




# BISCLAYVRET

SUPPLEMENT FOR IRONCLAW

*In Which the History of This Ambitious People is Told and their Modern Sciences are Revealed*



“Then in his overconfidence, the Earl began to yield ground — too much ground — to the hateful people... the slaughter wolves advanced.”

— from *The Battle of Maldon*, Old English poem

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and their Modern Sciences are Revealed*

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## Dedication

To my parents, a belated thanks — for everything!





KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN AND YOUR EARS UP.



THE SERGEANT WILL HAVE WORDS FOR US IF HE GETS AWAY!



This is *bunk*. He's long gone.

\*huh\*

\*huh\*

Shh! Such talk'll get us *all* whipped...



Feh. The trail's been trod twenty times over...

Not even a mad *gaisreach* would find something.



TROD MANY TIMES, YES, BUT ONLY *ONCE* TODAY.



THESE PRINTS ARE NOT YET FROZEN. AND THEY'RE THE RIGHT SHAPE.

HE IS CLOSE.

WITHIN MUSKET RANGE.



WHICH MEANS THAT IF HE DOES ELUDE US...

I'LL HAVE MORE THAN WHIPS FOR THE BACKSIDES OF LAZY CUBS LIKE YOURSELVES

SPREAD OUT. FIRE AT WILL.



BLAST! ARE YOU MEN DEAF AS WELL AS SIMPLE?

GAAHH!

ARE YOUR NOSES AS STUFFED AS YOUR BRAINS?  
TAKE HIM!

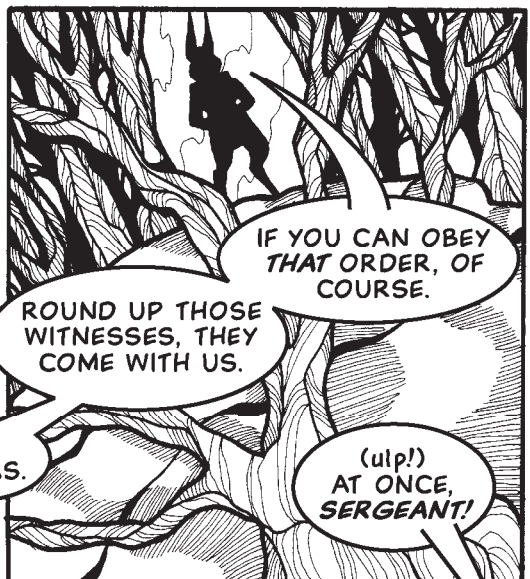


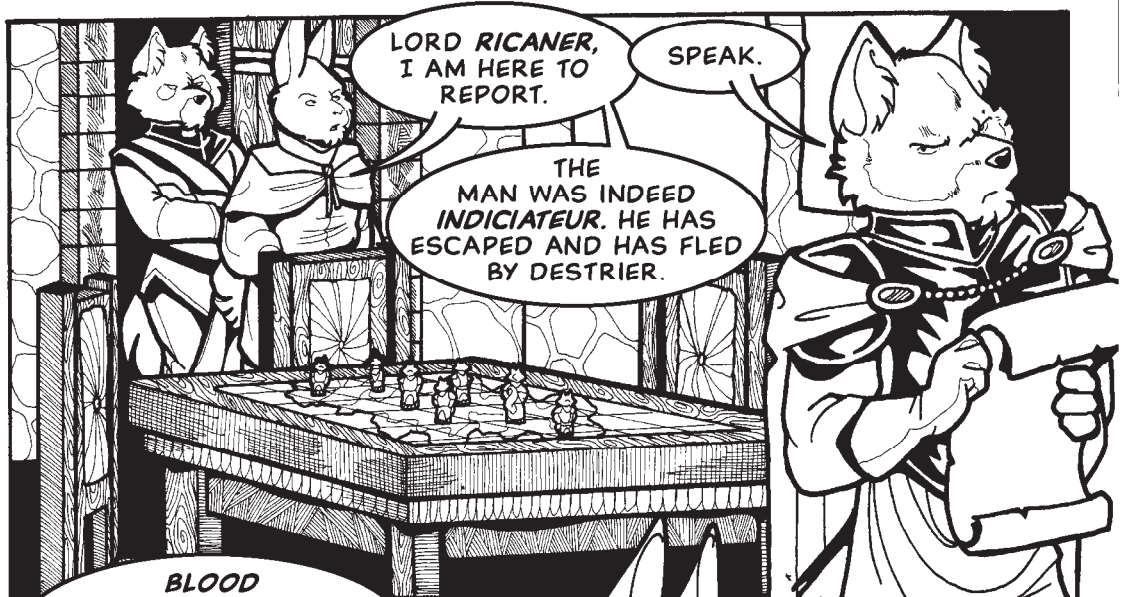
NEXT TIME, LEAVE ME TO THE PATTERN.

IT TAKES TIME TO PACK RIGHT. WE'LL MAKE HARROWGATE BY SECOND BELL.

STOP HIM!





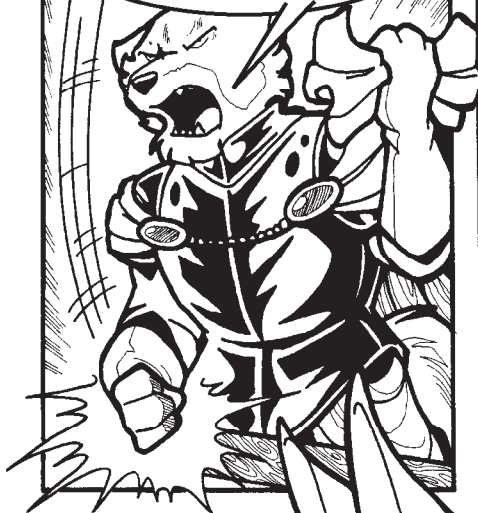


LORD RICANER,  
I AM HERE TO  
REPORT.

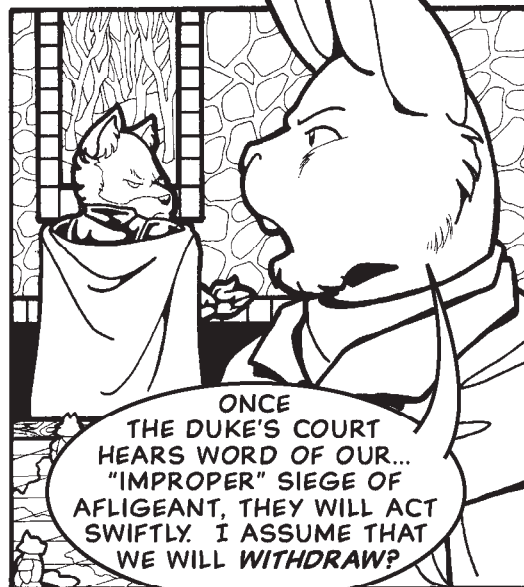
SPEAK.

THE  
MAN WAS INDEED  
INDICIATEUR. HE HAS  
ESCAPED AND HAS FLED  
BY DESTRIER.

BLOOD  
AND THUNDER! WHY  
DO I ONLY HEAR OF THIS  
NOW? WHEN WE ARE  
SO CLOSE?



MY LORD, THE INDICIATEUR  
ARE THE KING'S SECRET  
INSTRUMENTS, QUITE SKILLED  
IN INTRIGUE. MY MEN ARE  
WARRIORS, THEY KNOW  
NAUGHT OF THEIR WAYS.

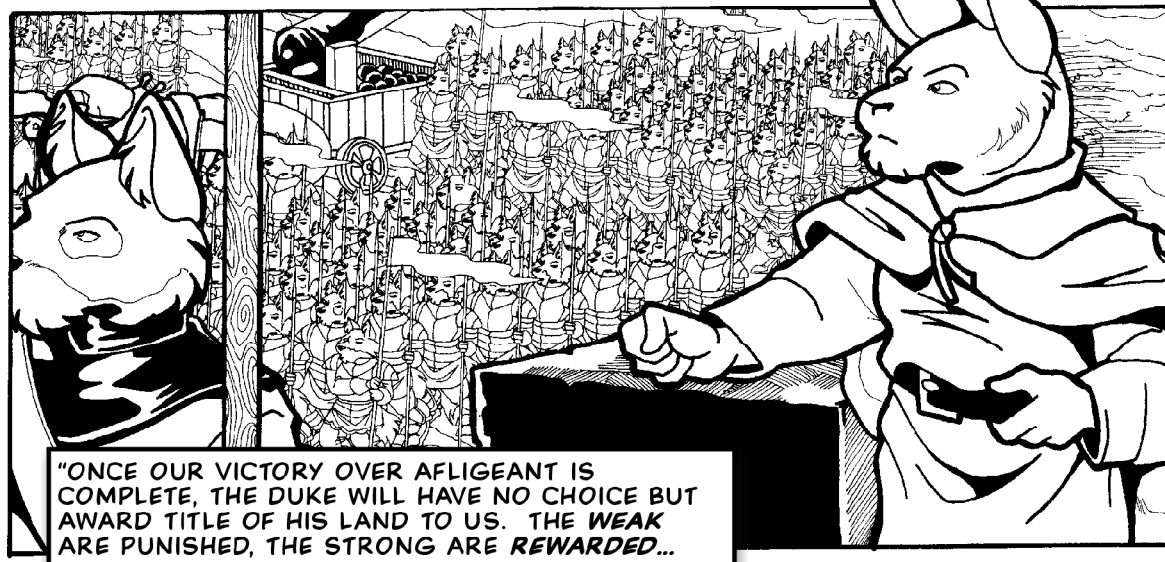


ONCE  
THE DUKE'S COURT  
HEARS WORD OF OUR...  
"IMPROPER" SIEGE OF  
AFLIGEANT, THEY WILL ACT  
SWIFTLY. I ASSUME THAT  
WE WILL *WITHDRAW*?



YOU PRESUME  
INCORRECTLY. THERE WILL  
BE NO RETREAT.  
OUR VICTORY OVER  
DODDERING OLD AFLIGEANT  
IS *CERTAIN*. WE MARCH AT  
DAWN.





"ONCE OUR VICTORY OVER AFLIGEANT IS COMPLETE, THE DUKE WILL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT AWARD TITLE OF HIS LAND TO US. THE **WEAK** ARE PUNISHED, THE **STRONG** ARE **REWARDED**..."

"...and therefore so long as shall we die, the Dukes shall live. So long as we shall quarrel, the Dukes shall laugh. Is a warrior worthy because he might strike down an aged and feeble king? Should he then become king by right of a quick arm and a darting spear? Thou knows all that I am wise, and knows my strength. And since I am wise, I have likewise raised my son to be wise. Since I am strong, I have likewise raised my son to be strong. Wouldst thou have king by right of wisdom and strength? Or wouldst thou have a king by right of a quick arm and a darting spear, which will availed thee not against the fury of the Dukes?"

— Riddock Déanamh-Gaisce,  
last Chieftain King of the Tuath na Bianféal

# HISTORY

## *Which Tells of the Fall of the Bianféala and the Rise of Bisclavret*

Bisclavret legend has its genesis in the waves of an unknown ocean. One thousand years ago, a flotilla of primitive vessels made a long and dangerous journey to find a new home. Their longboats held a few hundred haggard refugees, mostly of wolfish stock, who had hurled themselves outward into the seas for reasons clouded by legend and myth.

Of the many stories of the crossing, the Bisclavret often recite this one:

The captain of the leading vessel, *Midchain*, found himself low on supplies, and he ordered his passengers to weave nets to catch fish. An old wolf named *Aldmoen* arose from amongst the refugees, and in a quavering voice reminded Midchain of the tribal laws that forbade them to eat fish. Without a word, Midchain swept Aldmoen up and cast him into the sea. The people made the nets, and were thus they saved from starvation.





"THAT IS THE LESSON OF OUR GLORIOUS FOUNDER, KING RIDDOCK, WHAT HE FOUGHT FOR AND RISKED ALL. THAT IS WHAT IT MEANS, TO BE *BISCLAVRET*."

There are other legends, but these are preserved in the fractious and self-contradictory traditions of the barbaric Phelan. The modern Bisclavret dismiss the veracity of all oral tradition, even their own, although much of their written "history" are obviously transcriptions of well-told legend. Bisclavret historians usually classify the tale of Midchain and Aldmoen and later legends as parable rather than a fact. For the Bisclavret, their "authentic" history properly begins 180 years ago with the foundation of Harrowgate and the start of their own literary tradition. Everything else is a dream, the confused imaginings of the primitive savages they were before the event they call *Riddock's Dawn*.

For the sake of completeness, a general overview of this mythic history will be provided here. The events related in this false history in all likelihood did not occur, except perhaps in the most metaphorical sense, but they still influence the modern philosophy of House Bisclavret.

After their arrival in Calabria, the refugees settled in what is now the Muire Forest. The legends say the land was first found to be empty, and to be an abundant resource of wood and of game. The refugees quickly prospered. As their camps became over-crowded, they struck out into the deeper wilderness.

As they spread across the land, these primitive tribes came in contact with a race of violent monsters, feathered monstrosities known as *Morrigná* – giant creatures with the head and wings of a Raven, but the body of a Wolf, and a strength and savagery much greater than either. The monsters attacked the scattered villages of the Phelan, wreaking great havoc. It took many great deeds and many heroes to stop them.

Many Bisclavret scholars dismiss the legends of *Morrigná*, citing the well-known race of Ravens, a primitive people, small in stature, and having wings in place of hands. The only known Ravens live in the Phelan demesne, in bond to the bloody-handed wizards of Phelan society, the *Druids*. It is also common knowledge that Ravens have second sight and other command of the supernatural, so many believe it was the Raven's distant ancestors who confounded the ragged Phelan savages with illusions and other enchantments. Those who suspect the Druids of being in league with dark forces often spread rumors that the *Morrignái* were the wholesale invention of an ancient Druid with hopes to control the people of his remote village with crippling fears of the unknown. Even fewer claim that the *Morrignái* live on to this day, hidden in the darkest unclaimed forests of Calabria.

Whatever the whole truth may be, it is agreed upon that after the defeat of the *Morrignái*, the primitive settlers were free to spread out across the land. The refugees gradually came to form







a number of distinct tribes, each beholden to the age-old customs of their homeland, the unwritten laws known as the *Fenebras*. Some would fight, and earn the rights to call themselves *Fianna*, “warrior-knights.” Others cultivated an understanding of the mystical universe, the mysterious *Druids*. Those who were keen of mind and wise of judgment would aspire to become the revered interpreters of the law, the *Brehonna*. And those who were able to master both music and words to bring tears to other’s eyes, joy to other’s hearts, and courage to other’s spirits studied the tradition of the *Bards*.

Of all the six tribes, none disputed that the *Tuath na Bianfáel* claimed the greatest Bards in all the land. Any that disputed the claim were challenged to a *satire*, a contest between Bards judged by the response of their audience. The Dunwasser College of Triskellian has, in the library, the lyrics and music tablature of over forty songs collectively known as the *Carmina Bianfáelae*, all of which are believed to be winning compositions made simply to win the satires of past challenges.

As with all the tribes, the Bianfáel encountered the other settlers of Calabria, most notably clans of Boars, Foxes, Goats, and Horses. Some lived in their own woods, but most lived in the bare eastern lands. The Bianfáel were content to remain in their forests, and magnanimously allowed other races to reside there as well, provided they stayed in their own territories.

The legends speak of wars that raged across the land and caused the other races to suffer terribly. However, the canny Bianfáel again remained in their forest homes and fought off any outsiders who dared step foot under their boughs. In modern times, credulous peasants will sometimes find odd standing-stones or ruins in the deep forests. These superstitious folk attribute these relics to the mighty warriors and wizards of olden times; in reality, almost all of these stones were simply markers of property borders, their strange symbols the lost language of *Bérta Galleneah*. Likewise, the primitive Bisclavret themselves saw supernatural origins in the great public works of the Rinaldi, such as the many keeps and way-stations along the *Via Salutis*, with fortresses made of cut stone and bridges of keystone arches.

For many generations, the life of the Bianfáel was little different than that of the other tribes that called themselves the Phelan: a constant cycle of pagan magic, primitive rites, and barbaric laws. The history of the Bianfáel during this period is unclear.

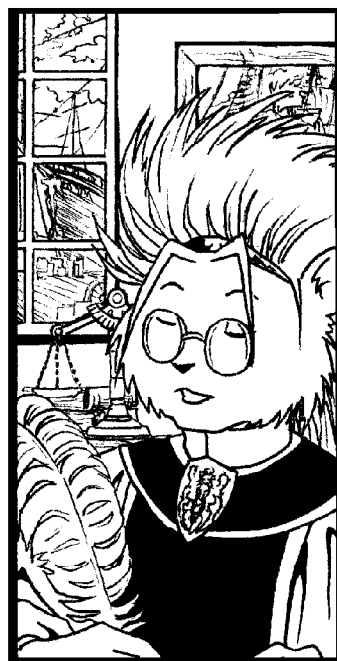
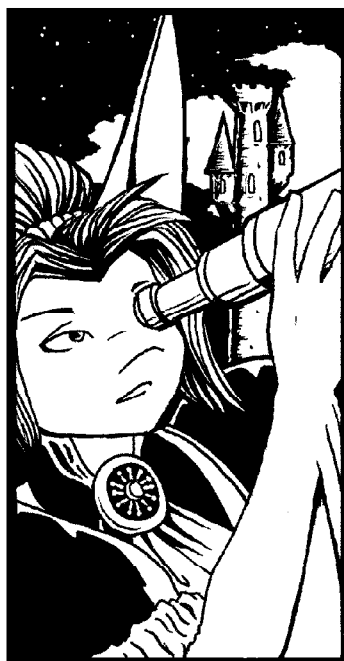
## The Founding of the Noble Houses

It is at this time that proper history of a kind begins, albeit in the inferior written records of the Rinaldi and other, forgotten, noble houses. These records, written as they were by excitable outsiders without a specific insight into the ways of the Bisclavret ancestors, should be accepted only as a general indication of the way things were. They invariably fall prey to unfair bias and prejudices when they try to deal with specific individuals or events. The exact dates are not clear, either – as was the old custom, all documents were dated by the year of the chieftain’s reign. Since many chieftains shared the same names, sorting out a proper chronology has been all but impossible.

Of the original Phelan who settled upon the western shore of Calabria, the Bianfáel were not one of the original tribes, but one granted franchise by a Phelan king over five hundred years ago. As with most noble clans, the Bianfáel did not recognize any authority above their own, and as they expanded into new territory, they encountered other noble houses:

- the *Repense*, a house of contemplative Bat artisans who lived in the southern peninsula near the River Skirfane;
- the *Blaireu*, stolid and practical Badgers who had carved a number of scattered freeholds throughout the Muire Forest;





- and the *Esclage* Porcupines, who ruled the narrow finger of rocky land that extends westward from the mainland, the wealthiest of these three houses, having made the port of Thanon a center of a brisk foreign trade in slaves and spices.

These houses had maintained a wary state of co-operation for generations, and in their later years were loosely united by a semblance of loyalty to the Rinaldi, their richer and more powerful neighbors to the east. When the Bianfáel gave them trouble by encroaching on their demesne, they resisted with minor militia (volunteer armies). Once or twice every generation, an organized Bianfáel raid might rise up, but then the three noble houses would petition for Rinaldi aid, who would sweep into the forests with their finely-bred destriers and their well-trained knights. In that day, the popular opinion was that the Bianfáel – indeed, that all Phelan – were savages and a menace to be dealt with by force of arms. The Repense poets composed verses about the Bianfáel’s mysterious ways. Blaireu rangers admired them for their forest craft, and a Bianfáel slave was often highly prized. Because of their distance from the Bianfáel, the *Esclage* mostly ignored them.

For the most part, the Bianfáel were content with this state of affairs as well. These other noble houses in their midst were puzzling, and their traditions silly. They could be safely ignored, and would have been, had not they owned land – the one measure of a person’s wealth. On the rare occasion when formal communications were required between a given noble house and the Chieftain of the Bianfáel, he and his retainers would travel to the castle of some civilized knight, to be shown the glories of the “modern world,” and to be treated with polite disdain. Then the Bianfáel nobles would return to his respective villages, to their stone huts and plain wives, and ask themselves why the world was this way. Their resentment flared into envy, and the Bianfáel were like many Phelan – a passionate and fiery lot. Why were their neighbors enjoying such splendor? What was their secret? Was it some magic? Was it the benevolence of their glowing mistress Helloise and their odd religion of self-denial? Many sought answers, but it would take the insight of one chieftain to make a plan....

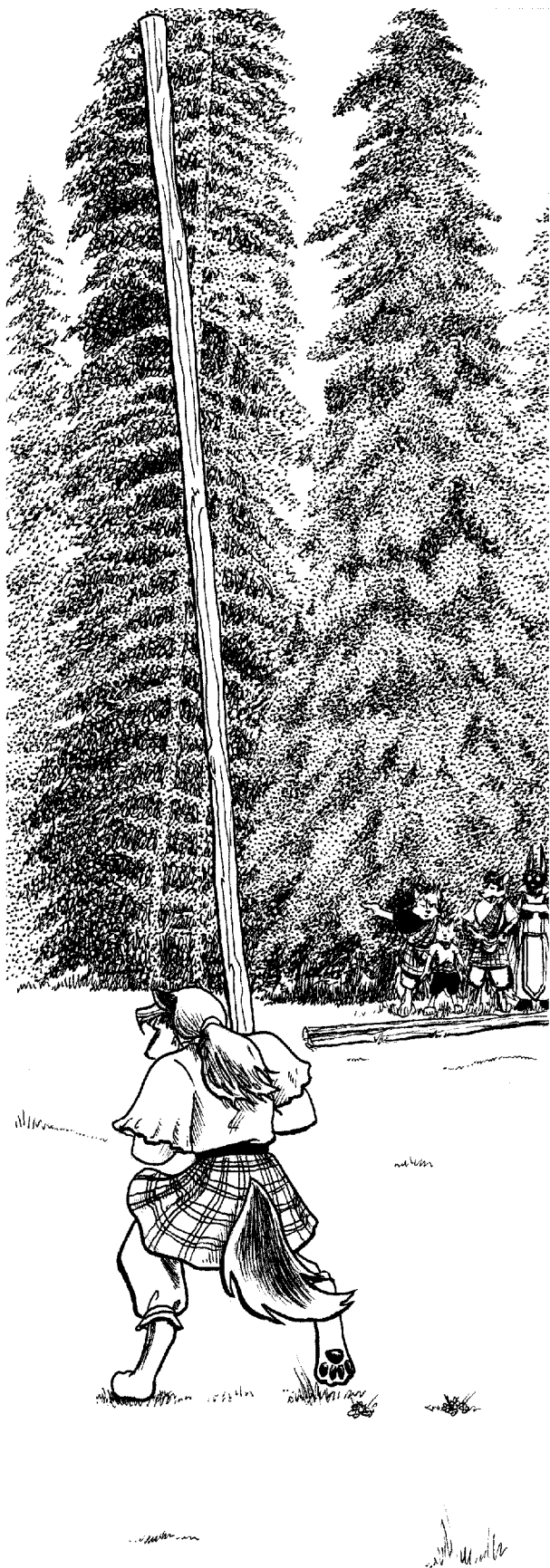


## The End of the Tuath na Bianfáel, and the Night of Seiscethir

Over three hundred years ago, an ambitious and charismatic Bianfáel chieftain named *Gaisce Mac Roth* believed he had puzzled out the secret of his richer neighbors, for the Bianfáel were Phelan, and they lived by Phelan laws. When a Phelan lord or lady died, their land was parceled out to the other lords; when an outlander lord died, his land was inherited solely by a single heir, along blood lines. When Phelan people had a dispute, they petitioned for a *Brehon*, an interpreter of the law, to resolve their argument; when outlanders had a legal problem, they had one recourse – to petition directly to their lord. In Phelan demesne, the Druids controlled wealth and lands by what they said was the will of the universe; in outlander territory, the Churches had land solely by the indulgence of the ruling lord. In Phelan society, the power was fragmented among many people; with the outlanders, authority was in the hands of the few. Gaisce felt it was time to become a modern race, and to do so meant to trade their *Fenebras* for the ways of *feudalism*, the government where vassals swore loyalty to their lords, who in turn swore loyalty to their king.

Ending thousands of years of tradition would not happen overnight. But where other would-be kings might fail, Gaisce made some shrewd choices that ensured his dynasty would live on.

Firstly, Gaisce focused on the conquest of wealth. He was known to hire numerous spies, especially educated foreigners who could speak fluent Calabrese. He studied the vulnerabilities of his neighbors. They relied greatly on goods from the far



city of Triskellian, heavily dependant on trade along the “Safe Road,” the *Via Salutis*, guarded by the patrols of the Rinaldi ... but the patrols were not the ones of legend – the Rinaldi lacked good weapons, healthy mounts, and skilled fighters. The patrols had become irregular, the quality of the troops was wanting. Gaisce encouraged his warriors to attack the patrols, to blockade the roads, and to seize the caravans’ goods as new wealth and the personnel as new slaves. The Rinaldi road-wardens, already stretched thin, decided to pull back to concentrate on their closer environs. The houses of Blaireu and Esclage sent diplomats to complain to the Don di Rinaldi, only to return with empty promises or craven refusals to aid.

The River Skirfane also became dangerous to the fishers and the merchant boatmen. Gaisce encouraged his warriors to train in the use of the spear-thrower, so that they could hurl spears at boats normally thought to be out of reach, and the *caber*, a large log thrown into troops or onto crowded boat-decks. The Bianféal would burn the boats and take the boatmen off in chains, back to their farms and to their mines. The Skirfane became infamous for the “river goblins”, river-man slang for the hidden Bianféal bandits, a fancy probably related to the rumors of the Morrignái monsters of old.

Already somewhat strained, and their petitions to the Rinaldi unanswered, the Blaireu, Repense, and Esclage found they had no authority over their lands. They humbled themselves and petitioned Chieftain Gaisce to stop his raids, and Gaisce responded that he demanded tribute. The nobles had no choice but to pay.

However, with tribute came a new problem for Gaisce – how to be paid. The nobles preferred to use coinage, the *denarii* of Triskellian, which they could exchange for goods and services. But the Phelan did not recognize this strange method – and for centuries, they had known only barter, only labor, only slaves. Gaisce realized that even if he could summon the strength of his armies to crush the nobles and seize all that they owned, the true secret of wealth – of perpetual wealth to be handed down for generations – would only be found if he could persuade his people to accept money.

Gaisce had a campaign to remove Brehonna and Druids from his territory. These people represented the old ways, and people often deferred to them for advice instead of their chiefs. Gaisce hired Bards to write songs that portrayed these people as buffoons or as tyrants, then he paid minstrels to travel and to sing the songs in public. Where people were already resentful of Druids, the songs brought laughter and ridicule. Where folk already distrusted Brehonna with their strange words and cryptic judgments, the songs emboldened the rabble to chase the judges out of their midst. Once again, Gaisce had spies almost everywhere, and it is believed he had a map drawn up to mark the places where he thought he would find sympathy for his new order.

For it is about this time that Gaisce died of old age, his plan having been set in motion for many years. For many long years, he had groomed his first-born son, *Slaine Mac Gaisce*, to inherit his empire. As one legend tells it, Gaisce was so





secretive of his plan, he never even told his son. Rather, after his funeral, a letter was delivered for Slaine's eyes only, detailing his plan.

Slaine took the map and his father's journals, and followed through with his plans, continuing to sow the seeds of discord against the old Phelan ways. With the network of spies already in place, Slaine concentrated on the ways of battle: he increased tolls on the roads and struck out against the weaker outlander lords. As the other noble houses withdrew and became more defensive, their taxes paid to the Rinaldi waned. Weakened with their own troubles back home, the Rinaldi were unable to marshal the forces necessary to either collect their due or to fight the rising tide of Bianféal power.

Using their new-found wealth to hire proper engineers and laborers, Slaine began the construction of a fortress upon a major crossroad of the Via Salutis, on the southern end of Lake Coire, in brazen defiance of any noble's law. Years later, when it was completed after Slaine's death, it would become the fort of *Harrowgate*. This fortress effectively blocks all road traffic from Triskellian to Thanon, an ideal

place to collect tribute.

