way of drawing out secrets from other people without giving away anything of importance. She is the local healer, midwife and clairvoyant. She knows more tricks than she lets on, mastering aggressive spells as well as the healing ones.

No longer young, she is still quite pretty, and is one of the most eligible maidens in this little town of Loufort.

## **Anna the Tale Keeper**

Anna is a tale keeper, a woman who collects, remembers and passes on much of the oral lore that is being passed down from generation to generation, in all kinds of aspects. She remembers stories that go back to the times before the Romans invaded the land, when magic was considered a good thing and when the Earthmother was held in honor. She is old now, and afraid that she will soon start to lose all that knowledge, but she has yet to find a successor to whom she can pass on her wisdom.

Anna lives in Trou-du-Loup. Most people consider her a bit of a dragon, stern and commanding; but people do cherish her stories, as long as she doesn't venture too much into forbidden territory by digging out old tales of magic and of the gods of days gone by.

## **Marthe of the Moors**

A healer, member of the Last Covenant, originally from the town of Marvert, near Castle Basbois, close to the boggy moors that swallowed the old castle Vaguerre. Several years ago she contracted leprosy and now resides in the Dying Farm.

## **Baroness Arina of Beaufort and her mother, Lady Nara**

The two ladies are described in the **Personalities** chapter.

## **Heloise the Smith**

Heloise, called the Smith, survived three husbands and bore seven children. Her current husband number four, Octave, is nominally the weapon smith, but it is common knowledge among the common folk that it is Heloise who is forging the

weapons. Her first husband was a smith, from whom she learnt the trade, to which she added her own magic to forge the best weapons (some claim) of the County.

Heloise lives in the village of Vaguerre, at the foot of Castle Basbois. She is big, strong and stout and a force to be reckoned with. She's made a few enemies in her lifetime, not least Father Aramé, who has accused her publicly of witch craft. The Count de Vaguerre has publicly vouched for her moral integrity - he appreciates her weapons too much to let the Bishop's hound dog cart her off to prison or to a worse fate.

## **Beatrix of Clève**

Beatrix used to be a member of the Last Covenant before marrying the Count of Clève, but she has renounced all ties with the group, and indeed with her magic talents, out of respect (some say fear) of her deeply devout husband.

# THE NOT SO SECRET ORGANIZATIONS

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## **The Hubertus Chase**

The Hubertus Chase is an informal, clandestine order set up by Countess Sybill of Rocmort. Directly overseen by her Constable, Sieur Roger de Padin, the organization's goal is to root out idolatry and paganism as well as political threats to the stability of Rocmort. The group takes its name from the 8th century Saint Hubert, also called the "Apostle of the Ardennes".

The order's origins can be found in Sybill's desire to spread the Christian faith in the last corners of her isolated lands. On her behalf, its members travel the land and investigate all sort of incidents and crimes, not merely the supernatural.

She does not want her regular militia involved and thus hires scholars, theological experts, soldiers, spies as well as local experts (such as hunters or mer-

chants) or skilled fellow nobles to make up her investigator group.

Sieur Roger has increasingly been using its members for political, if not military, purposes by sending them on espionage missions into neighboring counties or even further afield.

## The Jugglers of Fate

Outwardly, the Jugglers of Fate are just another group of jugglers, minstrels, animal handlers and performers who tour the land and entertain both the high and the low born. Tales of their wondrous performances have spread, and when they visit a town, they perform their tricks both for the nobles and for the common folk.

Most of the performers are not exactly what they seem. The tricks they do not only look wondrous, they *are* wondrous. That's because many of them have supernatural abilities: some are Nephilim, others are magic users; one or two are even reputed to be Sidhe from far off Ireland, and one has trained with a mysterious order of monks in fabled Cathay.

Word has spread that the Jugglers are using their talents and skills not just for edification; they're actually also for hire. From finding and rescuing children lost in the forest to tracking and killing monsters, it is rumored that the Jugglers take on any difficult job. Some say that they charge a royal fee, others heard that they do it for a pittance. Some claim that they only do what is law-abiding, others that they have been known to steal from the rich and give to the poor.

## The Heralds

In the late tenth century, under the leadership of the Baron de Toussaints, a group of zealous Christian warriors became intent on turning their corner of the world into a God fearing realm to prepare for the end of the world on the first day of the year 1000. Toussaint and his men exposed everyone, villager and noble alike, whom they suspect of being

pagans, heretics or sinners; as well as anyone tolerating forbidden faiths, overtly or tacitly. The Heralds saw themselves as both judges and executioners. They rounded up suspects, organized a fast trial and killed the convicted men, women or children by decapitating them. Few prisoners were ever acquitted. Unlike Church officials who were supposedly doing the same kind of job, the Heralds were not corrupt and could not be bought.



The Heralds were disbanded shortly after the Year 1000 when it became clear that the world was not coming to an end, and when the local nobles grew wary of the over-zealous Baron. The man was found hanged from a tree in the woods one winter morning. His troops disbanded almost instantly thereafter.

In 1215 Pope Innocence III issued anti-heresy laws, laying the foundation for the centuries long inquisition of all who were deemed heretics and unbelievers. A descendant of the original Baron de Toussaint took this event as an inspiration to revive the Heralds. The aim of the group is similar to that of the original one: hunting out heretics and unbelievers and delivering "God's" justice upon them. In this, the new Heralds are as zealous as their 10th century counterparts, and as unscrupulous and incorruptible.



# CHAPTER VIII: STATISTICS

## The Villains

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### Count Aran de Vaguerre, a Nephilim Leader

STR 16 CON 15 SIZ 19 INT 18  
POW 19 DEX 14 APP 14 EDU 16

Hit Points: 17

Damage Bonus: +1D6

Attacks: Long Sword 76% damage d8+db, Shield 60% damage d4+1Db (knockback), Dagger 55% damage d4+2+1Db

Armor: 8 point chain mail with helm (on the battlefield)

Skills: Command 90%, Dodge 45%, Etiquette 70%, Hide 80%, Language (French) 80%, Language (German) 60%, Persuade 70%, Ride 70%, Sense 65%, Status 80%, Strategy 75%

Psychic Powers: divination 35%, intuition 65%, mind blast 45%, mind control 58%, mind shield 55%, precognition 70%, sensitivity 80%, telepathy 35%

Mutations (all minor): Increased characteristics (POW, SIZ), Camouflage (can turn his skin pitch black at night or in shadows).

In his guise as the Black Prophet, Aran relies on Camouflage to disguise himself, Intuition to find babies to "bless" and Precognition to predict the future. He carries only a dagger and a wears chain mail under his black robe.

Aran has in his possession the ring of Azazel: a black stone set in a ring, this device was empowered by an Anakim, a sorcerous Nephilim. It allows Aran

to cast the *Sign of the Goat* spell and thus bring out the Strain in suitable individuals.

### Reynault de Vaguerre

STR 16 CON 15 SIZ 18 INT 17  
POW 16 DEX 15 APP 12 EDU 16

Hit Points: 17

Damage Bonus: +d6

Attacks: Long Sword 80% damage d8+db, Shield 70% damage d4+db (knockback), Lance 55% damage d4+2+db

Armor: 8 point chain mail with helm

Skills: Command 75%, Dodge 55%, Etiquette 45%, Language (French) 80%, Language (German) 45%, Ride 75%, Sense 85% (smell), Status 65%, Strategy 90%

Psychic Powers: clairvoyance 35%, dead calm 55%, mind blast 40%, telepathy 35%

Mutations: increased characteristics, minor (INT, SIZ); keen sense, minor (smell), pheromone, major.

Reynault is a renowned military commander, relying on his abilities to steer and rally his troops and to unnerve his opponents.

### Isabelle de Vaguerre

STR 11 CON 13 SIZ 17 INT 17  
POW 16 DEX 15 APP 19 EDU 17

Hit Points: 15

Damage Bonus: +d4

Attacks: Long Bow, damage d8+1+1/2db

Armor: none

Skills: Command 70%, Dodge 65%, Etiquette 70%, Knowledge (various) 85%, Language (French) 80%, Language (German) 60%, Language (Latin) 70%, Listen 90%, Literacy (French and Latin) 85%, Persuade 70%, Ride 70%, Status 70%

Psychic Powers: divination 15%, mind control 25%, mind shield 55%, sensitivity 40%, telepathy 15%

Mutations (all minor): Allergy (Sun), Increased characteristics (APP, SIZ), Keen Sense (Hear)

### **Baron Pieter von Schakel**

STR 16 CON 14 SIZ 15 INT 12  
POW 14 DEX 12 APP 11 EDU 13

Hit Points: 15

Damage Bonus: +d4

Attacks: Morning Star 80% damage d10+db  
Shield 68% damage d6+db

Armor: 5 point Leather & Rings

Skills: Dodge 38%, Persuade 65%, Ride 55%, Spot 45%, Track 50%

### **Baroness Arina de Beaufort**

STR 11 CON 14 SIZ 11 INT 17  
POW 20 DEX 14 APP 15 EDU 17

Hit Points: 13

Damage Bonus: -

Attacks: Dagger 45% damage d4+db

Armor: none

Skills: Bargain 78%, Command 80%, Dodge 40%, Etiquette 60%, Jump 45%, Hide 55%, Knowledge (Blasphemous Lore) 40%, Language (French) 80%, Language (German) 40%, Literacy 40%, Persuade 80%, Ride 55%, Science (Botany) 80%, Sense 75%, Status 70%

Sorcery spells: Bird's Vision, Cloak of Night, Midnight, Moonrise, Sorcerous Beauty, Sorcerer's Leap, Sorcerer's Sureness, Liken Shape, Muddle, Brazier of Power, Undo Sorcery, Ward, Witch Sight.

Optional Mythos spells: contact Shub-Niggurath and others.

The walls and floors of Arina's boudoir are covered with runes and other powerful magical inscriptions. The room is her "brazier of power" and holds 18 power points in reserve for her. Normally, the inscriptions are covered with imported French wall hangings displaying female saints.

Arina likes roaming the woods in the shape of a wolf. While she is no werewolf, she uses her Liken Shape spell in combination with Cloak of Night and Sorcerer's Leap to move around unhindered and unrecognized through her lands during at night.

### **Lady Nara, Follower of the Pagan Gods**

STR 9 CON 14 SIZ 9 INT 18  
POW 18 DEX 14 APP 9 EDU 14

Hit Points: 13

Damage Bonus: -

Attacks: none

Armor: none

Skills: Command 60%, Etiquette 35%, Hide 60%, Knowledge (Celtic Religion) 65%, Knowledge (Occult) 45%, Knowledge (Val-du-Loup region) 80%, Language (French) 80%, Language (German) 40%, Persuade 60%, Science (Botany) 120%, Sense 80%, Status 55%

Powers: none.

Originally, Nara was a village witch: she worked as healer, midwife and peddler of potions and charms. Although people call her a witch, nara employs no magic. Her power resides in the knowledge of the secrets of plants, which she uses for creating potions, teas and unguents. She knows how to create concoctions that heal, kill, disfigure, ease pains or make them worse, that make people fall in love, that help women get rid of unwanted pregnancies and that make feeble new-borns strong and healthy.

It is her knowledge of potions which led to the marriage of her daughter Ariana and Baron de Beaufort.

These days, her arrogance and spitefulness make her use her potions against all those that she sees as a menace to herself, her daughter or her grandson. Poison is what she concocts now rather than medicine.





Lady Nara has built an altar to the two main gods worshipped by her, Cernunnos and Arduinna, in her private chambers in Castle Beaufort.

### **Baron Roland de Beaufort**

STR 9 CON 11 SIZ 10 INT 14

POW 15 DEX 13 APP 9 EDU 12

Hit Points 11

Damage Bonus: -

Armor: 8 point chain & helm (on the battlefield)

Attacks: Long Sword 45% damage d8+db, Shield 55% damage d4+db (knockback)

Armor: 8 point chain & helm (on the battlefield)

Skills: Bargain 85%, Command 70%, Dodge 55%, Etiquette 70%, Language (French) 80%, Language (German) 60%, Persuade 55%, Ride 78%, Status 70%, Strategy 65%

### **Sieur Godefroi d'Inodin**

STR 16 CON 17 SIZ 17 INT 15

POW 14 DEX 15 APP 12 EDU 12

Hit Points: 17

Damage Bonus: +d6

Armor: 8 point chain mail & helmet

Attacks: Great Sword 80% damage 2D8+db (bleeding), Lance 70% damage d8+1+ horse's db (2d6; impaling); Long Bow 70% damage 1D8+1+1/2db

Skills: Command 75%, Dodge 65%, Etiquette (Chivalric Code) 45%, Language (French) 60%, Language (German) 35%, Ride 75%, Spot 55%, Track 55%, Status 60%, Strategy 77%, Track 50%

Traits: aggressive 70%, brave 90%, communicative 60%, honest 25%, inquisitive 90%, suspicious 80%.

### **Count Philippe de Hauterre**

STR 12 CON 13 SIZ 13 INT 17

POW 16 DEX 13 APP 10 EDU 15

Hit Points: 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 7 point chain mail + 1 point helmet

Attacks: Broadsword 80% damage 1D8+1+db, Lance 35% damage 1D8+1+1/2 db (Hauterre has lost the full use of his left arm, hence the reduced attack and damage scores)

Skills: Command 85%, Dodge 45%, Etiquette 60%, Strategy 80%, Ride 65%, Status 85%.

Traits: aggressive 80%, brave 80%, communicative 75%, honest 40%, inquisitive 70%, suspicious 60%, scheming 80%.

### **Baron Egon von Bless, the Leper Baron**

STR 10 CON 7 SIZ 13 INT 17

POW 14 DEX 8 APP 4 EDU 9

Hit Points: 10

Damage Bonus: none

Armor: none

Attacks: Short Sword 45% damage 1D6+1+db

Skills: Command 75%, Dodge 25%, Etiquette 60%, Strategy 80%

Traits: aggressive 80%, brave 80%, communicative 35%, honest 75%, suspicious 70%, scheming 60%.

### **Enigmaticus, the Wanna-Be Mage of Rocmort**

STR 9 CON 10 SIZ 10 INT 14

POW 16 DEX 12 APP 9 EDU 17

Sanity Points: 65

Hit Points: 10

Damage Bonus: -

Armor: none

Attacks: Knife 45%, damage 1D6

Skills: Insight 55%, Listen 65%, Knowledge (Myths) 35%, Knowledge (Occult) 45%, Literacy (Ancient Greek) 55%, Literacy (Latin) 75%, Research 78%, Science (Astronomy) 25%, Science (Mathematics) 25%, Perform (Oratory) 30%, Persuade 55%.

Magic Spells: Conjure Elemental 30%, Dark 45%, Dispel 30%, Heal 25%, Illusion 20%, Light 25%, Perception 50%, Vision 30%, Wall 15%.

Mythos Spells: Contact Nyarlathotep, Summon/  
Bind Hunting Horror.

### **Merat, a Drifter and Murderer**

STR 14 CON 15 SIZ 14 INT 16

POW 14 DEX 16 APP 14 EDU 8

Hit Points: 15

Damage Bonus: +d4

Armor: 2 point Leather

Attacks: Axe 80% damage d8+2+db, Thrown Axe  
65% damage 1D6+1/2 db

Armor: 1 point heavy clothing

Skills: Brawl 65%, Dodge 70%, Hide 80%, Listen  
65%, Persuade 65%, Spot 78%, Stealth 94%,  
Track 60%

Mutations (all minor): Hybrid (horns and tail of a  
goat), Keen Sense (Smell), Pheromone (pro-  
vokes rage with a POT of 2d6+6)

Psychic Powers: Dead Calm 60%, Intuition 45%,  
Sensitivity 40%.

### **Dierkinn the Ugly**

STR 13 CON 10 SIZ 18 INT 14

POW 14 DEX 16 APP 5 EDU 16

Hit Points: 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 1 point Soft Leather

Attacks: Long Spear 70% (thrown 45%) damage  
d10+1+1Db (for hunting), Butcher's Knife  
55% damage d4+2+1Db

Skills: Brawl 65%, Craft (Cooking) 95%, Craft  
(Dismembering) 70%, Dodge 45%, Etiquette  
65%, Language (French) 80%, Language  
(German) 70%, Sense 750%, Status 45%

Mutations (all minor): Disease Carrier, Metabolic  
Weakness (addiction to human flesh - see be-  
low), Sensitivity (human flesh).

Roll once per day for Will vs. CON x number of  
days that Dierkinn spent without consuming human  
flesh. If the roll fails, Dierkinn needs to kill and eat  
human flesh within the next 3 hours.

If using the Sanity rules, subtract 1d4 sanity  
points every 3 hours after that. Else, subtract 1 tem-  
porary Will point for every hour after that.

# The GOOD FOLK

### **Sybill, Countess of Rocmort**

STR 10 CON 13 SIZ 11 INT 18

POW 16 DEX 15 APP 14 EDU 17

Hit Points: 12

Damage Bonus: none

Attacks: Long Bow 40%, damage d8+1+1/2db

Armor: none / 7 point hauberk when on the bat-  
tlefield

Skills: Command 90%, Etiquette 90%, Knowledge  
(Religion) 90%, Knowledge (Val-du-Loup)  
85%, Language (French) 80%, Language  
(German) 80%, Language (Latin) 70%, Listen  
90%, Literacy (French and Latin) 85%, Perform  
(Harp) 35%, Perform (Oratory) 55%, Persuade  
90%, Ride 70%, Status 95%, Strategy 75%.

Note: the Countess does not actually fight in bat-  
tle, but when commanding her troops she watches  
the battles from strategic locations.

### **Arnault, Count de Sainsprit**

STR 14 CON 14 SIZ 12 INT 12

POW 14 DEX 12 APP 11 EDU 12

Hit Points 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Attacks: Long Sword 75%, damage 1D8+1Db; Kit  
Shield 65%, damage 1D4+1Db; Lance 65%,  
damage 1D6+2+1Db.

Skills: Command 60%, Dodge 50%, Etiquette  
65%, Knowledge (German Empire, France)  
45%; Knowledge (Val-du-Loup) 70%, Lan-  
guage (French) 90%; Language (German) 65%,  
Literacy 60%, Ride (Horse) 75%, Status 80%.

### **Sieur Jehan de Roifâ**

STR 9 CON 11 SIZ 12 INT 17

POW 16 DEX 9 APP 10 EDU 20

Hit Points 12

Damage Bonus: 0

Attacks: -



Skills: Knowledge (Blasphemous Lore) 35%; Knowledge (German Empire, Northern Italian States) 45%; Language (French) 90%; Language (German) 75%, Language (Arabic) 80%; Knowledge (Ardennes region) 90%; Literacy (Latin and Arabic) 90%; Research 95%, Status 70%.

### **Roger de Padin**

STR 14 CON 14 SIZ 14 INT 17  
POW 16 DEX 15 APP 12 EDU 16

Move: 10

Hit Points: 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 7 point chain mail with 1 point helmet

Attacks: Long Sword 80% damage 1D6+1+1Db,  
Shield (Buckler) 70%, Bow 55% damage  
1D8+1/2db

Skills: Command 85%, Dodge 45%, Etiquette 70%,  
Knowledge (Val-du-Loup) 85%, Knowledge  
(Religion) 70%, Knowledge (Espionage) 75%,  
Ride 65%, Status 70%, Strategy 85%.