As the tales tell it, when Slaine was laid to rest in a cairn not far from his own father, another letter written in his own hand, much like the one written by Gaisce so many years ago, was delivered to Slaine's heir, *Riddock Déanamh-Gaisce*. Groomed from an early age for power, it is said that Riddock read the letter with a quick smile ... then threw it boldly into the fire, instinctively aware of the plans laid as his birthright, and of the role he was to play in the grand scheme. (One rumor, never verified and possibly circulated by Riddock's enemies, was that he was not actually Gaisce's son but the messenger who was to have delivered the letter. Rather, he broke the seal, read the letter himself, and thus having known the secret of power, he set upon the true heir and murdered him, throwing his bones to the fire. Modern Bisclavret dismiss this foul tale out of hand, obviously the slander of their enemies.)

Late in Riddock's reign, when *Harrowgate's* towers stood tall and its brass cannon challenged any who would dare assail its walls, Riddock summoned his chiefs to the fort's great hall. His chiefs were pleased with the success and wealth that he and his forebears had brought to the Bianféal clan, but it is safe to say they were not expecting to hear what words he would say that fateful afternoon. A popular play has the following quote attributed to Riddock:

“My countrymen, my kith and kin, those who have held spears by my side, those who have drunk wine in my honor, sworn to my duty, and honored me by flying my flag, I bring you here to tell you that the Tuath na Bianféal must die. It is time to honor the spirit of Midchain, to sweep away tradition to take us to our final destiny. The stars, they are the portentous, and now I know in my heart of hearts that we must cast out the last of the olden ways and embrace our destiny as a young, new race of rulers chosen by destiny.”

Riddock produced the charter that would list the points of things to be cast out, and the plan he had detailed for the future. Whether Riddock had prepared this charter himself, or (as some believe) it was written in Gaisce's own hand, is a matter of speculation. What is known





is that all the chieftains signed it, and the Tuath na Bianfael would be no more. Henceforth, Riddock's bloodline would be known as the Bisclavret, with himself as King Riddock the First, Lord of the Western Wood. All those chieftains who signed would be his Lords and retainers. The history says that all the chieftains signed; if any did not, there is no evidence of their resistance that survives to this day. Gone were the "hidden laws" of the Fenebras, the mystic wisdom of the Druids – in this modern age, the time of the *Seiscethir*, there would be only place for new traditions, for the ways of nobles, for the ways of the Bisclavret.

## Riddock's Reign and the Rinaldi Rout

It is not clear exactly why Riddock chose Bisclavret as his family name. Some say that Gaisce had chosen the name, itself the name of a demon or dark force. Others believe that Riddock chose the name after conferring with his royal astrologer. A few think it is a nonsense word chosen as the final refutation of all Phelan tradition. And at least one member of the Dunwasser College believes it is a mistranslation of the *Magniloquentia* word for "new skin."

Riddock acted swiftly and decisively. His emissaries went out to the nobles of the Blaireu, Repense, and Esclage, and demanded their loyalty and their tribute. The lords who conceded were allowed to keep their land; the ones who did not were gradually beaten into submission in a series of small but bitter campaigns. Riddock knew that his attacks would eventually draw the attention of the Rinaldi, who may not have been at their former glory but were still a force to be reckoned with. The Bisclavret were excellent fighters in the woods, but the Rinaldi ruled the open fields with their cavalry. The Bisclavret were also lacking in proper metal arms and armor – their forges were few and far between, and their iron was mostly imported at great cost. One thing Riddock did have was rich coffers, coins that were good to hire mercenaries, white-shields, and free swords. As word spread throughout Calabria, the port of Thanon became popular with warriors of every stripe, from noble swords-for-hire to disreputable murderers. Riddock was only interested in numbers, for when mercenaries died in battle, there was no one to mourn for them. When he marched his men to seize the woods that yet remained in Rinaldi demesne, he was quite prepared for a bloody, vicious battle.

Don Fabroni di Rinaldi, King of Calabria, answered the challenge to his authority swiftly. He saw this war as a chance to restore the faltering glory of his rule. He called his retainers and lords to arms, marshalling the last great army ever called by the Rinaldi, and he marched them up the Via Salutis, the centuries-old road of his ancestors, intending to seize the city of Thanon.

They never arrived. As they neared Harrowgate, a grand array of mercenaries ran howling from the forests. The polished armor and bright banners of the Rinaldi army was overwhelmed in a sea of ragged, brutal warriors. The Rinaldi fought bravely at first, but they broke quickly. A few terrified foxes were able to flee back to Triskellian. The rest were brought away in chains, either ransomed or enslaved. Some claim that the





descendents of the crushed Rinaldi live on in remote towns in the Muire and in the Lochlan Mountains.

Humiliated, Don Fabroni sued for peace. In turn, King Riddock accepted the authority of the Rinaldi, and he became a Duke, one of the Great Noble Houses of Calabria. The sun had set upon the Rinaldi, just as it was rising on the Bisclavret. From now on, the Rinaldi would be seen only as a political tool, never again as a serious military power. Riddock's dream had been achieved in a spectacular fashion.

## The Bards

Following the Rinaldi rout, Duke Riddock felt his rule was unchallenged. He took the final step towards modernism: he officially declared the chivalrous tradition of *cuius regio, eius religio* into law – that is, the religion of the Duke was the religion of all, and Duke Riddock confessed that he was a Penitent of S'Allumer. Once he signed the law, all other religions were declared illegal. The Druids of Bisclavret demesne would have to convert, to flee, or to be punished.

No doubt that some Druids renounced their old ways, caught up in the philosophy of modernism that was everywhere in Bisclavret territory. A few resisted, using their command of the supernatural to fight against the Bisclavret armed resistance, but in the end the tide was towards this new religion of light. In Druidism, the practice of concealing one's true faith (*tergiversation*) is not against their beliefs – many Druids simply hid their faith, with a few becoming S'Allumer clergy but still practicing their ancient ways in secret.

Ironically, the same method used to sow the seeds against the Phelan way of life became one of the ways to preserve it. To keep their heritage alive, many Druid stories – and perhaps one or two of their mystic secrets – became transcribed into the repertoire of more than one Bard. The challenges of old may be gone, but the *satire* – a “duel” where two Bards attempt to sway the mood of the crowd to determine who is better – is still an accepted method of solving disputes today.

King Riddock died ten years after the victory on the Via Salutis. His son *Raldred* became Duke of the Bisclavret and King of the Western Woods after him. Raldred continued the absorption of the minor houses, and solidified the Bisclavret borders. Riddock *Déanamh-Gaisce* has been semi-deified in Bisclavret history, and all schoolchildren are expected to learn of his exploits in detail.

## The Bisclavret Today

The extent of the Bisclavret holdings remains essentially the same as it was in the days of Riddock *Déanamh-Gaisce* and Raldred, despite occasional forays by expansionist Dukes into the Doloreaux and Rinaldi territories. They maintain a state of watchful peace with the other great houses, and generally refuse to acknowledge the authority of any minor house or tribal people.



The bold unity of Riddock's day has given way to a society of uneasy status quo. The nobility constantly vie against each other in minor local wars, occasionally quashed by the Duke's own troops. All still claim loyalty to the central Ducal authority.

The previous Duke *Tremaine* de Bisclavret inspired a new renaissance in Bisclavret court, firing a passion among the urban nobility for new ideas. In the belief that he was personifying Riddock's spirit of progress, he made a number of changes and reforms through his thirty-year reign. He modernized the architecture of the ducal palace. In an attempt to attract foreign shipping from Triskellian, he lowered docking fees and taxes on imports. He gave a formal name and magisterial authority to the spies that had served his royal family for so many years, calling them the *Indicateur*. In a flagrant challenge to Rinaldi rule, he has minted his own coins, copper plated in silver, each with a professed value of 4 denarii, called a *fibula*.

These reforms have not been entirely positive. The new palace is generally considered a baroque monstrosity, quite unsuited to the image of the Bisclavret. The reduction of docking fees has attracted considerable shipping traffic, but of the absolute worst kind. Pirates, slavers, and mariners of every stripe now call Bisclavret ports home. The new currency of fibulae was quickly devalued by silver-plated counterfeits — often nick-named "copper-noses" because the thin silver veneer on Tremaine's profile may be easily rubbed clean on the fake coins to reveal the base metal below. Denarii and aureals are still very much the currency of preference among merchants, and fibulae are rarely (if ever) accepted outside Bisclavret demesne.

The *Indicateur* represent the most successful reform, a visible expression of the invisible hand that the Duke uses to control his nobility, penetrating into their secret machinations and reporting on hidden activities.

Duke Tremaine died four years ago. He did not produce an heir until quite late in life, and his eldest son *Mausein* was just nine years old when he ascended to the throne. A senior general, *Lord Castellan Thainistear*, rules as a regent in his stead, but it is unclear whether he will be willing to step down once the heir comes of age.





“Seas, mountains, forests, rivers; countless lands swear fealty to our beloved Duke. His army of mercenaries acts as his hand, by which he stretches to every corner of his Realm, but his armies are blind without us. We Indicateur are the thousand-fold eyes and ears of the Duke’s rule. Without us, he is blind and deaf. Without us, the state stumbles in darkness. Without us, the voice of the land goes unheard. “

— Master Indicateur Gerard, to a class of cadets

## DEMESNE

*Describing the Environs and the Manner of Life  
of the Wolves of the Western Wood*

### The Bisclavret Way of Life

The Bisclavret demesne is a unique body in Calabria. It possesses a powerful central authority in Harrowgate, but the nobility are largely independent. For the most part, they are content to send the Duke his tribute, but otherwise they ignore him entirely. This culture is largely due to the undeveloped, remote nature of much of the Bisclavret holdings. A lord may live and die without ever leaving his forest lands. He may have no contact with the Ducal authority beyond an occasional visit from the Indicateur. The nobles effectively rule as absolute monarchs in their own tiny domains. It is not unusual for local lords to carry on miniature civil wars with their neighbors, stemming from disputes over logging or long-forgotten personal wrongs. If these conflicts grow, the Duke will dispatch a some of his royal troops or (more likely) a captain with mercenaries to quell the disturbance. Outside invaders, hoping to take advantage of this kind of local infighting, must strike quickly – for the Bisclavret may quarrel amongst each other, but their personal vendettas are quickly forgotten and they will swiftly unite against the common enemy of outlanders. Bisclavret lords are quick to profess their loyalty to the Duke; they just might not be as swift to declare their loyalty to their peers. As with the other Great Houses, there are Minor Houses of Nobility that, while permitted to keep their names, have sworn fealty. The nobles of the Esclage, Blaieure, and Repense still maintain authority over their own holdings. However, they have no central court or Duke of their own – they are entitled to no rank higher than Baron. Under the system of feudalism, the Minor Houses have sworn loyalty to the Duke of Bisclavret. They must pay tribute to him, in terms of resources such as timber, food, and livestock. They must also provide troops to support the Duke in time of war. This state of affairs has been in place for several generations, and few Minor Lords have felt any need to change things. Those lords that do complain of their position are either skilled politicians or are quickly removed from power and replaced with one of the many Bisclavret aristocrats who are



Heather Wasneusk, 2001

hungry for power and eager to serve.

To understand the Bisclavret mindset, one must acquire a deeper understanding of their dislike for Phelan tradition. It is not simply a matter of turning their back on the past; modern Bisclavret ignore portions of their own history to an extent that other houses find laughable, if not downright ridiculous. The Bisclavret regard certain people and events in their history as above reproach, personifications of a powerful ideal of improvement and progress regardless of the personal cost. Stories and songs abound of individuals rising to glory by doing the right thing where their older, conservative fellows are too cowardly, too lazy, or too insipid to act.



This aggressive spirit of progress has widely-differing results in Bisclavret society. As a whole, the Bisclavret live rather austere. Garb at every level of society tends to be functional and unadorned. The most distinctive article of clothing is patterned skirt worn by men, known as a *kilt*. Kilts are holdovers from the days of Bianféal tribal life. Each is printed with a pattern of colored lines, or *tartan*, that is individualized to the family or lord. (In Phelan society, the tartan would have identified one's *derfbhine*, or tribe. The Bisclavret distinguish along a lord's family line.) Among other Calabrese lords, the *coat-of-arms*, a graphical design rendered on banners and on shields, is the preferred graphic for use in identifying a lord's authority, by the Lore of *Heraldry*. However, the Bisclavret rarely have a standard in battle – they usually fight in close-quarters in trees, where a tall pole would be cumbersome. They prefer to fight with spears and guns, and thus they have no shields to be painted up. With their typical aplomb, the Bisclavret claim that the tartan is the modern way of flying one's colors.

In the country, peasants and nobles alike wear simple home spun clothes in earth tones. In the towns, the most common mode of dress for men is a tunic, cap, and kilt or trousers, colored plain gray or black; for women, the shawl or cloak is regularly seen, also drably-colored to cover up the stains of working life. In Bisclavret society, wealth is associated with status, so the middle- and upper-class will dress as richly as they can afford. Any nobles will be all too proud to wear the kilt with the tartan of their family line. Fashions vary wildly – in some towns, people will aggressively imitate the frills and jewelry of Triskellian; in others, folks will look upon such clothing with sneering disdain. Keeping up with the latest trends can almost be a full-time occupation in itself. Legally, only blooded nobles may carry guns or swords, but in practice the few who can afford it will brazenly show off their superior weapons. Leather armor is commonplace, often reinforced with a steel helmet and a *lorica*, a small metal breastplate draped over the chest.

The desire for practicality and “honest living” permeates all aspects of Bisclavret life. The nobility speak in volumes about how their education includes not only the high sciences of oratory, philosophy, and history, but also of many hours spent tilling the fields and working the land. A Bisclavret knight's squiring will often involve many hours spent apprenticing at some trade. Many squires are sent to neighboring fiefdoms to be schooled in a trade that is lacking locally. (Of course, this relocation doubles as a safeguard – if your neighbor's first-born son is living in your guild-hall, your neighbor is less likely to attack you because you can claim his son as a hostage.)



For artists, living in Bisclavret demesne is a life of either feast or famine. Books, paintings, songs, and theater are all commissioned in great numbers by much of the nobility. Sculptures and architecture of mind-boggling complexity and expense are constructed almost everywhere, as fads come and go. But fashions come and go, and an artist who fails to study the winds of change may suddenly find themselves out of favor, without patrons, without money, and with many creditors and a few enemies.

Bisclavret commoners are quite different than most of the Calabrese. They are far less superstitious and respectful of age. Upper-crust accents, name-dropping, and other trappings of courtliness, often used to impress the rabble of Triskellian and elsewhere, will rarely make a strong impression upon a Bisclavret freeman. The spirit of adventure stirs in many hearts, and a Bisclavret commoner is far more likely to strike out into the world in search of gold and glory than a Doloreaux serf or an Avoirdupois farmer.

The rural nobility, like their bondsmen, are disdainful of traditions that have no obvious value. They are proud, rough, and matter-of-fact. They eschew courtly manners and courtesies, favoring direct action and forthright speech to a degree that outlander nobles find rude. Unfortunately, the nobility's frequent capriciousness makes them short-sighted. As one common parable goes: if a group of farmers complains about a flooding stream, a Bisclavret noble would immediately dam it, only to face the same farmers at the next harvest, distressed by their dry fields.

In the cities and towns, the modernist spirit becomes evident in different ways. Among the new moneyed classes, the merchants and tradesmen, there is an obsession with acquisition of new knowledge and clever artifacts, especially from foreign shores. The new art of clockwork has received great attention in the markets of Thanon and Harrowgate. Rich shop owners and merchants compete to collect the largest collection of books and clockwork toys and to invite the current favorite philosopher or artisan to their soirees. Fashion, art, and philosophies change more rapidly in this class.

Urban nobles take this obsession with novelty to the heights of absurdity. Indeed, the younger nobles go out of their way to challenge every tradition they can. They will sometimes dye their fur like Phelan savages or dabble in strange magic. One fad that shows little sign of waning is a mania for *astrology*, the study of the stars in the heavens to predict the fortunes of those on earth, a discipline largely particular to the Repense. Visitors to a Bisclavret courtly function will likely find the younger nobles divided from the rest of the company, heatedly arguing about planetary declinations and the like.

Older lords regard these passing fads with annoyance, and concentrate on more "practical" fashions, such as new weapons and armor. In the last twenty years, the Bisclavret court has entertained proposals for a flying army of grenade-carrying bats, for "submersible boats" that traveled in secret underneath the surface of the water, for airships propelled by dew, and countless "infallible" plans for invasion of the rest of Calabria. An idea remains in vogue for a few years at most and is then abandoned, no matter how practical. Those who continue to adhere to a fashion out of vogue are seen as obstructionist and silly. Currently, the Bisclavret court is divided between those who hope to conquer Calabria through naval power and those who hope to achieve victory by the construction of





bigger and better cannons. While these plans are not beyond the scope of reason, some of the particular points (such as a cannon that would fire half a league, to beyond the horizon, or for twenty galleons to transport an army) are quite improbable.

Unlike many of the disenfranchised, effete aristocrats of Calabria, who are all too happy to coast through life with their wealth and their privilege, the Bisclavret are a determined, fixated people. While they may often be misguided or led astray by false promises, the Bisclavret continue to push forward. They have a strong faith in their own personal, martial, and cultural superiority, and any self-respecting Bisclavret is more than willing to prove their worth anyway they can.

## Social Classes

Like all peoples of Calabria, Bisclavret society is broken up into various classes, each of which has different responsibilities, rights, and freedoms.

### Those Who Rule: Nobility and their Officials

The separation of nobility and central authority has created a division in the attitudes of outlying nobles and those in the Duke's court. The nobility of Harrowgate are more introspective and cerebral than their country brothers. They are aggressively modernist and cultivate unusual philosophies and fashions based around the ideals of progress and vitality. They have a keen interest in martial matters, and the court is filled with grand schemes of Byzantine alliances, rifle-equipped armies, and complicated siege engines.

The country lords are a very different matter. For the most part, they are uncomplicated souls with little in the way of civilized manners. Often, only their strong sense of authority and pride distinguish them from their subjects.

The stereotypical view of a Bisclavret noble held by other houses is that of a crude warrior, without honor, loud and brash. This picture is not far from wrong. What outsiders see as ill manners and a lack of knightly decorum, the Bisclavret praise as aspects of the plain-talking, common sense ideal espoused by Riddock and represented by the fabled Midchain.

At every level, the nobility are closely watched by the Indicateur, the secret police who answer only to the Duke. Some Bisclavret lords can be quite paranoid, wondering who among them is the Duke's spy.

The Bisclavret also recognize, to some extent, the claims of noble blood made by minor houses they have annexed. These houses are dealt with later in this book.

### Those Who Pray: Clergy and Priests

The Bisclavret have largely converted to S'Allumer. Officially, they have entirely abandoned an older, unstructured faith of spirits and omens they shared with the Phelan. By the law of *cuius regio, eius religio*, all religions other than S'Allumer are illegal; their worship is punishable by fine or by imprisonment. Penitents of S'Allumer receive a fair deal of respect from the common people and the nobility. However, the pomp and ritual of the Church does not impress the common throng.





Bisclavret prefer a “common sense” approach to religion. To them, it makes sense to do good works, work hard, exercise thrift, and expect spiritual reward as a result. A perfumed cleric asking for alms to build a cathedral would be regarded as taking advantage of his position. S’Allumer churches in Bisclavret lands are usually simple stone structures, and the clerics are often simple friars. Larger and more elaborate places of worship may be found in some of the bigger settlements. Indulgences and ordained priests are rare.

It is not against the law for an outlander to practice their religion while visiting Bisclavret demesne, but to practice openly risks hostility and violence. Many mercenary companies will set up service in the woods or in abandoned buildings, as those who make their living by shedding the blood of others tend to be a superstitious lot. Almost all are from some strange land with some strange faith of their own.

Worshippers of the “Old Faith” of Lutara and of the Phelan ways of Druidism are present, but almost always in hiding. Their particular religions do not prevent them from concealing their faith. (In fact, Druidism has secrecy as one of its tenets, and it has been argued that Druids *should* lie to unbelievers to protect the mysteries.) It is a matter of record that more than one “Penitent monk” has been a Lutarist or Druid in disguise – and one that may last an entire lifetime.

### Those Who Toil: the Working Class, Peasantry and Slaves

Per capita, Bisclavret society has the most slaves of all the demesnes in Calabria. An abundance of slave labor means that nobles rely less on





the services of their tenants. Anyone of free birth may elect to leave their home and seek their fortune, provided they leave before the age of eighteen. After that, they are pressed into service tending their Lord's lands. Because the Bisclavret enjoy a greater degree of class mobility than the other houses, it is not uncommon for a clever youth of low birth to achieve wealth and fame and to win his way into polite society. They may even, if very lucky, marry into minor nobility. Only Triskellian has a greater population of the middle-class.

Slavery is an accepted fact of life in Bisclavret society, and few see anything wrong with the practice. Slaves are so common, even a poor farmer may have one in his service. Almost all slaves are slaves by conquest – captured outlanders from a foreign shore, or sometimes from a remote corner of Calabria. By the letter of the law, maltreatment of a slave is the same as maltreatment of a commoner – the same laws of low justice protect both. However, slaves are beholden to greater laws themselves, and penalties for theft, vandalism and violence are usually much, much worse. While all slaves have the right to purchase themselves out of their condition, few will ever accomplish such a goal as they (by definition) earn no living wage. The most wretched slaves are those condemned to work in the mines of the Lochlan Peaks, doomed to toil long hours in the dark and to perish without ever seeing the sun again.

## Religion and Belief

The Bisclavret have converted almost entirely to the practice of S'Allumer. The popular orthodoxy is that of *Penitence*, the belief that by avoiding worldly sins such as pride, greed, and avarice, after death, one's soul will rise up to join the Light of All-Being, to Ascend into the glory that is all life in the universe. Of course, few Bisclavret live up to the austere requirements of Penitence, with their jealousy of their neighbors and their constant hunger for greater wealth and power. While many praise the church, donations remain low, and the life of a Penitent cleric in Bisclavret demesne is tolerable but hardly as glorious as, say, in the grand halls found in Avoirdupois territory. Most nobles see ornate churches and elaborate rituals as pointless at best, and decadent at worst. They disparagingly refer to these as "Triskellian trappings," and prefer plain churches and plain talking clergy.

Two different branches of worship of S'Allumer thrive in Bisclavret lands. The belief of *Anathasia*, that study of S'Allumer teachings and of White Magic in particular can lead to greater understanding of the universe, is popular among scientist, scholars, and astrologers, who would like to believe that there is a greater pattern to all things. The branch of S'Allumer known as *Orchomency*, where generosity and a zest for living is emphasized to a degree that would make a devout Penitent uncomfortable, usually finds adherents among the newly wealthy, who would like to combine their desire to help others with a way to show off their means. (For more information, see *Avoirdupois*, p. 40-43.)


The Phelan ways have been more or less swept aside, and the Phelan belief system of woodland spirits and devils has likewise been abandoned. Nonetheless, rebellious young Bisclavret nobles will sometimes affect pagan beliefs in an attempt to shock their elders. The form of Phelan spirituality they practice has little to do with reality, but it does give them the opportunity to wear unusual clothes and stay out late "communing with spirits."

Peasants in border villages maintain legends and tales of the Phelan past, as well as numerous local taboos and customs. These practices are simply seen as colorful superstition on the part of more educated Bisclavret, and even among the villagers they are more a matter of tradition than real belief. Still, it is possible to find certain old men and women in the most remote villages who possess a smattering of Phelan Druid magic. They are usually regarded as witches by their right-minded neighbors. Phelan traditions in their truest form live on among the Screeberagh, the outcast felines of the Muire, and among the denizens of Cutach ("The Stumps") in Harrowgate.









Even less accepted, and indeed actively suppressed, are the adherents of Ombre Caliner, or *Ombrists*. This is a secretive cult whose members are almost always members of the lower nobility. They worship their ancestors, and petition them for advice and power. Ombrists hold solitary vigils in family crypts, praying fervently in the darkness to the bones of their forefathers. More than a few Black Magicians are thought to exist among them. The Ombrist rituals and articles of belief are thought to be passed on from father to son, though it is possible that their blasphemous creed exists in some forgotten tome.

## Armed Forces

Like all Noble Houses, the greatest numbers of the Bisclavret fighting force are drawn from the peasantry of local lords, commoners pressed into military service known as a *militia*. These militia levies are poorly trained, and armed with simple skirmishing weapons like hand-axes, spears, and short bows. They are trained to approach the enemy under cover, then to charge *en masse*. Training aside, the Bisclavret have a deserved reputation for fierce, undisciplined battle. Male and female youths alike are raised with the ideal of individual strength and martial glory. While they know little of proper formations and drills, they fight bitterly with tooth and claw.

Bisclavret nobles charge into the fray with their fighters, either mounted on coursers and lesser breeds of destrier, or just as often on foot, wearing steel armor and brandishing a sword and rifle. In their hilly, wooded regions, lords prefer to have their troops skirmish their foes, then they move in under the cover of sheer weight of numbers.

As people have gained means, so have more free-men learned the ways of fighting. A black-powder gun is a great equalizer against superior size and strength. However, freemen usually train to fight defensively, against robbers and highwaymen. When pressed into military service, they may have a minor edge over untried militia, but in the chaos of a pitched battle there is little distinction.

## Swords for Hire: *Mercenaries*

Years of infighting, as well as an influx of wealth, has encouraged the practice of hiring mercenaries – men and women whose professional lives are devoted to the arts of war. Bisclavret nobles find no dishonor in hiring others to fight for them; rather, some lords over-reach themselves and spend too much money in an attempt to make an overwhelming display of force. Mercenaries are all too aware of their station – they have no families to mourn them, no countrymen to honor their fallen, and no leaders who feel a blood bond. Mercenaries are seen as resources to be spent, and their lives are usually short. Indeed, mercenaries that are too successful are often dismissed (or worse), as they might become an armed threat to a noble's power. The distinction between “gang of thieves” and “mercenary company” is often lost on the commoners, and many free-swords play at being both, when they see chance for fortune.

The oldest known mercenary company is the *Harrow Guard*, who can trace their history back to Riddock's battle with the Rinaldi hundreds of years ago. A motley crew armed with wood-tipped spears, iron-headed clubs, and poorly-fitted leather tunics, they are said to “be paid well and die well.” The Harrow Guard is slowly gaining a reputation for both foolhardiness and fearlessness as they employ gunpowder bombs and grenades in increasing numbers.

Recently, the Duke has reminded nobles that guns should only be in the possession of nobles and the magistrates of the court. Should the mercenaries become too strong and too well-armed, a rebellion could seriously weaken the Bisclavret state. Unfortunately, too many lords are eager to hire dragoons or other expensive fighters with their fancy modern equipment, and the number and quality of mercenary troops rises every day, tipping the balance. Some





Bisclavret lords have further restrictions, such as not permitting crossbows or mounts to non-blooded persons.

While the number of fighters in Bisclavret lands is the subject of debate, all experts would agree that the total is less than that of the Avoirdupois and the Doloreaux. However, because a large percentage of these folks are fearless, expendable, veteran mercenaries with superior arms and armor, the other Great Houses are unwilling to risk open warfare against an unknown strength.

About half of all mercenaries are Wolves. Some are the sons of peasant farmers who did not wish to spend their lives tilling fields or farms. Others are petty criminals, offered “trial by combat” to clear their names. Too many are bandits seeking “honest work” and regular pay. A few are true-blooded Phelan – sometimes outcasts from their land, sometimes thrill-seekers out to see how the other folk live. The other half are of Races from all over the Known World (and perhaps beyond) – Cats, Dogs, Rhinoceros, Weasels, and




even stranger Races still from the mysterious lands of Zhongguo. The *Screeberagh*, a clan of Cats who live in the “old ways” of the western woods, with their strange language of Bérla Féini and their own mysterious Druids, often work for the Bisclavret, as they hate the Phelan and would eagerly take up arms against them, especially to reap rewards.

Of course, in any sizeable group of mercenaries, one is likely to be an Indicateur spy. After all, mercenaries are anonymous – why bother to learn the name of someone who might die tomorrow? Weapons and armor are the tools of the trade – who would question an expensive pistol or sword in the hands of one who makes their living with it? And having come from the far corners of the world, who can make sense of a mercenary’s odd habits and peculiar language – is it a foreign gibberish or some kind of code? Bisclavret nobles are often in an uncomfortable position; they must hire mercenaries to win their private battles, but any one of them might report misdeeds back to the Duke.

Crimes committed by mercenary bands is all too common, since they basically specialize in fighting, looting, and pillaging. The better Bisclavret nobles make a point of punishing such transgressions swiftly and severely. Lords who are unresponsive or inattentive to these problems quickly lose face in front of their people. More than one Bisclavret noble has staged a coup on his neighbor by hiring his disaffected, amoral mercenaries away from them and effectively seizing power overnight. The Duke and his court are keenly aware that, should the balance of martial power shift too strongly to the hands of the mercenaries, their enemies might be able to buy the free-swords’ loyalty, both weakening the Bisclavret forces and adding to their own numbers.





Through festivals and the time-honored tradition of traveling bards, the Duke seeks to unite his people under a strong *esprit de corps*, to rally behind their throne as a whole and not behind their provincial lord. Histories and novels (whose accuracy is highly suspect) have been published and sold at a loss to the public. Despite these efforts, the Bisclavret remain bickering and distrustful of one another.

## Relations with Other Folks

While the Bisclavret are officially recognized by the Don di Rinaldi as a Noble House deserving of franchise, they are often regarded as “improperly finished” and lacking in the social graces.

### Avoirdupois

The Avoirdupois represent a serious challenge to Bisclavret rule. The austere Horses have unshakeable morale and incredible discipline, as well as the greatest support of the Church of S'Allumer. However, the Avoirdupois remain mired in tradition, continuing to put faith in the mounted knight in full plate when the era of cannon and musket is clearly on the horizon. As Gaisce put his faith in future generations, so do modern Bisclavret bide their time and wait for a sign that their own tools might eclipse those of the Avoirdupois.

Officially, the two houses are at peace. However, the Bisclavret have angered the Avoirdupois through their practice of seizing cargo ships of all houses near their coasts. The dispute would have flared into an outright war long ago but for the logistic difficulty of getting troops from one end of the continent to the other. It is suspected that the current Bisclavret initiative to build more ships may have something to do with this. One morning in the near future, the Avoirdupois may awake to find a thousand ships unloading Bisclavret mercenaries onto their shores.

### Chevernaise

The Bisclavret don't think about the Chevernaise much, who rarely come down from their lofty hide-aways in the Rothos Mountains. They are amused by the Doloreaux fear of the wild goats, and regard the Chevernaise as even more savage than their own Phelan brothers. The Chevernaise are welcome to squat on their frozen peaks.

### Doloreaux

The Bisclavret see the Doloreaux as a house that is very much in decline, beholden to their old ways and beliefs, but more forward-thinking than the Avoirdupois neighbors. The Doloreaux are a buffer against the expansion of the Avoirdupois, and the craftier Bisclavret use their mercenaries and spies to promote strife between their two rivals. The Doloreaux are rich in stone and metals, but are lacking in lumber, whereas the Bisclavret have the opposite. More money changes hands between the two than other houses, but neither house fully respects the other.

A few Bisclavret nobles and peasants near the border land of the two houses have converted to the Doloreaux religion of Lutarism. These few have a fairly friendly relationship with their Doloreaux neighbors. In other areas, a state of local hostility exists. Minor border clashes occur without the official approval of either side.

### The Merchant Guilds of Calabria

The Guilds and the Bisclavret have much in common. They both represent new power in Calabria. Both suffer the brunt of bias on the part of the entrenched nobility. Both have visions of a very different world. The Bisclavret are the best customers of the Sawyer's Guild (who cut the lumber) and the Sailor's Guild (who serve as a broker for hiring foreign mercenaries). However, their relations are not ideal. The Bisclavret port of Thanon is a safe



harbor for pirates who often sack Merchant Guild fleets. The free city of Triskellian is often used to sell goods or slaves taken by unscrupulous mercenaries from Bisclavret lands. Without any higher power or court to resolve their disputes, many nobles and merchants must find other ways to find satisfactory justice.

Rumors abound of a secret organization of thieves who work along the southern coast of Calabria, both in Triskellian and in Bisclavret ports, sometimes called the “Invisible Guild.” If such a cabal exists, the Bisclavret lords and the Master Merchants have yet to find conclusive proof. A criminal network would be enemy to both the nobility and the moneyed class.

## Phelan

Viewing their cousins as ignorant savages, suited only for base serfdom, the Bisclavret will on very rare occasions deal with Phelan chieftains and the like. For the most part, these dealings are very high-handed, and the Phelan rarely come out with the better part of the bargain.

The Bisclavret have, as a house, entirely turned their back on the Phelan ways. However, there are rebellious youth who occasionally ape the Phelan in an attempt to shock their elders. There are also a few more earnest souls who recognize that the Phelan way of life is not entirely without merit, and adopt some its trappings, such as the study of the ancient ways of Atavism, the talent for calling forth one’s base spirit forth to remarkable effect.

In very rare, situations a local Bisclavret lord on the border may enjoy the wary friendship of a Phelan tribe. Peasants in the border lands sometimes regard their Phelan neighbors with superstitious awe. In the normal course of affairs, though, the most contact a Bisclavret will have with a Phelan is when he bids on him in the slave market.

## Rinaldi

The Rinaldi are rulers of Calabria have title in name only. The Bisclavret find the Rinaldi dilettantes useful only as a claim to their legitimacy as nobles, for it is only by the centuries-old treaty with the Don Rinaldi that the Bisclavret have any claim to noble franchise. The Rinaldi nobles exploit their political status and generally live a life of idle turpitude, accepting bribes for their legal favors from all the Great Noble Houses.

The Rinaldi are seen as akin to a foolish and doddering old warrior, unwilling to turn over the reins of power. The Bisclavret lust after the wealth of Triskellian, and at the same time consider it be a den of weakness and iniquity. They hope that the Rinaldi will collapse under the weight of the Guilds, who will in turn fall to squabbling. The Bisclavret, with their ports and growing fleet, would be in a prime position to seize control of the city and establish a new and vital noble rule of law.





## The Minor Houses in Bisclavret Demesne

As is the common practice of Great Houses, the Bisclavret usurp the power of lesser houses in their territory, forcing them to concede tribute of goods and services in return to maintain title over their lands. The Bisclavret mostly ignore the entreaties of the lesser houses in Avoirdupois and Doloreaux demesne, who are usually too weak and too poor to be of any use to their ambitions. Each of these Noble Houses has sworn fealty to the Duke of Bisclavret. While all members of their royal families are still blooded and thus entitled to such privileges as “high justice” and the like, they are still eclipsed in power by forces greater than their own, for the Dukes claim no one above them as their masters.

### Blaireu

The badgers of the deep woods have the smallest population of those minor houses that swear tribute to the Duke. The Blaireu were already in decline during the time of Riddock, and their numbers grow smaller every year. Only four proper holdings remain, all small and ancient castles deep in the Muirc forest. Most of their nobles have sold their lands and titles, having sought commissions in the Bisclavret armies or having become scholars. In the past, a few Blaireu lords distinguished themselves to the point where they were invited to attend the Duke’s court as advisors.

The House of Blaireu is ruled by the elderly Viscount Gustaf. At his castle, he holds court with his few remaining retainers. While of little influence in grand matters, Lord Gustaf is well-liked by his people and he makes sure the taxes are paid on time, and the Indicateur spy in his court genuinely likes him.

Blaireu commoners tend to be poorly-educated, superstitious wood-cutters. Most are only dimly aware of the Bisclavret power structure - some know only that they are expected to kowtow to any rich looking wolves. Players who wish to make Blaireu characters may not purchase more than two points of nobility.



### Esclage

With their high population but their small holdings of land, the Esclage live mostly in poverty around the coastal towns, mostly within a bow-shot of Thanon’s walls. Some Esclage enjoy prosperity as privateers in the Bisclavret’s ships.

Prior to the expansion of the Bisclavret, the Esclage were isolationists, seldom intervening in affairs outside their territory. They purchased slaves from foreign sailors at low prices, brought them down the Via Salutis to Triskellian, and sold them for high prices to the Rinaldi and the merchants. After their absorption two hundred years ago, their fortunes have dwindled. Today, the Esclage serve the Bisclavret as overseers, harbor-masters, seneschals and officers in the court.

The Esclage population of nobles nears that of the commoners, so much so that almost any porcupine in Bisclavret demesne can claim to be of noble title and be believed. An Esclage noble may style himself as “Lord of the Weights and Measures,” or “Count of the Gates.” Esclage servants will sometimes copy this tendency, dubbing themselves the “Master of the Pantry” or “Guardian of the Third Floor Keys.”



Because of this over-population of the aristocracy, the Esclage are rarely taken seriously among their Minor-House peers and even more rarely elsewhere in Calabria. There is some grouching in royal circles that the Esclage are too trivial to enjoy franchise and should have their nobility removed.

The highest of the Esclage is Baron Epicium, who resides in a plain manor outside of Thanon.

## Repense

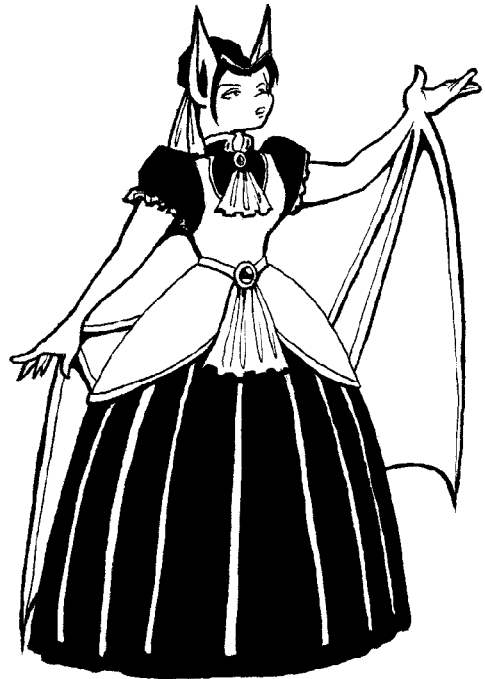
The Repense are something of a riddle to the Bisclavret, and indeed to the world at large. This small house of noble Bats are found on the banks of the River Skirfane, where their duties include maintenance of the river-side roads and canals. They uphold a spirit of courtly nobility at odds with their diminished status.

The chief concern of the Repense is the study of the stars. Most lords live in a series of tall, slender towers along the southern stretch of the river. From their lofty pinnacles, the head of each Repense household is expected to be educated in

astrology, to read portents in the stars, and to use these interpretations to guide their daily affairs. The head of the Repense, a haughty woman named Countess Venetia, is reputed to be a masterful Wizard of the Green and Purple College, as well as a seer.

Repense commoners are largely Mice. They live in well-kept villages, and tend neat plots of farmland, with extreme reverence for their mystical masters. At night, they whisper tales of the days when the star-gazing Bats were wingless Mice like themselves, and they swap stories of worthy Mice who were gifted wings. In the years since the Bisclavret conquest, the Mice have come to accept the Wolves as their temporal masters, but the Bats still maintain a grip on their spirits, a religious awe unseen in other parts of Calabria.

The Bisclavret have been quick to realize the advantages inherent in their control of a house whose members have the power of flight. The Indicateur have actively recruited among the Repense nobility, and several mercenary units have small companies of scouts.



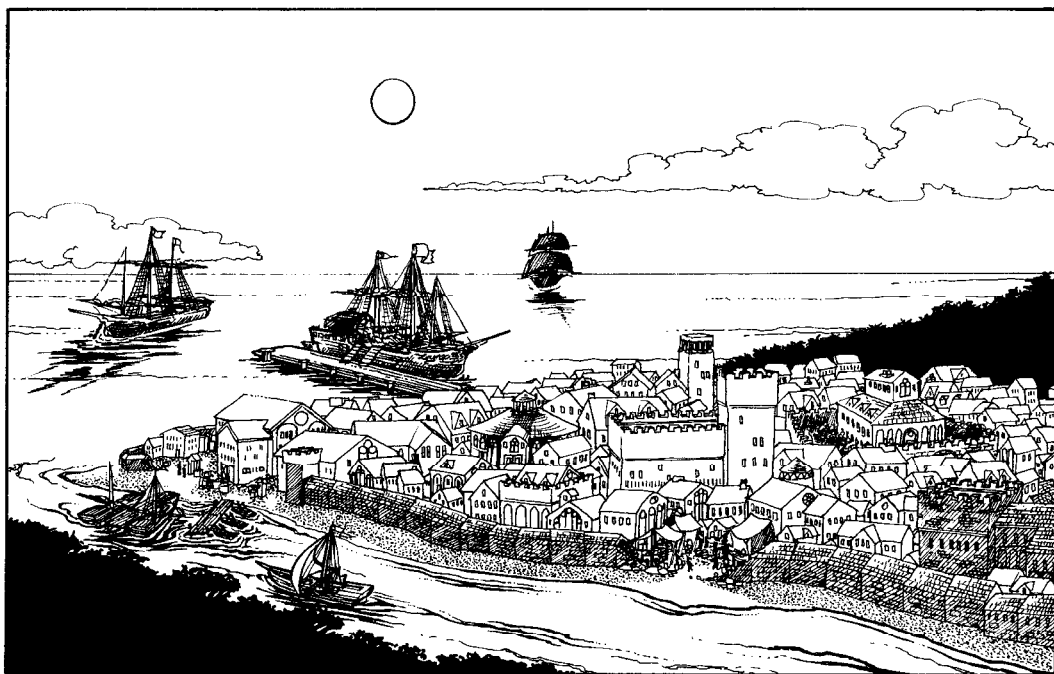
“The trees were nice, but the flies were horrid.”

— Duke Mausein Bisclavret, age nine,  
shortly after his first visit to a rural lord.

# GAZETTEER

## *Being a Guided Tour and Map*

The Bisclavret demesne has quite a bit of variation: mountains, grasslands, rolling hills, rocky coasts, and wetlands. But the majority of their land is lots and lots of forest, the key to their wealth. Their capital, the mighty fortress of Harrowgate, stands at the northern edge of their territory, on the border with the Phelan lands. From there the Bisclavret lands spread southward and westward to the sea. Eastward, their influence stops at the Granvert River, following its winding course down into the Bay of Auvrich. The Bisclavret are fond of boasting that they already control the western and southernmost points of the Calabrese mainland, and that the north and the east will not be long in coming.



## **Harrowgate**

In all ways, Castle Harrowgate is a physical manifestation of the Bisclavret expression of power. Its walls are constructed of modern style, sloped stone to stop cannonballs, in the “star” formation for overlapping fields of fire. Its interior has modern conveniences such as plumbing, an oven for smelting steel, and a mill. Expensive art, such as frescoes and tapestries, can be found in the royal halls. And Harrowgate goes too far to be “modern” – its hallways are complicated and improvised add-ons, its decorations baroque and extreme.

As with many fortresses, the proper town of Harrowgate is an urban sprawl of wooden-and-plaster buildings along meandering streets. Most people in attendance are patrons of the arts or the artists themselves, and various statues and theaters are in abundance. Taxation and rent upon Harrowgate property is exorbitant. Only nobles on official business are permitted within the Castle itself; for others, the noble quarters hold the greatest interest.

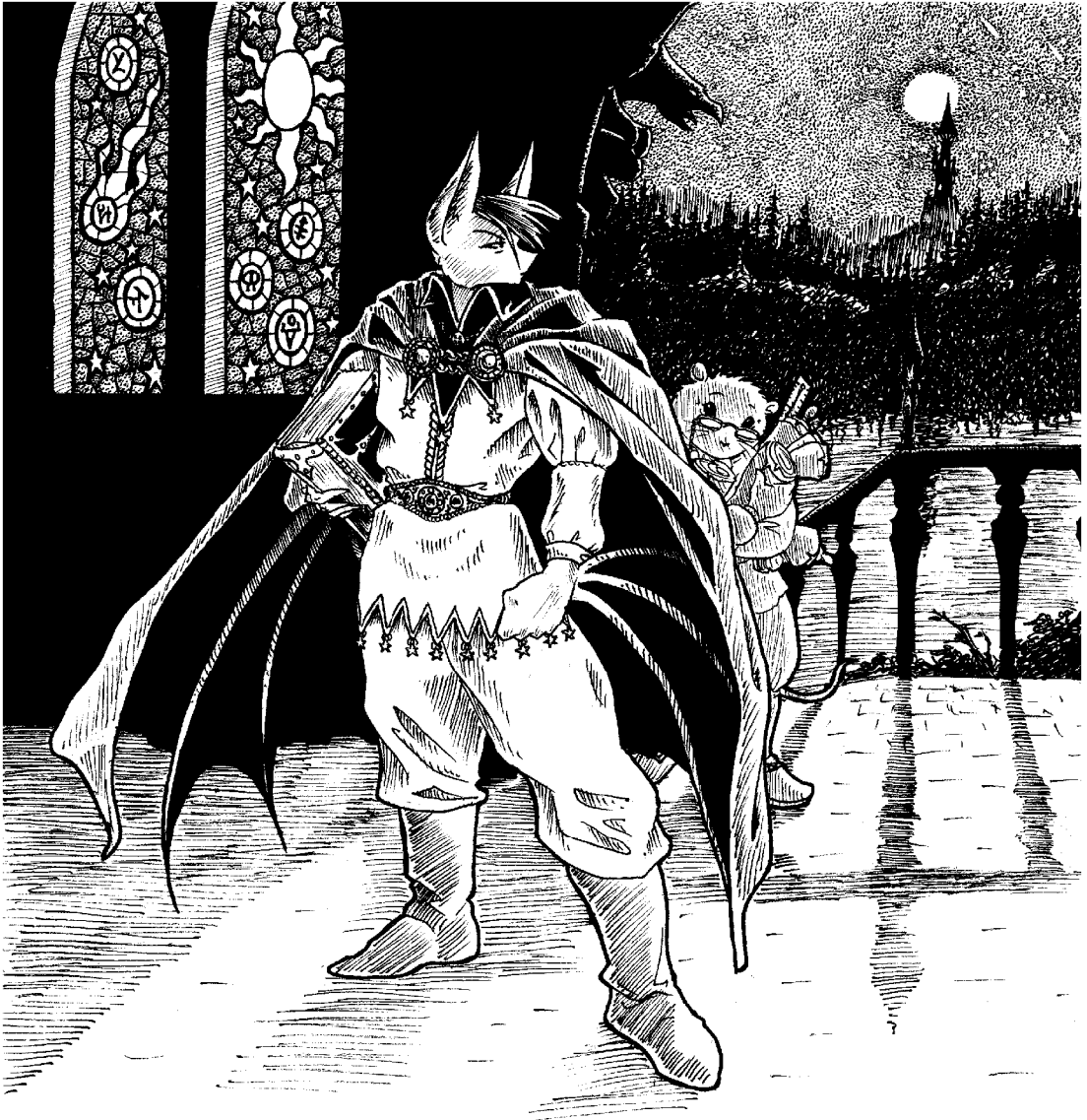



The walls and battlements are manned by members of the Harrow Guard, an elite company of mercenaries composed mostly of Screeberagh and Phelan stock, overseen by Blaireu captains. The Guard enjoys the best in arms and training that the Duke can provide. Footmen carry half-stone swords and rifles, and wear chain. Officers are armed with a brace of pistols. The Harrow Guard doubles as a town watch throughout the city.

Harrowgate is home to many taverns. Those of means will stay at the Duke's Favorite, famous for its façade of varnished wood. Most folks will prefer to room at the Greensward Inn, the Leather Cup, or the Steel Spoke. The poor or the indigent have no place in Harrowgate, and will have to make do in Cutach (below). Those of the cloth may enjoy hospitality at one of the eight churches built upon shrines of various key figures of S'Allumer.

### 1. Chateau du Bisclavret

Rising near the original fortifications of Harrowgate is a palace with walls almost a chain tall (22 meters), built in a style so modern it borders on the self-conscious. Following a long tradition, each Duke has added some room, tower, spire, or other architecture to the castle,





each more ornate than the last. The local folk are often impressed by its grandeur; more worldly folk from Triskellian or abroad often balk at its monstrosity.

A tapestry eight paces square hangs in the Bisclavret throne room, depicting the famous meet when Riddock Déanamh-Gaisce of the Tuath na Bianféal declared himself to be king, attended by his sympathizer lords and ladies. The authenticity of the picture is very much in doubt – the clothes and the furniture in the image are a hundred years out of date.

Many statues can be found of historical figures, all treated with equal importance, regardless of how large or small (or fictional) their accomplishments were. The center square has the Font de Farranet, a four-pace tall fountain in the courtyard, and those who have seen it say that mere words do not do it justice.

## 2. The Old Castle - The Indicateur Lyceum

After construction of the Chateau de Bisclavret, the original keep was used as barracks and storage. When the Indicateur were founded, they were stationed in the old building, which would henceforth be known as the Lyceum d'Indicateur. The ancient, drafty fortress serves as an academy, barracks, Hall of Records, and home to the senior members of the Indicateur. Prospective agents travel here (with their letters of recommendation in hand) for their long apprenticeship and training. Once they are suitably finished, the agents are dispatched far away (where no one would recognize them) or put to work sorting and reviewing the reports from all over Calabria.

In addition to reports, the Indicateur also serve as exchequers, counting the tax money and meting out the pay for the mercenaries. Several of the castle's rooms are devoted to counting-houses and bureaucracy. There are rumors of secret dungeons with political prisoners, of arcane devices that focus magical energies to spy on far-away places, of dark temples to long-forgotten gods, and of the usual nonsense that surrounds places of great secrecy.

## 3. Arena

A popular place for spectacle and sport, the Arena is the official grounds where people suffer “trial by combat” – where an accused person fights a Judicial Champion appointed by the court. If the person on trial wins the combat, they are free; more often than not, a slow, painful death awaits them, to the hoots and hollers of a cheering mob.

## 4. The Merchant Quarter

### 5. The Merchant Plaza

The first thing a traveler sees upon entry through the forbidding city gates is the bustling merchants' quarter. While small in comparison to Triskellian's or Bruges', the Merchant Quarter of Harrowgate is still impressive, with many exotic goods for sale.

The Merchant Quarter's land is open for purchase by commoners, but space is limited and the prices are extremely high. However, the Bisclavret gentry actively discourage the Triskellian Guilds from purchasing land, often arresting Guild Members (and suspected Guild Members) as a show of their noble power. The few merchants that own land here walk a thin line between enormous profits and severe punishment. The Merchant Quarter is one of the few places in Calabria to find rich merchants who oppose Guild rule.

The most famous part of quarter is Thiestoiré Street, known for its slaughterhouses and for its auction blocks of both livestock and slaves. Animals and people from across the seas, captured Phelan, indentured criminals, and captured prisoners-of-war are all sold off at least once a month, in all kinds of weather. Criminals from all around Calabria might find their way in





chains to Harrowgate, where the slave-masters ask fewer questions than those of Triskellian and where prices are often much higher.

The Merchant Quarter has no inns – only boarding houses and taverns. The rich make a point of either owning a residence here or in staying with well-to-do friends and relatives.

## 6. *Via Salutis*

This is the famous “Safe Road” that leads to Triskellian, several leagues away.

## 7. Cutach (“The Stumps”)

The name given to the poorest section of Harrowgate, Cutach is the poverty-stricken lands north of the city and south of Lake Coire. A few generations ago, Phelan refugees (such as escaped slaves, losers of tribal wars, disgraced families, etc.) asked the Duke for protection. In a rare show of mercy, the Duke granted them this small plot of land.

Cutach has yet to be cleared properly. Tree stumps dot the area, giving Cutach the nickname of “The Stumps”. Phelan-style huts, with round walls and thatched roofs, mix with random bits of stone-work and modern engineering. Sanitation is poor, and public works are lacking. Some locals are dejected and without hope; others show a strong pride despite their squalor. There is only one tavern to be found, “The Bard’s Tears”, and a blacksmith working with an old-fashioned anvil. The citizens of Cutach often become unskilled laborers, servants, or mercenaries. Cutach is the most likely place to find Atavists or even a practicing Druid (who will naturally be in disguise as a priest or beggar, to avoid prosecution for heresy). While the Bisclavret continue their aggressive campaign of modernism, much of their former culture has been destroyed. One of the few places to find people who still remember the ancient songs and history of the *Bianféal* are within the shadows of the Cutach. More than one scholar of Triskellian’s Dunwasser College has gone to Cutach seeking lost knowledge ... and run afoul of some dread mishap at the hands of desperate miscreants.



Travelers are advised to avoid Cutach. The only traffic that travels through the area is from infrequent river-boat service.

## 8. Lake Coire

A largely placid lake, the Coire is notoriously foggy at night, and often dangerous to navigate for small boats, as at all times of year large logs are floated down-river to Port Spar.

## 9. River Nith

The major route of commerce in Bisclavret demesne, this river is busy all year round, with logs being floated down to Triskellian for sale, and boats bringing imported goods to the north.

## 10. Harrowgate Shipyards

A place of constant activity, the Shipyards have people working at all hours to meet demand. With the constant demand, rates for ship-building have soared, and many Bisclavret nobles have begun construction of their private vessels elsewhere.



## 11. Sawmills

The only place in Harrowgate busier than the Shipyards, the Sawmills are full of laborers and slaves pulling logs from the lake, sawing them up, splitting the wood, and planing the planks. Few jobs are more physically demanding, or as dangerous – many folks are maimed or killed each year. The Sawmills are also a likely place to find strong, stubborn people who aren't afraid of pain or risk, and thus is a popular place for work for mercenaries who don't want to travel.

## 12. Drawbridge

Almost always lowered, the Drawbridge of Harrowgate can only be raised by permission of the captain of the watch. The standard toll is 3 denarii per pace of length of the ship's beam.

## 13. Barracks

The Harrow Guard call this place their home. Also found here are three sloops (small boats) used by the Guard on surprise raids or to chase scofflaws out on the lake.

## 14. Armory

This may be the largest repository of guns and powder in all of Calabria. Rumor has it that the place is guarded by a Master Water Elementalist, or even by a Water Elemental itself.

## 15. Cathédrale du Saint Tàisealan

The largest church in Bisclavret demesne, the cathedral began its construction over a hundred years ago during the reign of Duke Tàisealan. Because of his indulgence to the Church of S'Allumer and because of his many reforms, the Duke was canonized after his death, an act of questionable morality that bothers many people to this day. Still, the Cathedral is a place of refuge for those seeking charity, and it is a popular destination of pilgrimage among the Hyperduliants, a branch of the S'Allumer church (q.v. *Avoirdupois*).

## 16. River Watchtower

Possibly the oldest structure in all of Harrowgate, a giant, corroded bell remains here in the tower, its swing rusted still and its clapper long gone. According to experts from Dunwasser, this bell is Harrowgate's original *magh*, the bell used to mark the borders of the town according to Phelan custom. Modern Bisclavret deny this, but offer no counter explanation.

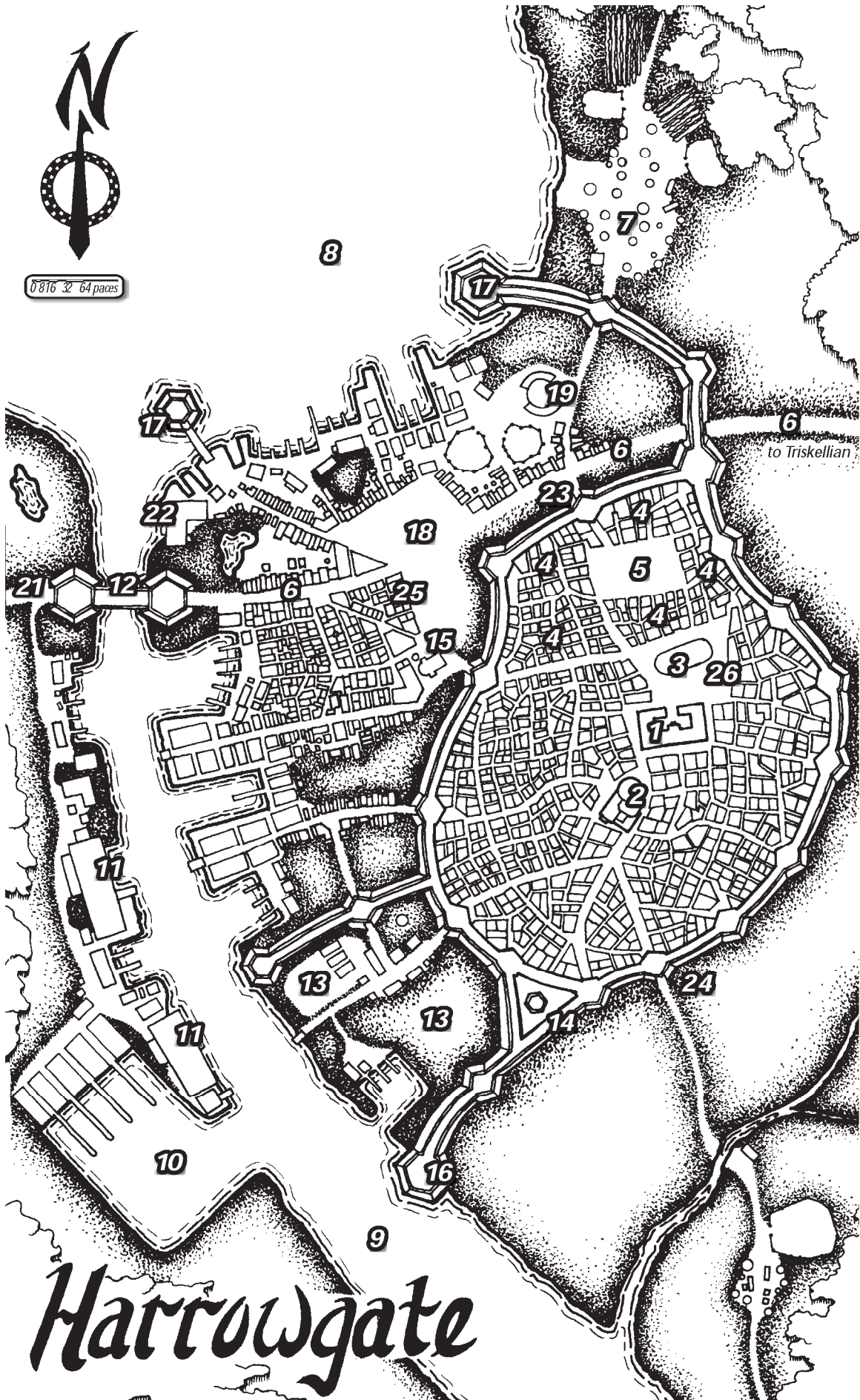
## 17. Lake Watchtowers

Originally, these towers were supposed to be twice as tall, but the Bisclavret lacked the engineering skill (or perhaps they just had too much hubris).