### **Guillaume de Maccard**

STR 13 CON 14 SIZ 14 INT 16  
POW 15 DEX 13 APP 9 EDU 15

Move: 10

Hit Points: 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 7 point chain mail + 1 point helmet

Attacks: Broadsword 70% damage 1D8+1+1Db,  
Long Bow 70% damage 1D8+1+1/2db

Skills: Command 85%, Dodge 45%, Etiquette 70%,  
Knowledge (Occult) 65%, Knowledge (Religion)  
90%, Ride 80%, Status 75%, Strategy  
80%.

### **Brother Marco**

The young monk has been taught a few spells by Marthe of the Moors, among them Healing. He visits her regularly in the Dying Farm. She has also taught him to develop the psychic powers that were beginning to bud in him, powers which lead him to be aware of his surroundings in a supernatural way.

Brother Marco is a Nephilim, although he is not aware of this as yet.

STR 14 CON 13 SIZ 11 INT 14  
POW 17 DEX 16 APP 9 EDU 13

Hit Points: 12

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Attacks: Fleecing Knife 80%, damage 1D6

Skills: Craft (Fleecing) 97%, Research 55%, Insight  
55%, Listen 45%, Knowledge (Florence and  
neighboring regions of Italy) 55%, Knowledge  
(Occult) 25%, Knowledge (Val-du-Loup) 80%,  
Own Language (Italian) 70%, Other Language  
(French) 55%, Literacy (Latin) 75%

Spells: Bird's Vision, Heal

Psychic Powers: Empathy 35%, Intuition 27%, Sensitivity 35%

### **Abbot Venerius of Eonach**

STR 10 CON 11 SIZ 10 INT 17  
POW 16 DEX 13 APP 10 EDU 18

Hit Points: 11

Damage Bonus: +0

Attacks: -

Armor: -

Skills: Command 80%, Spot 65%, Knowledge  
(Academic Lore) 90, Knowledge (Natural  
World) 60%, Knowledge (Blasphemous Lore)  
25%, Knowledge (Religion) 85%, Language  
(French) 90%, Knowledge (German) 75%, Lit-  
eracy Latin 80%, Perform (Oratory) 75%, Per-  
suade 80%, Ride 35%, Status 75%.

Traits: aggressive 20%, brave 60%, communicative  
80%, honest 90%, inquisitive 80%, patient  
65%, suspicious 25%.

### **Mother Agnes**

STR 10 CON 13 SIZ 9 INT 16  
POW 17 DEX 13 APP 14 EDU 18

Hit Points: 12

Damage Bonus: +0

Attacks: -

Armor: -

Skills: Command 80%, Spot 65%, Knowledge (Religion) 85%, Knowledge (various) 50%, Language (French) 90%, Knowledge (German) 60%, Literacy Latin 80%, Persuade 83%, Ride 35%, Status 85%.

Traits: aggressive 20%, brave 90%, communicative 70%, honest 90%, inquisitive 80%, patient 30%, suspicious 35%.

### Edouard d'Ascalon, a Knight

**STR** 16 **CON** 16 **SIZ** 17 **INT** 17

**POW** 15 **DEX** 16 **APP** 11 **EDU** 16

Hit Points 17

Damage Bonus: +1D6

Attacks: Battle Axe 92% damage d8+2+1Db, Shield 80% damage d4+1Db (knockback), Lance 75% damage d4+2+1Db

Armor: 8 point chain & helm

Skills: Command 85%, Dodge 55%, Etiquette 55%, Knowledge (Religion) 70%, Knowledge (Occult) 55%, Knowledge (Val-du-Loup) 45%, Language (French) 80%, Language (German) 35%, Language (Arabic) 55%, Literacy (French) 80%, Ride 90%, Status 65%, Strategy 75%.

### Serena the Hermit

**STR** 11 **CON** 13 **SIZ** 9 **INT** 16

**POW** 19 **DEX** 13 **APP** 9 **EDU** 13

**Hit Points:** 11

**Damage Bonus:** none

**Attacks:** Improvised Weapon 35%, damage d6-1 +1Db

**Skills:** Insight 70%, Insight (Animals) 70%, Knowledge (Blasphemous Lore) 20%, Knowledge (Natural World) 80%, Knowledge (Occult) 70%, Knowledge (Val-du-Loup) 80%, Language (french) 70%, Language (Arabic) 85%, Literacy (Arabic) 65%, Spot 75%, Status 45%, Track 75%.

**Favorite Spells:** Muddle, Undo Sorcery, Witch Sight, Heal, Light, Curse of Sorcery, Ward, Sorcerer's Ear, Sorcerer's Eye, Bird's Vision, Wings of the Sky, Summon Air Elemental. Serena keeps a grimoire written in Arabic.

**Psychic Powers:** Divination 25%, Psychometry 35%.

### Rianna, a Village Witch, Healer and Mid-Wife

**STR** 12 **CON** 13 **SIZ** 13 **INT** 13

**POW** 17 **DEX** 13 **APP** 16 **EDU** 16

**Hit Points:** 13

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Attacks:** Dagger 55% damage d6+1Db, Improvised Weapon 35%, damage d6-1 +1Db

**Skills:** Fast Talk 70%, Insight 70%, Insight (Animals) 65%, Knowledge (Blasphemous Lore) 20%, Knowledge (Natural World) 80%, Knowledge (Occult) 65%, Medicine 40%, Science (Botany) 20%.

**Favorite Spells:** Muddle, Undo Sorcery, Witch Sight, Heal, Light, Curse of Sorcery, Ward, Sorcerer's Ear.

## STOCK CHARACTERS

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### Man-at-Arms

**STR** 15 **CON** 14 **SIZ** 14 **INT** 11

**POW** 11 **DEX** 14 **APP** 11 **EDU** 9

Hit Points: 14

Damage Bonus: +d4

Armor: 6 point byrnie +1 point light helmet

Attacks: Spear 70 damage 1D6+1+db (Impaling), Shield (Buckler) 55% damage 1D2+db (knockback), Bow 55% damage 1D8+1/2db

Skills: Dodge 50%, Listen 55%, Ride 80%, Spot 55%, Stealth 45%, Track 60%.

### Serjeant

Sergeants are mounted warriors, serving as light cavalry on the battle field. They are less well armed and armored than knights, and hence more agile.



Use the same characteristics as for the men-at-arms, but apply the following skills:

Attacks: Long Sword 70 damage 1D8+db (Bleeding), Shield (Buckler) 65% damage 1D2+db (knockback)

Skills: Command 70%, Dodge 50%, Listen 65%, Ride 70% (55% after adjustment for the chain mail shirt), Sense 55%, Spot 55%, Stealth 45%, Track 60%.

### **Knight**

STR 15 CON 15 SIZ 15 INT 11

POW 12 DEX 15 APP 14 EDU 14

Hit Points: 15

Damage Bonus: +d4

Armor: 7 point chain mail +2 heavy helmet

Attacks: Long Sword 75 damage 1D8+db (bleeding), Kite Shield 65% damage 1D4+db (knockback); Lance 75% damage 1D8+1+ horse's db (usually 2d6; impaling)

Skills: Command 45%, Dodge 50%, Etiquette 35% (Dark Age) / 65% (High Middle Age), Language (own) 60%, Language (other) 35%, Listen 45%, Literacy (French and Latin) 45%, Ride 75% (55% after adjustment for the chain mail armor), Spot 45%, Status 50% (Dark Age) / 60% (High Middle Age), Strategy 30%.

### **Male Villager**

STR 15 CON 13 SIZ 11 INT 10

POW 12 DEX 14 APP 10 EDU 9

Hit Points: 12

Damage Bonus: +d4

Attacks: Axe 65% , damage 1D6 +db, Improvised Weapon 70%, damage d6-1 +db

Skills: Craft (various) 75%, Knowledge (Natural World) 60%, Knowledge (Occult) 35%, Track 55%

### **Female Villager**

STR 12 CON 13 SIZ 10 INT 10

POW 14 DEX 14 APP 10 EDU 10

Hit Points: 12

Damage Bonus: +d4

Attacks: Improvised Weapon 35%, damage d6-1 +db

Skills: Craft (various) 75%, Knowledge (Natural World) 60%, Knowledge (Occult) 55%.

### **Noble Lord**

STR 11 CON 12 SIZ 11 INT 10

POW 14 DEX 11 APP 9 EDU 14

Hit Points: 12

Damage Bonus: none

Attacks: Long Sword 50 damage 1D8+db (bleeding), Kite Shield 45% damage 1D4+db (knockback); Lance 35% damage 1D8+1+ horse's db (usually 2d6; impaling)

Skills: Command 70%, Etiquette 80%, Knowledge (Religion) 80%, Language (one other) 45%, Literacy (Latin) 45%, Strategy 60%.

### **Noble Lady**

STR 9 CON 12 SIZ 10 INT 10

POW 14 DEX 11 APP 13 EDU 14

Hit Points: 11

Damage Bonus: none

Attacks: Light Bow 35% damage 1d6+1+1/2db

Skills: Arts (various) 55%, Command 60%, Etiquette 80%, Knowledge (Natural World) 30%, Knowledge (Religion) 80%, Language (one other) 45%, Literacy (Latin) 45%.

### **Additional Stock Characters from the BRP Manual**

The following stock characters from the manual come in handy:

- ❖ Maniac [BRP p. 363]
- ❖ Priest [BRP p. 364]
- ❖ Spy [BRP p. 366]
- ❖ Thug [BRP p. 367]
- ❖ Tribal Warrior (Nomadic tribes of the Near East or North Africa) [BRP p. 367]
- ❖ Viking (use also for other marauding tribes, such as the Prussians or Magyar) [BRP p. 368].

# ADVENTURES

## Optional Rules

Statistics for the non-playing characters make use of the Education/Knowledge Roll and Literacy rules from the BRP manual. They use the Sorcery, Psychic Powers and Mutations power systems.

## Starting Powers / Level of Play

Many of the characters encountered in Val-du-Loup have mutations of various sorts, while other characters display psychic powers or wield magic. To even out the odds, the gamemaster should allow players to create characters with one or the other of these powers.

I would suggest that starting characters without powers are created for a heroic level of play, and characters with powers are created for normal level of play.

The scenarios have been designed for heroic level characters.

## How to find places in Val-du-Loup

The scenarios send adventurers to all kinds of places in the Val-du-Loup. Depending on the characters' origin, this is what they know about the region:

Any character (PC and NPC alike) with a local background automatically knows all the information about major towns which are contained in the gazetteer, that is they know the location of the towns and its main features. They know vaguely the location of sites which are not directly on a road or beside a river are located ("south of the bridge where the Beaufort road crosses the Loup"), but have to make a

successful Knowledge (Val-du-Loup region) roll to know the exact location, and Navigate rolls to find a place if it isn't located on a road or by a river.

Non-native player characters must make a normal Knowledge (Val-du-Loup region) roll to be aware of major towns and sites, and a *difficult* roll to know specific locations.

If the adventurers ask friendly locals, they will be pointed to, or even led to, specific places. Locals will also have to make successful Knowledge and Navigate rolls to find features not directly located on a road or by a river.

## Status and Fame

As characters bring adventures to a successful end, some of the quests they are on may lead to increased fame, and thus to a higher status.

To simulate this, I suggest the following rule: at the successful end of an adventure, the players are allowed to make an experience roll against their Status rating. If the roll succeeds, they can either add +1d6 points to the score, or a fixed amount of points (3, 5 or even more), depending on the nature of the obstacles they overcame, and the public exposure their feat receives.

Check the adjusted Status table in the **Character Creation** chapter: If the Status score of an adventurer increases so that it reaches that of another class, their Wealth rating changes. Within limits, the gamemaster may also consider upgrading the player's social rank: an unfree man or woman is freed, a warrior may be knighted or a merchant be granted a barony. Social mobility was very limited, however, and should be the exception rather than the rule.





# SCENARIO I: A BLACK HEART

## BACKGROUND

Countess Sybill of Rocmort is a very religious woman, and she has made it her goal in life to ensure that the Christian faith reaches every last and forgotten corner of her domain. She is very alarmed at the many reports of pagan and supernatural activities that circulate among the population, and she is determined to stamp out these blasphemous acts. She has empowered her marshal, Baron Guillaume de Maccard, to investigate and eradicate all sorts of behavior that is deemed unholy by the Church.

De Maccard is, like Sybill, an incorruptible zealot, but unlike the Countess, he is also unscrupulous and willing to sacrifice 'innocent' lives for the greater good. Thus, when 'proof' was brought before him that all inhabitants of the hamlet of Boison were werewolves, he did not question the claim: he and his men attacked the village and killed everyone of the thirty or so villagers, men, women and children.

Boison is - was - a town on the border to the County of Crafer. The lands belong directly to Countess Sybill, and lies in the area commonly referred to as the Black Heart. This is a region of densely wooded, oftentimes inaccessible steep hills and deep valleys. The Black Heart is feared for being haunted by large packs of wolves, and legends of werewolves abound.

The reports which were brought before Maccard concerning werewolf activities in Boison were only partially true: only the members of one family - a woman and her two children - were werewolves. The rest of the villagers were not.

The werewolf woman killed by Maccard was the illegitimate daughter of one Louis de Blancepeau,

who is in the service of the Chevalier d'Ascalon. Louis de Blancepeau is a werewolf himself, as are a number of men fighting under him.

Louis now wants revenge. For this, he has recruited several soldiers from Ascalon's militia, some being werewolves like himself. He's also aided by his other daughter, Elise, another werewolf.

Acting upon insider information, Louis' men ambushed Maccard's son Elias and his retinue as they were out hunting and abducted the youngster, killing the other members of the hunting party. Padin's men later followed the abductors tracks up to the border of Montfort, but decided not to follow them into their neighbors' territory.



Several days after the initial event, a ransom note was delivered to Guillaume de Maccard. It stipu-

lated the conditions for the return of the boy, Elias: Maccard himself is to deliver a ransom of ten thousand deniers. The note fixes a date and locale where further information is to be available. The place is an inn located on Montfort territory.

## The Plan

At this point, our adventurers are brought into play. It is Roger de Padin who is hiring their services, based on several possible premises:

- ❖ The adventurers work for Sybill's *Hubertus Chase*, the clandestine operation set up by the Countess to investigate supernatural occurrences. This option is recommended for starting characters.
- ❖ The adventurers work for one of the other nobles, such as Sainsprit or Roifâ, who recommended them to Padin; or they work for one of the monasteries such as Eonach.

One of the requirements for the job is that the men and women to be recruited are fairly good riders (with a skill rating of at least 30%). If the characters do not own horses, these are provided to them from the Countess' stable for as long as they are in her employ.

The characters meet up with de Padin in Castle Rocmort, in his rooms in the military barracks within the castle compound. Here, they also meet Maccard and another man introduced to them as Edgar.

De Padin quickly explains the background events, and then lays out his plan:

He wants the player characters to accompany Edgar to the tavern named in the ransom note. Edgar, who more or less resembles the Marshal, is to stand in for de Maccard, who has been forbidden by the Countess to act as the note demands. The adventurers are given the money requested by the kidnapers. Their primary aim is to retrieve Maccard's son alive. Saving the money or saving Edgar are only of secondary importance.

## A Night in Rocmort

The adventurers are to leave by morning. Until then they are given beds in the castle, depending on their background and gender either in servants' dormitories, the militia dorms, or proper guest

rooms in the castle. They are free to move around Rocmort until morning, and may also move around the public part of the castle grounds (but not the castle itself).

By posing direct questions to Padin, the characters may learn these additional facts:

- ❖ It was the Baron de Beaufort who provided Maccard with proof of the villagers of Boison being werewolves. The proof was the confession of a man from Boison, captured and 'interrogated' by Beaufort's men after supposedly having been seen shape-shifting from a wolf to human form when he was discovered hunting and killing several of Beaufort's sheep.

*Note: The man is supposedly still in Beaufort's prison, although in truth Beaufort had him killed right after news of the massacre in Boison reached him. The prisoner was not a werewolf, and his confession was made under torture.*

- ❖ It is not known who delivered the ransom note to Maccard. The sheet of vellum was found in Maccard's quarters by one of his men. Padin suspects that the kidnapers have someone in the castle spying for them. This would also explain how they were able to get hold of Elias so easily.

The player characters may also talk to servants and soldiers in the castle, although they are forbidden to discuss the plan with anyone. However, the characters may learn a few general bits of information concerning the Marshal's and Elias' character.

The spy is a serjeant in de Padin's service. The adventurers are not likely to come across him. If some of the adventurers are put up in the barracks, there is a 25% chance that they encounter the man in the soldiers' common room. If they go out drinking that night, there is a 10% chance that they run into him and a bunch of his buddies. The sergeant is friendly if a bit boisterous when drunk. He fraternizes with the adventurers and tries to learn a few things, but he does not push his luck and refrains from becoming suspiciously curious.

The sergeant, Alban, spies for the Chevalier d'Ascalon and has been recruited by Blancpeau for strategic goals. Alban does not play a further role in this scenario.



# GAMEMASTER HINTS

The main villains of the scenario are all werewolves. At the outset of the adventure, the player characters are unaware of this, and they may very well walk into the final show-down scene without having been able to figure it out. Depending on the size and the strength of the adventurers' party, facing a bunch of almost invulnerable werewolves may be too much to handle. The gamemaster may therefore wish to drop a few hints along the way - some are discussed in the section **Options** below.

The werewolf characters have been created based on the description given in the BRP manual, with the additional provision of making them allergic to wolfsbane. This allergy is referred to in many of the werewolf legends of the region.

It should also be pointed out that the werewolves' vulnerability to silver seems only to have been discovered in the 17th century. It is up to the gamemaster to decide if the player characters are aware of this, or even if it's true at all.

Any character who makes a successful Knowledge (Occult, Group [Werewolves] or Region [Val-du-Loup]), or anyone who had dealings with werewolves before, knows that werewolves are vulnerable to fire and magic, and optionally silver and wolfsbane.

## EVENTS

### On the Road

To reach the tavern, the easiest route is via the old Roman road that leads north beside the river Loup. Near the cascade of Becblanc, the main road turns west; from here the group can follow a dirt trail that lead eastward into the Black Heart.

The pathway meanders through deep, dark valleys in between high pine tree covered hills. Even at noon, the valleys tend to be dark and without sun. From time to time, the howling of wolves can be heard. Hawks, eagles and big fat raven circle overhead.

The path eventually leads to Castle Crafer. The tavern, the group's first goal, is located at a juncture where another path branches off towards Castle Montfort. The tavern is called *The Hanging Goat*, and is detailed further below.

While nothing much happens on the Roman road, a couple of events may take place once the characters enter the deep of the woods. The events listed below may happen in any order.