0 816 32 64 paces



# Harrowgate



## 18. Merced Dale

Also known as the “New Market Square”, Merced Dale is located outside of Harrowgate’s walls, and thus is home to the less-expensive vendors who cannot afford the more expensive licenses. Merced Dale is also Harrowgate’s largest slave market – the Bisclavret use the idiom “to stand in the Merced Dale” as an expression to mean to be sold into slavery or (sometimes) to work for an unkind boss who might as well be a slave-driver.

## 19. The Fèrobian Bibliotheca

Named after Lord Fèrobius (who may or may not have existed, depending on who you ask), the Bibliotheca is the largest library in Harrowgate. The story goes that Fèrobius founded the library as a place to train folks in the modern sciences of engineering, technology, and wizardry. Bisclavret nobles (and the aristocrats of the Minor Houses) send their princes and princesses here to be “suitably finished” and schooled in the higher pursuits. The Fèrobians like to cultivate a rivalry with the members of Triskellian’s Dunwasser College, but the Dunwassers are usually too level-headed for that sort of conflict and remain wryly bemused. Rumors abound that, somewhere in the dark hallways and deep catacombs, the Bibliotheca holds some of the oldest and most powerful relics of the Phelan race, things even the modernist Bisclavret are too frightened to destroy.

## 20. Priory

Various monasteries and churches are found on these streets. The Priory is one of the few places in Harrowgate to find Druids, masquerading as a modern worshipper of S’Allumer, but one would have to be pretty savvy to find them. More than one desperate person has gone to the Priory seeking charity (q.v. *Ironclaw*).

## 21. Road to Thanon

The last place of relative safety is the Inn of the Lighted Candle, and a few other accommodations around it. After that are leagues of wilderness, rife with beasts, bandits, and all sorts of danger.

## 22. Foundry

Making guns is not easy. To achieve gun-quality steel, ovens must reach incredible temperatures, and thus must be constructed specifically for the purpose. The Harrowgate foundry runs only a few days a month, but then it runs all day long, with two crews working to make as many cannons, guns, and proved plate as possible. Regulars of Harrowgate sometimes refer to “foundry rain,” the hot ash that falls from the sky during those times. Because of such pollution, the foundry does not run on Dimarche (the day of worship), religious holidays, or during parades.

## 23. North Gate

## 24. South Gate

Possibly the only gate-men more surly than the ones of Triskellian are the ones of Harrowgate. If someone gets into the city and makes trouble, the gate-men are the first to be called up for discipline by their superiors, and in the Bisclavret climate (where folks are always eager to prove themselves and to move ahead by disgracing others), the guards would be more likely to err on the side of caution and not let any obviously dangerous or indigent folks into their capital city. Of course, many guards would be willing to take a chance at trouble if a bribe was sufficiently large....

## 25. The Triangle

A tangle of streets, the Triangle is home to the many boarding-houses, taverns, and hostels that cater to the many folks who pass through Harrowgate. Ownership and names change regularly, and it takes a Streetwise individual to separate the fair establishments from the rip-offs from the downright dangerous. Enduring names include The Weight and Balance, The Broken Rock, The Shattered Windows, and Hallam's Boarding House.

## 26. The Vulgar Grisette

The largest inn of Harrowgate, with rooms catering from the middle-class all the way to those whose status is just a bit too low to demand hospitality from the Duke himself, the Vulgar Grisette is famous for the fancy gray gowns and tunics worn by the serving-women and -men. The current Metropolitan of Harrowgate, Her Most Reverend Caithe-Beatha, has recently decried this tavern as a place of iniquity, which has only added to its reputation.



## Thanon

Situated on a narrow spit of rocky land, Thanon is the western-most settlement in Calabria. It gazes out towards an unknown horizon, lashed by frequent storms and floods. Thanon is often the first view of Calabria seen by the crews of foreign vessels, and it is a grim one.

The stone houses and battlements of Thanon blend in with the rocky terrain, offering little hospitality to visitors. Experienced sailors know better — Thanon has many welcoming taverns and inns, and a seasoned voyager knows that the chilly stone walls hide warm hearths and good company. A good example is the “Lucky Refuge,” an inn run by the mysterious but friendly Fu Lei, an ex-merchant who has just recently purchased the place but is already quite popular with the locals.

While the port may be inviting for sailors, many who arrive in Thanon will know little joy, as this port is where many slaves are unloaded. Some will be sold as galley-slaves to row boats for the rest of their miserable lives; some will be sent to nearby mines to work in the dark for the rest of their days; others will be taken to Harrowgate or Triskellian in an attempt to fetch better prices.

Thanon is also noted for the monastery of *Lumière Du Monde*, founded by the Eleutherians, a society who oppose slavery in all its forms. Some of them are Penitents of S'Allumer, others are various philanthropists. Their members print books and bills and preach their doctrine to all who would hear, advocating that all people are endowed with the right to liberty at their creation. The Eleutherians are not popular with the aristocracy or the merchants.

Thanon was once the seat of power of the Esclage, a Minor Noble House of Porcupines that has since been absorbed by the Bisclavret. The nobles maintain their own titles and franchise,

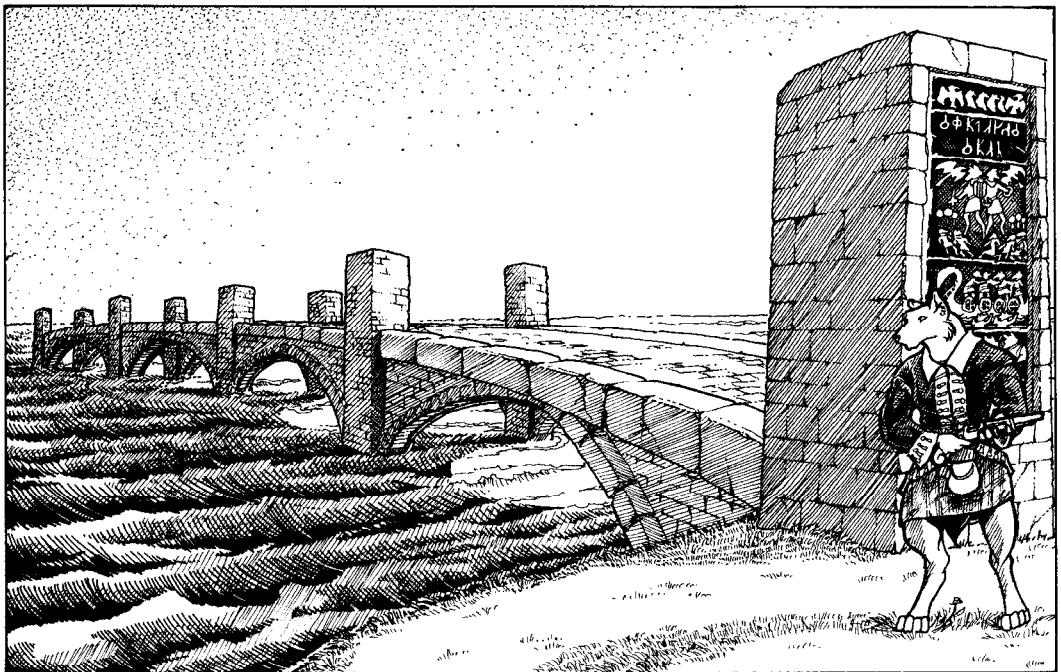




but swear loyalty to a Bisclavret governor. The Esclage have been put to work as the government of the port, as magistrates, overseers, exchequers, and quartermasters. These officials are notorious for being honest, but also for being lackluster. In other words, if they are forced to get involved, they will impose lots of hidden fees and obscure regulations to extract money or to arrest trouble-makers. The key to successful business in Thanon is to pay dock fees on time and to avoid involving the law.

Because of the *laissez-faire* attitude of the officials, Thanon is a popular port with pirates. Many ships arrive with cargo stolen from ships bound for Triskellian, to be sold to the Bisclavret or to other merchants. A particular idiom in Bisclavret territory is “Auvrich’s flotsam” – referring to goods pillaged from ships sailing into the Bay of Auvrich, sold and re-packaged in Thanon, then shipped over-land along the road of the *Via Salutis*.

Of course, the Bisclavret nobles loudly denounce such criminal activity, but the Avoirdupois, Doloreaux, and the Merchant Guilds know better – and as tensions rise and fortunes are stolen, there are many who plot their revenge. Every year, the merchant boats are bigger and stock more cannon.



### The Unfinished Bridge

West of Thanon, there is the incomplete construction of a stone bridge that extends some hundred-odd paces over the sea. The Unfinished Bridge pre-dates the founding of Thanon, its blocks inscribed with letters in an unknown language. The Unfinished Bridge does not appear to ever have been finished. It simply ends, with no evident damage of collapse, hanging over the roiling waves.

Whoever built this bridge, and to what purpose, is still unknown. One old Phelan legend claims it was a bridge to a spirit world, which will re-open when the *geisa* (mystical prohibitions) deem that it is right to re-appear. A popular conceit is that there was once a grand city above the waves, but it was destroyed by the Autarchs in their magical wars of long ago. One story among the Doloreaux makes reference to “Septagus’ Span”, a magical bridge whereby the evil bogeyman of Lutarism marched his troops into Calabria. Those gifted with second sight have claimed to receive “impressions” from the bridge on certain nights.



Whatever the truth may be, on rare cold, clear nights, a group of hooded figures have been spotted on the bridge, dancing wildly and chanting. No one knows where they come from, or what their ritual entails, and they have yet to be caught or questioned.

## Muire Forest

Divided by the River Nith, this mighty forest is the core of Bisclavret wealth. Long ago, the Muire Forest extended unbroken along the shores of the River Granvert. Growing settlements and increasing demand for timber have changed that, and large expanses of the forest have been cut clear, or are interrupted by clearings and farmland, or are rife with roads and trails. The Muire is the Bisclavret heartland, and its inhabitants are very loyal to their House. Paradoxically, the Muire is also where the most bitter feuds between local lords take place, with fierce disputes over who is allowed to cut trees where.

Muire land that is not owned by Bisclavret title is owned by the Blaireu ... but since the Blaireu must pay tribute to their Bisclavret lords, it is safe to say that Bisclavret own the whole woods. The darker parts of the forest are home to a tribe of Screeberagh, whose presence is technically illegal but who are cunning, stealthy, and thus difficult to remove. Many of these Screeberagh have learned the common language of Calabrese and gain employ as scouts, bodyguards, or mercenaries.

Logging within the woods is quite dangerous. First, there is the risk of injury from falling trees. Second, there are the other lords who dispute their neighbors' claims to timber, who encourage their sheriffs to arrest or to attack trespassers found within their declared borders. Third, there are roaming herds of *bethrachranna*, clawed toothy beasts who hunt in packs, though their attacks are rarer each year as their numbers are thinned by organized hunting.


Naturally, Indicateur agents, both obvious and in secret, are common in the Muire Forest, to count the trees and to make sure proper taxes are being paid. The agents are small in number but are rumored to be more numerous (as is the result of good police training).

## River Nith

The *Via Salutis* is the most important east-west route through the Bisclavret lands, and the River Nith is the most important path from north to south. The Nith drains into the Quistonsee Ocean from Lake Coire, far off in the mountains. Its banks run to within a bow-shot of Harrowgate, and it winds generally southward through the gentle forested hills of the Muire.

The Nith is a broad and pleasant river for most of its length, quite navigable for river-boats but far too shallow for ocean-going ships. (Larger vessels dock at Port Spar, where they





transfer their cargo into flat-bottomed barges.) These long and narrow vessels are hauled northward by harnessed drays walking on the banks. Empty barges are borne southward by the current. Once every few days, a passenger barge makes its way to Harrowgate.

Passage along the Nith from Port Spar to Harrowgate may be bought for 12 denarii, or from Harrowgate to Port Spar for 8. The journey in either direction takes about two weeks. There are also dirt roads, maintained in only the most bare-bones manner, where one would stop at the inns known as Crossed Cabers and the House on the High Hill (which is on a former execution site, and is rumored to be haunted by those hanged many years ago).

## Port Spar

Port Spar is a narrow strip of a settlement that follows the east bank of the River Nith northward, within bow-shot of the rocky foothills of the Lochlan Mountains. The port exists because of the sea – no true roads exist leading to other places on land, just overgrown paths unpreserved by any workers. The port's buildings are mostly constructed of wood and plaster, save a few stone towers with cannon for defense and with light-house lamps that are lit at night. Dozens of docks protrude from the shore, next to sizeable warehouses. One local saying has it that more of Port Spar is built on water than land.

Port Spar is a place of constant hustle and bustle. Well-armed mercenaries patrol the docks, looking for drunkards to press into service as soldiers and for bribes for not noticing the frequent violations of Bisclavret law that they observe. Brawling privateer crews roam the streets, spending the spoils of their most recent captures. Noisome bawds summon unsuspecting souls into dank alleys. Maddened priests of S'Allumer shout their gospels at every corner, beseeching the wicked to give up their ways. Every street has a tavern with rum for sale that is notorious for making men go blind. Port Spar is also home to Gymari (q.v.), a merchant of some repute, who is said to be a dangerous man to cross, and to be a member of the rumored "Invisible Guild."

Despite its black reputation, Port Spar is very much under the authority of the Bisclavret. *Lady Adelia Ratatiner*, a canny widow in early middle-age, knows much of what transpires in the town, the news carried to her imposing stone manor home by an unofficial network of spies. Lady Ratatiner allows a great deal of illegal trade to exist, in the knowledge that commerce of any kind enriches her House in the long run. However, she does not allow visiting nobles or other worthies to be harmed, and does not take kindly to new underworld powers starting power struggles. Visiting nobles of every house and nation will be offered the protection of the town guard. Indiscreet outsiders hoping to make a mark in the criminal empire she suffers to exist will also receive a visit from these guards. She is a firm believer in the existence of the "Invisible Guild" and is currently working with the Indicateur to uncover them.

Prices and quality of goods and services in Port Spar vary wildly, inviting many an Appraise Test, Forgery Test, and Haggle Test (q.v. *Ironclaw*). Recommended taverns include The Sawyer's Place and The Hunter's Moon; less savory company can be found at the Inn of the Rusted Anchor or the Current-on-the-Beam, among numerous other places. Those desperate for aid might find help at the Sallant Monastery, the largest body of S'Allumer worshippers to be found.

Journeying down the River Nith to Port Spar, and then to Triskellian, is generally considered the safest and most pleasant way of traveling from Harrowgate to the Rinaldi capitol. It is also the fastest way of sending large cargoes, a fact not lost on the Bisclavret generals. They could raise an army in Harrowgate, send it down the Nith, and have it under full sail to Triskellian before anyone was the wiser...

## Lochlan Mountains

A small range of rocky peaks rises suddenly out of the coast just south of the Muire Forest. While none of these mountains are tall enough to challenge the grim majesty of the Rothos, a few peaks are lofty enough to touch the clouds, their snow-peaks visible throughout the year. Unlike the Rothos, the Lochlans are poor in precious metals and gems, but they do hide metals like iron, lead, and copper. The Bisclavret maintain a number of mining operations through extensive use of slave labor. The mining is hard and yields nothing close to what may be had in the Rothos.

Besides the mining settlements, the Lochlans are almost entirely unpopulated. Rumors persist of a hidden tribe of Phelan in the more inaccessible areas. There are also tales of great treasures to be had by those daring enough to brave the treacherous mountain passes, and of ruins of a citadel of a forgotten Autarch.

At the coast, the Lochlan Mountains suddenly plunge into the Quistonsee Ocean, forming a forbidding landscape of sea-cliffs. At the base huddle a few tiny fishing villages, with no inns or proper churches.

Of more interest to adventurers, however, is the crumbling keep built a stone's throw from shore, far from any settlement. This forgotten fortress was once the lair of a petty pirate king, Gustafus the Green. The wily rat, named for his bright green eyes, eluded Rinaldi and Bisclavret patrols for years before meeting his doom near the mouth of the River Skirfane. There are tales that he buried a great treasure somewhere along this rocky coast before he died. There are also rumors that his angry ghost haunts the keep; fishermen report seeing a strange green light in the tower windows.





## River Skirfane and the Skirfane Greens

Springing from an underground source in the highlands west of the Lochlan Mountains, the Skirfane flows south through the forest home of the Minor House of Repense, into the Bay of Auvrich.

The highlands where the Skirfane has its genesis is a place of rain-soaked green hills where peasants of canine stock herd their drays. Small manor homes and towers dot the rolling hills, connected by a series of lonely roads. The Skirfane Greens are a quiet landscape, where adventures tend to be rare. Many young souls, not wishing to spend their lives tending noisy, smelly animals, volunteer for the active life of a mercenary.

Quiet as the land may appear, in some of the more isolated villages there are tales of ghosts and monsters that wander the midnight roads, preying on lone wayfarers. More than one scholar has braved the dark fog of before the sunrise to find the truth behind these tales.

Further south, the River Skirfane transverses a land of broad-leafed forests and rich dark earth, the proper home of the Repense, a Minor House of Bats that was conquered by the Bisclavret in the time of Riddock Déanamh-Gaisce. The river flows quickly by their towers, emptying into the Bay of Auvrich. The Repense are content to spend their time quietly fishing and star-gazing, and they have no particular aspirations towards regaining their former status. The Bisclavret demand little of them, beyond taxes of their crops and fish.

The Bisclavret have constructed a fairly sizable fortress at the mouth of the Skirfane, the *Château Riviere*, which guards against possible invasion up the Skirfane. A small town has sprung up around its walls, serving as a base of operations for pirates raiding the Triskellian trade routes. Only one tavern, the Mossy Stone, has space to house visitors. Still on construction is the Cupidory of Anathasia, a temple devoted to unorthodox worshippers of S'Allumer.

## Corsair Islands

Officially, no Noble House has title to the islands. The Bisclavret assert frequent claim to them, always disputed by the Rinaldi who are (in title anyway) the high rulers of all of Calabria. The recent Bisclavret increase in naval power has rendered the Rinaldi claims impotent, for now. While no other Noble House or organization has an interest in these barren isles, they all have an interest in driving a wedge between the Bisclavret and the Rinaldi. The matter continues to be debated by petty nobles and diplomats, while the few inhabitants of the Corsair Islands live as they please.

The islands themselves are mostly small, dismal affairs, windswept salt marshes inhabited by wild reptiles and surrounded by treacherous reefs. These small islands have no permanent inhabitants, but are sometimes used seasonally as fishing camps or as temporary bases by the pirates who gave the Corsairs their name.

The largest islands are slightly more hospitable, and have a small native population. Most have small creeks and ponds of fresh water, and stands of hardy trees. The largest settlement is the fishing village of Salthaven (q.v.). It is by no means the only settlement, however. Pirates, outlaws, shipwrecks, escaped slaves... all have fled to the Corsairs for their own reasons.

The wide channel between the islands and the mainland is an important shipping lane. The Corsairs themselves form a giant sea-wall that takes the edge off violent storms. But an expert navigator, an accurate map, and experienced sailors are required to navigate the reefs, unexpected shallows, and powerful currents. In recent years, piracy has become a problem, as a keen pirate-captain knows the few safe routes through the islands, can quickly trap his target, and run them aground or sack their ship, and then retreat to any number of secret hideaways.





## Salthaven

This village hangs precariously off the side of a rocky prominence. About two-dozen ramshackle wooden buildings are home to about three hundred people of almost every race. The people of Salthaven earn living through fishing and smuggling. The Bisclavret maintain a Indicateur office here, but it serves as little more than a observation post. The town's inhabitants answer to an elected reeve.


There are three small taverns in the village (the Broken Compass, the Bilge-Water, and the eponymous Tavern of Salthaven), and a single inn, The Gull's Rest. The innkeeper is friendly enough, but the rooms are alternately drafty and cold or stifling. The only thing on the menu is chowder, but it's said to be very good chowder. Those searching out spiritual help will find no proper churches, but many mendicant monks of S'Allumer are often in attendance performing acts of charity.

## Port L'Olonoise and the Saltbelly

Of more interest to adventurers than the quiet fishing village of Salthaven is Port L'Olonoise. This town, situated on particularly inhospitable stretch of shore and extending on rickety piers over the buffeting waves, acts as a home away from home for the most hardened and vile of characters. Pirates who are too notorious to dispose of their booty in any Calabrese port come to Port L'Olonoise to spend their ill-gotten gains.

The Port is especially infamous for The Saltbelly, a tavern, bawdy-house, pawn-broker, and slave market. This reprehensible hive actually lies *underneath the water*. The location of the entrance is a secret that can be bought for a few denarii from any knowledgeable Port ruffian. The entrance is two sets of counter-levered wooden doors set in a rocky bank under one of the docks. It is generally guarded by a pair of burly rats, who ask a password from those who would enter (and who make it clear that gold is the best password of all). A few coins will





generally suffice, as will a show of force. However, the guards will be sure to remember the face of any abusive adventurers, and pass on that description to others.

The Saltbelly was built in a series of abandoned stone-flagged catacombs that run for about 50 paces under the waves. The dripping walls are covered in slippery green moss, and many chambers are partially flooded with stagnant water. Still, it is an ideal place to rid oneself of awkward goods and people, and possibly make a small profit. Some sections flood at high-tide, but the common areas are kept dry by a series of clever bulwarks and by pumps manned by hapless slaves. There is also a tavern and common room (ideal for odd gossip) and rooms for rent down here, hardly good for convalescence but excellent for hiding. The de-facto owner of Saltbelly is Old Neant, is a towering black Bear with only one ear. Some whisper that he is really none other than One-Eared Jovario, former first mate to the legendary pirate, Gustafus the Green. If Neant is asked, he will simply laugh and refuse to say anything more.

## The River Granvert

The mighty Granvert splits into two at the foot of the Wall of Calabria, the natural stone cliffs that reach up to half a league in height. The eastern branch becomes the Lyorc, while the western branch continues the Granvert for ten more leagues, where it splits again: the northern branch is the Ruther, while what continues west is known as the Petite Granvert, a slow-moving and marshy stream.

The River Granvert marks the eastern border of the Bisclavret lands, which has remained quite well-defined for hundreds of years. Across its eastern shores is the demesne of the Doloreaux, who gaze enviously at the mighty stands of trees on the Bisclavret bank. Surprisingly, very few border skirmishes take place here. The Doloreaux are too sparsely settled to hope to take the opposite, and the rich mountain mines craved by the Bisclavret are too far away to risk an invasion here.

At the mouth of the Granvert, the Rinaldi capital of Triskellian may also be seen from the Bisclavret side on a clear day. It is upon this city that the Bisclavret focus most of their attention. The Bisclavret have constructed a small naval fortress across the river, with cannons pointed ominously towards the great city, but laughably out of reach. Numerous other strongholds mark the progress of the river northward. A small castle bestrides the *Via Salutis*, the road from Triskellian to Harrowgate, at the point where it crosses the river, where the Bisclavret sometimes demand outrageous tolls from foreign merchants.

The Granvert is the prime river for trade from Triskellian, allowing access to the towns of three different houses. As such, it is also a target of regular river piracy.

## The *Via Salutis* (The Granvert Road)

Cutting across the Western half of Calabria is a road that extends from the gates of Triskellian to slave market of Thanon. The *Via Salutis*, often called “The Granvert Road” in this modern day, represents the single greatest engineering achievement of the Rinaldi golden age. At their peak, Rinaldi guardsmen patrolled the road’s entire length and guaranteed the safety of travelers between Triskellian and the Walls of Calabria. Beyond that, the stone-paved road plunged into the heart of the mighty Muire Forest before emerging seventy leagues farther, near Thanon.

Times change, but the road remains. Though the stone-flags have been removed in many spots by locals seeking building material, it is still the surest and quickest way overland. The Bisclavret are careful to ensure that the road remains passable in all seasons and have encouraged the construction of road-side Inns at long intervals. However, lengthy stretches of the road are plagued by bandits and Phelan raiders from the north, especially as it passes through the Muire Forest.

“Dépasser le passée. Saisir le futur.  
[Outrun the past, seize the future.]”

— motto of the White Duke

# ROLE-PLAYING IN BISCLAVRET DEMESNE

*In Which New Rules are Presented  
for the Benefit of Player-Characters*

## Making a Character

Here are some suggestions on how to make a character that hails from the Bisclavret lands. Options presented in roman type are from *Ironclaw*; options presented in *italic* type are in this book.

<i>Design Choice</i>	<i>Suggestions for Bisclavret Characters</i>
<b>Traits</b>	High Speed and Career
<b>Race</b>	Wolves, followed by Dogs, Porcupines, Bats, Badgers, and Mice
<b>Gifts</b>	Atavist; Belongings; Extra Move; Guild Membership; Good Reputation; <i>Greater Investiture</i> ; <i>Indicateur</i> ; <i>Local Investiture</i> ; <i>Letter of Marque</i> ; Luck; Prodigy; Robustness
<b>Flaws</b>	Agnostic; Bad Reputation; Capricious; Coarse; Drunkard; Duty; Envious; Faltering; Foe; Garrulous; Greedy; Gregarious; Heroic; Lustful; Poverty; Proud; Rivalry; Romance; Scofflaw; Showoff; Slothful; Stubborn; Superstitious; Wrathful
<b>Careers</b>	Archeologist; Artisan; <i>Astrologer</i> ; Bandit; <i>Bard</i> ; Bawd; Beggar; Boatman; Bodyguard; Bounty Hunter; Burglar; Clockwork Maker; Charlatan; Dilettante; Dragoon; Exciseman; Farmer; Fence; Fisherman; Gambler; <i>Grenadier</i> ; Herdsman; Highwayman; Homeopath; Hunter; Jailer; Judicial Champion; Laborer; Marine; Mercenary; Merchant; Messenger; Navigator; Ostler; Peddler; Pickpocket; Pit Fighter; <i>Privateer</i> ; Racketeer; Ranger; Road Warden; Robber; Rustler; Sailor; Scout; Seer; Servant; Slaver; Smuggler; Soldier; Spy; Toll Keeper; Torturer; Trader; Trapper; Vermin Catcher; Watchman; Witch Hunter
<b>Skills</b>	Acting; Administration; Animal Handling; Area Knowledge; Boating; Brawling; Bribery; Camouflage; Carousing; Climbing; Clockwork; Cloak; Craft; Cryptography; Diplomacy; Dodge; Fast-Talk; Fencing; Forgery; Gambling; Geography; Gun; Hagging; Herbalism; Hiking; Holdout; Intimidation; Language; Leadership; Lock-picking; Observation; Psychology; Resolve; Seduction; Shadowing; Singing; Sixth Sense; Stealth; Streetwise; Swimming; Sword; Tactics; Trade: Gunsmith; <i>Trade: Musical Instrument</i> ; Weather Sense

In addition, there are some new options presented here that are appropriate for Bisclavret Characters.

## New Gifts

### Esoteric Gift – Greater Investiture: Indicateur (1 point)

*Requirements: a die in Cryptography (whether from Career or Skill) of d8 or better; the Flaw of Duty*

This Gift, not granted lightly, establishes you as an agent of the Duke of Bisclavret's private secret police. Within Bisclavret demesne, an Indicateur is entitled to demand "the Duke's audience" at any time. When asserting this authority, all Bisclavret nobles are expected to remand the Indicateur agent over to the Duke, unharmed and with all speed and convenience. In this way, Indicateurs are immune from the justice meted out by any nobles of lower rank than the Duke – at court, they simply demand the Duke's audience, and they must be spirited away to Harrowgate.

This Investiture is honored almost without exception in Bisclavret demesne – too many lords and ladies fear what reprisals the Duke would visit upon them for a loss of one of his beloved agents. In other parts of Calabria, Indicateur agents who reveal themselves might be treated as a visiting dignitary beloved by a foreign Duke ... or with all the suspicion due to a foreign spy.

As their Duty, all Indicateurs are expected to send a letter to the Indicateur Lyceum informing of any changes in power, and of their own location should they need to be activated for some purpose. Since all Indicateurs are skilled at codes, the message can come in many forms.

Open Indicateurs are usually Excisemen (since those people travel much and have many records of money), Diplomats, or (rarely) Solicitors. (Many folk believe that Indicateurs themselves are permitted to mete out "low justice," a confusion that no doubt stems from the fact that many agents are blooded nobles in their own right, or have obtained Local Investiture in a separate letter.)

As with all Esoteric Gifts, a Player must supply their Game Host with a good reason for buying the Gift. It is not without precedent that the Indicateur masters seek out foreign nationals to employ as spies against their own countrymen ... or as agents abroad.

### Esoteric Gift – Local Investiture: Letter of Marque (1 point)

*Requirements: a die in Boating (whether from Career or Skill) of d4 or better; Leadership Skill of d4 or better*

This Gift entitles you to attack and raid ships on open water that belong to a particular Guild or House. Essentially, a Letter of Marque is a license to commit piracy and to dispense low justice to enemy crews. So long as you restrict your predations to those groups named in the letter, the authority who dispensed the permit will turn a blind eye. If the enemy should catch you, the letter is meaningless, and you simply be treated as a common pirate (or worse).

Only Counts and nobles of higher rank can write a Letter of Marque. Letters are only valid upon the sea – they have no official standing when on Bisclavret (or any) soil. Letters of Marque can be as specific as the noble who is writing them wants them to be, such as "Only ships of the Malthus Company found sailing northward on the River Skirfane during harvest season."





The Bisclavret secretly give out Letters of Marque to commoner captains. Only Earls or lower rank give out the Letters (often to the loud dectrying of their neighbors, who “deplore” such “under-handed” tactics, but who secretly rejoice in the plundering of others). The Duke would not put himself at such political risk.

Player-Characters rarely begin the game with a Letter of Marque, but they are often rewarded with one from a Bisclavret noble if they make certain promises. There is no official limit on the number of Letters a character can have, but politics often make gaining more than two difficult.

### **Esoteric Gift – Cartouche Ways (1 point)**

**Requirements:** *Expert Guns Skill (d12, d4 or better)*

Usable when you have a Cartouche.

If you have your powder in a Cartouche (q.v.), your reloading time with your Gun is reduced by 2 Rounds (to no fewer than 4 Rounds).

### **Esoteric Gift – Bullet-Making Ways (1 point)**

**Requirements:** *Expert Gunsmith Skill (d12, d4 or better)*

Usable when you have Bullets made in a mold by your own hand.

If you own your own Bullet Mold, and have spent at least an hour crafting your own bullets, your reloading time with your Gun is reduced by 2 Rounds (to no fewer than 4 Rounds).

### **Esoteric Gift – Custom-Crafting Ways (1 point)**

**Requirements:** *Guns Skill of d4 or better with a Favorite Weapon; Expert Resolve Skill (d12, d4 or better)*

Usable with your Favorite Gun.

Your reloading time with your Favorite Gun is reduced by 2 Rounds (to no fewer than 4 Rounds).



## New Careers

### Astrologer

Astrologers see the heavens as a mystical representation of the future. They study the position of stars, planets, and other cosmic bodies to get a glimpse of the future. In Calabria, the most common use of astrology is the casting of horoscopes to provide guidance. The Repense are rumored to use the study of Astrology to direct the affairs of their house.

While many believe that the stars exert influence over the world, there are others who denounce the practice as flimflam or simple nonsense. More details on astrology can be found under “Trade: Astrology” (below) and in the Appendix.

**Include with:** Ciphering; Literacy; Lore: Astrology; Navigation



### Bard

**Requirement:** a die in *Singing* (whether from *Career* or *Skill*) of d4 or better

The last vestige of Phelan society, transformed into a modern guise, the Bards are the messengers of society, traveling from place to place and bringing news to wanting ears. The Bards carry on the musical tradition of the Bianfáel of many generations ago, and are masters of the secret strains of music, the chords that can influence others to heights of bravery, the lows of sorrow, and many other states in between.

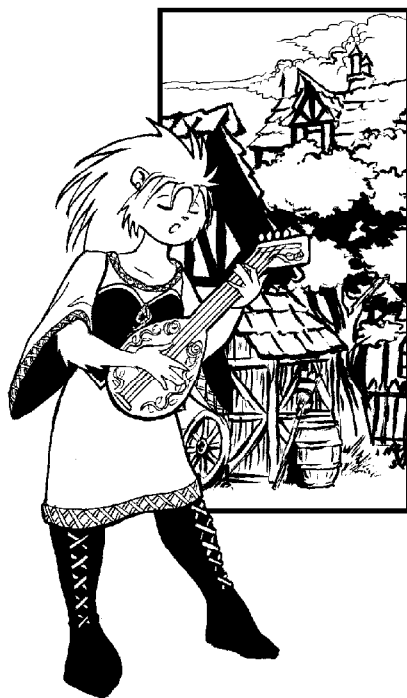
The traditional musical instruments of the bard are the *harp*, the *bandura* (a small guitar-like instrument), the *lute* (a larger fret-less stringed instrument) and the *drums*.

**Include With:** Carousing; Geography; Hiking; Musical Instrument (of choice)

This is a *Wizardly Career*. Add your Bard Trait Dice to your starting Magic Points.

This Career grants you the Spell List *The Way of the Bard* (q.v.).

(Note that *Singing Skill* is important to a Bard, but is *not* one of the Skills granted by the Career.)







## Grenadier

A Grenadier is a mercenary with special training in the preparation and use of thrown explosives, as well as larger explosive devices such as the petard. Typically, a Grenadier will run towards the enemy lines and hurl an explosive when near a close-packed rank of enemy troops. A veteran grenadier can often be identified by his missing digits and scarred paws.

**Include with:** *Dodge; Resolve; Sling; Thrown Weapon: Bomb*

## Privateer

**Requirement:** *the Gift of Letter of Marque (p. 45)*

Privateers make a living by preying upon shipping on the high seas, using their enfranchisement from their Letter of Marque to sell their loot with legal protections (in the jurisdiction of the letter, at least). At the best of times, piracy is an uncertain profession. Many Pirates end up offering their swords to one or more of the Noble Houses or guilds, becoming privateers.

Privateers run a gamut of attitudes and types. Some possess a powerful sense of honor and justice. Other Privateers are little more than thugs operating within the law. Few, however, live up to the romantic ideal of a charming scoundrel.

A *pirate* (a would-be Privateer without a Letter of Marque) is a Marine (q.v. *Ironclaw*), most likely with the Flaw of Scofflaw.

**Include with:** (Combat Skill of Choice); Boating; Carousing; Swimming

## Sapper

Rare among the Bisclavret, and even rarer elsewhere, the professional Sapper plies a dangerous trade of working with gunpowder explosives. Most folk do not last long in the Career, as their trade is notoriously unforgiving of error. Long-term Sappers may have Flaws such as Ill-Favored, Lamé, One Hand, and Poor Vision

More details of the Sapper's trade can be found in the Appendix on Gunpowder (p. 99)

**Include with:** *Digging; Dodge; Resolve; Trade: Demolitions*



## New Trait

**Birth Sign:** [Planet of Choice] with [Sign of Choice]

**Requirements:** *the Flaw of "Superstitious" and two other Flaws – see p. 117*

Your character was born under a particularly auspicious sign of the Repense Zodiac, and this fact has affected their whole outlook on life. See page 117 in the Appendix for more details.

## New Skills

### Trade: Astrology

Astrology is art of foretelling the future through the study of the stars as they careen through the heavens. In Calabrese society, it is often mistaken for Lore: Astronomy, a very different and much more rigorously scientific practice that allows scholars to predict the changing of seasons and navigate the seas. However, a good astrologer has a grounding in astronomic lore as well. Many Astrologers will have cross-trained in Navigation or other obscure Lore.



An Astrologer who wishes to foretell the future creates a horoscope, a chart that may give some insight into the events of a given future period. The astrologer must know the place and time of birth at the very least to produce an accurate horoscope. It is best to study the stars the night before the period in which the foretelling applies, but there are many scholarly books which describe the disbursement of the stars on any given night, so this “field work” is not essential. The horoscope should take a few hours to prepare.

In game terms, it is up to game host as to whether or not astrology has any real use. At most, it should allow bits of generic advice. The host should present this advice in such a way as to allow for multiple interpretations, unless it serves a dramatic purpose in the game to have a very clear and definite message.

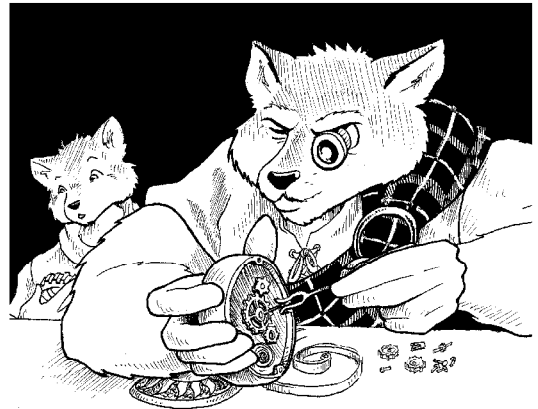
The Game Host can secretly decide if Astrology portends the future, usually with a roll of Astrology Skill and Augury Skill (remember that a Career Die gets included only once!) vs. 4d12 or more. The Difficulty can be reduced in size by spending one long, clear night studying the heavens, as well as by having very accurate birth data (and star-charts) for the person being divined for. If the roll is successful, the Game Host should make some vague prediction, such as “You will meet a dark stranger after a journey of great distance” – then, for all rolls that day involving the vague prediction, the target gains Favored Use. Agnostics will dismiss this Favor as psychosomatic – that the target is simply “trying harder.” The Superstitious will know better.

For those so inclined to chicanery, Astrology can be used as an Influence Skill to convince others to do certain things, much like Fast-Talk. As a general rule, the Superstitious can be fooled this way, whereas regular folks are likely to be skeptical, and Agnostics won’t listen to any of this nonsense.

**Possible Favored Uses:** for a particular astrological sign; finding romance; predicting a journey of great distance

## Trade: Clockwork

This skill allows a talented artisan to create accurate mechanical time-pieces, or even self-propelling devices that simulate the action of life! It also allows you to repair these devices. One current popular use of clockwork is the construction of incredibly complicated art and toys for the nobility. The Repense, for example, have a passion for moving models of the heavens, known as an *orrery*. One popular gadget is a model of a small wheeled cart drawn by drays. Drinks or condiments are placed in the cart, and when wound, it paces the circumference of a table, allowing guests to serve themselves.



The Duke is reputed to have an extremely life-like clockwork simulacrum of a wolf boy, which writes letters with pen and ink. The content of the letter may be changed by opening the back of the creation and adjusting a number of dials and levers found there.

Clockwork springs require extremely hot forges to create, and a clockwork artisan would be unable to ply his trade at a village smithy. As such, they tend to be only found in larger cities, or in employ of rich nobles.

**Possible Favored Uses:** making a specific kind of device



### Trade: Demolitions

A rare trade, but one highly-prized among the nobles of Calabria, Demolitions is the necessary skill to work with gunpowder explosives, such as Grenades (p. 105), Mines (p. 104) and Petards (p. 105). Unlike “Trade: Gunsmith,” this Skill is more concerned with making effective explosives and has little to do with the delicate firing mechanisms of guns or the metal-smithing to make barrels that don’t burst.

*Possible Favored Uses:* making Mines; making Petards

### Trade: Musical Instrument

The most popular form of entertainment in Bisclavret demesne is popular music. Traditionalists prefer the *harp*, with strings made of wire or animal-guts. Popular instruments include the *bodhrán* (a low-toned frame drum held by a cross frame and played with a small double-ended stick), the *fiddle* (a stringed instrument held under the chin and played with a bow), the *flute*, and the *mandolin* (a stringed instrument with a pear-shaped body and fretted neck). A modern instrument, the *bagpipes*, consists of an airbag (inflated by either a mouthpiece or with bellows), a chanter (a recorder-like part with nine-holes), and drone pipes (one or more pipes that play one continuous note).

*Possible Favored Uses:* with my Favorite Instrument

### Trade: Singing

Singing is the ability to put poetry to music, creating melodies and harmonies with the strains of one’s own voice. Even the youngest of children can sing to some degree, but to sing well requires great training. In the Bisclavret demesne, singing is essential to the work done by Bard (q.v.), though with the rise in popularity of the Church of S’Allumer, other forms of singing are coming to light.

*Possible Favored Uses:* to a crowd in a tavern; in a choir, a capella (without instruments); while singing a Strain of my choice

## New Weapons and Equipment

### Gunpowder

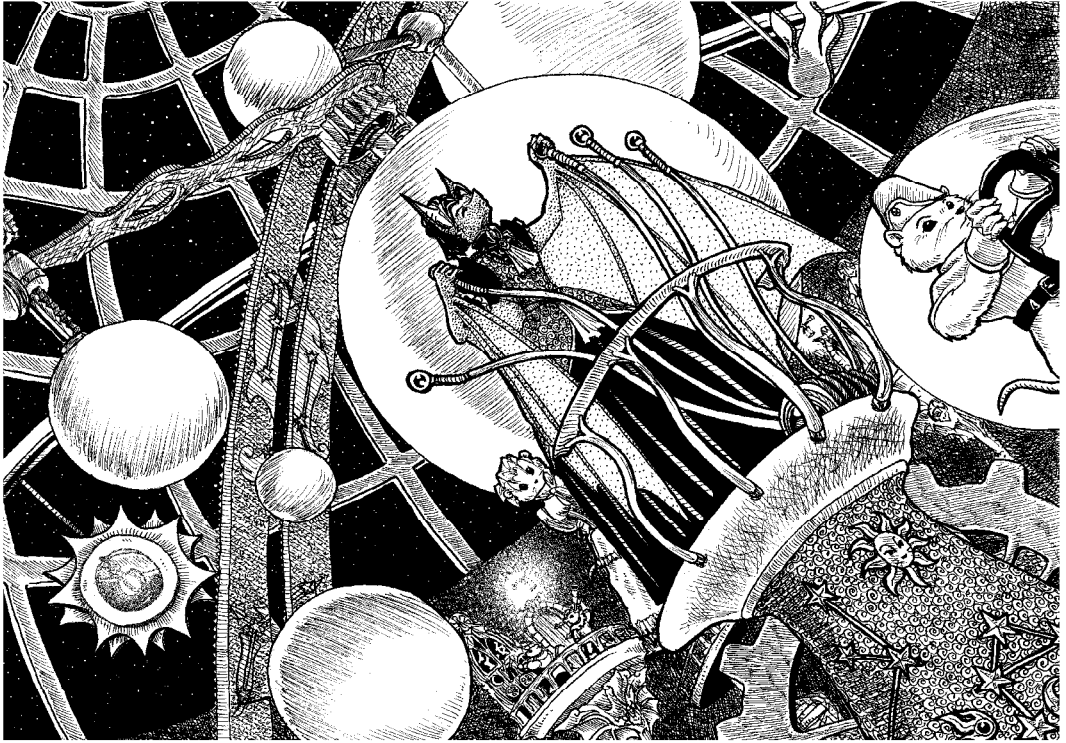
Among all the powers of Calabria, the Bisclavret make the greatest use of gunpowder. Refer to the Appendix, page 99.

### Pocket Watch

A pocket watch represents the pinnacle of the clockwork-makers art, and perhaps the peak of Calabrese science. They are tiny, spring-driven clocks, generally measuring a few inches in diameter, and a single inch in thickness. Watches must be wound every two bells (about six hours), and a wise owner will make sure to check their time once a week. A watch is a hand-made status symbol, custom-built for the wealthy, rather than a practical accouterment. They are elaborately engraved, set with precious stones, and generally made of gold. Owners wear them on chains



on their bellies, so as to display them more obviously. When a watch owner meets another, they will generally chat about the artisan who made their time-piece, and then politely argue about the actual time of day. Pocket watches are Expensive items, starting at twenty aureals (480 denarii); since they are symbols of status, many have jewels or gold and are worth much more. Their weight is negligible.



## Orrery

A maddening contraption, the orrery duplicates the action of the heavens with a series of small globes affixed to a metal frame. An orrery is an invaluable aid to an astrologer or astronomer, allowing them to see the year-long path of the stars through the heavens in but a few moments of time. A functional Orrery decreases an Astrology or Astronomy roll by one level. Orreries range in size from cannon-ball sized representations of the sun, moon, and key planets, to room-sized creations that also detail the course of comets and the rise and fall of constellations. Non-clockwork orreries exist, but are generally thought of as primitive. Orreries are inordinately Expensive, beginning at fifty aureals (1,200 denarii) and increasing from there. Even the smallest Orrery weighs two stone.

## Wind-up Clock

A timepiece driven by mechanical springs, suitable for display on a mantelpiece, desk, or (in the case of larger pieces) a hallway. Clocks are expensive to build because of their springs, which must be forged from very pure steel to have the proper elasticity. They must be wound once a day, and accuracy should be checked once a month. It is generally safe to set a clock according to the eight prayer bells of a local S'Allumer chapel or monastery. Otherwise, set it for noon when the sun is straight overhead. Wind-up clocks are necessary for sea travel; other kinds of clocks, such as pendulum-driven clocks or water-clocks, require a delicate balance that no ship is stable enough to provide. Spring-driven clocks will keep time even if held upside down. Clocks vary in cost according to accuracy and ornamentation, but all are Expensive items, starting at ten aureals (240 denarii) and weigh at least a quarter-stone.



## Bisclavret Names

Before Riddock's Dawn, families would claim lineage along their mothers' lines, but this practice has since been outlawed. Now that wealth is inherited solely along male lines, only the name of the father's family (or *patronym*) is taken. As with all modern folks, Bisclavret citizens have two names: their first name and their family name.

Claiming descent from the noble families of Bisclavret is a great honor. The families include Afligeant, Buadhachan, Devlin, Ealadrach, Fagen, Raciner, and Uilleam. Cousins of one of these first-families might have *Mac* added to their family name; for example, *Logan MacFagen* is not a Fagen in pure blood, but he can claim lineage to their line.

Families of the servants of the Bisclavret often have the prefix *Gil-* or *Kil-*, meaning "one who serves." For example, Dona Gilleam's name is derived from *Gil-Uilleam*; her family has probably served the Uilleam clan for generations. Mercenaries often use "Giolla" as an improvised last name, a custom dating back to the Bianfael, which simply means "servant."



## Female Names

Agatah, Aiden, Aimiliona, Alesone, Alona, Aneer, Aoife, Aurnia, Banya, Bebhail, Bevin, Blinna, Breeya, Brigid, Caci, Cailin, Cait, Caitlyne, Callie, Camrinne, Cara, Carrol, Casiegh, , Cathach, Cayleigh, Caytlyn, Ceitag, Clothra, Cristiona, Dana, Dasi, Dearbhorgaill, Deardriu, Dedra, Della, Diorbhail, Dona, Dorie, Duibhleamhna, Eadan, Effrick, Eilis, Elizabeth, Erinna, Esther, Evalyn, Fainche, Feelin, Fieona, Finscot, Fola, Geneviene, Glennis, Grania, Gwenaelle, Iona, Ita, Jenna-Rose, Joneta, Jonette, Josephine, Kacye, Karen, Karistina, Kassidey, Kaysey, Keelia, Kelee, Kelli, Kelye, Keriann, Kerwin, Kinsey, Kristeen, Kyleigh, Lacye, Leanne, Leigh, Liadh, Luighseach, Maegan, Mairghead, Malvina, Maol-Mhuire, Maolmin, Marjorie, Maureen, Megan, Melissa, Mhuadh, Mocka, Moriah, Muirgheal, Nara, Neila, Nolana, Oocra, Peigi, Ragan, Reilly, Rileigh, Roan, Rowena, Sabina, Seana, Shae, Shannan, Sharra-Sarai, Sheelah, Shina, Silis, Slainte, Sydok, Tarrach, Teresa, Tuathla, Vevina, Wallach, Wanna, Winifred

## Male Names

Adaith, Aiden, Ailin, Alastair, Amergin, Amhalghaidh, Aodh, Aodhagan, Aodhan, Aonghais, Artagan, Auliffe, Aydon, Baird, Barhart, Bearach, Beisdean, Bhruic, Blayne, Brady, Breas, Brodie, Buillidh, Caimheul, Calvock, Camrin, Caolan, Carmichail, Carvey, Cathaoir, Cearbhall, Chay, Clancy, Coilin, Coll, Colyn, Congal, Connlan, Corcurachan, Cory, Criostal, Cuthbeirt, Curr, Daegan, , Darce, Darroch, Dechlin, Dermod, Diolmhain, Domhnull, , Dougan, Dualtock, Dugald, Eachan, Eamailinn, Edan, Ennis, Eoghnaidh, Ernan, Fagan, Farquhar, Fearghall, Felimid, Fia, Fingal, Fionnghal, Florry, Frederick, Galaway, Galway, Gawen, Gibidh, Gilleathain, Giollanaebhin, Glen, Cuenael, Hagen, Hugh, Ildatch, Kaegan, Kaley, Keefer, Keilan, Keller, Kendon, Kennet, Kern, Keven, Kile, Kohal, Krin, Kyrell, Laird, Leannan, Leslie, Logan, Lowry, Magee, Maloney, Maoldomhnaich, Martainn, McGwire, Miach, Moireach, Morven, Murdoch, Naomhan, Neeshay, Nial, Niles, Nolyn, Oitir, Orran, Pader, Piaras, Quillen, Rafferty, Raghallach, Redmund, Riocard, Rodaidh, Ronald, Ros, Royan, Ryen, Seathan, Seosaidh, Shane, Sheary, Sionn, Sloane, Steaphan, Sullie, Tamhas, Tiernan, Torin, Truinnean, Zachary







“When the music of society changes, the whole society changes.”

— Attributed to “Good King Gaschan” in the *Carmina Bianfáelae* no. 11, thought to be a quote from Chieftain Gaisce Mac Roth

# BARDIC MAGIC

Without written books, the Phelan depended on stories and oral folklore to preserve their culture, their history, and their entertainment. In all their demesne, no story-tellers could rival the craft of the Bianfáel, the greatest in all the land. With a few words and some well-chosen notes, a skilled Bianfáel could bring their audience to laughter, to tears, to rage, or almost any other emotion.

During King Gaisce’s reign, the techniques of the Bianfáel story-tellers were refined into a Wizardly Art – the way of the *Bard*. Today the Bisclavret employ their Bards to bring their messages to the people, to make their will known throughout the land, to bolster support of their policies and their proclamations ... and to supernaturally influence the mood of the public.

## *From the inspiration to the final chord:* **Delayed Bard Spells and the Song Test**

Bardic Magic is slightly different from other kinds of Wizardry. The Bard draws upon a canon of work of famous poems, plus their own improvisation and a keen sense of how to “read a crowd.” While the power of words can sway the heart and move the spirit, the Bards are able to draw upon an even greater power within themselves.

First, a Bard must compose the music within their head ... in game terms, Bards “fill their heads with songs” by casting Delayed Spells; each Bard Magic Spell represents a different kind of song the Bard has prepared. As with all Delayed Spells, the Bard cannot recover those Magic Points until the spell is released.

In order to affect people with Bardic Magic, you must perform the song in front of them. The targets of your song do not have to speak the same language as you; in fact, many of the powerful Bardic songs are untranslated from the *Bérla Féini*, the ancient language of the Phelan. However, they *must* be able to hear your music – they must not be deaf or Hard of Hearing (q.v. *Ironclaw*).

Bardic Magic has a different Scope than other spells (q.v. *Ironclaw*). Bardic Magic has the potential to affect an entire *Crowd* of listeners – all folk within the range of the your voice, no farther than 72 paces.



Similar to the rules for defining a Group, you can choose which folks you affect by some general rules, such as “all my friends” or “all my foes”. You could even choose to sing a song that affects a single person. For better or for worse, you may *never* sing a song that affects yourself.

### *Composing your thoughts:* **Delaying the Spell**

Before you sing any songs, you must first cast the spell. Doing so is a standard Casting Maneuver, for a Delayed Spell. The Magic remains resident on yourself, Delayed in your own mind. Novice Bards sometimes unconsciously hum their magic Strains that are concealed in their heads; experts keep their “tells” to themselves.

### *Preparing the audience, and determining Resistance Dice:* **Lengths of Song**

While singing, you may take no defenses, as you are in deep concentration. If something disturbs you (such as a blow that sends you Reeling), then you have “lost the moment” and must start over. Likewise, if you Abort to use any Defense, then you lose the moment and the performance is negated. Fortunately, if your performance does not get to the final note, then the Strain is not Released and no Delayed Spells are lost.

Nothing compels your audience to hang around while you sing – they may choose to leave before you finish.

### **Lyric**

The shortest kind of song, a single *Lyric* is but one line of a composition. Only the most compelling Bard performances can expect to yield influential results with such a brief recital.

Performing a Lyric is a Third-Rank Maneuver. A Lyric is the least likely to have effect on an audience; the targets will resist with Body, Mind, Will, and Race Dice.

### **Canticle**

The most popular of traditional music, the *Canticle* is a short piece that tells a maxim about daily life, a quick bawdy joke, or other brief performance. When people outside of Bisclavret demesne think of Canticles, they think of the repetitive hymns sung in Penitent churches; in fact, many of those songs have their roots in traditional Bardic Songs. While Canticles can go on for minutes or hours, they can affect their magic in as few as Two Rounds. Canticles are Resisted with Body, Mind, and Will Dice.

### **Chantey**

Many a cold night in a dismal tavern has been brightened up by a lively *Chantey*. Popular with sailors, mercenaries, and such people who travel in groups and live a dangerous life, the Chantey encourages everyone to sing along and join in the fun, and the words are usually simple enough that they can be sung while intoxicated. A skilled Bard will improvise new stanzas in between the repeats of the Choruses, playing to the whims of the crowd. While a Chantey can go on and on





until even the drunkest reveler gets tired of it, the minimum time for a Chantey to take effect is Five Rounds. Chanteys are Resisted by Mind and Will Dice.

## Ballad

The music most people associate with Bards is the *Ballad*, which is also their longest piece. Ballads tell a complete story about some kind of hero, be it comedic or tragic, fictional or real. Ballads require the strongest performances and the most time to sink in; they require a minimum of five minutes, or one whole Scene, before the Bard can take effect. Ballads are Resisted solely by a target's Mind Dice.

### *The Final Note, and Releasing the Spell:*

#### The Strain

When your song reaches its end, you then call upon the final note, called the *Strain*. Once that note is played, the Delayed Magic Points are released, and the listeners must test against its effects. No actual Magic happens until the Strain, so Scrying Tests before then will be ineffective.

Roll your *Singing Dice*. (Note that your Bard Trait Dice do *not* apply to Singing.) If you were playing a musical instrument such as a harp or a lyre, you may include your *Music Skill Dice*. (Note that your Bard Trait Dice *does* apply to a Musical Instrument of your choice.) So you can still attempt a song without any instruments – you will just have fewer dice to roll to win the Song Test.

Your targets resist with dice based on the length of your performance; the longer you were able to sing, the more meaningful your song will be, and the fewer dice they may roll.