### Lady Elise

While still on Rocmort soil, the group encounters a small party of travelers, the Lady Elise de Blancpeau and five or six men of her retinue, returning from Castle Beaufort to Castle Montfort. Elise is the daughter of Louis de Blanceau, and fully knowledgeable about the kidnapping. She and her men have been on the look-out for a riding party to approach from Rocmort. She is charming and inquisitive, and there is a good chance that she catches on who the travelers are, suspecting Edgar to be the hated Marshal. She carries a bow attached to her saddle and a dagger at her belt. Her men are well armed and armored, and wear the coat-of-arms of the Chevalier d'Ascalon, as they belong to his mercenary army. Two of the men are scouts. These two, Leo and Amien, are werewolves, as is Lady Elise.

Elise offers to travel with the adventurers. If they refuse her offer, she appears angered and she and her men ride ahead in a huff. In that case, two of her men shadow the group (see **The Look-Outs** below).

If the adventurers let her accompany them, she sends one of the two scouts, Leo, to inform her father. The man disappears in the middle of the night, leaving his horse behind, as he travels in werewolf shape. If one or more of the PCs stand guard that night, they may have a chance of seeing Leo sneak off (roll a difficult Spot roll against Leo's Stealth score). Leo shape-changes once he has left the camp.

Elise does not offer an explanation for her man's disappearance and suggests that he has fallen prey to wild animals while leaving the camp at night. She resists looking for him, claiming that she has to hurry back home, and that if anything happened to the man, it is his fault.

If the adventurers want to track down Leo, they come across discarded clothing and notice how the



human tracks stop, and wolf tracks begin (normal Spot roll). From this, the players may draw their own conclusions.

If exposed, cornered or attacked, Elise and her men will attempt to flee. Neither Elise nor Amien are willing to shape-change in front of the others, and so give away their secret, but if they see no other way out, they will.

Pursuing werewolves on horse back through the dense forest requires *difficult* Ride rolls. The player characters may decide to follow the werewolves by tracking them; this requires a successful *Track* roll every six hours. If they miss one *Track* roll, they can repeat the roll at half their *Track* score; but if this roll also fails, they have lost the werewolves' trace for good. Successful tracking leads the adventurers to Blancpeau's camp. Supposing that they stop for the night, this takes two days.

A detour of more than 12 hours means that the adventurers miss the deadline for arriving at the tavern.

Searching the horses and clothes left behind by Elise and/or her men reveals nothing that helps the adventurers in their quest.

## The Look-Outs

This event takes place shortly after the adventurers part company with Lady Elise.

Two wolves start shadowing the group - Elise's scouts, Amien and Leo. The density of the undergrowth makes the hard to notice, and it takes a *difficult* Spot or Sense roll vs. the werewolves' Stealth skill of 65% to spot them (roll twice per day). They use their enhanced Sense, Spot and Track rolls to successfully stay on the adventurers' tracks.

## The Raided Village

Shortly before the border, the adventurers pass by Boison, the village razed by the Marshal. The devastation is still visible: burnt-out hovels, slain goats and chicken, and burnt fields; and at the edge of the town, a plot of freshly dug earth where the slain villagers have been hurriedly buried in a shallow mass grave.

When the travelers arrive in the village, a lone figure is working on this grave. It is a young monk

named Marco who has taken it upon himself to properly bury the townspeople, properly covering the bodies with earth, erecting a cross and saying prayers over the dead. Brother Marco knew the people, and he also knows that they were not werewolves (the monk has some low-level psychic powers, such as *Sensitivity*, with which he is sometimes able to tell if someone has supernatural powers). The young man is angry and resentful, accusing Maccard of indiscriminately slaughtering innocents. He has met the Marshal before and has not a good word to say about the man and his blind zeal, although he likes the marshal's son, who was being tutored in Eonach, Marco's monastery.

A single fresh grave is located in close proximity to the mass grave. A cross has been erected here, bearing three names: Marthe, Johan and Alaine. These are the names of Blancpeau's daughter and her children. Blancpeau had their body removed from the mass grave and buried separately. An insignia has been scratched below the names (Spot roll required), it is Blancpeau's coat of arms, a stylized unicorn profile. If the adventurers have met Elise before, they recognize the coat-of-arms from her cloak on a successful Idea or Knowledge (Heraldry) roll.

## Way Layers

A band of robbers tries to ambush the party. They have nothing to do with the kidnappers, and do not know about the ransom being carried along. There are about four or five of them, ambushing the travelers as they pass through a narrow chasm. They appear on the rocks above the riders, arrows pointed at them, and demand that any money and precious items be handed over to them.

## Wolves

Upon the gamemaster's decision, the travelers encounter a pack of 2d6+3 wolves. If this happens while Elise is traveling with the party, the wolves seem to shy away from an attack. Roll against Elise's Luck score of 75: if the roll succeeds, the wolves back off. Else, they attack. Characters with a successful Sense roll may have noticed some kind of non-verbal communication between Elise and the wolves.

Other animals such as bears or boars might also be encountered.

## The Tavern and What Happens Next

The tavern is called *The Hanging Goat*, a reference to the bait used for luring wolves into traps. It sits in a small clearing in the heart of the woods where the road leading to Castle Montfort branches off the main track continuing to Crafer. It features a large public bar room on the ground floor, and two large bedrooms with beds large enough for 3-4 people to sleep in. Most importantly, it has a stable where the horses can be kept safe from marauding wolves. Food is basic and cheap, as is the accommodation.

There are no guests staying in the inn when they adventurers arrive. The only people living here are the old couple who run the place and a simple minded boy who is looking after the stables. The owners are called Mathias and Alice and have been living here pretty much all their lives.

The inn keeper has a note waiting for de Maccard. It contains the instruction to proceed to the Chapel of St. Mary of the Hills. The inn keeper and his wife can provide instructions on how to get there. The note requests de Maccard to proceed with only one escort. They are to arrive there by noon the next day, which gives the group the chance to stay overnight at the inn.

If the inn keeper's wife hears of the chapel being their destination, she crosses herself, and tries to warn the player characters away from going there. The hill is reputed to be a meeting place for werewolves, the main reason why the chapel is being shunned and thus falling to pieces. Alice also tries to press wolfsbane on Edgar and the player character accompanying him. Wolfsbane is a purple-flowered plant that werewolves are allergic to, and Alice has bunches of the plant placed behind doors and windows to keep the werewolves out.

*In game terms, werewolves have an allergy against wolfsbane; this works like an adverse mutation. In a minor form, it causes skill ratings to drop by 20% when exposed to the plant, as a major mutation, it causes a skill ratings drop of 40% and a loss of 1D6 hit points every minute. A Luck roll may decide if a werewolf has a minor or major allergy.*

If Elise and the scouts are accompanying the group, then their ways part here. Elise spends the night at the inn, and in the morning makes off towards Castle Montfort; eventually cutting back east and heading towards her father's camp. She also dispatches two of her men to shadow the adventurers.

The Chapel of Saint Mary of the Hills lies off the 'main' road. A narrow track, probably made by deer or by foresters, leads east, climbing up a steep incline onto the peak of one of the hills. The chapel sits at the top of the peak, a small edifice that is threatening to crumble as the forest encroaches on it year after year. What Alice told the adventurers is true: every full moon, werewolves gather here before they set out on their hunts.

A group of men-at-arms hired by Blancepeau is waiting for de Maccard. There are ten or more of them, all well armed and armored; enough to fight off the adventurers should they decide to proceed against the note's instructions. They are led by a captain, Feliz. These men are all soldiers and neither scouts nor werewolves; their task is to bring de Maccard to the camp where Blancepeau is waiting. None of the men knows any further details of Blancepeau's plans.

The soldiers disarm the supposed Marshal and lead him off, leaving the remaining man behind and free to leave. The Marshal is escorted to Blancepeau's camp.

The mercenaries wear neutral grey garb, nothing to show that they are in the service of the Chevalier. They all wear heavy armor with helmets to hide their faces.

In case 'de Maccard' does show up with more than one escort, the soldiers have instructions to seize the Marshal by force and to kill the rest. However, they will not follow these orders if the escorts are either women or clergy or are obviously unarmed.

## Blancepeau's Camp

Louis had his men erect a bunch of tents that he, Elise, his men and Elias, the kidnapped boy, are staying in, waiting for the arrival of the soldiers and the Marshal.

The camp is located on a hill top. No obvious path leads there. The location is accessible from two sides only, the other sides being too steep. There are always two men on guard, hiding in tree tops and surveying the two accessible hill sides.

The smoke from the kidnappers' camp fire is visible beyond the tree tops and may lead searchers to the location, using a Spot roll once the gamemaster determines that the men are in close enough proxim-

ity. The smoke is even remotely discernible from the hilltop where the chapel sits. It takes a *normal* Spot roll to make it out, followed by two *Navigate* rolls to then find the exact location of its provenance.

Blancpeau is planning on executing the Marshal by burning him at the stake: he wants him to die the same death as his daughter. Before that, he wants Maccard to witness the death of his son Elias, whom Louis plans to kill quickly by cutting his throat.

The stake has already been set up and twigs, branches and hay has been heaped around it. The boy is kept tied up in one of the tents, constantly guarded by one man.

There are only three or four men staying in the camp (or more, depending on the size and strength of the player characters' group). Elise and her companions are also there if nothing untoward has happened to them in the meantime. If the player characters do not know that they are facing werewolves, it should look like an easy task to them.

Supposing that events go as planned, the fake marshal is brought to the camp in late afternoon. Blancpeau is planning a quick mock trial once the night sets in, followed by the executions of the boy and then the Marshal. This gives the playing characters the advantage of darkness should they want to attempt a rescue.

Many of the men in the camp are werewolves. This is not something that is directly noticeable to any onlookers. However, if an attack is made on the camp, the men (and Elise) will all shape-change and fight in their wolf shape.

Possibly, the following complications can be added:

- ❖ a makeshift wooden barricade has been built all around the camp site. It is relatively easy to climb (standard *Climb* roll).
- ❖ One of the sentries has assumed his wolf shape in order to better sense and spot any intruders.
- ❖ Horses are likely to sense any intruders. Use the horses *Sense* skill of 50% to determine if they get noticeably nervous if the adventurers approach the camp, followed by *Luck* rolls to see if Blancpeau's men notice.

While Louis has his plans nicely laid out, he will change them quickly once he sees them jeopardized. If the camp is attacked, he orders the kid brought to him. Pressing a dagger under the boy's throat, he

tries to force the attackers to stop; he then demands to see de Maccard. Even if the attackers follow Louis' instructions, he slits the boy's throat before their eyes.

# OPTIONS

## Players' Options

At some point in time, someone should remark that one of the playing characters looks a lot like de Maccard and Edgar. This gives the players the option to use one of their numbers as a stand-in for de Maccard instead of Edgar.

Otherwise, the players have a number of options, ranging from shadowing Feliz and the soldiers to capturing them and forcing them to reveal the location of the camp.

The adventurers may also seize and interrogate Elise, who is the only one who knows the details of Blancpeau's plan (everyone else assumes that Blancpeau only wants to kill the Marshal, and not his son). When rolling dice to determine the outcome of such an interrogation (using the *Persuade* skill), the quality of the roll determines how much she reveals:

- ❖ Normal success: Blancpeau intends to burn de Maccard at the stake.
- ❖ Special success or better: he intends to also kill the boy beforehand.

Elise may also be used as a bargaining chip to get the kid free. If faced with a choice of having his revenge or seeing his surviving daughter safe, he will hesitate for a moment, but then decide for his daughter's safety. Nonetheless, he will try to get in a killing blow at the boy if given half a chance.

## Gamemaster's Options

Since the player characters do not know beforehand that they have to deal with werewolves, it is highly unlikely that anyone brought silver weapons with them. Thus, the landlady's warnings and her insistence that the player characters take along wolfsbane may prove critical to the outcome.

The gamemaster may also decide to limit the number of werewolves present. For beginning player



characters, limit the werewolves to Louis, Elise, Damien and Leo. All other scouts are normal humans who are aware of the true nature of their comrades.

It may not be advisable to let the player characters enter the camp without any advance notion of who they are facing. Thus, the gamemaster may drop a few hints along the way:

- ❖ Brother Marco may be along for the journey. He has the *Sensitivity* power which allows him to recognize werewolves.
- ❖ Elise or any of her werewolf escorts react badly to the wolfsbane handed out by the landlady to the player characters.
- ❖ As the adventures approach the camp, one of the guards can be spotted assuming his wolf shape.

## ENDINGS

De Maccard is an influential public person, and getting his son freed will do a lot for the adventurers. They will be rewarded by the Marshal, if not in money then in goods (weapons, armor or horses). A successful resolution can also increase their status: have the players make an Experience Roll against Status, and if successful, add +1d6 points to that score.

Likewise, if the player characters botch the rescue mission, their status diminishes by 1D6 points.

If the player characters are not already working for de Padin, a successful outcome also leads to the Constable offering to permanently hire the adventurers.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

### Louis de Blancpeau

A veteran of the Chevalier d'Ascalon's wars in the Mediterranean, low-born Louis is a formidable fighter and an excellent rider. He's smart and versed

in leading men into battle. He has served his master for over thirty years. Some ten years ago, the Chevalier knighted him, and made him commander of his company of scouts.

Louis is a werewolf, as are/were his two daughters Elise and Marthe, and his grandchildren. Within the scouts company, he has built up an elite core made up of other werewolves, in all a dozen or so (it is generally not known to what extent the Chevalier d'Ascalon knows about the true nature of some of his men. They seem to have an unspoken "don't ask, don't tell" policy about this). Louis and his men use their special skills to spy on their targets, and as a special reward allow their wolf selves to hunt and kill straying enemies during the many battles that the Knight involves them in.

Louis used to have a conscience once, years ago, but lost it in the long years of fighting. Killing and raping civilians, looting and burning are all part of the game for him. He himself claims that his heart has turned black. He is almost blind with rage about the death of his daughter and grand-children, and will stop at nothing to get his revenge.

#### In human form:

STR 15 CON 14 SIZ 16 INT 16  
POW 14 DEX 15 APP 13 EDU 13

Move: 10

Hit Points: 15

Damage Bonus: +d4

Armor: 1-point leather armor

Attacks: Short Spear 85% damage 1D6+1+db,  
Long Bow 90% damage 1D8+1+1/2db

Skills: Command 85%, Dodge 50%, Knowledge (Regions: Spain, Holy Land....) 70%, Listen 55%, Ride 80%, Spot 70%, Stealth 45%, Track 80%.

#### In wolf form:

STR 22 CON 15 SIZ 17 INT 5  
POW 14 DEX 15

Move: 13

Hit Points: 16

Damage Bonus: +d6

Armor: 1-point fur, immunity to normal weapons

Attacks: 1x Bite 80% damage 1D8+1/2db, 2 x Claws 50% damage 1D6+db

Skills: Dodge 60%, Hide 60%, Jump 70%, Listen 60%, Sense 80%, Spot 75%, Stealth 55%, Track 90%.

Powers:

Transformation, Regeneration (1 HP / round), Immunity to damage from normal weapons. Exceptions: silver weapons, fire, magic. Louis has a minor allergy to wolfsbane.

## Elise de Blancpeau

The daughter of Louis de Blancpeau, she is like her father a werewolf. She is small in stature but looks strong and sturdy underneath her fine clothing. When out on a mission, she arms herself with a bow and a dagger. She also wears a grey surcoat emblazoned with her father's coat-of-arms, a unicorn.

### In human form:

STR 14 CON 15 SIZ 10 INT 17  
POW 15 DEX 15 APP 15 EDU 17

Move: 10

Hit Points: 13

Damage Bonus: none

Armor: 1-point padded clothing

Attacks: Dagger 65% damage 1D4+db, Long Bow 70% damage 1D8+1+½db

Skills: Command 70%, Dodge 60%, Knowledge (Occult, Region: Val-du-Loup, Heraldry, others) 80%, Listen 65%, Ride 70%, Spot 60%, Stealth 45%, Track 50%.

### In wolf form:

STR 21 CON 15 SIZ 12 INT 5  
POW 15 DEX 16

Move: 13

Hit Points: 14

Damage Bonus: +d4

Armor: 1-point fur, immunity to normal weapons

Attacks: 1x Bite 65% damage 1D8+½db, 2 x Claws 45% damage 1D6+db

Skills: Dodge 60%, Hide 60%, Jump 70%, Listen 60%, Sense 80%, Spot 75%, Stealth 55%, Track 90%.

Powers: Transformation, Regeneration (1 HP / round), Immunity to damage from normal

weapons. Exceptions: silver weapons, fire, magic.

Elise has a major allergy to wolfsbane.

## Blancpeau's Men

### Amien the Scout Master

Amien is the oldest and most experienced of Blancpeau's scouts. He also thinks that he has something to prove - that despite his age he is still every inch a formidable fighter. He is also ruthless, and has doubled as assassin on more than one occasion.

### In human form:

STR 14 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 15  
POW 14 DEX 16 APP 11 EDU 10

Move: 10

Hit Points: 14

Damage Bonus: +d4

Armor: 1-point leather armor

Attacks: Short Spear 75% damage 1D6+1+db, Short Spear (thrown) 80% damage 1D6+1+½db

Skills: Climb 45%, Command 70%, Dodge 60%, Listen 45%, Ride 70%, Spot 55%, Stealth 55%, Track 60%.

### In wolf form:

STR 20 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 4  
POW 14 DEX 16

Move: 13

Hit Points: 14

Damage Bonus: +d6

Armor: 1-point fur, immunity to normal weapons

Attacks: 1x Bite 65% damage 1D8+½db, 2 x Claws 45% damage 1D6+db

Skills: Climb 45%, Dodge 60%, Hide 60%, Jump 70%, Listen 60%, Sense 70%, Spot 60%, Stealth 55%, Track 90%.

Powers:

Transformation, Regeneration (1 HP / round), Immunity to damage from normal weapons. Exceptions: silver weapons, fire, magic. Amien has a minor allergy to wolfsbane.



## Leo the Young Scout

A freshly recruited werewolf scout, Leo is still earning his spurs in Ascalon's army. He is eager to please Amien - too eager perhaps. He is fast and stealthy, but lacks the older man's wisdom.

### In human form:

STR 14 CON 16 SIZ 14 INT 12  
POW 11 DEX 15 APP 11 EDU 9

Move: 10

Hit Points: 15

Damage Bonus: +d4

Armor: 2-point leather armor

Attacks: Short Spear 65% damage 1D6+1+db,  
Short Spear (thrown) 75% damage  
1D6+1+½db

Skills: Climb 65%, Dodge 60%, Listen 55%, Ride  
80%, Spot 55%, Stealth 55%, Track 60%.

### In wolf form:

STR 24 CON 15 SIZ 14 INT 4  
POW 11 DEX 15

Move: 13

Hit Points: 14

Damage Bonus: +d6

Armor: 1-point fur, immunity to normal weapons

Attacks: 1x Bite 65% damage 1D8+½db, 2 x Claws  
45% damage 1D6+db

Skills: Climb 75%, Dodge 65%, Hide 65%, Jump  
80%, Listen 70%, Sense 90%, Spot 70%,  
Stealth 65%, Track 90%.

Leo has a minor allergy to wolfsbane.