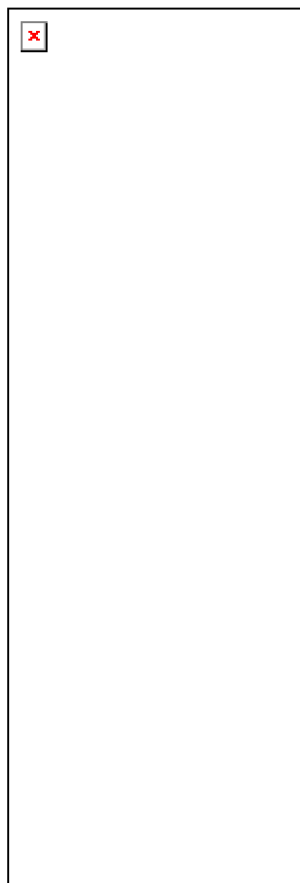
<b>Song</b>	<b>Length of Performance</b>	<b>Target Resists with...</b>
<b>Lyric</b>	Third-Rank Maneuver	Body, Mind, Will, and Race
<b>Canticle</b>	Two Full Rounds	Body, Mind, and Will
<b>Chantey</b>	Five Full Rounds	Mind and Will
<b>Ballad</b>	One Whole Scene	Mind

The Effect of each Strain varies – consult the spell's write-up, below, for details.

For the most part, the *magical* effects (and Abnormal Status) of a Bardic Strain only last for one Scene, but the *emotional* effects will usually last much longer, especially when the target Overwhelmingly Fails, or worse. Game Hosts should use their discretion.

## Summary of Bardic Magic

1. First, prepare a song by Casting it as a Delayed Spell.
2. Next, declare the length of your performance.
3. At the end of your performance, play the strain that releases the Magic.
4. Roll your Singing Dice. (If you played the appropriate musical instrument, roll your Music Dice & Bard Trait Dice, too.)
5. Target resists with their own dice – the longer your performance, the fewer the dice they roll to resist your spell.





## The Way of the Bard

*Requirement: The Career of Bard at d4 or better*

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### The Grimace Strain

---

*Cost:* 1   *Difficulty:* 5d6   *Type:* Delayed   *Effect:* Target must win a Song Test or become  
(Bardic)   *Enraged*

---

You cast this spell on yourself, to prepare yourself for your next Bardic Magic performance. (See above.)

Each target that *Fails* the test will be in a state of *Rage* for the rest of this scene. The state of *Rage* replaces any other mental state of the target, such as *Despair*, *Fear*, etc.

Targets who are *Enraged* are flushed with anger. They are quick to lash out at their foes, and they are eager for violence. Enraged combatants cannot *Focus* (q.v. *Ironclaw*). The next time an Enraged combatant's Mental State would change, such as from another spell or from failing an Unconsciousness Test, then the change does not happen and the State of *Rage* goes away. (In this way, an Enraged combatant can "get out of Unconsciousness free", once.)

---

### The Hunger Strain

---

*Cost:* 3   *Difficulty:* 3d6   *Type:* Delayed   *Effect:* Target must win a Song Test or become  
(Bardic)   *hungry*

---

You cast this spell on yourself, to prepare yourself for your next Bardic Magic performance. (See above.)

Each target that *Fails* the test will become hungry. Other than the salivating mouth and growling stomach, there is no other game effect. The hunger is "normal" affected persons need only eat something to sate themselves.

---

### The Sleep Strain

---

*Cost:* 6   *Difficulty:* 6d6   *Type:* Delayed   *Effect:* Target must win a Song Test or become  
(Bardic)   *Asleep*

---

You cast this spell on yourself, to prepare yourself for your next Bardic Magic performance. (See above.)

Each target that *Fails* the test will fall *Asleep*. Sleeping combatants can be woken by Thundering Noises, and they will wake up if they are slapped or suffer damage. Otherwise, the effects of the Strain last until the end of the Scene, or until dispelled.

---

### The Smile Strain

---

*Cost:* 5   *Difficulty:* 5d4   *Type:* Delayed   *Effect:* Target must win a Song Test or become  
(Bardic)   *Euphoric*

---

You cast this spell on yourself, to prepare yourself for your next Bardic Magic performance. (See above.)

Each target that *Fails* the test will be in a state of *Euphoria* for the rest of this Scene. The state of *Euphoria* replaces any other mental state of the target, such as *Rage*, *Fear*, etc.

Targets in *Euphoria* find it hard to become angry with anyone. They suffer one Penalty on any rolls involving Mind or clear-thinking, including Initiative and Spell-Casting Tests. They lack competence, and cannot *Focus* or claim *Favored Use*.



“The world is only so large as your spirit.”

— Traditional Phelan Proverb

# HEROES, VILLAINS, AND SUNDRY OTHERS

*Being a List of Notable People and Creatures  
in Bisclavret Demesne*

## Burindents



Constant threats to the Phelan rancher are packs of “bethrachanna,” fearsome lizards that use sophisticated tactics of surrounding their prey and then taking it down. The Bisclavret have named them *Burindents*. Some breeds are domesticated and used as guards or as patrols. Many other breeds run free in the thick forest, a menace to farmers and hunters.

Body d8, Speed d12, Mind none, Will d6

Bethrach d8

Weapons: Claws, Teeth

Habitat: Plains

Sense Tests: Spot, Smell

### Skills (with Favorite Use)

	d8	Brawling (with teeth)
d8		Hiking
	d8	Observation (for prey)
d8		Sixth Sense
d8	d8	Stealth (in the plains)
d8		Tactics (bringing down prey)

**Gifts:** Night Vision

**Flaws:** Skittish

**Armor:** None (Soak d8)

**Weapons:** Claws & Teeth (To Hit d12, 2d8; Damage d8 & d6)

**Size:** 8 stone

**Dash:** 12

**Stride:** 4

### Burindents' Motivations:

1. Survive.
2. Eat.





# Duke Mausein Bisclavret, King of the Western Woods



The youthful head of the Bisclavret is often referred to as the “White Duke,” because of his completely white pelt, a physical trait he inherited from his late mother. The Duke’s parents have both been dead for the past four years, and he has been raised by a series of imported tutors and courtiers. Only 12 years old, Mausein has lived his entire life within the confines of Harrowgate. His upbringing and isolation have brought him to a point where his own wolfish nature is very much alien to him. He is extremely intelligent and well educated, but dreamy and unrealistic, given to sudden flights of fancy and introspection. Mausein shares the current mania for stargazing, and is an accomplished astrologer. He has rarely met anyone of another species, and has been raised to think of them as less than real. As a result he will treat foreign visitors graciously, but with an odd kind of detachment. Rural nobles are often shocked to see how eccentric the young Duke is, and treasonous

whispers have been heard. Thus far, nothing has come of them.

**Body d6, Speed d10, Mind d12, Will d8**

**Wolf d8**      *Weapons:* Claws, Teeth    *Habitat:* Forest    *Sense Tests:* Listen, Smell

**Dilletante d10**

**Astrologer d10**

*Skills (with Favorite Use)*

		d10	Ciphering
	d10		d8 Etiquette (among the Bisclavret)
	d10		Fencing
d8			Hiking
		d6	Leadership (over Bisclavret loyalists)
	d10	d10	Literacy
		d10	Lore: Astrology
	d10		d8 Lore: Heraldry (Bisclavret)
		d10	Navigation
d8			Tactics
d8			Tracking

**Gifts:** Nobility (Duke); Wealth; Teeth; Howl; Claws

**Flaws:** Curious; Naïve; Proud; Soft-Hearted

**Armor:** Proved Plate (2d12, d4 & Soak d6)

**Weapons:** Main-Gauche “White Fury” (d6 & Strength d6)

## The Duke’s Motivations:

1. Have future generations remember him as a wise and just ruler.
2. Survive.
3. Expand the Bisclavret empire.



## Earl Franc de Granvert, Regent of Bisclavret



A stern middle aged general, tough but honorable, Franc was named as Regent in the will of the last Duke, four years ago. This was in many ways a wise choice. Despite his rough edges, Franc is a sound and dependable officer.

However, while Franc is loyal to the *idea* of Ducal authority, he has no special esteem for any individual duke. He looks fondly on the current Duke, but fears he has been led astray from the path of Riddock by too many foreign influences. Franc has the lifelong loyalty of many of the older court knights and the rural nobility, to a degree the Duke cannot claim.

Franc reserves a special hatred for the Avoirdupois, who he feels are arrogant cowards. He also dislikes

the Indicateur, who he feels are often nothing more than lick-spittle spies. He is willing to work with them, but sometimes ignores intelligence received through them.

**Body d10, Speed d8, Mind d8, Will d8**

**Wolf d12**      *Weapons:* Claws, Teeth      *Habitat:* Plains      *Sense Tests:* Listen, Smell

### Cavalier d10

*Skills (with Favorite Use)*

d12	d12, d6	Atavism: Cry of a Hundred Souls (when holding "Brain-biter")
d12	d12	Atavism: Inner Might (when holding "Brain-biter")
	d12	Axe (with "Brain-biter")
	d10	Etiquette (among soldiers)
	d6	Gun (with Favorite Gun)
	d6	Gunsmith (with Favorite Gun)
d12		Hiking
	d10	Lore: Heraldry (signs in battle)
	d10	Riding
	d10	Shield
	d10	Sword
d12		Tactics
d12		Tracking

**Gifts:** Atavism; Nobility (Earl)

**Flaws:** Coarse; Proud; Taciturn

**Armor:** Reinforced Leather (d8, d4 & Soak d10)

**Weapons:** Full-Stone Axe "Brain-Biter" (2d8 & Strength d10); Half-Stone Gun (2d12)

### Franc's Motivations:

1. Continue the glory of the Bisclavret name.
2. Survive.
3. Reduce the population of mercenaries in Bisclavret demesne.



# Old Neant



Neant is a towering black bear in early middle-age. His face and body bear impressive scars from numerous fights. Most notable is an angry red patch of bald skin where his right ear once was. Neant will not tell anyone how he lost his ear, and will grow angry with anyone who persists in asking.

He is a boisterous and merry fellow, but crude and unmannered in the extreme. Most quickly tire of his rough sense of humor. He is loyal to those he sees as friends, but the gaunt slaves who act as his wait-staff are evidence of his true nature.

Neant lives in a relatively dry rear chamber of his extraordinary tavern, *The Saltbelly*. Here, he nightly holds court with the greatest knaves and villains to haunt the Calabrese waters. A rumor persists that Neant was once One-Eared Jovario, notorious first-

mate to the legendary pirate Gustafus. His age is about right, as is his appearance. Neant will just smile and laugh when asked. If it is true, then he may well be the only living soul who knows the whereabouts of Gustafus' famed treasure horde.

## Body d12 & d4, Speed d10, Mind d8, Will d10

Bear d8      Weapons: Claws, Teeth      Habitat: Plains      Sense Tests: Listen, Smell

### Marine d12

### Slaver d8

		Skills (with Favorite Use)	
	d12		Carousing
		d12	Dodge (when in <i>The Saltbelly</i> )
d8			Fishing
	d12	d12, d4	Gun (with "Sure-shot")
		d12, d4	Gunsmith (with "Sure-shot")
		d8	Haggling
		d8	Intimidation
		d8	Leadership (when out-numbered)
		d8	Observation (when Focused)
		d8	Psychology
	d12	d12, d4	Resolve (when out-numbered)
		d12	Sixth Sense (when in <i>The Saltbelly</i> )
d8	d12		Swimming
		d8	Sword (with "Clever")
		d8	Torture
d8			Wrestling



**Gifts:** Bullet-Making Ways; Cartouche Ways; Claws; Custom-Crafting Ways; Strength +2; Teeth

**Flaws:** Coarse; Foe: Indicateur (Common, Strong); Poor Hearing; Scofflaw

**Armor:** Reinforced Leather (d8, d4 & Soak d12, d4)

**Weapons:** Three-Quarter Stone "Cleaver" (d12, d8 & Strength d12, d8); Full-Stone Gun "Surc-shot" (2d12)

**Equipment:** Cartouche; bullet mold

### Neant's Motivations:

1. Survive.
2. Keep his secrets to himself.
3. Punish those who have wronged him.

## Gymari



Gymari is a rod-thin chectah in late middle age, who moves with a odd kind of vicious grace, something that permeates his entire manner. Careful observers may occasionally see flashes of melancholy underneath this, but his casual aggression is no façade — Gymari is an angry and violent man. When he was a young boy, his village was torched and ransacked by slavers, and he was brought in chains to be sold in Thanon's markets. For a time he served as a household servant for a Bisclavret merchant, but his temper proved unsuitable and he was eventually sold to a mercenary company. Eventually, he escaped and became a career pirate. With his keen wit and remorseless ambition, Gymari has become a

favored member of the Invisible Guild.

**Body d6, Speed d12, Mind d8, Will d8**

**Cat d8**

*Weapons:* Claws, Teeth

*Habitat:* Plains

*Sense Tests:* Listen, Smell

### Mercenary d10

*Skills (with Favorite Use)*

d8	Acrobatics
d8	Climbing
	d6 Etiquette (Bisclavret)
d10	d6 Fencing (With hereditary sword)
	d8 Guns (With favorite pistol)
d10	Haggling
	d6 Literacy (Gloomy poetry interpretation)
	Lore: Heraldry
d10	Resolve
d10	Shield
d8	Stealth
	d8 Tactics (Defending castles)

**Gifts:** Ambidextrous; Extra Move +4; Guild Rank: Master, Invisible Guild; Claws; Night Vision; Strength +1 Teeth

**Flaws:** Bad Reputation: as aging pirate privy to a secret treasure hoard (Uncommon, Extreme); Scofflaw; Lustful; Proud; Overconfident

**Armor:** Reinforced Leather (d8, d4 & Soak d6)

**Weapons:** Quarter-Stone Foil "Quick Blade" (To Hit d12, d10, d6; Damage d10 & Strength d8; Parry d12, d12, d10); various throwing knives (To Hit d12; Damage d6 & Strength d8)

### Gymari's Motivations:

1. Have a noble death.
2. Survive.
3. Stand fast against Lord Raciner.

## Fu Lei



A small, plump monkey from the faraway land of Zhongguo. He is middle-aged, and dresses in expensive and exotic silks. Fu Lei's face is bright red and furless, surrounded by a bold mane of white fur. The rest of his pelt is a dignified gray. He speaks Calabrese with an oddly lyrical accent, and occasionally speaks to himself in the strange tongue of his homeland. Fu Lei is the owner of the Lucky Refuge Inn in Thanon, well-known to sailors as the best place to find a good cheap meal and a safe room.

Fu Lei spent years as the captain of merchant ship, selling silks in Triskellian. After a while, he decided that Thanon was a shorter journey, and made it his new port of call. He was impressed by the vital and active Bisclavret, so different from the etiquette-obsessed people of his home lands. A few years ago he decided to retire from this seafaring life and settled down as an innkeeper in Thanon. His inn serves food

that is unusual to most Calabrese, but not unpalatable. He does a steady business with sailors from his homeland, as well as gastronomically adventurous locals. He enjoys telling stories about his home. He is also visited by undercover agents from his old kingdom in Zhongguo who expertly probe him for information about Thanon and Triskellian. Fu Lei honestly believes that these curious strangers are simple merchants like himself, wondering what to expect in this rough and ready country.

Fu Lei is happy in this new land, but occasionally longs for the blossoming trees and quiet dignity of his home, a place where they have elaborate ceremonies to govern every aspect of life and death. He dislikes the cold Calabrese winters, and misses the beautiful red-faced women of his own village. One day, he will sell the Lucky Refuge and sail homeward to retire once and for all.

If an adventurous explorer hopes to visit that far-off land, they could do worse than hire Fu Lei and his vessel.



Body d8, Speed d8, Mind d10, Will d8

Monkey d6      Weapons: Claws,      Habitat: Plains      Sense Tests: Listen, Smell  
Teeth

Merchant d12		Sailor d6	
		Skills (with Favorite Use)	
d6			Acrobatics
	d12		Administration
		d6	Boating
	d12		Bribery
		d6	Carousing
	d12		Ciphering
d6			Climbing
d6			Contortionist
		d8	Geography (islands between Calabria and Zhongguo)
		d8	Language: Calabrese (praising customers)
		d12	Leadership (over Marines)
	d12		Literacy
		d8	Mace (with Favorite walking-stick)
		d6	Navigation
		d12	Navigation (by the stars)
		d6	Swimming
		d8	Tactics (when leading Marines)
		d12	Trade: Sailor (on the <i>Ba Hei</i> )
d6			Wrestling

**Gifts:** Prehensile Tail; Prehensile Feet

**Flaws:** Corpulent -1; Gluttonous

**A armor:** Padded Clothes (d4 & Soak d8)

**Weapons:** Walking Stick (Inferior Mace: Damage d8 & Strength d8, has no Specials)

**Equipment:** Sailing ship, the *Ba Hei*

### Fu Lei's Motivations:

1. Survive.
2. Keep his ship and his crew safe and sound.
3. Make money.



“I have learned this much: take what you can, when you can.”

— Lord Baron Ricaner

# THE WOLVES IN WINTER

*In Which an Forest Shrouded in Fog and Ice  
Becomes a Theater for Tragedy*

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**Attention!** The text that follows explains in detail an adventure involving mystery, deceit, and even violence. This section is for the purview of the Game Host only. Those players planning to experience the adventure must avert their eyes and must not read this section, lest they spoil their own enjoyment.

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## What Has Gone On Before

There is an ancient saying common among the Phelan, “The World is only as large as your Spirit.” Like most Phelan sayings, it is scoffed at by the Bisclavret. However, at least two Bisclavret nobles personify the spirit of the old Phelan adage.

For twenty years, a bitter conflict has raged between the Baron Afligeant and his neighbor, Sir Ricaner. The two nobles share a hilly patch of forested land at the base of the Lochlan Mountains, known locally as the Méchant Wood. Neither can tolerate the other.

Their dispute has its genesis in an act of extraordinary courage on the part of Sir Ricaner’s father, 25 years ago. A guardsman at Harrowgate, he saved the life of the former Duke’s wife from a slave assassin, and was granted a noble title. Unfortunately, the plot of land he was given along with the title, while ownerless in theory, had been long occupied by the family of the Baron Afligeant. The Baron understandably resented the intrusion of the newcomer, and does so to this day. Sir Ricaner’s father tried to make peace with the Baron for a time, but soon resigned himself to a lifetime of feuding. His son was raised in this environment, and sneers at the doddering old Baron, thinking him unworthy to hold his land.

Though their hatred and disdain have festered and bubbled for two decades, action is rarely taken. They act only when they are certain the



other cannot definitely trace their attack back. Wells are fouled, peasant huts burned. Each blames every accident, every bandit raid, and every professional failing on the other as a result. Recently, a junior member of the Indicateur assigned to the area as an advisor and observer unwisely informed both nobles that he intended to advise his superiors of their constant squabbling. His story can be seen in the comic strip at the front of this book. The brave young Indicateur managed to reach a garrison of Ducal mercenaries, and even now they are preparing to march to the Méchant to investigate matters.

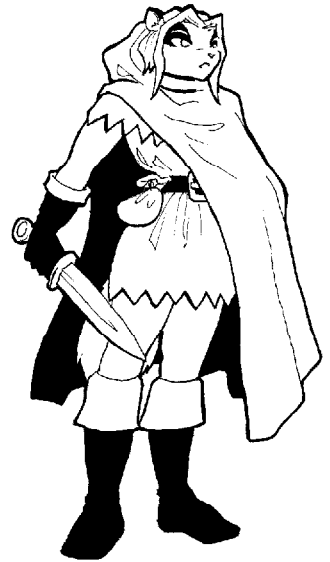
There are other forces gathering as well. The mysterious organization of thieves and assassins known as the Invisible Guild, who have allied themselves with Ricaner, and have plans of their own. And who is the mysterious mad wanderer the adventurers find hiding in a burnt out village?

For Afligeant and Ricaner, the world is limited to their remote land. The Duke, the Indicateur... they are all far from thought. Their petty dispute has bound them to the Méchant. Soon, their spiritual isolation will become a very physical, for themselves, and for others, as their dispute flares into open conflict during a bitter winter.

## Getting the Players Involved

Every gaming group is different. Some parties concentrate on militancy and combat, while others prefer to solve their problems through reason and other “higher” methods. Most groups are somewhere in between. You, as Game Host, know your Players and Characters better than we do, and it’s up to you to find a way to get them involved in this escapade.

The assumption made in the adventure as written, however, is that the players have been hired by a scribe, Henri d’Muireud. Henri has been summoned by the Baron Afligeant to record samples of the Baron’s poetry, and share them with the world. At least, this is his ostensible purpose. Henri is in reality a Indicateur agent sent to check on the deteriorating relationship between the two nobles. He is also here to investigate a reports that Afligeant intends to leave his lands to the Church, a possibility that angers the Duke and his advisors.



If this “hook” doesn’t work for your group, there are several other possible ways to get them involved in this adventure.

### Hooks

In order to “hook” your Player-Characters into this plot, there has to be something in the context of the story that would motivate them to participate. What are your PC’s motivations? What drives them to adventure? Here are some suggestions that may help you.

- Are any of your PCs members of the clergy? Baron Afligeant is a relatively devout adherent of S’Allumer. His personal confessor has recently died, and a cleric must be sent to settle his affairs and act as temporary spiritual advisor. Or, perhaps they have been sent to make arrangements for Afligeant’s lands to be transferred to the Church upon his death. Alternately, the players could be sent on a mercy mission in light of the extreme weather, dispensing food and blankets to the peasantry.
- If your characters are scholars, it may be harder to come up with a reason to entice them to the remote Méchant Wood. Other scholars may have been summoned to



research his land claim against Ricaner. Or maybe they have been sent to make a copy of one of the Baron's books?

- Do your Player-Characters have any ties among the nobility? Perhaps they have been dispatched to negotiate a treaty between the two lords, or simply to pay regards to them. By the time they arrive, of course, it is too late for talk.
- Are any of your PCs criminals? As the situation grows worse in the Méchant, news of the easy pickings spreads in the Underworld. Whole villages left empty, just waiting for the right person to stop by and fill his pockets! Of course, the reality is a little different.
- Wizards might be attracted by rumors of forbidden knowledge. The Méchant Woods are said to conceal ancient Autarch ruins which have never been properly researched. The ruins are simply a few standing stones left over from Phelan days, but once the wizards are in the Méchant, they will find it difficult to leave. Or, they might have heard of a magical text in the Baron's library, one he is willing to sell.
- It is no secret that Afligeant and Ricaner have hated each other for some time. Word of their current dispute has found its way to nearby settlements. Both nobles seek mercenaries to help them, and both are offering very good shares of booty.
- Perhaps the easiest way to involve the players in this adventure is to have them stop in Méchant on the way to somewhere else. They simply get drawn into the local dispute, whether they like it or not.

## How to Run This Adventure

As Game Host, your job is to make sure the adventure runs smoothly, that all the PCs are getting “screen time” and contributing to the game experience.

- *Episodes in the game should be tailored to your group.* Many of the episodes in this game won't happen until the Player Characters actually “show up” at the places where they take place. The trick is to encourage your Players to want to solve whatever dilemma the episode causes, and then to be eager to move on to the next one.
- Choose the episodes that you think your Players will enjoy — skip the ones they don't. For example, if your Players don't like combat and other such dire situations, then don't use Ambush episode described below. If you don't think your Players would have fun participating in the Lost! episode, then skip that. You should also feel free to improvise new episodes or make major changes.
- Let the Players exercise their free will. Your Players may choose to avoid Schaphandre's haunt all together, or they may want to talk each of the Bisclavret knights leading the siege on Castle Afligeant. Never force your PCs to participate in encounters — your best bet is to be familiar with your PC's Gifts, Flaws, and other motivations and then tweak the episodes to play on those. It will make the Players feel more involved and it will make for a more satisfying game.
- Watch for the portraits in circles. When you see these, this means there's a write-up for the NPC.

The game host should note this adventure is not a traditional “treasure and glory” scenario. Instead it is intended to clearly show the players the cost of political infighting and blood feuds on the part of the Bisclavret. The Baron and his household will scheme and plot, even as the enemy batters the gates and supplies grow short. The players will, at best, be able to achieve a kind of pyrrhic victory simply by staying alive and learning a few valuable lessons.



## The Tale of the Forest Méchant

In summer, the Méchant is an unremarkable part of the larger Muire Forest. Its location in the foothills of the Lochlan Peaks mean there are more pines here than broadleaf trees, and it is not as well settled as some other places. These things aside, it is very much a representative sample of a typical Bisclavret demesne.

In winter the Méchant area has a reputation for unusually heavy snowfall and unexpected changes in weather. Snowfall can be very heavy and block doors, roads, and form drifts in the valleys that are as deep as a grown wolf's whiskers. Occasionally, the area is isolated from the outside world for several days at a time. The residents are used to this, but this winter has been different.



Frigid rains have been falling for days. At night, the rain freezes on the ground, trees, and buildings. Over the past three weeks, the entire area has been coated with ice. Trees are literally bent double under the weight, and all have lost branches. Even though branches are scattered everywhere, fires are hard to light because of the constant freezing rain. Any kindling that is gathered must be scraped free of ice before being thrown on the fire. Roofs have collapsed, and walls are covered in up to two full inches of hard ice. Peasants have found themselves climbing out through windows, because their doors have been frozen shut over night.

However, as the players approach the Méchant, it is the end of a clear and relatively warm day. If they have not yet met with their employer, Henri, they may do so at a small hostelry on the outskirts of forest. In the distance, the players can see the grey peaks of the Lochlan mountains rising indistinctly from an expanse of snow-topped forest to the west. Dark clouds above the mountains hint at more bad weather on the way. The wood is separated from the rest of the Muire by a rapidly flowing river, a tributary of the much larger River Nith. An infrequent ferry service runs across this river, and a two-story wooden building is located on the east side.

This establishment, the called the 'Timber and Water,' is a small inn and common house. The owners, a young dog and his wife, maintain the ferry as well. The inn is empty but for the owners and Henri, who can be found sipping ale in the main room of the hostelry.

If Henri is expecting the players, he will greet them warmly, and order food and drink for them. If they are not here to meet the young wolf, he will nonetheless be likewise friendly, and carefully enquire as to their reason for visiting the Méchant.

No matter their purpose for being here, Henri will present himself as an affable scribe. If the players are seeking employment, he offer to pay them for escorting him to Baron Asligeant's castle. He cannot pay them until they arrive at the castle, and will offer no more than 12 denarii apiece for the escort. If he finds they are on their way to the castle independently, he will suggest traveling with the group, for protection. If Henri is rebuffed, he will maintain his genial façade, and soon after will have the innkeeper ferry him across the river.



Speaking to the innkeeper or his wife may prove useful. They are friendly, but very isolated at their quiet inn, and unable to comment usefully on the situation between Ricaner and Afligeant. If the players engage them in conversation, they will say that business is generally slow in the winter. However, a two weeks ago, a party of a dozen or so “rough and crude rats and foreign types” passed through. They caused no trouble, but made the couple very nervous. The innkeepers can provide no other information about these strangers.

The innkeeper is able to ferry the players across the river on his flat-bottomed barge at any point during daylight hours, and will not charge for the service if they stay one night. Otherwise, he will ask for 1 denar for each person, and 5 denarii for any mounts. He can take three people across at once, or one steed. The players may elect to ferry themselves across in his boat, and leave the vessel on the west side of the river. They are free to do this, but it will anger the innkeeper.

Henri will want to leave the inn almost at once, but he is willing to stay overnight if the players insist. If they do, their rest is fitful. Shortly after midnight, a new winter storm strikes in earnest. Dozens of trees, already strained by a heavy cake of ice, collapse in the fierce winds. The road is covered with a thick blanket of drifting snow. As grey skies lighten to the dawn, the players arise to a transformed world. Freezing sleet continues to pour from the skies, obscuring the horizon. Except for the river, no landmark is familiar. Attempts to attract the attention of the innkeeper will fail – he and his wife are shuttered in their home.

If the players leave at once, the storm begins shortly after they are ferried to the opposite of the river. In any case, the innkeeper wishes them luck and safe journey. The road to Afligeant’s castle lies before them, a narrow icy track that disappears into a snow covered forest of pines.

## The Tale of the Unforgiving Winter

Even following the road, the adventurers soon find themselves hard-pressed to fight their way through the broken trees and icy ground as they penetrate deeper into Afligeant’s realm. The weather shifts dramatically from hour to hour. When the winds blow from the south, cold rain soaks everything. When they come from the west or the north, the rain turns to snow, and fur and clothing acquire a thin coating of ice. The forest seems unnaturally lifeless and still. For hours at a time, the only sound is the wind and the eerie creaking of the trees under their coats of ice.

It will take two or three days for the players to cover the distance to Afligeant’s castle, more if they wander away from the road. The forest paths have been so badly blocked by snow and fallen timber that the players are forced to struggle through at a snail’s pace. There are a number of possible encounters that may occur along the way, at the host’s discretion. These are detailed below.

The host should also make sure to get details of the party’s preparations for encamping each night. Henri has a small tent, but if the players have no portable shelter of their own, their best bet may be to create a “lean-to” from some of the plentiful broken timber that lines the road. If they simply camp in the open, have each player roll against a d4 “attack,” to reflect the danger of frostbite and exposure. If the players are not properly dressed, or are furless, increase this to d6. Merciful hosts may allow the players to find a cave, abandoned hut, or similar shelter each night.

Additionally, each day the game host should make regular Foraging and Travel test rolls, as the elements take their toll upon the party. If any of the players is dressed in unsuitable clothing, the host should have them make d10 difficulty Body rolls to avoid taking double fatigue damage. If any players are submerged in a body of water, consider this a physical attack



of d6 damage per minute in the icy water! It is up to game host to determine how this time wandering is played out. You may wish to cut short or skip this section all together, and proceed immediately to the next section. Alternately, you could simply have the players make three daily Forage and Travel tests, and apply any effects immediately. However, if you want the journey to be a little more memorable, use some or all of the following encounters.

### Ambush!

This encounter will occur unless the players are taking every effort to conceal themselves. While carefully crossing a frozen creek, the party is attacked by a band of ragged ruffians! They will be operating in two groups, one of either side of the creek, thus hoping to put the adventurers at a disadvantage.

The bandits are wandering thugs in the employ of the Invisible Guild! They are wandering the countryside, raising panic among Afligeant's peasantry, and keeping an eye for outsiders, like the players. The majority of them are dressed in scraps of leather, and armed with spears and short swords. Use the "Minion" statistics provided in *Ironclaw*. There are two of them for every player, though the host should tailor this number to suit his group. They are led by a grizzled ferret named Inégal. Use stats as per a Captain in the *Ironclaw* rules, and arm him with a rusty saber and a pistol.

If they defeat the players, they will simply take whatever arms and money the group has and run off into the wilderness. If they players display powerful magic, or disable more than half the bandits, they will likewise retreat. Those left living will beg pitifully for mercy, with the exception of Inégal. If he is left alive, he will try to convince the players to bring him to Baron Afligeant. Inégal has a small price on his head (12 denarii), but he tells the party that Afligeant will reward them richly for his safe capture.

If the players search Inégal thoroughly, they will find a brand scar on his left shoulder. The brand is in the shape of an oval above a cross, a stylized skull and crossbones. Any Bisclavret character will recognize this at once as the insignia of the feared Invisible Guild! If Henri discovers this, he will insist the players bind Inégal and bring him along. If they refuse, he will tell them that the only other option is to execute the miserable wretch on the spot. He will display a signet ring, indicating his noble blood and his right to dispense low justice.

The players may wish to interrogate Inégal when they find his brand. He will tell them nothing unless tortured, or probed with Thought-Reading or Mesmerism. He knows that the Guild has been hired by Ricaner to cause trouble for the Baron, and that is all he knows. He thinks the Guild is involved simply as mercenary soldiers. This fact alone, however, is enough to bring the full weight of Bisclavret wrath down upon Ricaner.

Perceptive players may suspect Henri is more than he seems in his dealings with Inégal. If questioned, he will insist he is simply obeying the will of the Duke. (This is true.) He will not reveal his additional status as a Indicateur except under the most dire threats, or under the influence of magic.





## Hunted!

This encounter should occur no matter what the players do. While hiking or camping at night, the player with the keenest ears hears an oddly discordant melody floating on the wind. The tune is being played on a distant flute. Attempts to track the unseen musician fail at night, though the party may occasionally see faint lantern light a few hundred paces away.

Attempts to find the musician during the day will turn up a set of tracks that clearly belong to a rabbit. These paw prints disappear into the woods. The players are being tracked by Fetter Présent, an Invisible Guild ranger in the employ of Sir Ricaner. He will simply observe them from a distance, unsure of their strength. If the players have some magical means of tracking the rabbit, he will lead them to Sir Raciner's camp, which is described later in this adventure.

## Refugees

As they fight through a particularly dense patch of forest, the adventurers will find themselves almost face to face with a ragged line of twenty peasants, led by an aged wolf farmer. They will regard the adventurers warily.

The peasants are mostly wolfish and canine stock, but there is a young family of mice struggling to keep with the rest. The refugees have no valuables with them, and little food. If any of the players is a cleric, the refugees will beg for prayer. If any player is an obvious noble, the oldest of the refugees will approach him and humbly ask for assistance. If the players are so crass as to threaten these wretches, they will flee.

If questioned, the refugees will tell the players they are fleeing from bandits and the soldiers of Sir Ricaner. If asked why do not seek refuge at Baron Afligeant's castle, they will fall silent for a few moments, and finally say they have heard the road is blocked by soldiers. This is not true - they simply fear the Baron's cause is doomed. They will be able to direct the players to their nameless village (described in the next section,) which lies on the road to the castle.

## Attack!

One morning, as the Player-Characters prepare to head out they hear angry growls and the sounds of breaking branches. Looking behind, they see a small pack of lean and fierce lizards, mouths filled with forbidding teeth. These are *Burindents*, known to the Phelan as "bethrachranna." While dangerous, they seldom attack people. The harsh winter has them desperate for food, and they are willing to risk spears for a meal.



The *Burindents* attack without subtlety, simply running in and attacking the nearest person en masse. There are one for every player, though the host may adjust this to fit the players. The *Burindents* will have to be killed - they cannot be chased off or frightened.

Once the players have tired of the perils of the Méchant, and the host feels he has battered them sufficiently, proceed to the next section.

## The Tale of the Village of Ghosts

After a long day of trudging through frozen muck and ice, the party spots a welcome refuge, just in time for nightfall! Here and there through the fallen and bent trees a dozen small wooden dwellings can be seen clustered around a stone cottage in a small clearing. The buildings are silent and still. No light can be seen through their windows, and no smoke arises from their chimneys or smoke holes. All is quiet and cold. The only sign of life is a churned mess of footpad prints in the snow of the clearing. A fairly-large group of people has been within the last day. A successful tracking roll shows that there were about a dozen







people, mostly canines, though a few ferret prints are seen as well. They entered the village from the north, milled about, then headed to the east.

If the players investigate the buildings, they find that most of them are peasant cottages. The roofs of some have collapsed under the weight of snow and ice, and others show signs of fire damage. All have been broken into - doors are smashed, and shutters torn from windows. No valuables are left inside, and very few personal effects. There are no bodies or signs of struggle. None of the cottages are particularly suitable as shelter, unless one of the adventurers happens to be a carpenter. At the hosts discretion, the players will be able to scavenge some blankets and stale food from the hovels. The residents obviously left with most of their useful possessions.

The most interesting structure is the nearly undamaged stone cottage, which serves as a blacksmith's home and workshop. The window shutters were torn off, but seem to have been partially, and inexpertly, repaired. Likewise, the smashed door has been propped up against the frame. If the players peer through the shutters, they will be able to see a dimly glowing fire pit in the centre of the smithy. Inside, the embers in the furnace have burned down considerably, but the warmth they emit is a welcome comfort after the fierce cold outside.

Unless the players make a lot of noise entering the smithy, they will find a miserable wreck of a dog asleep on the floor by the furnace. This is Schaphandre, and he seems entirely mad. If the host feels the players made a lot of noise while exploring the village, Schaphandre is hiding under the blacksmith's bed. If the players don't look under there, he will try to run off into the woods when they leave or settle for the night.

Schaphandre will start away, uneasy, when the players awaken him. He clamber to his feet, and stare at them blinking. If they threaten him with violence, he will fall down on the ground and start wailing incoherently. When given a chance, he will run off into the wilderness. If the players aren't not obviously threatening, or speak to him kindly, he will sit down on the floor and grin a wide and nearly toothless grin.

"How now, how now? Spare some coins for the S'Allumer damned soul? For the sake of the Lady and her blessed servant, the good Duke?"

At this point, Henri will suddenly step forward, and place a coin in Schaphandre's outstretched paw. "May S'Allumer comfort you, for all the Duke's true men support each other," he will say. This is a sign and countersign of the Indicateur, and the exchange may be noted by clever players.

If the other players give Schaphandre some money, he will clutch it his chest and count it over and over again, chortling to himself. He will not respond to any questions for sometime, though if anyone comes close to him, he will try and hide the money in his mouth. If they attack him, he will suddenly produce a dagger from his dirty rags, and defend himself ably. Henri will draw his sword and pistol, and fight alongside the beggar. If the players defeat the two Indicateur, they will find both carry the iron eye badge of their office hidden in secret pockets. A search of the smithy will turn up clerical robes, a book of scriptures, and some trail rations, all hidden a wooden box in the ashes of the furnace. Schaphandre has more than one disguise.

The majority of what Schaphandre says is complete nonsense. However, if the players are patient, they may glean some useful information from his rambling.





## Frequently-Asked Questions for Schaphandre

### **Who are you and what do you do?**

“Do? Do? I didn’t do nothing, we didn’t, and now we lost it. I don’t know what I do. You’re lost? I am lost, lost, poor and wandering in the wind, frost in my fur screaming agonies. Spare a coin? Spare a bit of bread? A bit of bread?” He will then mime eating and drinking with great gusto.



### **If the players ask him his name again, he will rather sulkily say...**

“I’m the Duke in his damn castle, with 100 guards. Not Schaphandre, never that dirty flea.”

### **What did you lose?**

“Ubi sunt! What a question! Love, paradise, myself, my shoe, my tooth! Give me some money. I don’t know what we lost. A coin for the wicked, you who are blessed of S’Allumer?”

### **Why are you here?**

[Schaphandre will point to the fire. Then he will wink, and mime eating food, and perk his ears inquisitively.]

### **Can you help us?**

“Help? Is there help? Help the noble lords? Maybe help the sun move in sky! Ha! Oh, but I am tired and still I must find...” He then glares at the party suspiciously.

### **Can you lead us to Baron Afligeant’s castle?**

“We are all lost, then! In the morning, we may be found.”

[That is the only answer he will give until the next morning, when Schaphandre will go out the door and start walking towards the castle. If the players don’t follow him quickly, he will just keep walking, and not be seen again for the rest of the adventure]

If the players decide to ignore Schaphandre, he will simply sit quietly and watch them. If they camp in the smithy, he will remain and sleep when they sleep, taking food only if it is offered. When they head out, he will follow them at a distance, unless threatened. Henri will try and convince the players to let Schaphandre join them, saying it is the charitable thing to do. The party has gained an unsavory, though apparently harmless, mascot.

If the players have run through the adventure in the Rinaldi supplement, they may suspect Schaphandre to be some local worthy under the influence of an enchantment. Schaphandre will play along with this, to Henri’s amusement. He will make Delphic pronouncements, and vague references to gold and handsome rewards for his “last loyal friends.”

Wise players will choose to camp in the village for the night. The game host may wish to mention the strange growls and twig snaps they hear outside, suggesting a huge pack of Burindents just outside. Emphasize the pleasantly warm fire, and contrast this with the miserable biting wind that howls around the corners of the smithy and rattles the shutters. They should make the sensible choice.

At some point in very early morning, one of the players will awaken to see Schaphandre peering out of one of the broken shutters, and muttering quietly to himself. If the players look

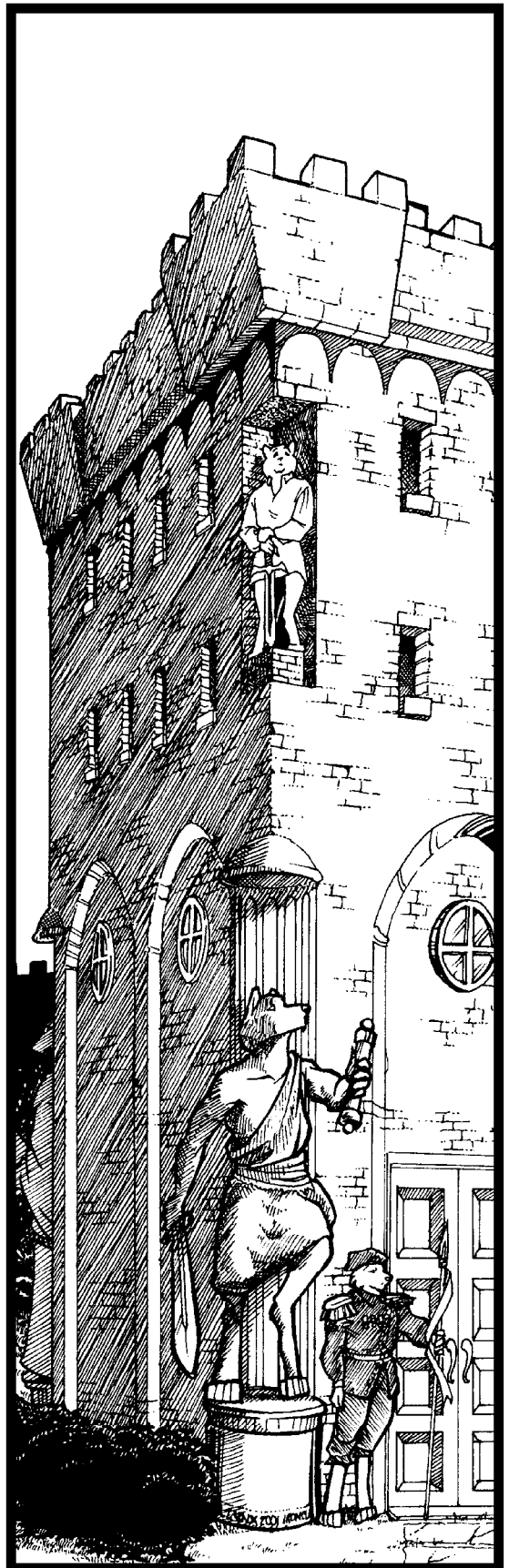


out, they will see a trail of dimly flickering lights through a veil of blowing snow. There are about a two dozen lights, all in a row, and they seem to be about one hundred paces off. These are militia from Sir Raciner's army on the march, but the player may ascribe a supernatural origin to the sight. As soon as others are awakened to see the lights, they wink out one by one. Otherwise, the night passes quietly.

The storm breaks temporarily as morning dawns. When the players leave the smithy, they will see the dark peaks of the Lochlan range rising into the pale blue winter sky, much closer than before. They will also see Afligeant's castle, a dark pile of stones half a league distant, perched atop one of the Lochlan foothills. A few black tendrils of smoke rise from the hills around the castle, too thick to be campfires. The way is clear from here on. If the players insist on setting out in the night, the game host should feel free to make multiple challenging travel rolls, and consider a random Burindent attack. No matter the outcome, shortly before dawn the group runs into a Ricaner patrol, as described in the section entitled "Capture!"

## The Tale of the Mournful Baron

Afligeant's castle is an obsolete tumble of stone, constructed atop a hill that gently rises about 80 feet from snow-covered fields. At the southern base of the hill is a small town, or rather the ruins of one. Smoke still rises from a few burned out houses. All the residents have long since fled or taken refuge in the castle. As they approach the castle, they will see Ricaner's camp built in a natural "dip" in the ground halfway up the southern side of the hill. The depression shelters the camp from sight of the castle, while giving a commanding view of the approach to Afligeant's castle. A single cannon is pointed at the ruins of the village. Strangely, no sentries are visible at this





camp, though sunlight can be seen glinting off the armor of soldiers manning the castle walls. The players can openly approach Ricaner's camp, investigate the ruined village, or try to circle around the back of the hill. The last two routes will involve the danger of capture. If the players simply walk straight to his camp, proceed to the section entitled "Sir Raciner's Camp." If the players can turn themselves invisible, teleport, or otherwise transport themselves to the castle without fear of capture, proceed to the section entitled "In the Castle."

If the players pass through the village, they will pass a number of recently killed peasants, whose bodies are frozen into grisly statues by the freezing rain and snow of the past few days. They will be able to take advantage of the ruined walls and houses to cover their approach to the base of the hill. After that, they will be very much exposed, and would be well advised to make a beeline for the castle gates.

## Capture?

As the players pick their way through the ruins of the village, or creep up the side of the hill, they stand a chance of being picked up by one of Ricaner's patrol. His tracker and sword master, Fetter, has been tracking the players through the forest. He has finally ordered one of his more skilled patrols to pick them up for questioning. They are hiding behind a ruined garden wall in the village, or behind a stunted grove of pines if the players decided take another route to the castle.

Have the players make Observation checks versus the militia men's camouflage dice of d6. In all likelihood, the players will spot the soldiers inexpertly lurking behind their cover, and manage to sneak past or outrun them. If they are ambushed, or stand and fight, assign two soldiers for every player, using the "Minion" stats from *Ironclaw*. The soldiers will demand the players surrender, and then try to capture them. If the players show no mercy, the soldiers will fight to the death.

Fetter watches the proceedings from a safe distance, and will not attempt to interfere unless the players are captured. He will then lead the guards into Sir Ricaner's camp. Proceed to that section of the adventure.

## In the Castle

However the players get to the castle, they find it in a shocking state of disrepair, and obviously has been for some time. The eastern wall has partially collapsed, and the number of missing stones is matched by the number of moss-covered boulders at the base of the walls. More recent damage is evident on the wooden gates, which has been holed by cannon shot in a number of places, and charred by fire in others. Another grisly hallmark of war are the arrow filled corpses of Ricaner's men that line the base of the walls.

As the players approach, they will be challenged by a pair of dirty wolf sentries, who threaten them with crossbows from the safety of the walls. They will accept any reasonable story, and let the players in through a small iron sally-port set in the wall. If they are being pursued by Raciner's men, the sally-port will be open, and the sentries will slam it shut as the players enter.

Inside the walls, the players see a three story stone keep in much better repair than the surrounding walls, as well as a wooden chapel, stable, smithy, and barracks. Everywhere the players look, they will see wretched peasants huddling for warmth around meager fires. Players obviously dressed as clerics will find themselves subjected to numerous requests for prayer and healing on the parts of these peasants, who will soon be chased off by the sentries.



The captain of the sentries, a bored looking wolf-woman with an eye-patch named Leth-shuil, will inquire as to their business at the castle. If it legitimate, or if they are obviously nobles, she will immediately arrange an audience with the Baron. If she thinks they are spies, she will likewise arrange an audience, but under guard. She will let Afligeant judge their tale himself. If the players can not give any good reason for being at the castle, she will offer them employment as soldiers, and again bring them before the Baron. If Schaphandre is with the players, he will be treated kindly, but will not be welcomed into the Baron's presence. The wily spy will not be particularly concerned by this, as in his last audience with the Baron, he was disguised as an itinerant friar. It was to Schaphandre that the Baron unknowingly announced his intentions to leave his lands to the church!

## Meeting the Baron

The players will be ushered into the keep, which is pleasantly warm after their ordeal. If they are noble, they will be offered a change of clothes before meeting the Baron. The audience will be held in a room on the third floor of the keep. The Baron will greet the players from a table littered with maps of the hill surrounding area. He speaks in a slow and precise manner, as if carefully dispensing precious stones of wisdom. With him is an attractive and rather exotic bat woman (Semence Fleuve) dressed in elaborate robes, and a pair of sullen looking guard captains. If they are not suspected as spies, he will offer them wine and bread, then ask them what it is that brings them to his castle.

## Frequently-Asked Questions for Baron Afligeant

### **Who are you and what do you do?**

“I am Baron Cedric de Afligeant, proper ruler of these lands by right of antiquity, and right of worth. And who might you be?”



### **Why are you being attacked?**

“Ricaner is a young man, with a number of silly ideas he gathered from his hot-headed father. He thinks I conspire against him, when really, it is his father who mistreated me. He poisoned my wells, stole from my herds, and burnt my crops! He should be before the Duke for trial... but I suppose the Duke has more important things to worry about than this odd corner of his realm, yes?”

### **Why do you not send for help?**

“Help? Against that boy and his rabble? He will tire himself out soon enough. And if he does not, well, he will have certainly learned a lesson about the fate forged valor of the men of Afligeant, yes?”

### **Where are the Indicateur?**

“Captured by Ricaner as they tried to bring word of our plight to the Duke! Slain, perhaps. He has no respect for the philosophy of Bisclavret unity, I fear. A terrible situation all round, no?” (This is a lie. The Indicateur was on his way to recommend the Duke have both nobles before judgment.)

### **We are here to aid your cause! How can we help you?**

“I am honored. This is not your fight, but you obviously recognize my just position. I welcome you and your talents! Let us a plan a strategy, hmm?”



***The people are starving. Why do you not help them?***

“I give them daily rations of bread. That is all I can spare from the soldiery. They will not suffer overmuch. This siege will be over soon, and even if it is prolonged... well, my people are bred of a tough stock, well used to privations and the challenge of war. They will endure, and if they do not, their bravery will be an example, will it not?”

***This war is unlawful. Lay down your arms, and await Ducal judgment!***

“And not defend myself against the unwarranted aggression of that...that... whelp? I think not! Leave my castle immediately!” (He will then have his soldiers escort the players out of the castle, unwilling to take chances at imprisoning an Indicateur agent.)

[Assuming the players achieve the good favor of the Baron, proceed to the section entitled “Siege of Castle Afligeant.”]

## **The Tale of Ricaner’s Camp**

Ricaner’s camp is a noticeably rag-tag collection of two dozen large tents set in a depression on the side of the castle hill. A single cannon is pointed at the village at the base of the hill, but is unmanned. Closer inspection shows that it is not in working order - a portion of the barrel has burst outwards. If the players are brought here as captives, they will be disarmed and taken to Ricaner’s tent.

No sentries are immediately visible as the players approach, but there are four hidden behind snow-covered rocks. If the players are entering the camp openly, two guards will jump out and brandish spears at them, demanding to know their business. If the players fight, the other two will run and sound a general alarm.

Especially fool-hardy or well-armed players may try to stand and fight. They are free to do so, but the host should make it clear that there at least 120 armed men in the encampment. Even powerful destructive spells will likely not give them victory. If the players give the sentries a good reason for their presence, the sentries will bring them to see Sir Ricaner, under guard. If they cannot give a good reason, they will be arrested and disarmed, and then brought to Ricaner’s camp tent.

If the adventurers sneak into the camp at night, they will have to avoid regular patrols of crossbow-armed guardsmen. However, this approach will give them the greatest chance of wreaking havoc on Ricaner’s forces. Refer to the section entitled “Lifting the Siege” later in this adventure.

As the players make their way to Ricaner’s tent they will find themselves the subject of curious stares. Though most of the residents of the camp are militia, there are a few civilian camp followers as well, mostly washerwomen and slaves. There are also about a dozen armed commoners, who seem somehow separate from the main force. These are mercenary leaders from the Invisible Guild, keeping an eye on the conflict. Sir Ricaner has relatively few troops, no siege machines beyond a single cannon, and some ladders. Without the cannon, his attack would be a risky gamble.

Ricaner will greet them in his tent, a large canvas affair with half a dozen rooms. He will be in deep conversation with an aide when the players arrive, but will immediately give them his full attention, demanding to know their names and business. If Schaphandre is with them, Ricaner will assume he is a servant of some sort and ignore him.



## Frequently-Asked Questions for Baron Ricaner

### **Who are you and what do you do?**

“Why, I am Sir Bonaré Ricaner, rightful lord of this land. We are here to evict this outlaw princeling, that gloomy scoundrel Afligeant, who has pressed my patience too far! Who are you, and what is your business here?”



### **Why do you wage war?**

“For twenty-five years, my family has withstood the outrageous impertinence of Afligeant. More than once, he has attempted to oust us from the lands given to us by the hands of the Duke himself! Why, he has even hired a magician to cast spells against me, some treacherous bat woman. He would be dead or in my dungeon even now, had not my cannon burst. Another will be here within the day.”

### **This war is unlawful. We demand that you lay down your arms.**

*[If the players are of noble blood, or Indicateur]:* “What? Good sirs, can you not see that Afligeant is a wicked man, who secretly harbors hatred against our beloved Duke!? I will not lay down arms. My actions will vindicate me. It is with great regret that I must ask you to stay here as my guests until such time as I am victorious.” (He will then summon his guards.)

*[If the players are Clergy of S’Allumer]:* “Yes, yes. I have heard the counsel of priests before in this matter. I tried, many times, to speak peace with the Baron. I have been forced at final extremity to take up bloody arms. Save your breath for prayers, gentle reverends.” (He will allow the players to remain at the camp, or leave as they wish.)

*[If the players are commoners]:* “Guards! Arrest these spies!”

### **May we join you in your noble crusade against the evil Baron?**

“Certainly! We have need of experienced sword arms, strong backs, and nimble minds. I shall appreciate your aid.”

If the players are placed under arrest, they will be taken to the outskirts of the camp and chained by their feet to a heavy timber beam that masses about 50 stone. This spot is exposed to the elements, and to the gaze of militia drilling in the camp. If any of them are obviously magicians, they will be gagged and chained hand and foot as well. Go to the section entitled “A Friend in Need.”

If they join Ricaner, or are allowed to stay in the camp, he will let them set up camp where they please – provided he is able to establish that they are not spies. When the audience draws to a close, the players will be led from Ricaner’s tent to the quartermaster’s tent to draw pay. The quartermaster is not present, and the guards tell the players to wait while they find him. Shortly after they leave, Fetter Prisént will enter. He will look about nervously, and then approach the party. “May I have a favor, good sirs, for the sake of the Lady and her blessed servant, the good Duke?” he will ask.

This is a trap. If Henri is with the group, he will give the countersign. Smart players who remembered the similar exchange between Schaphandre and Henri may try and give it as well. If anyone gives the countersign, Fetter will smile broadly, and then dart from the tent.





Immediately, the guards will rush back in with weapons drawn, and an alarm will be raised. If the players are quick witted they may be able to escape the camp, but standing and fighting would be suicide. If they are caught, the players will be placed in irons, and chained to a spar of wood on the outskirts of the camp. Proceed to the section entitled “A Friend in Need.” If the players respond in any other way other than the countersign, Fetter will say “Oh, never mind,” and leave without another word.

If the players elect to throw their lot in with Ricaner, and pass Fetter’s test, proceed to the section entitled “The Siege of Castle Afligeant.”

## The Tale of the Needful Pressed-Man

The party will soon find their predicament to be rather unpleasant, as the cold winter rains start to deluge the earth once more. Sullen militia men will check on them intermittently, and regular traffic between nearby tents will ensure the players are unable to make use of any magic or embark on obvious escape attempts. They will be able to watch Ricaner’s men as they prepare for a renewed assault. They also witness the arrival of a new cannon around sunset.

After a time, a young fox soldier in ill-fitting armor brings them bread to eat, and melted snow to drink. This is Ronaldo de Muire, a former slave in the service of Afligeant, who volunteered for Ricaner’s army as they passed through his village. If the players seem unwilling or able to come up with an escape plan, Ronaldo may be able to help them. He will watch them eat, then try to start a conversation with them.

### Frequently-Asked Questions for Ronaldo

#### **Who are you and what do you do?**

“I am footman Ronaldo de Muire, and I am bringing you food at the orders of the noble Sir Raciner.” (He will make a face when he says that name.)



#### **Do you like being a soldier?**

“It is better than being a slave, which is what I was. At least I get fed every day. Perhaps if I am a good fighter, I will become a famous general, and be able to return to Triskellian.”

#### **What is in Triskellian?**

“My heritage. I am of noble blood, you know. I imagine my retainers have been holding on to my family lands, awaiting the day of my return.”

#### **You are a noble?**

“Of course! I am a fox, as you can see. My great-great grandfather was one of the brave knights who was captured many years ago, on the Via Salutis.

#### **You are not a noble, you’re just a slave.**

“Oh? Well, then, high and mighty masters, I hope you enjoy your food.” [*He will sulkily pelt them with bread rolls, then stalk off.*]

#### **If you help us gain our freedom, we can reward you**

“You have my interest... “



Ronaldo wants to strike out on his own, and dislikes being a soldier. However, he is cautious. Promises of later wealth will not interest him. If the players promise to bring him to Triskellian, or if a noble offers to help him regain his heritage, he will jump at the chance. He will hint at this, and if the adventurers don't take the hint, he will sigh and walk off.

If the players are able to persuade Ronaldo to free them, he tells them to wait. As the sun sets, the camp is a buzz of activity. In the chill hours before dawn Ricaner's men start to march into formations on the hillside. Ricaner himself can be seen riding to and fro on a courser of indifferent quality. As the camp empties, Ronaldo steals over to the area the players are chained in. He has a set of keys with him, and quickly removes their manacles. "Remember your promise!" he says. From there, he will follow them wherever they go.