## Louis' Men at Arms

Louis has hired a few men who are not scouts, which he retrieved from Ascalon's regular army. They are not werewolves, nor do they know about the scouts' true nature. Unlike the scouts, they are not here out of loyalty for Blancpeau, but they're in it for money.

STR 15 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 11  
POW 11 DEX 14 APP 11 EDU 9

Move: 10

Hit Points: 14

Damage Bonus: +d4

Armor: 6 point chain mail shirt; +1 light helmet

Attacks: Spear 70% damage 1D6+1+db (Impaling),  
Shield (Buckler) 75% damage 1D2+db (knock-  
back)

Skills: Dodge 50%, Listen 55%, Ride 80%, Spot  
55%, Stealth 45%, Track 60%.

The captain, Feliz, has the following skills: Attacks:  
Long Sword 70% damage 1D8+db (Bleeding);  
Bargain 60%, Command 75%, Dodge 50%,  
Listen 65%, Ride 85%, Sense 55%, Spot 55%,  
Stealth 45%, Track 60%.

## Louis' Scouts

The scouts accompanying Louis are mostly from his inner circle of werewolves.

The men usually appear in only two forms, men or wolves, they rarely use the hybrid form.

### In human form:

STR 14 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 11  
POW 11 DEX 14 APP 11 EDU 9

Move: 10

Hit Points: 14

Damage Bonus: +d4

Armor: 2-point leather armor

Attacks: Short Spear 65% damage 1D6+1+db,  
Short Spear (thrown) 75% damage  
1D6+1+½db

Skills: Climb 65%, Dodge 60%, Listen 55%, Ride  
80%, Spot 55%, Stealth 55%, Track 60%.

### In wolf form:

STR 22 CON 15 SIZ 13 INT 4  
POW 11 DEX 14

Move: 13

Hit Points: 14

Damage Bonus: +d6

Armor: 1-point fur, immunity to normal weapons

Attacks: 1x Bite 65% damage 1D8+½db, 2 x Claws  
45% damage 1D6+db

Skills: Climb 65%, Dodge 60%, Hide 60%, Jump 80%, Listen 60%, Sense 70%, Spot 60%, Stealth 55%, Track 70%.

Powers: Transformation, Regeneration (1 HP / round), Immunity to damage from normal weapons. Exceptions: silver weapons, fire, magic.

If required, use a Luck roll to determine if a particular scout has a minor or major allergy to wolfbane.

## Edgar, the false Constable

Edgar is a bit of a bumbling fool. He's being paid well to stand in for Guillaume de Maccard, but he's overly nervous, even more so when he is supposed to leave for the chapel with only one escort.

Edgar is the fifth son of a minor noble, and he's not really good at anything. He works as a clerk for Countess Sybill.

He's been equipped with a sword so he looks the part, but he's not a fighter.

STR 10 CON 11 SIZ 13 INT 16

POW 12 DEX 14 APP 11 EDU 16

Move: 10

Hit Points: 12

Damage Bonus: none

Armor: 7 point chain mail

Attacks: Long Sword 25% damage d8+db

Skills: Knowledge (region: Val-du-Loup) 65%, Knowledge (Heraldry, Natural World) 80%, Literacy (Latin and French) 80%, Ride 40%.

## Alban the Spy

Hired as a sergeant by de Padin a few years ago, this young man has worked himself up through the ranks of Countess Sybill's militia and has become one of the advisers of de Padin. He has access to his correspondence and sits in on secret planning sessions. He's passing every information he garners back to the Chevalier d'Ascalon.

He's outgoing and friendly but has a tendency to get boisterous when drunk.

STR 14 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 15  
POW 14 DEX 15 APP 15 EDU 18

Move: 10

Hit Points: 14

Damage Bonus: +d4

Armor: 5 point ring

Attacks: Long Sword 75% damage 1D8+db, Shield (Buckler) 70%, Long Bow 75% damage 1D8+1+½db

Skills: Brawl 65%, Climb 60%, Disguise 60%, Dodge 50%, Etiquette 75%, Fast Talk 75%, Gaming 70%, Knowledge (Val-du-Loup) 85%, Knowledge (Espionage) 75%, Ride 55%, Sleight of Hand 55%, Spot 65%, Stealth 70%, Strategy 70%.

## Thugs / Way Layers

STR 15 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 10

POW 10 DEX 14 APP 11 EDU 9

Move: 10

Hit Points: 14

Damage Bonus: +d4

Armor: 1-point leather armor

Attacks: Short Spear 50% damage 1D6+1+db, Long Bow 55% damage 1D8+1+½db

Skills: Brawl 50%, Climb 45%, Dodge 35%, Hide 30%, Listen 55%, Ride 60%, Spot 35%, Stealth 30%, Track 40%.

## Special Guests

The following characters are described in detail in the **Personalities** chapter.

❖ Marshal Guillaume De Maccard

❖ Constable Roger de Padin

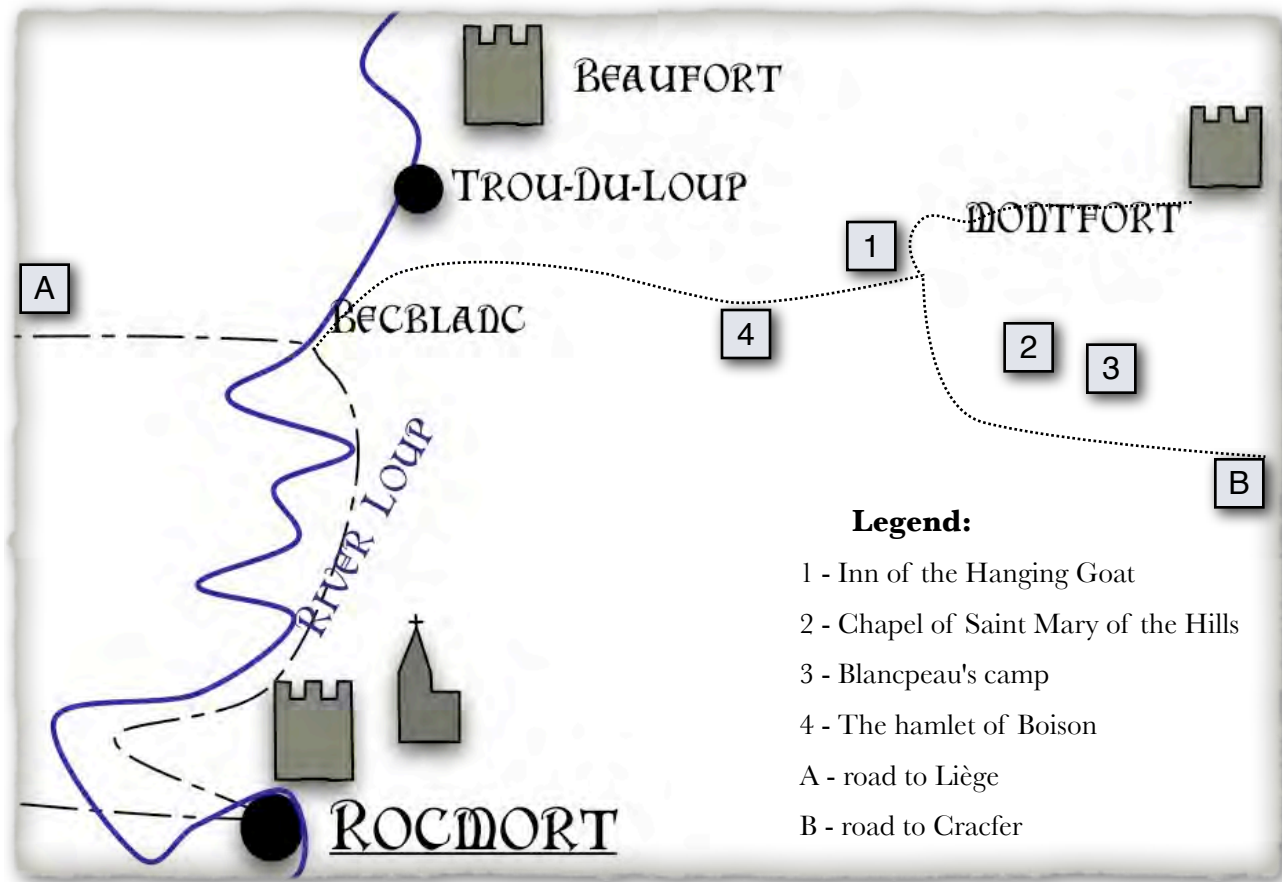
❖ Brother Marco

Stock Characters:

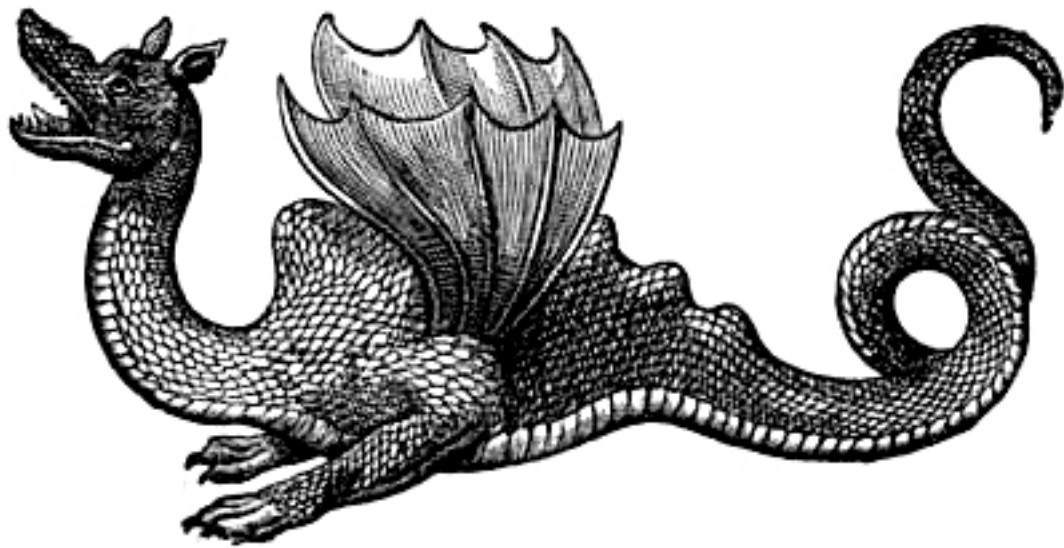
❖ Villagers



# SCENARIO MAP



# SCENARIO II: PRELUDE TO WAR



## INTRODUCTION

### Summary of Events

The Counts of Sainsprit and Hauterre are preparing for war. Both sides are massing troops in the Froideau valley on opposite side of the stream.

The adventurers are hired by Venerius, the Abbot of Eonach, to retrieve a precious book, an illustrated bible which the monastery has lent to the nuns of Saint Clarissa for restoration. As the armies prepare to march on each other, the Abbot is afraid that the nuns are caught between the lines and that his precious book may get lost in the mayhem. He is

less concerned with the fate of the nuns, trusting that the Count of Hauterre (after all a vassal of the Prince-Bishop of Liège) will take care of his clergy citizens. The Abbot provide a right of passage for the group, which he expects the Count de Hauterre and his vassals to respect. Additionally, two of his monks are to join the group, and they can vouch for the adventurers should the need arise.

As the adventurers get ready to leave, they are approached by Roger de Padin, who is High Constable to the Countess of Rocmort. He has an additional mission for the group: they are to find out the



strength of the Hauterre troops, a "simple" assignment as he puts it: all they have to do is get close enough to the army camp to count the number of banners, and if possible make a list of them. Judging by the banners representing the noble houses who have joined the Count of Hauterre, it will be possible to estimate the number of knights and men-at-arms amassed by the enemy. Additionally, if they can find out what the rumored "secret weapon" of Inodin is all about, that would be much appreciated as well

The route takes the adventurers through the Rocmort army lines arrayed on the Eastern bank of the Froideau - a stream which normally is more of a brook than a river, but after heavy rainfalls it is swollen and treacherous. They can cross the flooded valley over the only working bridge which is guarded by soldiers of both sides; or they may take a chance on swimming across.

After that, they have to make their way through the enemy lines. It is up to them if they travel openly or try to remain hidden. Despite the bill giving them right of passage, they will be questioned if they meet the wrong sort of patrolling soldiers. The roads are all heavily patrolled, and detours through the wooded hills involve treacherous terrain and encounters with the local fauna. If intercepted, they may be taken to Castle Inodin, the residence of the Knight, Sieur Godefroi D'Inodin, the main villain of the piece. In the castle, they also encounter Inodin's wife, Mathilde, who may prove a valuable ally and is able to provide them with much needed information about Hauterre's secret weapon: a wyvern.

On their way to the monastery, the adventurers come through a deserted village where a good many people have been massacred. By investigating the hamlet, they come across a sole survivor who can inform them about what has happened.

At some point in time, one of the monks accompanying the group ends up dead while the other monk has vanished. The monk who disappeared is a spy for the Prince-Bishop of Liège and seeks to join the Count of Hauterre to bring him information on the Rocmort-Sainsprit troops.

There is no hard and fast time line for this scenario as pretty much all the actions depend on the choices, and the skills, of the player characters. The following vague time limits can be used:

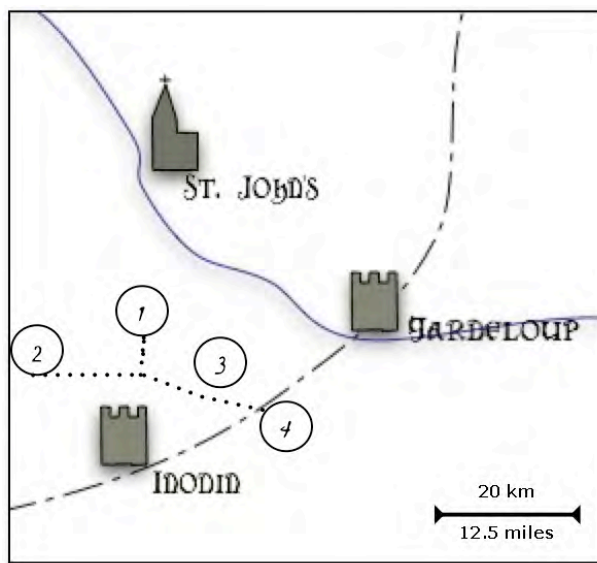
It takes another week before the flood waters recede, and again another week before the ford at St.

John-in-the-Woods, where the battle is to take place, becomes usable again. This means that Hauterre cannot mount his attack for another two weeks.

For the player characters' actions to make a difference in the outcome of the impending battle, they need to get their findings back to de Padin in not more than five days. The remaining time until the battle is needed by the Countess of Rocmort to get the Counts of Vaguerre and Clève involved, and for these two Counts to get their troops ready and in place in the Froideau valley.

## Travel Times and Distances

The map below shows the scenario's main location. A larger area map is provided at the end of the scenario.



### Legend:

- 1 = Army Camp
- 2 = Monastery of St. Clarissa
- 3 = Town of Legure
- 4 = "halfway point"

The approximate travel times are listed below, based on the assumption that the player characters stick to the roads and trails - add 1/3 more traveling time if they decide to make their way through the woods (note that galloping through the woods is almost *impossible*).

The listed times have been adjusted for the bad state of the roads and for traveling through hilly terrain.

The term "halfway point" used below refers to the place where the trail to the Monastery branches off the road to castle Inodin.

**From Castle Gardeloup to the halfway point:** 10 hours walking or 8 hours riding. In normal circumstances, the distance could be covered by a fast horse in 3 hours, but the incessant rain of the past weeks has left the road in a desolate state.

Riding fast cuts down the time to 5 hours, but a missed Luck roll followed by a missed, *difficult* Ride roll causes horse and rider to tumble over debris or a washed out patch of road. The riders should have a Ride score of at least 50% to maintain a constant gallop (if not, make at least one Ride roll per half a day to see if they manage to stay in the saddle).

It takes the same time to reach the castle from this point.

[Distance: 20km]

**From the halfway point to the monastery:** the desolate state of the trail leading up and down through the hills means that it takes almost 18h walking and 15h riding at normal speed, or 9h riding fast.

[Distance: 25 km]

**From the halfway point to the army camp:** again, the desolate state of the trail means it takes 15h to walk, 12h to ride and 7h to ride fast.

[Distance: 20km]

**Between monastery and camp:** 9h walk, 7-8h riding and 5h riding fast.

[Distance: 12km]

## Choices

When undertaking the trip to the monastery, by way of the enemy's camp (or vice-versa), the adventurers have to make a series of choices which may significantly influence the way that the story runs its course:

- ❖ The player characters have a choice on which goal to follow first: they may first travel to the monastery and decide to investigate the army camp later, or they may do their spying on the way to the nuns. The former choice is more likely to help them in their goal of retrieving

the valuable bible, but endangers the goal set to them by de Padin.

- ❖ It is also up to them whether they make the journey on foot or on horse back. Riding is faster and less tiring, but horses hinder their progress if they have to take to the woods and the hills, or if they want to sneak up on enemy positions.
- ❖ Likewise, it is their choice to use the bridge and the main road that connects the different locations, or to try and travel through the woods on little used and badly maintained paths.
- ❖ If the adventurers come to Castle Inodin and encounter Mathilde, they will have to decide how to deal with her: help her to flee and take her along, or abandon her to her fate.
- ❖ The adventurers may or may not try to find out about the secret weapon, i.e. the wyvern, near Castle Inodin. They may even have the foolish notion of trying to kill the beast, in which case their chances of success look slim, unless they are skilled, veteran fighters.
- ❖ When Augustin murders Brother Karl and flees, the adventurers may choose to follow his tracks or to continue with their mission.
- ❖ If encountering Inodin's troops they may try to talk or to fight their way out of the situation. If they choose the latter, they have Inodin on their tracks for the remainder of the adventure. If they get caught too close to the army camp, however, talking will not help them get out of the situation. Likewise, if Brother Augustin manages to make his report to Inodin or Hauterterre, men-at-arms are searching for them with orders to bring them to Castle Inodin for questioning.

# CAST OF CHARACTERS

## Godefroi d'Inodin, Master of Ravens

Godefroi is a cold hearted, scheming knight with little regard for life. He is a strong and powerful war-

rior, and resembles his coat-of-arms, a lion, in more ways than one. He is used to getting his way, more often than not through sheer physical force and brutality. He is feared and hated by his enemies and allies alike.

Godefroi is detailed in the **Personalities** and **Villains** chapters.

## Charles du Loq, Inodin's Captain

Charles du Loq is the captain of Inodin's army and like his master, he is powerful, brutal and unscrupulous. He cares little for the lives of the 'unarmed' classes, treating civilians (peasants and clergy alike) as a nuisance, whose sole role in life it is to provide food and entertainment for the knights and their armies. He is ambitious and willing to sacrifice friend and foe alike to his dream of becoming a knight. He's likely to exaggerate his own feats and to claim the achievements of others for himself. He is almost as hated as Inodin is, and a few attempts at killing him have already been made.

du Loq is a strong, skilled fighter; one who takes risks in battle and so far has got away with it.

### Charles du Loq

STR 17 CON 17 SIZ 15 INT 14

POW 14 DEX 17 APP 11 EDU 12

Hit Points: 16

Damage Bonus: +d4

Attacks: Long Sword 72% damage 1D8+db (bleeding), Shield 65% damage d4+db (knockback), Lance 60% damage d4+2+db

Armor: 8 point chain mail & helmet

Skills: Command 70%, Dodge 55%, Etiquette 35%, Knowledge (Val-du-Loup) 55%, Language (French) 60%, Language (German) 45%, Ride 70%, Spot 55%, Track 59%, Status 45%, Stealth 45; Strategy 55%

Traits: aggressive 70%, brave 80%, communicative 35%, honest 15%, inquisitive 50%, suspicious 50%.

## Mathilde d'Inodin

Mathilde is the Chevalier's young wife, his fourth. He likes to marry his brides young, and he also buries them young; none of the girls lived to be older than twenty three. Mathilde is seventeen and has been Godefroi's wife for two years, during which she has had to put up with constant beatings and brutal sex. She has borne him no children so far, and she is afraid that before too long this will be her death sentence (she is probably right about this).

When/if the adventurers come to Castle Inodin, either as guests or as prisoners, one of the characters, the one with the highest Charisma, catches Mathilde's attention; a fact which any character with a successful Insight roll notices.

If the adventurers come as guests, Mathilde tries to strike up a friendship (if not more) with that particular character (male or female); she'll also use her not inconsiderable charisma and means of persuasion to get the character to help her to flee the castle. She shows the character bruises and other signs of the brutality she has to suffer, and relates the fate of the Chevalier's three other wives, who all died under mysterious circumstances after failing to produce a heir for Inodin. Additionally, she makes it clear that she can provide the characters with additional information on Hauterre's troops and plans (she has witnessed discussions between Hauterre and her husband).

Finally, she also proposes to lead the characters to the location of Hauterre's secret weapon, i.e. the wyvern. She knows where it is hidden, and that it is Melwas who control it. She does not reveal the location to the characters, instead she proposes to lead them there if they get her out of the castle and to safety.

If the adventurers are led to Castle Inodin as prisoners, Mathilde is the gamemaster's resort to get the adventurers out of the dungeon. She hopes that in freeing the prisoners, she can persuade the group to take her along and set her free. As a reward, she leads the adventurers to the location of the wyrm, and provides the essential clue that it is Melwas who is controlling the monster - meaning that if Melwas is killed, then Hauterre loses control over his secret weapon.

## Mathilde d'Inodin

STR 10 CON 11 SIZ 10 INT 16  
POW 14 DEX 13 APP 18 EDU 14

Hit Points: 11

Damage Bonus: +0

Attacks: Dagger 30% damage d3+db

Armor: none

Skills: Etiquette 60%, Language (French) 60%, Insight 57%, Knowledge (Region) 30%, Literacy French 40%, Persuade 64%, Ride 45%, Status 55%.

Traits: aggressive 20%, brave 75%, communicative 70%, honest 70%, inquisitive 90%, suspicious 50%.

## Melwas, the Master of Worms

Melwas is a man with a striking appearance, to say the least. He is tall and of broad build, is clean-shaven and crops his hair very short. He has dark hair and tanned skin which make him look like a man from the Levant, but he claims to come from Wales (the Country of the Gauls, as Wales is known in the French language). He speaks both French and German with a heavy accent.

He wears light armor only and carries a long slender sword which he calls by a name which none of the locals understand.

He carries himself like a man of authority and indeed does order the soldiers around, despite not being a fighting man. Since Melwas is Hauterre's man, they treat him with fear and respect, but they clearly do not like having him in their midst. They call Melwas the 'Worm Master', for the one skill that has landed him here in this barbarian backwoods part of the world: he can control wyverns and other similar mystical beasts.

Melwas is a Nephilim, a descendant of an Egyptian clan that came to the British Isles at the height of the Roman occupation and has remained there ever since. Melwas has but recently joined the services of the Count of Vaguerre (c.f. *Villains* chapter in the Gamemaster Section). Vaguerre, in trying to raise the stakes of the war that is about to begin, has had the Baron de Beaufort suggest the services of Melwas to the Count de Hauterre; who, upon wit-

nessing what Melwas can do with a wyrm, hired him on the spot.

Neither the Count de Hauterre nor Inodin know about Melwas' connection to the Count de Vaguerre, nor are they aware of his Nephilim background. For them he is a sly and secretive sorcerer who can sing to the monsters, and it is best to stay away from him.

Melwas uses his psychic abilities to control the wyvern. Additionally, he uses sorcery to summon the beasts, and also to see through their eyes when he sends them on his errands. He uses ancient songs to channel his powers.

## Melwas

STR 14 CON 18 SIZ 18 INT 15  
POW 19 DEX 18 APP 17 EDU 19

Hit Points: 18

Damage Bonus: +d4

Attacks: Long Sword 65% damage 1D8+db

Armor: 2 point leather

Skills: Command 70%, Dodge 75%, Knowledge (multiple) 65%, Language (French) 60%, Language (German) 45%, Language (Ancient Babylonian) 90%, Persuade 65%, Ride 70%, Spot 70%, Track 65%, Status 50%, Stealth 65%

Psychic abilities: Empathy 55%, Mind Control 65%, Telepathy 50%.

Sorcery spells: Summon Wyvern, Ward, Worm Vision (similar to the sorcery spell Bird Vision, the power point cost is 3).

Traits: aggressive 30%, brave 80%, communicative 30%, honest 50%, inquisitive 30%, suspicious 65%, scheming 60%.

## Gabriel the Wyrm

Wyverns are considered the smaller cousins of dragons. While being reptilian like the dragons, they are much smaller (the size of a large horse), with two (instead of four) bird-like legs, and wings that have claws at their tips. Unlike dragons, they do not breath fire. Their long tail is equipped with a venomous sting. On their forehead they have a shiny prominent protuberance that is widely believed to be a ruby.

Melwas sought out a group of wyvern deep in the Black Heart and using his psychic powers he has brought one of the beasts under his control. Most of the time, Melwas has the wyvern resting in a psychically induced daze in a clearing at the foot of Castle Inodin. A small troop of men guards the beast, that is, they make sure that no-one unwarranted comes close to the dozing monster.

The Nephilim has placed a ward around the clearing and is alerted if somebody approaches the wyvern. If this happens, he lets the wyvern wake up, much to the detriment of whoever is brave or foolish enough to get close to the monster.

Wyvern are natural predators who live in groups, hunting animals and the occasional human for food. This particular beast, having been kept on a tight leash for so long by the Nephilim, is full of penned up aggression. If let loose, it is likely to endeavor in a killing spree from which no-one is spared, as long as Melwas does not intervene.

Melwas has nicknamed the wyvern Gabriel, its true name is not known.

### **Gabriel the Wyvern**

STR 30 CON 20 SIZ 36 INT 8

POW 14 DEX 18

Hit Points: 28

Damage Bonus: +3d6

Move: 13 (flying)

Armor: 8 point thick skin

Attacks: 1 x Bite 65% damage 3d6 +db, 2 x Claws 55% damage 1D6+db, Poison Sting Tail 65% damage 1D6+db + poison POT 14

Skills: Dodge 55%, Fly 100%, Sense 70%, Spot 60%, Track 55%

Traits: aggressive: 70%, brave 60%, curious 80%.

### **Augustin, a Zealous Monk**

Augustin is a zealot of a monk, one who has spent thirty years trying to bring the gospel to the most backward of villages in this great forest. Recently he has come to the conclusion that his life's work isn't going anywhere, and that it will take a sterner reign than that of the Countess Sybill to purge the land of the last vestiges of paganism.

Which is why he threw in his lot with the Bishop-Prince of Liège. Through the intermediaries of Father Aramé de Saint Desmere (c.f. the **Personalities** chapter), he has come into contact with the Count de Hauterre to whom he has pledged his services as a spy, and if needed, saboteur. As someone who knows this area of the woods like no other, he has managed to get himself on the mission to the Monastery of Saint Clarissa. Having witnessed the preparations that the forces of Sainsprit and Rocmort are undertaking, he not only plans to betray the adventurers' espionage plans to Hauterre or Inodin, but also to provide a tally of the forces gathered on the other side of the Froideau.

Augustin is a thin, wiry man in his middle years, he is strong and fast; and having been a man-at-arms in his youth, he can hold his own in a brawl. He is likely to quote the bible for all sorts of reasons, but mostly to get out of providing clear answers or statements. He comes across as cynical and disillusioned with his long life as a missionary.

### **Brother Augustin**

STR 12 CON 14 SIZ 10 INT 12

POW 13 DEX 17 APP 9 EDU 12

Hit Points: 12

Damage Bonus: +0

Attacks: Dagger 55% damage 1D4+db (impaling)

Armor: none

Skills: Art (Bible Illustrations) 25%, Brawl 60%, Spot 65%, Knowledge (Val-du-Loup) 70%, Knowledge (Religion) 70%, Language (French) 65%, Knowledge (German) 45%, Literacy Latin 60%, Navigate 55%, Persuade 55%, Ride 45%, Stealth 60%.

Traits: aggressive 45%, brave 60%, communicative 60%, honest 55%, inquisitive 60%, suspicious 40%, stubborn 80.

### **Brother Karl, a Doomed Monk**

Brother Karl is an older, gentler monk who loves the outdoors and cherishes any possibility to get out of the confines of the monastery. He is less of a zealot than Augustin, and old age has not rendered him cynical; instead he displays a fatherly attitude towards the adventurers. Like Augustin, he knows the area as he grew up here. His mother used to be a

maid at Castle Inodin, and his father was the previous lord of the castle (not related to Inodin). At times he appears a bit strange in the head as he claims to hear the voices of the dead and to hold conversations with them. His great fear in life is to end up in limbo after death in the same manner as the many restless souls that he communicates with.

Karl sleeps lightly, and so, unfortunately for him, he observes Augustin trying to sneak out of the camp one night. Augustin notices this and kills his fellow monk by stabbing him repeatedly.

Option: after Karl's death, the Gamemaster may decide to use the ghost of Karl to warn the adventurers of impending doom.

### Brother Karl

STR 12 CON 11 SIZ 10 INT 14

POW 11 DEX 14 APP 11 EDU 16

Hit Points: 11

Damage Bonus: +0

Attacks: Fist 45%, damage 1D3+db (crushing)

Armor: -

Skills: Art (Calligraphy) 45%, Brawl 45%, Spot 65%, Knowledge (Religion) 45%, Knowledge (Val-du-Loup region) 80%, Language (French) 55%, Knowledge (German) 80%, Literacy Latin 80%, Navigate 60%, Ride 55%, Sense 65%.

Traits: aggressive 20%, brave 90%, communicative 30%, honest 80%, inquisitive 10%, suspicious 20%, stubborn 40%.

### Father Edgar, a Survivor in the Village

Father Edgar is an old soldier who became a priest, now living out his life in the village of Legure. If the adventurers search the village they come across the gravely wounded man in the church. He is the only one left in the village, and he tells the tale of how du Loq and his men came to take away all of their grain and all of their livestock, and how the great flying beast came to slaughter what the soldiers left.

### Father Edgar of Legure

STR 12 CON 11 SIZ 13 INT 14

POW 12 DEX 12 APP 10 EDU 13

Hit Points: normally 12, reduced to 2 when discovered by the adventurers.

Traits: aggressive 10%, brave 80%, communicative 80%, honest 90%, inquisitive 50%, suspicious 40%.

### Supporting Cast

#### Men-at-Arms

STR 15 CON 14 SIZ 14 INT 11

POW 11 DEX 14 APP 11 EDU 9

Hit Points: 14

Damage Bonus: +d4

Armor: 6 point chain mail shirt +1 point light helmet

Attacks: Spear 70 damage 1D6+1+db (Impaling), Shield (Buckler) 55% damage 1D2+db (knockback), Bow 55% damage 1D8+1/2db

Skills: Dodge 50%, Listen 55%, Ride 80%, Spot 55%, Stealth 45%, Track 60%.

#### Serjeants

Use the same characteristics as for the men-at-arms, but apply the following skills:

Attacks: Long Sword 70 damage 1D8+db (Bleeding), Shield (Buckler) 65% damage 1D2+db (knockback)

Skills: Command 75%, Dodge 50%, Listen 65%, Ride 70% (55% after adjustment for the chain mail shirt), Sense 55%, Spot 55%, Stealth 45%, Track 60%.

#### Knights

STR 15 CON 15 SIZ 15 INT 11

POW 12 DEX 15 APP 14 EDU 14

Hit Points: 15

Damage Bonus: +d4

Armor: 7 point chain mail +2 heavy helmet



Attacks: Long Sword 75 damage 1D8+db (bleeding), Kite Shield 65% damage 1D4+db (knockback); Lance 75% damage 1D8+1+ horse's db (usually 2d6; impaling)

Skills: Command 45%, Dodge 50%, Etiquette 35% (Dark Age) / 65% (High Middle Age), Language (own) 60%, Language (other) 35%, Listen 45%, Literacy (French and Latin) 45%, Ride 75% (55% after adjustment for the chain mail armor), Spot 45%, Status 50% (Dark Age) / 60% (High Middle Age), Strategy 30%.

## Special Guests

Check the **Personalities** and **Villains** chapters for more information on the following characters:

- ❖ Count Philippe de Hauterre
- ❖ Venerius, Abbot of Eonach
- ❖ High Constable Roger de Padin
- ❖ The Baron and Baroness de Beaufort
- ❖ Agnes, Mother Superior of Saint Clarissa

# LOCATIONS

## The Bridge

Castle Gardeloup guards the eastern side of the bridge, but the western side is under Inodin's control. A tollgate has been erected; in peace times passing merchants have to pay a toll to cross back and forth. Now the toll gate is deserted. A squadron of Hauterre's light cavalry has taken up position on a nearby hilltop from where they can keep an eye on the bridge. If enemy troops were to proceed across the bridge, the fastest of the riders would be dispatched to inform the Count de Hauterre. If civilians, like the adventurers, are passing, a small group of riders is sent to intercept them on or shortly after the bridge. If the adventurers ride fast, they are likely to pass across the bridge before being intercepted, but the sergeants will pursue them. This will fuel their suspicion of the PCs.

If intercepted, the adventurers can attempt to persuade the guards to let them pass - see the section *Patrols*, under **Obstacles**, below.

The group can also try to sneak their way across - they have some cover behind the railing, and further on behind the trees (use their Sneak skill against the guards' Spot roll. Adjust accordingly if they sneak over at night, or if they try to take their horses with them). Being caught sneaking across will have the same results as being caught spying - see the appropriate section under **Obstacles** below.

## The River Froideau

The adventurers may try to brave the swollen river instead of taking the bridge. They need to pass two successful Swim rolls in a row (or roll one special result) in order to make it across safely. If a Swim roll fails, re-roll. Starting with the third missed roll, start making a Condition check for every missed Swim roll - if a Condition roll fails, the character is too weak to continue and begins to drown (check the spot rules for drowning in the BRP manual). If the Condition roll succeeds, continue rolling for the Swim skill.

Modifiers for armor and weapon encumbrance should be taken into account for both the Swim and the Condition rolls.

If horses are taken along, the animals need to make the same rolls.

Hopefully, the adventurers remember to wrap their precious right of bill (and later the bible) into waterproof oil-cloth before jumping into the floods...

## The Enemy Camp

The main camp of Hauterre's army is located off the trail leading to the monastery. De Padin's instructions as to its whereabouts were necessarily vague ("northeast of the monastery"), but once the adventurers reach the place where the trail branches off from the main road, they cannot fail to notice the tracks where a good many riders widened the path by trampling the undergrowth and bushes. Following this trail, they eventually come to the point where the broad, deep tracks left by the army branch off in a northerly direction, while the old trail continues due west.

The army's tracks lead them directly to the camp. Eventually they can see smoke from the camp fires (Spot roll) and from that point on they can use their Navigate skill to help them find their way through

the woods, rather than follow the heavily patrolled path.

If they follow the trail, chances are high that they encounter patrols - check the Patrols Encounter Table in the scenario appendix for more details.

They can see or hear a patrol approaching if they succeed their Spot or Listen rolls, but likewise, they can be seen or heard if they are on horse back. If they are on foot, they can attempt to hide before the soldiers are upon them.

If intercepted in the vicinity of the camp, they will be seen as spies and will need the greatest skill to talk their way out of it (see *Caught Spying*, under **Obstacles**, below). They can always try to fight their way out of it, however, they need to consider their two non-armed companions, the monks.

The enemy camp is very large - almost a thousand men are camped here: eight hundred fighters - foot soldiers, archers, knights and their squires; together with an impressive number of camp followers. In all, Hauterre has managed to assemble the forces of four more Counts and three abbots, who brought some forty barons and almost a hundred knights in their service. Their flags are flying above the camp and can be counted by the adventurers if they get close enough. From this number (or better yet, from the identity of the coat-of-arms), de Padin can estimate the size of the enemy army. To identify the assembled noblemen by their coat of arms requires a Knowledge (Heraldry) or a *difficult* general Knowledge roll.

This army vastly outnumbers the combined Sainsprit/Rocmort troops. Between them, the Count and Countess have mobilized less than sixty knights. Including the light cavalry and the foot soldiers, their troops number five hundred men at best.

If the adventurers manage to report their findings back to de Padin, he can convince Countess Sybill to commandeer the Count of Vaguerre to join their effort, and also to seek the alliance of the Count of Clèves; in which case the numbers of the two armies are about equal.

## The Field of Carnage

Traveling east of the hamlet of Legure, the adventurers pass close to the community's pastures. Alerted by circling flocks of ravens, the adventurers may decide to investigate. What they find is a

meadow littered with the torn carcasses of sheep, goats and a few milk cows. On the edge of the woods they also find the remains of a handful of townspeople, all of them stabbed to death by swords or spears.

If the adventurers visit the village, they find it deserted. Investigation of the dwellings suggest that people have departed in a hurry (Idea roll). Shouts from the small wooden church alert them to the presence of the sole occupant left in the town, the village priest, Father Edgar. He is badly wounded, having received a nasty sword wound. He is dazed and barely conscious, but if the adventurers can provide First Aid, he is able to talk. Here's what he says to say:

*"Late last afternoon we heard a commotion from the pastures. A group of us men went to see what went on... There were soldiers... Inodin's men. They were leading the sheep and goats out of the fields. When we came closer we saw the soldiers cut down the shepherds who tried to intervene. The villagers, unarmed 'though they were, attacked the soldiers with whatever weapons they had brought - mostly clubs and hay forks.... It went all so fast. The soldiers cut the men down, and even when we fled they chased us... as you can see, they didn't even hesitate to strike a priest. The soldiers were all very nervous, on the edge of panic. They quickly herded away about half of the livestock, left the rest on the field, then hurried away like they were running for their lives... I then saw this strange man... tall and dark and dressed as a rich nobleman, but not a fighter. He just stood there and sang, and then the beast came... God, it was terrible to watch... a dragon, I think, a two-legged dragon the size of two bulls... it came swooping down over the trees from the castle, then just dived over the meadow... killing the sheep, tearing them apart, slaughtering them all... and then it settled down to feast on the carcasses before finally flying off again. And the stranger, he just stood there, in the middle of the carnage, just singing, singing to the beast..."*

What Father Edgar witnessed was the wyvern being led out to feed. The men-at-arms confiscated first the majority of the town's livestock as provision for the encamped army; then Melwas called in the wyvern to feed on the remaining animals. In their haste, the soldiers left behind more than they should, and the wyrm, eager to hunt after being penned up

for so long, went into a mad rush and tore apart each remaining sheep and goat it could find.

The priest needs medical help to survive, so the adventurers have to figure out what to do with him. The best solution may be to take him to the nuns.

## Castle Inodin

The adventurers may come to Castle Inodin either as guests or as prisoners (possibly both), depending on whether they have been found out or not when trying to check out the army camp.

Either way, upon arrival they meet the Chevalier d'Inodin, his wife and Captain du Loq. There is a 80% percent chance of Melwas being present, and a 50% chance of the Count de Hauterre being there.

A map of Castle Inodin is provided in the adventure appendix.

### If the adventurers come as guests:

They are questioned about their motives for traveling the land in these uncertain times; the bill of passage provided by the Abbot of Eonach goes a long way of persuading the Count of Hauterre (if present) to let the group continue on its way to Saint Clarissa. If only Inodin is present, they will have to Persuade or Fast Talk him into letting them continue - if the rolls fail, he orders them to return to Sain-sprit, and will send an escort with them; the escort consisting of one sergeant per player character present, plus one knight.

They are invited to stay the night, and if they accept, they are given quarters as befits their status and background.

If Melwas is present, he uses his psychic abilities to learn the truth about the adventurers, but keeps what he finds out for himself. His employers are not aware of his mind reading abilities and he does not want to give himself away. Instead, he has the wvern shadow the player characters and alerts Inodin when/if the players make their attempt to approach the enemy camp.

### If the adventurers come as prisoners:

If caught spying, or betrayed by Brother Augustin, the player characters face the full cruelty of both Inodin and du Loq.

They are thrown into the dungeon (located under the keep), each into their own cell. All cells are adjacent to each other. They are damp, dark holes in the wall, with nothing but a thin layer of straw covering the stone floor, and lacking even such a basic amenity as a pail. The doors are made of sturdy wood, impossible to break down using bare hands, and barred by a thick, padlocked wooden bar on the outside.

The player characters are brought individually before Inodin and du Loq in order to be interrogated. The techniques that the two men use are not exactly subtle: they start by beating up the characters, proceeding then to cutting off fingers of the right hand; or worse still, depending on the game-master's mood (although less is probably more).

To simulate the characters' resistance to torture, for each round of 'interrogation', make a CON roll, starting at CONx5. Each time a roll fails, make a WILL roll, also starting at WILLx5. If the WILL roll fails, the character breaks down and confesses to what they are on about. From that point on, the characters are simply thrown into the dungeon cell without food or water and left there to die.

If the WILL roll succeeds, the next rounds of interrogations begin; CON and WILL rolls are now made using a multiplier of 4, then of 3 etc. down to 1. However, after three hours the prisoners are taken back to their cell, which gives them a chance to recuperate, so that for the next interrogation sessions, the multiplier increases again by 1.

Each "round" of interrogation leads to a loss of 2d4 hit points. If enough hit points are lost, the character falls unconscious, and may even end up dead.

For characters wishing to escape, the following possibilities exist:

- ❖ Once a day the cell door is briefly opened and a wooden jar of water is placed inside the cell. There are only two armed guards doing this, so a strong, agile character may have a chance of overpowering them. The keys to the cells can be found on one of the men.
- ❖ When the prisoners are escorted to the interrogation room, there are three armed and armored men guarding each prisoner. Again, a powerful character may manage to overpower them.

- ❖ Inodin's young wife, Mathilde, decides to help the prisoners escape. She is present when the prisoners are first brought in, and one of the characters (the one with the highest Charisma) has caught her eye - a fact which the character (or any other PC) notices with a successful Insight roll. If the character gives some sign of recognizing Mathilde's attention, she will set him or her free. She waits for a moment until there are no guards in the dungeon (which will be at night time), get the keys and open the cell of the prisoner. At this point, she only wants to flee her husband and will beg the freed characters to take her along, which they may or may not do - but in the latter case, she will raise the alarm herself.

The flight from the castle takes luck and skill: use Luck rolls to get out of the dungeon undetected; and Stealth rolls (which are *easy* if the escape takes place at night) to get across the court yard undetected. If Mathilde leads the adventurers, she shows them a back door (located between the keep and the barracks, item 8 on the map) through which they can exit the castle (alternatively, a Spot roll leads the escapees to the door as well). That door is guarded by two or more guards which need to be overpowered. After exiting the door, the characters must make a successful Climb roll (adjusted accordingly for armor encumbrance, bad weather and night time) to safely climb down the steep rocks to a path below the castle.

Getting out by the main gates is trickier: three or more men are guarding each gate from the top of the ramparts, so they are more likely to notice the approaching prisoners (+25% on their Spot roll if using a Spot vs. Stealth roll, although the adventurers' Stealth roll is *easy* if the action place at night). Additionally, the outer gates need to be opened (at night, both the outer and inner gate), which may be heard by other men-at-arms: a failed Luck roll has 2d6 more guards come running after 2d4 rounds.

## The Monastery of Saint Clarissa

The nunnery is not overly large - home to some forty nuns - but quite prosperous, being the owner of a generous amount of land rented out to peasants and serfs. The nuns have gained a reputation for being skilled restorers of miniature decorations in

bibles and on ornaments, and in the process they've built up quite a collection of holy books and other old valuable religious items, including some dating back to the Roman times.

The monastery follows the typical layout: a Church, which is open to the public; and the monastery itself, closed to all but the sisters, comprising dormitories, refectory, kitchens and a scriptorium, arranged around a large, carefully tended yard. Behind the buildings, but enclosed within the monastery walls, lie a herb and vegetable garden tended by the nuns themselves.

Men are not allowed in the monastery - only male clergy may enter as far as the rectory - the remainder of the monastery is off limits to them as well. Female characters are taken to the scriptorium and the gardens, if they care to see it. The scriptorium is where the bibles are kept, including the one that the group is supposed to retrieve. A vault underneath the scriptorium contains the valuables collected by the nuns over time.

If the adventurers arrive on day 3, they encounter the nuns getting ready to leave; anytime later than the evening of day 3, they find the nuns gone and the monastery barred; the heavy entrance door securely fastened. The precious bible is with the nuns.

# OBSTACLES

## Patrols

Right behind the bridge, or at any time on the road to the monastery, the group may encounter a troop of men-at-arms. Use the **Patrol Encounter Table** in the scenario appendix to determine the group's chances of meeting an enemy patrol.

Even if the adventurers show the right of passage signed by the Abbot of Eonach, they must make a Persuade roll (or any other appropriate Communication skill roll) to be able to continue. If the roll is failed, they are ordered to return across the bridge; if it is fumbled, they are arrested. A narrow success means the adventurers can continue, but they are being shadowed by a few enemy soldiers.

A patrol always includes as many men-at-arms as there are adventurers (not including the two non-

combatant monks), 2d4 serjeants and 1D3-1 knights. The knights will not take part in a pursuit across the woods as their heavy armor is not suited for that kind of a chase.

There is a 10% chance of Inodin being with the patrol.

If no knight is with the patrol, it takes a Luck roll for one of the serjeants to be literate. If there isn't anyone who knows how to read, Persuade rolls are at -25%. If the rolls fail, the adventurers are taken to Castle Inodin, not as prisoners but as guests. See the entry on Castle Inodin below for further details.

Obviously, such a situation can also be role-played rather than rolled for.

## Natural Obstacles

The heavy rain falls of the last several weeks causes major obstructions for traveling off the main trail. Small roads and paths are likely to be obstructed by mud slides and fallen trees, and walking cross country means crossing bogs and dense underbrush and navigating steep, slippery hillsides.

On small roads, there is a 50% chance twice per day to come across mudslides where the road is either covered in earth and fallen trees, or has been washed down the hillside. These obstacles must be crossed using Climb and/or Jump rolls.

In the woods, there is a 80% chance per day to walk into bogs (Spot roll to see the swamp, 1D4 successful Jump rolls to make it across) or to have to climb treacherously wet hillsides (two successful Climb rolls in a row to make it).

Additionally, successful Navigate rolls twice per day are required to find the targeted location by crossing the woods off the major roads.

## Caught Spying

If/when the adventurers leave the road to the monastery to approach either the army camp or Inodin castle, there is a good chance of meeting a patrol of enemy soldiers (a failed Luck roll every 2 hours or so: see the Patrol Encounters table at the end of the scenario). If they are intercepted, they will find it difficult to talk their way out of the situation; the right of bill will not help them much. Any attempts at persuasion are *difficult*, and if the rolls

fail, the men-at-arms will attempt to arrest the adventurers and lead the prisoners to Castle Inodin.

## Escape

If the adventurers have been discovered spying, or have otherwise antagonized Inodin and/or his men, they may find themselves in a situation where they have to make an escape back to Sainsprit territory.

The player characters will have to decide whether to stick to the roads where progress is faster but where the chances of being discovered are higher, or stick to the woods where progress is slow and dangerous, but where they enjoy a relative safety from pursuing soldiers.

Eventually, Inodin orders Melwas to have the wyvern seek out the adventurers. If the group sticks to the forest, the flying beast will not be able to attack them, but it will do so if they make it across open country or travel on a road. In any case, the wyvern gives away the adventurers' position, and Inodin's men are able to follow them. To escape the wyvern's attention, they need a successful *difficult* Stealth roll vs. the monster's Spot skill; or they may choose to travel at night, with all the dangers this entails. If they choose to do so, have the character with the lowest Will score roll for Luck every twelve hours: if a roll fails, the wyvern has again detected their presence.

# EVENTS

## A Tale of Two Monks

The two monks in the adventurers' party are not the best of friends, to say the least. Karl is often taken aback at Augustin's zeal, and the rage which he displays against everything and everyone he deems un-Christian. Augustin, on the other hand, despises Karl's lax attitude towards Christian doctrine and their mission to convert.

Augustin believes that the salvation of the people in Val-du-Loup lies with the Prince-Bishop of Liège. The very fact that a woman is in charge of the County is, for him, a sign of things going very wrong. He fears a woman in power leaves too many

simple minds questioning the Church authorities and their dogmas.

With the battle so near, Augustin has lost all sense of perspective: in order to bring about what he perceives as salvation, he is willing to do anything.

Thus, when he deems the moment is right, he abandons the group and makes his way towards Inodin in order to present him with his tally of the troops assembled by the Count of Sainsprit. In the process, he has no qualms about committing murder as well as treason.

Right from the first night on, the two monks volunteer to take their turns at guard duty (provided the adventurers deem it necessary to keep watch at night). The player characters may try to convince the monks otherwise, but they will have to try hard to persuade a very stubborn Augustin (Persuade or Fast Talk vs. the monk's Stubborn trait of 80%). Karl is easier to persuade (Stubborn 40%).

One night, preferably when the adventurers are in somewhat close proximity to either Castle Inodin or Hauterre's army camp, Augustin tries to make good his escape. He waits for a propitious moment, preferably when he's supposed to stand guard, to grab his few belongings (including his horse if the group brought some) and as quietly as possible steal away from the camp. As a final act, he stabs Brother Karl's to death before disappearing into the night, either because Karl caught him sneaking off, or simply out of sheer malice.

Supposing that this incident happens when all the other characters are asleep, Augustin's escape succeeds, and the player characters wake up to find Karl dead and Augustin missing.

Should the player characters keep watch all night, things are a bit trickier, but Augustin will still try to escape, even if it means leaving his belongings behind, and not killing Karl. He will either try to sneak out of the camp (Stealth roll vs. the player character's Spot skill; if no fire is lit at night, the Spot roll is *difficult*).

If the adventurers catch the monk as he tries to escape, they may question him and get him to reveal his schemes.

If Augustin escapes, the player characters are faced with a choice: they can decide to follow him or to continue with their missions.

If Augustin reaches Castle Inodin or the army camp, or meets one of Inodin's patrols, he not only provides the enemy with the number of troops that the Count of Sainsprit could muster, but he also gives away the player characters' mission and location. This triggers Inodin to launch a manhunt for the adventurers, if necessary involving the wyvern, giving the order that the spies are to be brought in dead or alive.

If the player characters decide to follow Augustin, they can track him across the woods. Provided they move fast and make two successful Track rolls in a row (and the gamemaster makes one failed Luck roll for Augustin), they can catch up with him before he makes contact with the enemy.

If the track rolls succeed but Augustin gets lucky, the adventurers get to observe how Augustin approaches Inodin (or one of his patrols) and is then led away (but not as a prisoner). Again, the usual Stealth rolls are required to sneak up on the meeting undetected.

## The Final Confrontation

If the adventurers are lucky and skilled, they may get away with obtaining their goals without being found out. If they do, they should nevertheless face a final confrontation with Inodin and his men on the banks of the river Froideau. As they prepare to cross the Froideau back to the Sainsprit side, Inodin and his men come upon them. Inodin shoots first then asks questions, so the adventurers have a choice of running, fighting or talking.

Inodin and du Loq (or, if they are dead, Hauterre) and a troop of men-at-arms large enough to give the adventurers a good fight will corner them at the bridge, or wherever they are making their way back across the treacherous waters. Inodin has brought archers who try to take out the adventurers before the melee begins.

The bridge and the fallen trees on the bank and in the water provide some cover from the archers. Hand to hand combat is made difficult by the slippery ground and the fast flowing water. To simulate this, all characters should use the lowest of their Agility and Attack scores when fighting on the slippery slope by the river. Failed rolls mean the character end up in the river and may even risk drowning, especially if wearing heavy armor (see the appropriate Spot Rules in the BRP manual).



It is the gamemaster's choice whether or not to use the wyvern in this climatic scene, depending on the skill levels and number of characters in play. There is a rationale for not using the wyvern at this point: Inodin does not want to risk the enemy troops finding out about their secret weapon too soon, so he refrains from using the beast in close proximity to the border.

Obviously, if the wyvern intervenes, the adventurers' best bet is to kill or incapacitate Melwas rather than the wyvern, thus freeing the beast from its service.

## ENDINGS

Of the three goals that the adventurers have been charged with in this quest, certainly the most important one is getting an account on Hauterre's forces back to de Padin, and this in due time. If the Countess wants to get reinforcements from Vaguerre and Clève, she needs to act quickly. Thus, the PCs should not take more than five days for their endeavor.

The importance of this goal may even lead the adventurers to abandon the other two targets. It is possible for them to go back into Inodin territory later and retrieve either the precious bible, or deal with the wyvern or its master, Melwas. In that case, the enemy forces will be on increased alert and it will be a heck of a lot more dangerous to sneak around the countryside.

If the group brings back an account on the approximate strength of Hauterre's troops, the gamemaster may consider sending them on a follow-up adventure to Castle Clève, where they are to convince the Count to join the forces of Rocmort and Sainsprit. This quest is outlined in the next adventure, **A Sway of Hearts**.

## The Battle

Hauterre will march his army against Sainsprit as soon as the floods recede and the horses can cross the river; which is about two weeks after the start of the adventure. He has chosen a ford south of the chapel of Saint John-in-the-Woods where the river is shallow enough to allow the troops to cross swiftly.

Sainsprit's troops will be waiting on the other side of the ford.

The Count de Hauterre also plans to use the wyvern in his attack. Having the wyvern attack the enemy troops from behind, he hopes to rout the footmen before the battle properly begins; so taking out the wyvern, or Melwas, will be a decisive factor in the battle. At the very least, de Padin should learn about the monster so that he can take his precautions (i.e. place archers at the back with the order to take down the beast).

As the battle begins, Hauterre attacks first, thereby giving a tactical advantage to the combined Rocmort and Sainsprit troops, as the river crossing slows down Hauterre's riders and makes it impossible for the knights to advance in a proper, effective line of attack.

If Vaguerre and Clève have joined Sainsprit's army, then this advantage will decide the battle in their favor. If Sainsprit and Rocmort are pitted alone against Hauterre and his allies, then they will be so vastly outnumbered as to lose the battle. Hauterre will subsequently occupy the Froideau valley and use it as a base of further incursions into Sainsprit lands and into the coveted Herbenoir valley.

## Rewards and Retributions

The adventurers' success in this scenario has a direct bearing on the future of the valley. Thus, they may end up as heroes (and vastly increase their Status), or end up as the fools who lost the Froideau valley.

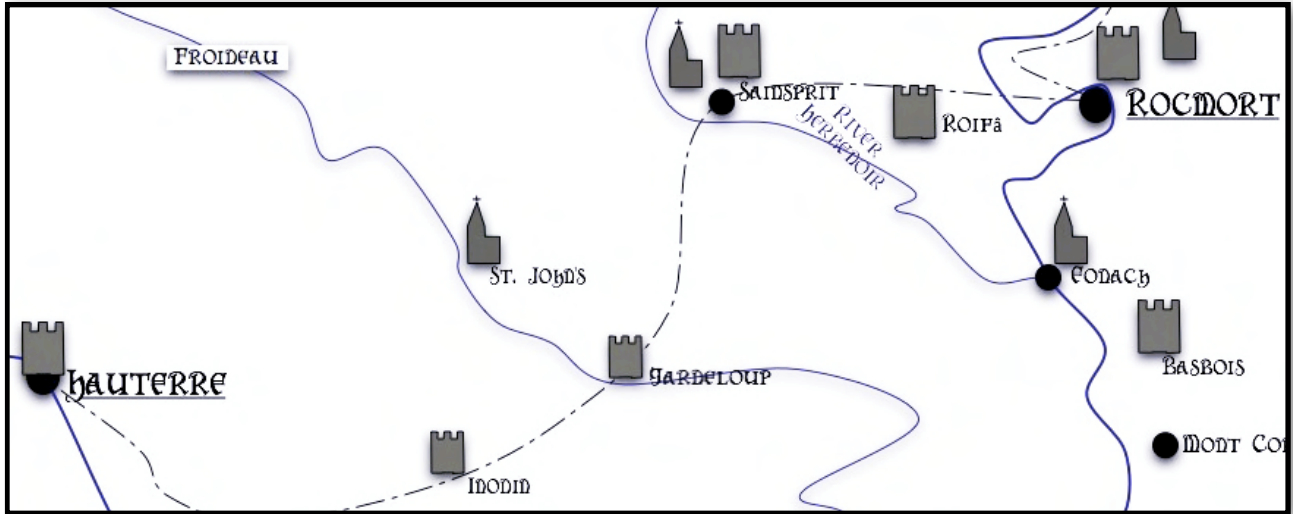
To simulate a gain in Status, make an experience check on the Status skill and add +d10 points if successful. See the table in the **Character Creation** chapter to determine if the Wealth rating also increases.

If they also rescue the bible, Eonach Abbey will pay them enough money to bolster their armor and weapons. If they do not come back with the precious book, they will probably never work for the monks again.

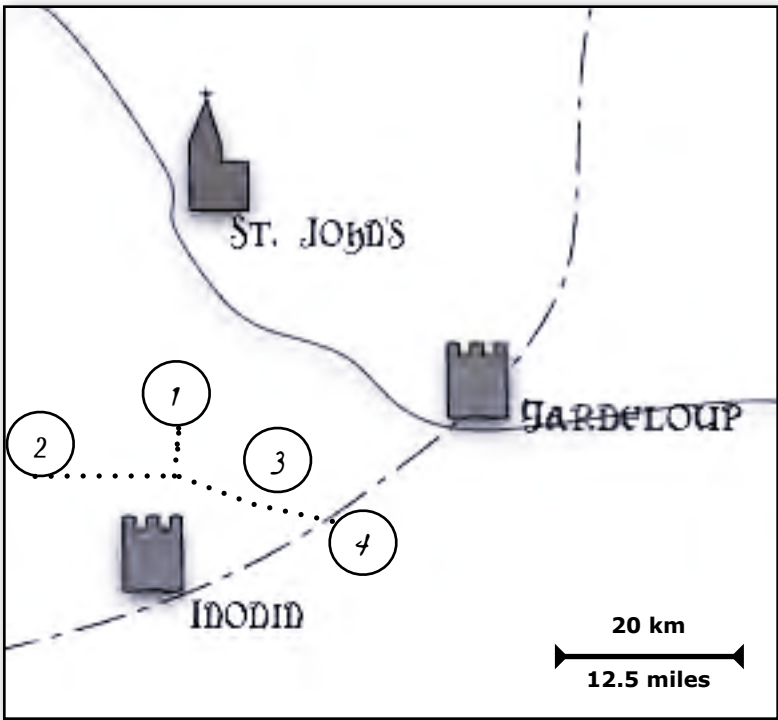


# SCENARIO MAPS

## Froideau Valley Map



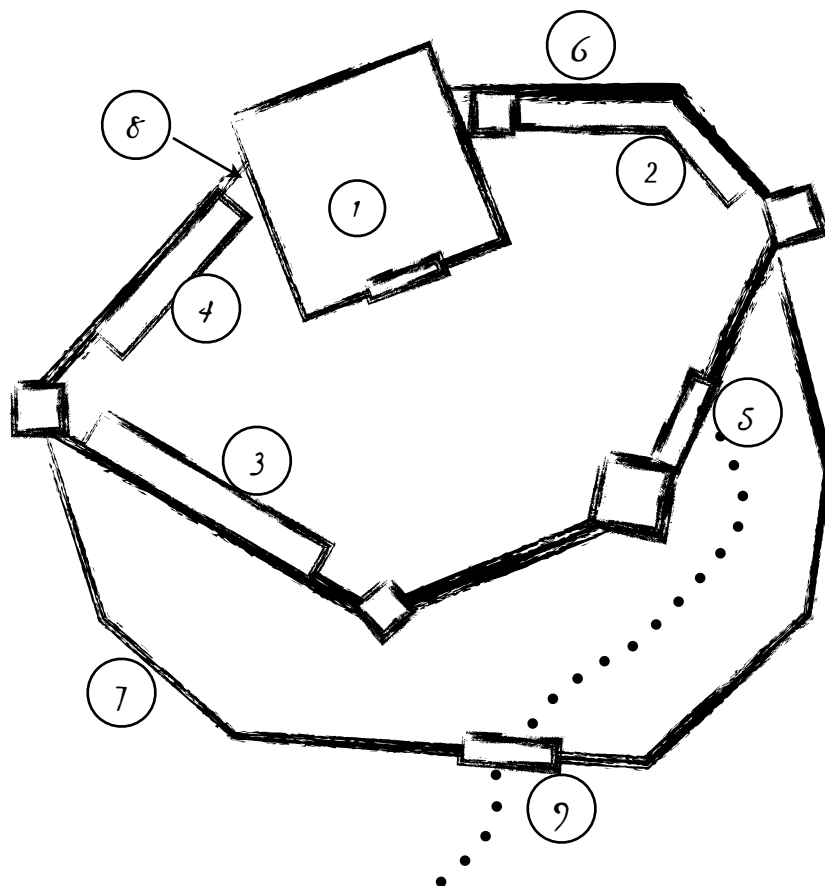
## Scenario Locations Map



- Legend:**
- (1) Army Camp
  - (2) Monastery of St. Clair
  - (3) Town of Legure
  - (4) "halfway point"

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## Castle Inodin Map



### Legend:

- 1 - Keep
- 2 - Servants' Quarters & other facilities
- 3 Stables
- 4 Barracks
- 5 Barbican / Inner Gate
- 6 Inner Ring Wall
- 7 Outer Curtain Wall
- 8 Back Exit
- 9 Outer Gate

## Patrol Encounter Table

Have alternating player characters roll for Luck. If the roll listed in the table fails, then an encounter takes place.

	<b>Day Time</b>	<b>Night Time</b>
<b>Road</b>	<i>Normal</i> Luck roll every 6h	<i>Normal</i> Luck roll once per night
<b>Trail</b>	<i>Easy</i> Luck roll every 6h	<i>Easy</i> Luck roll once per night
<b>Trail Near Camp</b>	<i>Difficult</i> Luck roll every 6h; 1 encounter minimum.	<i>Difficult</i> Luck once per night
<b>Woods Near Camp</b>	<i>Difficult</i> Luck roll every 6h	<i>Normal</i> Luck roll once per night
<b>Other Woods</b>	<i>Easy</i> Luck roll every 12h	Roll 95 or below once per night

If the adventurers are actively pursued, divide the chances listed in the table in half.

If the adventurers are in close proximity to the castle or the enemy camp (less than 3 miles or 5 km), divide the time intervals by 3 (e.g. make a roll every 2 hours during the day time, or 3 rolls per night).

Make Spot vs. Spot (or Listen vs. Listen) rolls to see who notices who first; if the PCs are sneaking, use a Stealth vs. Spot roll (adjust for visibility if the encounter takes place in the woods or at night).

# ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

## SCENARIO III: A SWAY OF HEARTS

**Premise:** In anticipation of the battle against the armies of the Count de Hauterre, the Count of Sainsprit sends the adventurers as envoys to the Count of Clève to convince him to join the Sainsprit and Rocmort forces in their fight. As a sign of good will, the Count of Sainsprit entrusts them with his daughter Émerault, whom he intends to betroth to one of de Clèves' twin sons - whoever is supposed to inherit Clève. The adventurers must make speed, avoid the troops sent by Hauterre to intercept the adventurers, and deal with the mood and temper of a fourteen year old who does not want to marry.

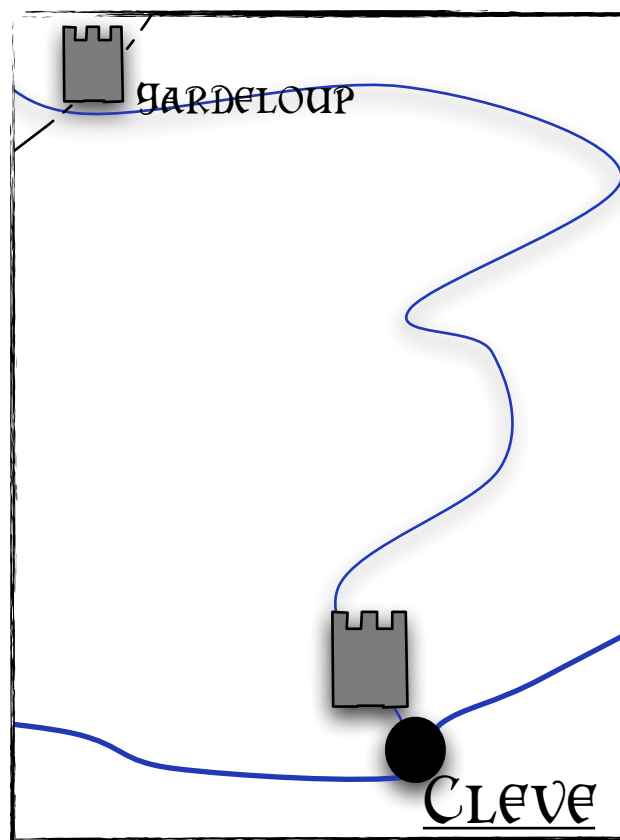
**Time:** the attack by the Count of Hauterre not being far off, time is an important element in the successful resolution of this adventure. In all, the PCs should have persuaded the Clèves to join the battle at the end of the fourth day.

**The Road Ahead:** The easiest road from Gardeloup, where the last adventure ended, is down a narrow, twisting path along the Froideau. The stream flows into the Loup river in the town of Clève at the foot of the castle. Riding is possible, but the riders should be somewhat experienced (30% or higher). The journey to Clève takes two days under normal circumstances. A more direct path leads straight through Inodin territory, but it means crossing the still-swollen river and navigating through the woods.

**Complications:** The path this close to the river brings them into range of Inodin's archers who are laying in wait at a couple of points downstream where the river is narrowest and where high cliffs overshadow the valley on the Inodin side - a perfect vantage spot for archers. Additionally, mounted Ino-

din troops (serjeants led by a knight) have crossed the river and are waiting in ambush. This knight is du Loq if he is still alive after the previous encounters, else a knight of similar capabilities.

The GM may also throw natural obstacles such as landslides and fallen trees in the path of the riders.



**A Mind of Her Own:** Émerault has been taught the value of being a good daughter and doing what her father says, but the fact that she sees herself

as the next ruler of County Sainsprit has led the girl to believe that she has *some* say in whom she gets to marry. Plus, she knows the Clève twins and they are just not her crowd. In short, she does not intend to follow through with this marriage and looks for a way out. She sees her opening when the ambush by Inodin's troops happens. At the first sign of trouble, Émerault, who is actually a formidable rider, veers off eastward into the woods, following a narrow trail that leads her deep into the dark woods. At this point, the adventurers (who may not even notice that she has vanished unless they make successful Spot or Idea roll), must either finish the battle on hand or follow the girl and thus draw the attackers along. Use Ride, Spot, Track and Luck rolls to play out the chase through the woods; one way of resolving the chase, based on the rules from the BRP manual (pp. 216-217) is given in the next paragraph. The GM may also decide that the girl gets away, no matter what the dice say, in order to play out the goat-men incident.

**The Fun is in the Chase:** the BRP rules for staging chases can be used in the following manner: Once Inodin's men engage the adventurers, Émerault escapes. It takes a Spot or Idea roll at -25% to notice that she has ridden off; roll once per round. If one or more PCs notice and get away from the fight, they can pursue her. Each round, roll also for Émerault's Ride skill. Increase Émerault's range for a successful Ride roll on her part, and decrease it for a successful Ride roll on the part of the adventurers [BRP p. 216]. Adjust any Ride rolls for armor encumbrance. If her range exceeds 5, she is out of sight.

Each round lasts 5 minutes.

Once she is out of sight (range 5 or above), the adventurers may still pursue, but now they must make a successful Track roll on top of the Ride check.

Once Émerault's range reaches 10 or above, her trail grows cold: now the PCs must make a *difficult* Track roll to find her trace, and once they miss two rolls in a row, they have lost her track for good. In this part of the chase, a round lasts 30 minutes, and the Ride skill is no longer relevant.

If the PCs catch up with the girl, she's not about to give up. She can be persuaded, or the reins of her horse can be grabbed (Agility roll), or she may even be wrestled from her horse (Grapple), at the danger

of her and the attacker falling and hurting themselves.

**A Pack of Horny Men:** the area where Émerault escapes to is the hunting ground of a tribe of wild goat-men, who are none the happier to see a young girl ride into their clutches. As a bunch of overly excited goat-men give chase, the PCs hopefully catch up with the girl before the creatures have their way with her. If using the Chase rules above, the goat-men intercept her in round 15, unless the adventurers are hot on her heels.

The goat men are on foot and thus less fast than Émerault's horse, but their agility give them the edge, and she cannot shake them. As a last resort, Émerault manages to find refuge in a crevice in a rock that is too narrow for the bulky goat-men to intrude. This happens in round 20.

The goat-me resort to building a fire outside the crevice in the hope of smoking their victim out. Again, time is of the essence: for every Track, Spot or Navigate roll that the PCs must use to find the girl (the smoke from the fire should help, 'though), the GM should make a Stamina roll for Émerault: if it fails, she crawls out from her hiding place and is taken prisoner.

To calculate the time lost through these events, add one hour per battle plus the time spent hunting the girl.

**Clève at Last:** eventually, one hopes, the PCs reach the city of Clève and the castle which towers above it. They should not have any problems gaining an audience with the Count and the Countess. It is up to the most charismatic of adventurers to persuade the Clèves to join in the battle. The Count is rightly fearful for the independence of his County: he hesitates to involve his troops for fear of attracting the wrath of the Bishop-Prince of Liège, and doesn't really trust the Count of Sainsprit nor Countess Sybill. His wife is more sympathetic to the cause, understanding that Clève will be next on Hauterre's list; but she is not one prone to favor military action - she advocates that the Count of Clève acts as a mediator between the rival factions to sort out their differences. The results of the discussions with the Clèves can be role-played out, or rolled for: use the adventurers' Persuade, Fast Talk or Charisma skills. The rolls are *difficult* if somehow Émerault didn't make it to Clève, and *easy* if the next act (see below) is successfully resolved. Failed discussions can be taken up



again the next day, but after three days, the Count calls off the talks.

**Treachery:** the Count of Hauterre manages to infiltrate an assassin into the castle. Traveling in the guise of a wandering preacher, 'Father Ensard', the assassin has called on the Christian charity of the castle's chamberlain to gain access to the castle grounds. The first evening, as the adventurers are treated to a festive meal in the Great Hall, the traveling preacher is invited as well. There are several clues to the true nature of the man: a dagger hidden in the folds of the robe's sleeve (*difficult* Spot), the hesitating and false Latin he uses to say the pre-meal prayer that he is asked to give (Language(Latin) and Idea rolls), his athletic shape (*difficult* Idea), etc. In other worlds, the PCs have a chance to notice that something is wrong before the assassin strikes. He does strike as he finishes his prayer: as he advances towards the Count, who holds out a handful of coins to the presumed priest, the man draws a dagger and attacks. This counts as a surprise attack unless the adventurers notice that something is wrong. The assassin hits with a dagger; if unhindered, his attack is *easy* versus a *difficult* Dodge for the Count.

Even if the adventurers notice, it takes 3 DEX ranks for the PCs to reach the scene of the intended crime and intervene in some way.

The assassin takes one strike at the Count then attempts to flee, using his Jump and Climb skills to make it through a window, onto a rampart and down a sheer cliff to the valley below.

As stated above, if the assassination is foiled, it is now *easy* to persuade the Count to act against Hauterre. If it succeeds, the PCs have one last *difficult* attempt at persuading the Countess; if it fails, they are asked to leave the castle.

**A Happy End?** If all goes well, the PCs manage to persuade the Clèves in time to join the battle and help determine the outcome in favor of the Sainsprit camp. Émerault eventually marries young Rainer but soon after begins a passionate affair with his twin brother, Konrad.

**Statistics:** For Inodin's bunch of bad boys, refer to the previous adventure, *Prelude to War*. Goat-Men are detailed in the **Bestiary** chapter.

For the Count of Clève, use the Knight statistics from the Stock Character section, adjusted for the man's advancing age, and for the Countess' statistics refer to the Noble Lady entry and add a few harmless spells.

## Émerault de Sainsprit

**STR** 9    **CON** 11    **SIZ** 9    **INT** 14  
**POW** 14    **DEX** 12    **APP** 14    **EDU** 14

**Hit Points:** 10

**Damage Bonus:** none

**Attacks:** Light Bow 45% damage 1d6+1+1/2db

**Skills:** Arts (various) 55%, Command 70%, Etiquette 80%, Knowledge (Natural World) 40%, Knowledge (Politics) 50%, Knowledge (Religion) 60%, Literacy (Latin) 45%, Ride 80%, Status 80%.

## The Nameless Assassin

**STR** 14    **CON** 13    **SIZ** 10    **INT** 14  
**POW** 15    **DEX** 17    **APP** 12    **DEX** 14

**Move:** 10

**Hit Points:** 12

**Damage Bonus:** none

**Armor:** none

**Attacks:** Dagger 90% damage 1D4+2+db + poison POT 13.

**Skills:** Climb 80%, Disguise 65%, Dodge 80%, Hide 70%, Jump 70%, Language(Latin) 20%, Listen 65%, Sense 55%, Sleight of Hand 55%, Spot 75%, Stealth 78%, Throw 75%, Track 45%.

# SCENARIO IV: THE LURKER IN THE SHROUDS

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**Set-Up:** The annual horse trade fair is the social event in the city of Rocmort. The fair attracts visitors from far and wide, both low and high born. Minstrels, jugglers and gleemen play to the masses, there are tournaments and jousts for knights and wanna-be knights; contests for wrestlers, archers and troubadours. Of course, there are horses on sale, too; as well as all sorts of crafts that have vaguely to do with horses. The adventurers are visiting the fair, and possibly participating in events, when a commotion arises: an old, seemingly crazed woman has lapsed into a fit of howling, claiming she has seen a ghost. Once people manage to calm her down, she claims to have seen her long lost love, Ludwig – looking exactly like he did when she saw him last some twenty five years ago. She implores, cajoles or hires the adventurers to find Ludwig – or the apparition.

**Background:** The crazed woman is Serena the Hermit. Anyone with a successful Knowledge (Val-du-Loup) roll knows the information that is given about her in the **Personalities** chapter. The 'apparition' is in reality Johan von Bless, the son of Egon von Bless, who was the young warrior that Serena knew as Ludwig. Egon is believed dead by everyone, but in truth he has contracted leprosy and is alive, hidden away from all save his wife and son, his marshal and two trusted servants. Johan looks exactly like his father did when a young man.

**Finding a Ghost.** Based on the description furnished by Serena ("*a young red-haired man, in fine clothing; leading a nervous young black stallion*"), the adventurers may start to ask around if anyone knows him or has seen him. They get lucky both in the tavern where he resided and with the horse dealer from whom he bought the stallion and learn the young man's identity. By this time, however, Johan has already left for home.

**An Unwelcome Reception.** Presumably, the adventurers now travel to the home of the von Bless family, Castle Haubach. Once the adventurers reach the castle, they find that they are not very welcome there. They are received by the Baroness von Bless who listens to what they have to say, but she will neither admit the adventurers beyond the castle's Great

Hall, nor call out her son (on pretence that he is sick and cannot be seen), nor answer any questions with regard to her husband. If the adventurers are too demanding or impertinent, she has Robben, her Marshall, and his men throw them out.

**The Castle.** If the adventurers want to continue their investigation, they need to get into the castle either by force or by stealth. If trying the latter strategy, they need to climb the sheer walls (2-3 Climb rolls), get past the guards (Stealth vs. Spot rolls), sneak through a court yard into the keep and up the stairs leading to the family quarters, passing at least two sets of 2d3 guards on their way up.

**The Lurker in the Dark.** The adventurers eventually end up in the Baron's living quarters – a floor in the keep he has to himself, where the windows are always kept boarded up, and where a few scarce torches barely disturb the darkness. Egon is heavily disabled by the disease: his face is virtually destroyed, with large holes where his nose and mouth used to be, his head covered in scabs and wisps of long red hair. To a stranger he appears like a downright monster. He keeps his appearance hidden under shrouds of linen when in company of the few people who visit him. Although a physical cripple, and barely able to talk, he is mentally fit and is still able to run his domain together with his wife.

Depending on the way the adventurers burst onto the premises, the Baron, feeling threatened, resorts to attacking the intruders with a sword. Obviously, it would be preferable that the PCs get the Baron to talk, and to listen, so that they can find out the truth. Hopefully they can fit the pieces together before killing him.

**Complications:** if breaking and entering a castle are not challenging enough, here are a few complications to throw in:

- ❖ The Baroness knows a few spells to make life hard for the player characters.
- ❖ Tensions between the County of Hauterre and von Bless are running high, and the PCs encounter a troop of Hauterre men spying on von Bless, and they are not happy to be found out.



- ❖ Serena insists on coming along. Her advancing years, and her emotions worn raw are of more of a hindrance than a help in the endeavour.

**Statistics:** Egon von Bless and Serena are detailed in the **Secrets** chapter in the Gamemaster

section. For Marshall Robben, use the Knight statistics from the stock characters section, and for Johan use the serjeant statistics. For Mildred von Bless, use the Noble Lady statistics and give her a few spells if desired.

# STORY SEEDS

The following are a series of mysterious occurrences which can be used to build adventures:

- ❖ Merat, the lunatic murderer who is hiding away on the Dying Farm, has been on a killing spree again.
- ❖ A cockatrice has taken up residence dangerously close to towns in the Loup valley. So far it hasn't attacked anyone yet....
- ❖ A strange, handsome traveler from a far Northern country shows up at the court of Countess Sybill. He seems bent on seducing the Countess, and also seems to be succeeding. Roger de Padin wants the adventurers to investigate. Could he be one of the mysterious elves of Northern myths?
- ❖ Several members of the Last Covenant have run afoul of Father Aramé and he has them arrested on accusations of devil worship. The adventurers must prove the women's innocence. But how can they argue away the witches worship of the Horned One, and how far exactly were these women prepared to take this worship?
- ❖ The Count of Sainsprit hires the adventurers to find out the fate of his vanished son. The young man was last seen traveling to the monastery of Eonach. But the monks are very secretive. What have they to hide? (Note: Arban de Sainsprit is in reality Edmont, the young leper residing in the Dying Farm, the hospice run by the monks of Eonach).
- ❖ Yet another attack is made on the life of Roger de Padin. This time it may even succeed.

- ❖ The Oaklord is hunting again, leading the Wild Hunt further afield than ever. He also seems madder than before. What or who provoked this new rage in the undead rider?
- ❖ Hellequin has been out again on his Wild Hunt. This time he is after a nobleman who is a role model of chivalric virtue. So why is Hellequin after him?
- ❖ A huge demonic goat-man has been spotted in the deep of the woods. Is the Horned One haunting the woods once again?
- ❖ The adventurers visit Trou-du-Loup on carnival day. One of the group is crowned King for a Day.
- ❖ The Heralds of Doom are actively looking for witches and warlocks, with the full blessing of the Church and the Countess. Can the adventurers stay above suspicion, especially if any of the group have supernatural powers, or if there are independent-minded women among them?
- ❖ Frequent attacks on travelers in southern Sainsprit county may be the work of the Brotherhood of the Raven, or of the robber baron, Odo de Lionnoir.
- ❖ Inhabitants of a small town claim that most of the new born have been exchanged for gnome changelings; and indeed, the toddlers are *very* ugly. As the townsfolk get ready to make war on King Schadai's gnome tribe, the adventures must find out if the young ones are really gnomes, or maybe goblins, or if there is something else at work.

# APPENDICES

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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### Copyrights

The setting described in these pages makes use of the Basic Roleplaying System published by Chaosium Inc., and all terms and statistics quoted from the BRP manual are copyright of Chaosium. Additionally, some entries also refer to the *Call of Cthulhu* and *Malleus Monstrorum* books published by Chaosium.

Val-du-Loup and all people and places described in here are my own inventions, and I assert the right to be considered the author.

This is a work of fiction, and no resemblance to persons living or dead is intended or should be inferred. Several town names exist in real life, but no similarity to actually existing locations should be inferred.

All maps were drawn by me.

All illustrations used are from the public domain. Most of these have been taken from Karen Hatzigeorgiou's collection of public domain images; see: <http://karenswhimsy.com>.

The devices for the coat-of-arms were taken from the public domain tomes *Dictionary of French Architecture from the 11th to 16th Century* by Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, published in 1856; and a few from *A Complete Guide to Heraldry* by Arthur Charles Fox-Davies, illustrated by Graham Johnston and published in 1909. I have modified some of the devices to fit the requirements of the narrative.

While I tried to be as accurate as possible with facts regarding history, I did take some liberties in the rendering of local legends and creatures.

### Sources

The following source books were instrumental in defining the medieval, mythological background:

*Von Hexen und wildem Gejäg / Von Tieren und Tierspuk / Sagenumrankte Heimatburgen*, all by Jean Haan; published by Edi-Centre, Luxembourg.

*Luxemburg in Mittelalter und Neuzeit*, by Paul Margue; published by Editions Bourg-Bourger, Luxembourg.

*Forêt légendaire*, by Philippe Barrier; published by Christian de Bartillat Éditeur, France.

*Cthulhu Dark Ages*, by Stéphane Gesbert; published by Chaosium.

*Millenium - The End of the World and the Forging of Christendom*, by Tom Holland; published in the U.K. by Little, Brown.

*Die Ritter*, by Joachim Ehlers; published by Verlag C.H. Beck

Wikipedia

### Inspiration

The following movies and books may be helpful for getting a feel for the time period and the location:

*The Company of Wolves*, by Neil Jordan; based on a book by Angela Carter.

*A Knight's Tale*, by Brian Helgeland.

Although set in a different time period: *Brotherhood of the Wolf (Le Pacte des Loups)*, by Christophe Gans.

The *Averoigne* stories by Clark Ashton-Smith.

The *Grail Quest* series (set in 14th century France) by Bernard Cornwell. I can pretty much recommend anything by this writer, whom I consider my favorite author of historic fiction. Try also the *Alfred the Great* series (9th century Britain and the Danish invasions) and *The Warlord* trilogy about King Arthur.

The *Brother Cadfael* novels by Ellis Peters.

Robert E. Howard's Dark Age and Crusader stories, such as *Worms of the Earth* (one of my favorite REH

stories), *The Lost Race*, *The Dark Man*, *The Hawks of Outremer* and others.

The *Hellboy* comics by Mike Mignola, which take their inspiration from legends and myths from around the world. *Hellboy* comics feature witches, fairies, werewolves and other magic creatures galore. The latest outing (as of May 2009) is called *Hellboy: The Wild Hunt*.

The movie *Shadow of the Vampire*; not for its subject matter but because it was shot in the Luxembourg Ardennes.

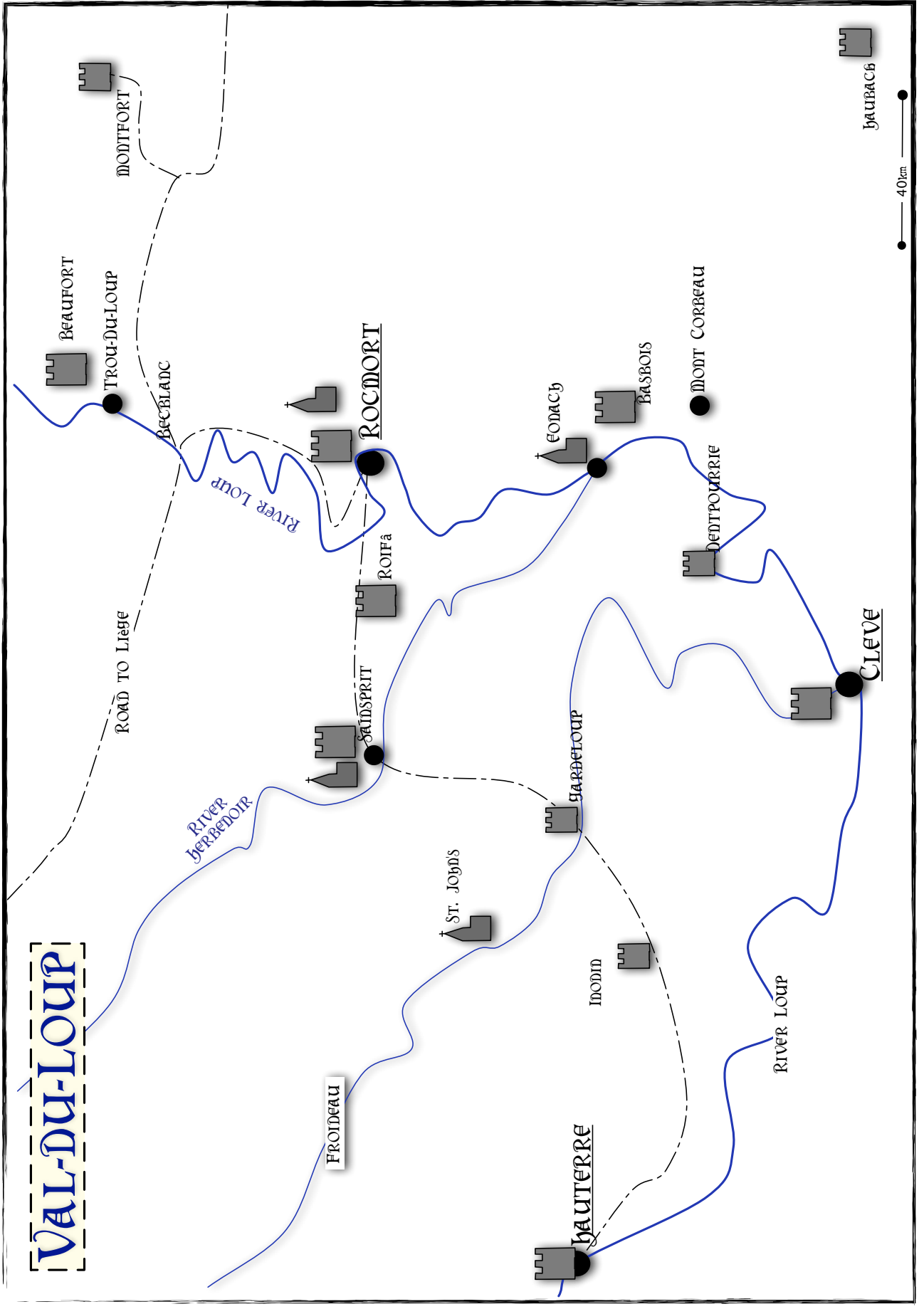
## Designer Notes

I initially invented the setting for the *Ars Magica* roleplaying game. At the time I lived in a town called

Beaufort in the Luxembourg foothills of the Ardennes, and from my bedroom window I could glimpse the ruins of an old medieval castle. This got me started on medieval history and legends, and I wrote up an Ardennes based setting. A few years ago I revived and expanded the Val-du-Loup for Chaosium's *Cthulhu Dark Ages* game, but I found that most of the scenarios I came up with had little to do with the Cthulhu mythos; instead, I drew my inspiration from local legends about undead hunters, ogres, robber barons and other wild creatures. With the publication of Chaosium's generic Basic Roleplaying system, I decided to update the setting again to fit the revised rules and terminology.

➡ Check out the site <http://web.me.com/ghee.don/Val-du-Loup> for additional support material, links, and digital copies of the hand-outs.







# BASIC ROLEPLAYING

Medieval / Fantasy Setting

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 Race \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_  
 Height \_\_\_\_\_ Weight \_\_\_\_\_  
 Description \_\_\_\_\_  
 Age \_\_\_\_\_  
 Distinctive Features \_\_\_\_\_  
 Move \_\_\_\_\_  
 Religion/Gods \_\_\_\_\_  
 Profession \_\_\_\_\_ Wealth \_\_\_\_\_  
 Social Rank \_\_\_\_\_ Handedness \_\_\_\_\_  
 Coat of Arms \_\_\_\_\_

## CHARACTERISTICS & ROLLS

**STR** \_\_\_\_\_ Effort \_\_\_\_\_ %  
**CON** \_\_\_\_\_ Stamina \_\_\_\_\_ %  
**SIZ** \_\_\_\_\_ *Damage Bonus* \_\_\_\_\_  
**INT** \_\_\_\_\_ Idea \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 **POW** \_\_\_\_\_ Luck \_\_\_\_\_ %  
**DEX** \_\_\_\_\_ Agility \_\_\_\_\_ %  
**APP** \_\_\_\_\_ Charisma \_\_\_\_\_ %  
**EDU** \_\_\_\_\_ Know \_\_\_\_\_ %

## HIT POINTS

**Major Wound** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Dead (- )**  
**00 01 02 03 04 05**  
 06 07 08 09 10 11  
 12 13 14 15 16 17  
 18 19 20 21 22 23  
 24 25 26 27 28 29  
 30 31 32 33 34 35

## SKILLS

### COMMUNICATION bonus (\_\_\_\_)

- Bargain (05%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Command (05%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Disguise (01%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Etiquette (05%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Fast Talk (05%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Language, Own (EDU\*5) % \_\_\_\_\_
- Languages, Other (00%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- \_\_\_\_\_ %
- \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Perform (05%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- \_\_\_\_\_ %
- \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Status (00%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Teach (10%) \_\_\_\_\_ %

### MANIPULATION bonus ( \_\_\_\_)

- Art (05%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- \_\_\_\_\_ %
- \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Craft (05%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- \_\_\_\_\_ %
- \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Fine Manipulation (05%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Repair Mechanical(15%) \_\_\_\_\_ %

- Repair Structural (15%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Sleight of Hand (05%) \_\_\_\_\_ %

### MENTAL bonus ( \_\_\_\_)

- Appraise (15%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- First Aid (30%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Gaming (INT+POW%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Knowledge (var%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- \_\_\_\_\_ %
- \_\_\_\_\_ %
- \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Literacy (00%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- \_\_\_\_\_ %
- \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Medicine (05%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Science (00%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- \_\_\_\_\_ %
- \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Strategy (05%) \_\_\_\_\_ %

### PERCEPTION bonus ( \_\_\_\_)

- Insight (var%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- People (05%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Dom. Animals (15%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- \_\_\_\_\_ %

- Navigate (10%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Research (25%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Sense (10%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Spot (25%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Track (10%) \_\_\_\_\_ %

### PHYSICAL bonus ( \_\_\_\_)

- Climb (40%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Dodge (DEX\*2%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Drive Carriage (10%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Hide (10%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Jump (25%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Pilot Boat (25%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Ride (05%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Stealth (10%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Swim (25%) \_\_\_\_\_ %
- Throw (25%) \_\_\_\_\_ %

### COMBAT bonus ( \_\_\_\_)

- \_\_\_\_\_ %
- \_\_\_\_\_ %
- \_\_\_\_\_ %
- \_\_\_\_\_ %

## WEAPONS

Weapon Type	attack	damage	range	attacks	length	hand	HP
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____ %	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____ %	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____ %	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____ %	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Brawl (25%)	_____ %	1D3+db	touch	1	close	1h	n/a
<input type="checkbox"/> Grapple (25%)	_____ %	special	touch	1	close	2h	n/a

## ARMOR

Armor Type	Value
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

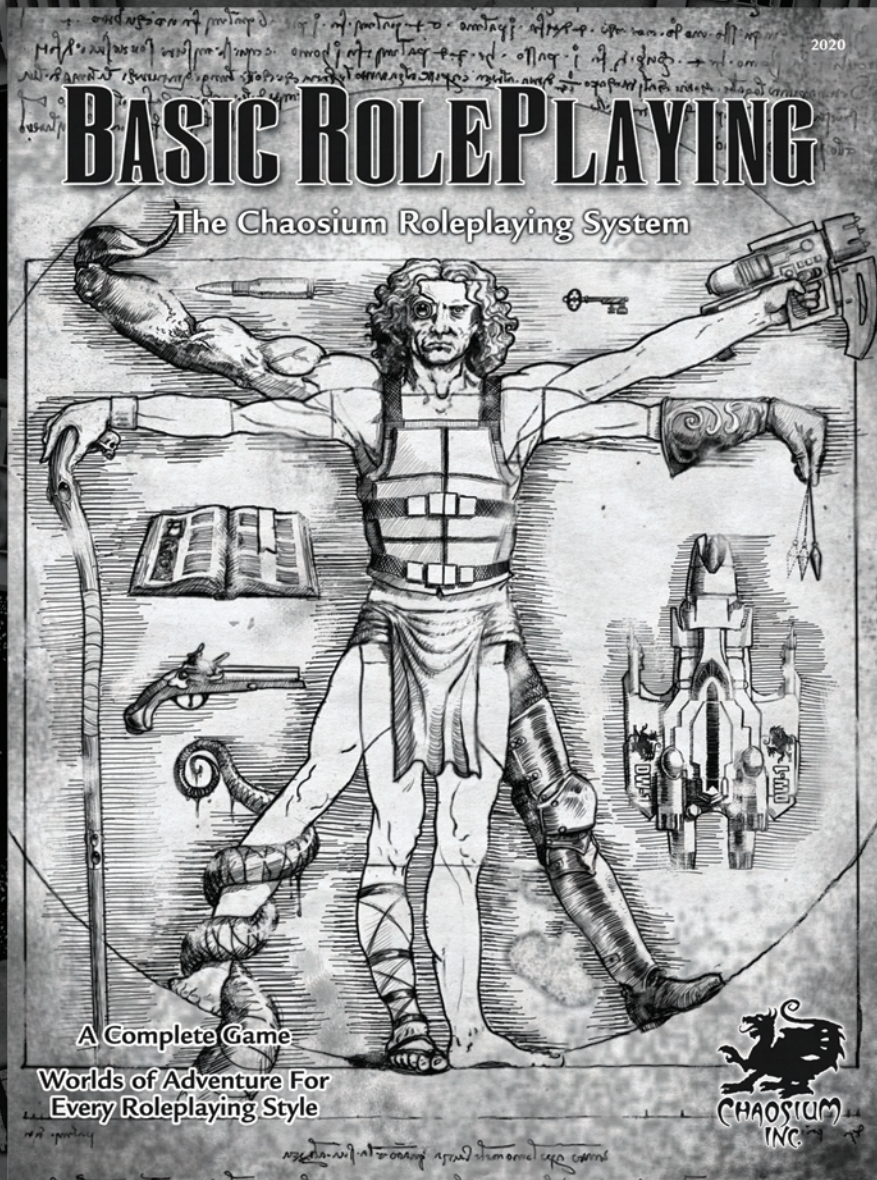
### Shield Type Parry dam HP

<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____	_____

**PLAYER:**



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