As the players break free, it will become clear that the Baron's castle is the sanctuary easiest to reach, though soon to be imperiled. If they try to flee into the woods, Ricaner's men will spot them and head off in hot pursuit. If they have already been somehow evicted from Afligeant's castle, they will find themselves in a very tenuous situation. Assuming they immediately head for the castle, return to the section entitled "In the Castle." If they decide to wait around Ricaner's camp, they will soon be seen by the handful of elderly or wounded soldiers that remain as rearguard. Still, the players may find this to be an unparalleled chance to loot the camp and flee. If the players try to enter the Baron's castle anytime after the siege begins, refer to "The Siege of Castle Afligeant."

If the players failed to befriend Ronaldo, they will simply have to wait until the camp is nearly empty the morning after their capture. At this point, they will be left alone and can free themselves as they wish. If they are still trapped, they will be eventually freed when the Duke's mercenaries arrive.

## The Tale of the Storming of Castle Afligeant

How the adventure plays out once the characters have arrived at the Castle Hill is very much dependent on whether they end up on the outside or the inside, and upon which force they have elected to support, if any.

If the players joined with Ricaner, the hours leading up to his final assault will be taken up with preparations and planning. Ricaner will tour the troops, giving inspirational speeches. Clerical players will be asked to deliver a blessing to the troops, and will be later approached by individual soldiers hoping for a prayer of protection. Those with military experience or noble rank may be offered command of a small unit of men. Once the replacement cannon arrives, he will begin his preparations for the final attack, at dawn the following day. Some of the soldiers will spend the last night in uneasy roistering, and the rest in fitful sleep.

Those in the castle will be offered the full hospitality the Baron, including banquet on the evening before the assault. Though he goes





about dressed in full military regalia, he will seem oddly calm about the prospect of attack. If questioned, he will refer the players to Semence Fleuve, his Repense astrologer. Fleuve has cast a positive horoscope for the battle, and assured the Baron that Ricaner will lose even if the Baron takes no action. "And what could I do to him, anyway? If I leave the castle, I am dead. If I remain, I will endure until the end. And if I die, my lands will go the church. No matter his course, the young whelp is denied my lands," the Baron says.

He will allow the players to do as they will. They may see to improving the defense of the castle, or even suggest raids on Ricaner's camp. Provided they do not take more than a few men with them, the Baron will be agreeable. Perhaps they are the instruments of victory promised to him in his horoscope. Proceed to the section entitled "Lifting the Siege." If the players remain in the keep, the Baron takes them on a tour of his library and war room. He is not the most cheerful of companions, and is prone to quoting gloomy poetry. They will be comfortable enough, regardless. He will offer them fine wine and rich food as they await the inevitable assault. The players may also choose to speak with Semence, who follows the Baron wherever he goes.

### Frequently-Asked Questions for Semence Fleuve

#### **Who are you and what do you do?**

"I am the lady Semence Fleuve, of the Repense. I am his lordship's personal advisor and astrologer."



#### **You are an astrologer?**

"Yes, many of the Repense are. We have a gift for reading the fates in the paths of the stars as they proceed through the crystal spheres of heaven."

#### **What do you foresee for this battle?**

"I have prepared numerous horoscopes for the Baron. They all prove one thing. His enemy will be defeated soundly by the time the Bear Star ascends into the Constellation of the Burindent. That happens tomorrow night."

#### **How can you be sure?**

"I have never been wrong before! Perhaps you would like your horoscope prepared? It will help us pass the time until this unpleasantness is resolved."

#### **Can you fly to bring us help?**

"I fear my wings are too delicate to bear me far enough! Besides, did I not say that our victory is writ large in the stars? There is no danger."

Semence will happily prepare a horoscope for any respectable looking character who asks. Once complete, it will indicate a great struggle in the near future, followed by peace. The players may make of this what they will. (The peace of death? A quiet dungeon cell?)

### What of the Indicateur?

If Henri or Schaphandre are still with the players, they will be busily making plans as soon as they arrive at the castle. Henri will excuse himself from the players, and make himself scarce, and Schaphandre, if he was with them, will simply disappear into the crowd of ragged refugees inside the castle.





The actions they take will be very much dependent on the progress of the siege, which is detailed below, and upon what information they have. In general terms, the Indicateur is dedicated to preventing this kind of internecine conflict, and both Afligeant and Ricaner stand to be punished by the Duke. However, the heirless Afligeant has elected to leave his lands to the church, rather than leave them to be handed out by the Duke upon the Baron's death. This galls the Indicateur, who would rather see Ricaner take the lands than see them given to the Rinaldi dominated church of S'Allumer.

Of course, if they know Ricaner has been working with the support of the Invisible Guild, this crime will take precedence over all others. Both Schaphandre and Henri will work to stymie Ricaner and do what they can to ensure he is taken to justice. This does not necessarily mean they will support the Baron. Schaphandre, who is rather less idealistic than Henri, may well decide to simply let Ricaner defeat Afligeant, and then turn Ricaner in when outside forces arrive.

Possible actions taken by the two spies could include such skullduggery as opening a sally port to the enemy overnight, or attempting to kidnap Afligeant and take him to Ricaner's camp. If the agents decide Ricaner is in the wrong, they will take a different tack. They might try to organize a midnight raid against his camp, or an assassination attempt. They could encourage the players to act as double-agents, feigning support for Ricaner and promising to leave open a sally port as above, and leading Ricaner's men into a trap. If Henri and Schaphandre feel there is nothing they can do, both will simply leave the castle or camp, over the walls if necessary, and disappear into the woods.

In any case, only Henri will dare reveal his true identity to the players. He will try to convince them to support one side or the other with moral arguments. Which side will depend on whether he knows of Ricaner's ties to the Invisible Guild. If the players refuse these arguments, Henri may play his trump card and show them his badge of office. Unless the players are of noble blood, they could get into serious trouble by refusing to aid an Indicateur in the course of his duties.

While the Baron sits idly in his castle, Sir Ricaner has been busy preparing his troops for what he hopes to be the final attack in the siege. As the sun rises, and the snow begins to fall once more, the army will march resolutely up the hill and array themselves around the castle. The main body of men will face the gate, while small groups will station themselves at the compass points to ensure no one escapes.

It is possible the players may decide to throw their lot in with Ricaner. In this case, victory is almost assured, though they run the risk of injury or death in the taking of the castle. If the players are all on Ricaner's side, skip ahead to the section entitled "The Castle Falls."

## Ending the Battle by Brute Force

Perhaps the surest way of stopping the attack is sabotaging Ricaner's cannon on the night before the attack, or otherwise raiding his camp. It will be difficult to sneak into the camp unobserved – the sentries are on full alert, and few in the camp are sleeping. The cannon itself is guarded by the six members of the gun crew. At least two of them will be on careful watch through the night, while the others play at cards and dice near the cannon. If an alarm has been raised, all six will be carefully keeping watch with their weapons drawn, and a soldier will be on guard at every tent. Destroying or otherwise sabotaging the cannon will severely hamper Ricaner's plans. The attack will still take place at dawn, but it will be much harder and bloodier.

Other possibilities include attempting to assassinate Sir Ricaner, or causing a panic in the camp by setting fire to the powder magazine, or striking with powerful spells and atavist





powers like the Cry of a Hundred Souls. Bold players may even attempt an all out attack on the camp with a handful of Afligeant's braver soldiers. None of these options will prove easy. Assassinating Ricaner will effectively end his claim on Afligeant's lands, and will also throw the camp into turmoil. Fetter and the other Invisible Guild mercenaries, if alive, will steal Ricaner's cash boxes and disappear into the woods, and Ricaner's captains will call off the attack. However, they will make every effort to catch the assassins, and if they feel Afligeant is harboring the killer, the siege will continue. Though Afligeant hates Ricaner, and welcomes his death, he would willingly turn the players over to Ricaner's men if he feels they killed him. After all, slitting a nobleman's throat in the night is very much in violation of the rules of war.

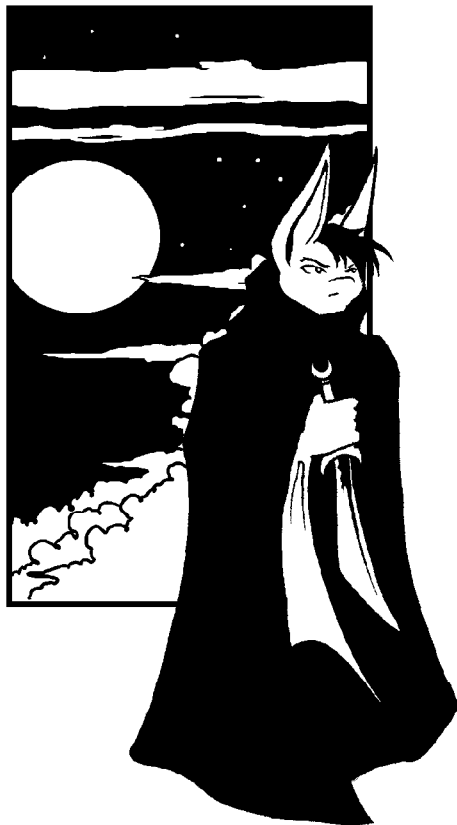
Panicking the troops in the camp with the use of powerful spells, such as Earthquake or Maelstrom, will prove fairly effective in the short term. Ricaner's men will be thrown in disarray for a time, long enough to provide cover for further sabotage attempts, or to soften the camp up for a frontal assault.

Attacking the camp with Afligeant's men will not be easy. The Baron will not part with more than 40 of his soldiers, and they will be badly outnumbered. Simply assaulting the camp will cause great commotion for a time, but the Baron's men will be quickly beaten. If the players are able to throw the camp into turmoil before the attack, the assault will have a slim chance of success. Allow the players to make a Warfare test versus a difficulty of 5d12. If at least one of the players achieve Excellent or Phenomenal results on this test, then the host can assume the powder keg and cannon have been destroyed, or even that Ricaner has been slain. The attacking force will still be forced to retreat, but the morning's attack will not take place.

### Ending the Attack by Diplomacy or Trickery

Ricaner is willing to meet with other nobles or high-ranking clergy to discuss the situation. However, he will use this audience to simply rant about the injustices Baron Afligeant has heaped upon his head, and try and convince his listeners to support him. Simply talking to him will likely achieve nothing. However, if the game host feels a player has role-played a particularly impassioned speech calling for peace, it would not be untoward to make a diplomacy or oratory skill check, with a difficulty of at least 3d12. If successful, Ricaner will agree to give Afligeant a few more days to surrender. By that time, the Duke's mercenaries will have arrived.

Creative players may be able to come up with other ideas to stop the attack. Ricaner's force has no magical support to speak of, and spells like Blind or Mesmerism could be used to great effect against him. Sneaky players might get the idea to somehow blackmail or threaten him into returning to his lands. This is a risky proposition, however. Ricaner would surely remember any such dealings, and repay them ten-fold.



## Throwing in with Afligeant, and Defending the Castle

If the players are trapped within Afligeant's castle as the final assault proceeds, they may very well feel there is little they can do except wait for the end. This is not so, though stemming Ricaner's advance will certainly prove a daunting task.

Unless the players are directing the Baron's few score troops, there will be no fire from the walls until Ricaner's men are well within bow shot. The castle guards have wasted too much ammunition in previous attacks, and will fire only if sure of a target.

They will not get their chance. As soon as the cannon is brought into range, it will open fire, shattering stones, and sending one of Afligeant's men screaming to the ground.

The cannon crew will adjust their range and reload, a process that takes a few minutes.

The shot is heard in every room of the castle. When he hears it, Afligeant will rise and stamp towards the nearest window, and remain there, watching his men scramble for shelter, and the peasants in the courtyard cowering. The cannon will fire once every five minutes. Ricaner will ride back in forth in front of his men impatiently, who themselves stand eager for battle, watching hungrily as the castle gate is smashed bit by bit. Players with Ricaner's force may attempt their own raids, climbing the walls, or sniping at guards.

Players within the castle are in a sticky situation indeed. Short of magical attacks on the cannon crew, little can be done from the walls. The bulk of Ricaner's men are out of range of bow and gunshot. The cannon is key to Ricaner's attack – if it is destroyed or disabled, Ricaner will be forced to attack the castle with ladders and a small ram. This will prove much bloodier for his side, and the attack may be cut short by the imminent arrival of Ducal mercenaries.

As the cannon is located near the rear of Ricaner's army, it may be possible for stealthy characters to exit the castle secretly and sneak around to the cannons, avoiding the watchful eye of sentries. Once there, they will have to fight their way through the gun crew, and will have a few moments to sabotage the cannon as best they can before Ricaner's soldiers spot them and open fire with bows and guns. There is a cart of gunpowder kegs near the cannon. If this is set on fire, it will explode in d10 rounds if the flames are not extinguished. The explosion will severely damage the cannon, and do d12, d6 damage to anyone within ten paces.

If the players hold tight in the castle, the gate will be smashed to pieces after about one hour of bombardment. This can be prolonged somewhat if players inside have managed to shore them up somehow. Once the gates are smashed, Ricaner will order his men to batter what is left down with an iron-tipped ram carried by twenty men. About half will be felled by arrows and bullets from defenders, but the gates will quickly collapse.

Once the gate is breached, Ricaner's men run howling into the courtyard. Screaming peasants take what shelter they may as the invaders torch and slay at random. Afligeant and his remaining men secure themselves in the keep. He and Semence shelter in his third floor



war room, along with his older servants, and any non-combatant players whose status warrants this special protection. The Baron will be utterly despondent, sinking into his chair and alternately weeping and praying. Semence will vainly, and half-heartedly, assure him that victory is just a matter of time. Something will happen to save him. In the meantime, arrows and occasional shots rattle against the walls.

This is likely the last chance the players on Afligeant's side will have to save the day. Succeeding in a leadership test against a difficulty of d12 will allow them to rally Afligeant's guards in a counter attack. An excellent result on a 4d12 difficulty warfare test by any players leading Afligeant's men will allow them to push back the invaders and secure the gate with broken carts and the like. An extraordinary result means the players are able to force the enemy back and advance far enough to capture or sabotage the cannon. Ricaner will regroup and attack again, but will not be able to capture the castle before the Duke's forces arrive.

If the players remain neutral in this fight, or are prisoners in Ricaner's camp, or simply take shelter with the Duke in his keep, the castle will fall in short order according to the sequence of events outlined below. The keep does not remain secure for long. Through the windows, players who are inside will be able to see Ricaner's men pushing the cannon into the courtyard, and aiming it at the door. A few well-aimed arrows will delay them, but a Petard placed against the keep door by a nimble soldier will destroy it just as readily as a cannon.

Ricaner's men will soon overrun the first two floors of the keep. They will smash and burn everything in sight, and kill anyone they see who does not immediately surrender. Afligeant's remaining castle guards are slain or taken prisoner, and it is up to his household servants to hold the final stair. They do not last long, and soon Ricaner's men are pounding on the final door. Unless the players have some magical means of holding it, it too bursts.

## The Battle for Castle Afligeant

As his servants and courtiers run screaming, Afligeant runs shouting into the mass of soldiers, swinging wildly. He wounds the first few, but is soon overrun and stabbed several times with spears - unless the players are somehow able to restrain him. The soldiers will grudgingly accept the surrender of any of the players. Alternately, clever adventurers may be able to escape to a forgotten part of the castle, where they may fight on. If they are captured, they are brought down into the courtyard and tied together.

If the players were actively involved in the fighting on either side, a few Warfare tests are in order, with a difficulty of 4d12 for combatants on both sides. Roll one test when Ricaner's men breach the gates, and another when they arrive inside the keep. Even non-combatant defenders in the keep will have to make this final roll.





In addition to these Warfare tests, the game host can individualize the battle to suit his players. For example, as Ricaner's men burst into the keep, a player knight might be faced with a pair of canny swordsmen. A gentle cleric may find himself pursued through corridors by a spear-toting soldier. A scholar might find himself trying to defend the Baron's extensive library from being consumed by fiery destruction, a few books at a time.

### If Ricaner is victorious...

If the players are unable or unwilling to stop him, Ricaner's men will seize control of the keep just as the sun reaches its peak. They will tear down the Baron's banner, and raise Sir Raciner's crest in its place. A fire will be set in the library, and outside in the chapel. The soldiers now ignore the miserable peasants who flee from the castle, back to their wrecked homes and an uncertain future.

If the players are nobles, clerics, or Indicateur, they will be brought before an exultant Ricaner. He will set them free, and explain this unfortunate local conflict was brought about by the treacherous nature of the Baron. If the players object too loudly, he may consider throwing them in his newly acquired dungeons. Ricaner will personally parade the Baron's head (or parade him, if he is still alive) in front of his cheering troops and cowering prisoners in the courtyard.

His delirious joy at the victory will not last long. At that moment, a pistol shot is heard. Turning, all in the courtyard see a finely garbed porcupine astride a Courser. Beside him is a mounted member of the Indicateur (a much cleaner Schaphandre, if he is alive and with the players) with a smoking pistol. A score of musketeers stand behind them, guns at the ready. More enter with every moment.

The knight spurs his mount forward a few paces, and instructs all present to lay down their arms in the name of Duke Mausein Bisclavret. The Esclage knight who leads the mercenary company, Sir Morlage, will immediately place Ricaner under arrest, and free Afligeant if he is alive. He will order the soldiers to lay down their arms and return to their homes. He will then leave half of his men at Afligeant's castle under the command of an officer, and begin the long trek to Harrowgate, with Ricaner and Afligeant in his custody. There, the nobles will be called to task for making unlawful war.

If Afligeant is dead, and the Indicateur are unaware of the support the Invisible Guild gave to Ricaner, he will be judged as the rightful heir to the Baron's lands. If players have proof that Afligeant pledged his lands to the Church, this transfer will take place, but they will have made many enemies in Harrowgate. If Afligeant is dead and the Indicateur know of the Invisible Guild's role, Ricaner will be executed and his lands given to some worthy knight, or the Church, if proof can be shown that Afligeant intended this.





The winter storms break in a few days, and the peasants of the Méchant get on to rebuilding their broken lives. Proceed to the section entitled “Denouement.”

### If Ricaner is defeated...

Assuming the players were able to stall Ricaner’s attack through one means or another, Afligeant and the castle will be saved. In late morning, guards on the walls will spot a column of several hundred men approaching the settlement at the base of the hill, and soon after an Esclage knight, Sir Morlage, will arrive to take charge of the situation. He is accompanied by a senior member of the Indicateur (Schaphandre, if appropriate). This Indicateur is acting in the name of the Duke, and will not hesitate to dictate terms to either noble. They in turn will grudgingly accept them.

How Sir Morlage and the Indicateur take care of the situation will depend on the condition of Ricaner’s attack, and upon the information available to the Indicateur. If they know Ricaner is working with the Invisible Guild, they will not bother with Afligeant at all. Ricaner will be placed in irons, and his lands will be given to the Baron or some other worthy.

If Ricaner’s force was mostly scattered by the players, the Ducal representatives will be relatively lenient. They will disarm his men and escort them back to Ricaner’s lands. A small force will be left behind to ensure the two keep the peace, and both Ricaner and Afligeant will be summoned to Harrowgate in the Spring to settle the matter at the Duke’s court.

If Ricaner’s army is whole, the Duke’s men will not be as merciful. They will disarm both sides and send all combatants home. Sir Morlage will leave half his men behind to keep the peace, and both Ricaner and Afligeant will be taken to Harrowgate to immediately answer to the charge of unlawful war making.

## Dénouement

As one option, Sir Morlage may decide the situation in the Méchant is grim enough to warrant leaving his entire force. In that case, he will hire the players to escort the prisoners to Harrowgate. He will provide them with a carriage and mounts for this.

The players might also choose to remain and help the populace recover from the conflict. A character of noble Bisclavret rank might even be expected to do so. Clerics, scholars, and craftsmen could also find no end of work to put their hands to.

If they made any promise to Ronaldo, he will loudly insist they be honored. A journey to Triskellian may be in the offing. And Schaphandre might insist on tagging along.

Of course, if the players came to the Méchant for a reason besides the war between Afligeant and Ricaner, the way now lies clear for them to continue on their adventure.

They may be a little wiser and cynical for their experience here.





While the adventure as written contains few opportunities for enrichment, the host may wish to allow the players to try their hand at thievery, or a shot at some booty as the fog of war descends. The Baron has a finely stocked library for such a provincial noble, one that may hide a handwritten copy of a magical tome. Also, his table is set with solid silver cutlery that would fetch a fine price on the open market. Fleuve's chambers hide an ornate golden orrery, and some clockwork toys, items very much in demand in Harrowgate and Thanon.

Ricaner's camp doesn't offer as much in the way of valuable artifacts, though he does have a pair of pearl handled dueling pistols marked with his family crest. Perhaps more practical for most player groups is the chest full of small coins meant to pay for mercenaries. This contains about 16 aureals in denarii and "copper-nose" coins from Bisclavret mints.

If the players support Afligeant, and he is still in possession of his life and lands at the end of the adventure, he will reward them depending according to their role in his victory. He will give mercenaries 5 gold aureals each. Fellow nobles will be offered tracts of land on his demesne. Scholars, clerics, or mages will be given a choice of books from his library. He will send letters to the Duke praising them, and this praise may prove useful later on.

If Ricaner is the victor, and is given the Baron's lands, his rewards may be less welcome. He will offer cash as a reward, no more than one or two aureals, and try to entice the players with the promise of more paid mercenary work in the future.

## ***Dramatis Personae***

What follows is a list of the relevant gaming information for the prominent NPCs in this adventure. Each write-up includes a brief description of the character, their rules and statistics, and their personal "list" of priorities, ranked in order of importance. As Game Host, when you are playing the role of an NPC, check the NPC's list of Motivations to see what their priorities are, to better help you decide how the character would behave.



# Baron Cedric Afligeant



A heavy-set wolf in late middle-age, the Baron is flabby, slow-moving, and grim. He has a penchant for spouting long-winded speeches about honor and the immutable nature of destiny. Baron Afligeant is a mournful and tragic soul, doomed to die a poetically heroic death... or so he hopes.

Throughout the adventure, the Baron will put on airs of "death or glory," and rally his troops with speeches about the honor that will be bestowed upon the martyrs.

The Baron is smarter than he sounds, however. Though not skilled at arms, he has a keen intellect, and is a capable administrator. This current crisis has simply aggravated his already gloomy personality.

Body d8, Speed d6, Mind d12, Will d10

Wolf d6      Weapons: Claws, Teeth      Habitat: Forest      Sense Tests: Listen, Smell

### Dilettante d12

Skills (with Favorite Use)

	d12	d6	Etiquette (Bisclavret)
	d12	d6	Fencing (With hereditary sword)
		d8	Guns (With favorite pistol)
d6			Hiking
		d8	Leadership (when standing his ground)
	d12	d6	Literacy (Gloomy poetry interpretation)
	d12		Lore: Heraldry
d6		d8	Tactics (Defending castles)
d6			Tracking

**Gifts:** Nobility (2pt), Wealth (5pt)

**Flaws:** Corpulent (2pt), Foe - Lord Raciner (Common, Extreme; 5pt), Morose

**Armor:** Chain and Plate (d12, d10 & Soak d8)

**Weapons:** Quarter-Stone Foil ("Sommeil de Raison," d6, d4 & Strength d6)  
Pistol (2d8)

### Afligeant's Motivations:

1. Survive.
2. Stand fast against Lord Raciner.
3. Have a noble death.



## Lord Bonaré Raciner



People know when Raciner is in a room. The cocky, strutting wolf makes an impression, though not usually a good one. Raciner's torso and arms are of ordinary stature - but his legs are usually short. This deformity does not effect him seriously, but he will not take any comments about it with good grace. Ricianer is several years younger than Afligeant, just 32 years of age, and he has inherited the current dispute from his late father.

Ricianer is a capable general, but imagines himself to be much, much more than that. In his mind, he is a world-conquering empire builder. His every waking moment is filled with martial dreams.

**Body d8, Speed d10, Mind d6, Will d12**

**Wolf d8**      *Weapons:* Claws, Teeth    *Habitat:* Forest      *Sense Tests:* Smell, Listen

### Cavalier d10

*Skills (with Favorite Use)*

	d8	Guns
d8		Hiking
	d10	Hunting (big game)
	d8	Leadership (when shouting)
d10		Lore: Heraldry
	d12	Resolve (when leading men in battle)
	d10	Riding
	d10	Shield
	d10	d8 Sword (when delivering a coup de grace)
d8	d10	Tactics (Sieges)
d8		Tracking

**Gifts:** Nobility (3pt), Wealth

**Flaws:** Wrathful, Overconfident, Short

**Armor:** Proved Plate (2d12 & Soak d8)

**Weapons:** Half-Stone Stone Sword "Siflet Final" (d12, d4 & Strength d8)

**Equipment:** Brace of Pearl-Handled Pistols (To Hit d10, Damage 2d8)

### Ricianer's Motivations:

1. Survive.
2. Destroy that fool Afligeant.
3. Avoid Ducal entanglements.



# Semence Fleuve



Semence is the impoverished third daughter of a minor Repense nobleman. She is a young, attractive bat woman. Semence dresses in gaudy fashions, festooned with cabalistic symbols which she feels make her look mysterious.

She has served the Baron for three years now, and feels a great deal of loyalty towards him. She is deeply moved by the depth of his soul, and by his noble spirit. (Or at least, what she thinks of as such.) If only he were younger, and of bat stock...

She is a competent astrologer, and has a fair record of success with her predictions.

Body d6, Speed d10, Mind d8, Will d8

Bat d6

Weapons: None

Habitat: Forest

Sense Tests: Listen

### Astrologer d12

		Skills (with Favorite Use)	
	d12	d12	Astronomy
		d12	Ciphering (When making astrological charts)
		d6	Etiquette (Flattery)
	d12	d12	Psychology Fast-Talk (With the Baron)
d6			Flight
		d8	History (Bisclavret)
	d12		Literacy
	d12	d12, d4	Lore: Astrology (Casting fortunes for the Baron)
	d12	d12	Augury (Navigation (With the by the stars)
d6			Night Speech
		d8	Research (Bisclavret)
		d6	Stealth (at night)
		d6	Sword (With my favorite Dagger)

**Gifts:** Echolocation, Flight, Prehensile Feet, Nobility (1pt)

**Flaws:** Coward; Frail

**Armor:** None ( & Soak d6)

**Weapons:** Dagger (d8 & Strength d6)

**Equipment:** Book: *On the Virtue of Mystery* by Kyndranigar the Shadow-Mage

### Semence's Motivations:

1. Survive.
2. Live comfortably.
3. Unlock the secrets of the ages.



## Fetter Prisént



Fetter is a tall and thin rabbit with a brown pelt. He dresses in multiple layers of clothing to guard against the cold of the Bisclavret lands, topped off with a large and heavy overcoat. His clothing makes him seem larger than he really is.

Fetter is currently under contract to Lord Raciner, serving as a kind of general advisor, scout and tracker. If anyone escapes the castle, Fetter will try and find them before they can summon aid. When closing in on his prey, he will occasionally sound discordant notes on his tin flute in an attempt to confuse and dismay his target.

While he is loyal for the time being to Raciner, he has no respect for him. If he feels he can gain more from the players, he will throw in with them. No matter what happens, as soon as the Ducal Mercenaries arrive, he will disappear into the wilderness.

**Body d6, Speed d12, Mind d8, Will d10**

**Rabbit d8**

Weapons: Claws

Habitat:  
Plains

Sense Tests: Listen

### Bounty Hunter d12

Skills (with Favorite Use)

	d12	d4	Bow (with his handmade long bow)
d8			Herbalism
d8			Jumping
		d6	Musical instrument (tin whistle)
		d12	Observation (scouting)
		d8	Resolve (when facing a target)
	d12	d4	Shadowing (in the woods)
d8		d6	Stealth (in forests)
	d12		Streetwise
		d8	Tactics (when facing large numbers)
		d8	Thrown sword (from surprise)
	d12		Tracking

**Gifts:** Claws, Guild Membership (Invisible Guild, 1pt), Keen Ears,

**Flaws:** Taciturn

**Armor:** Light Leather (d6 & Soak d6)

**Weapons:** 2-Stone Draw Bow (d8, 2d4);  
Daggers (d6 & Strength d6)

**Equipment:** List special equipment here

### Fetter's Motivations:

1. Survive.
2. Fulfill the terms of his contract.
3. Be enigmatic.





# Schaphandre



Schaphandre is far from an innocent, mad beggar, though he plays the role quite well. He has wandered the Bisclavret countryside for several months, begging to stay alive. Sometimes, he will settle down in one place and live fairly happily on the charity of superstitious peasant folks or S'Allumer friars. However, he is no simple wanderer. Schaphandre is a special member of the Indicateur. He wanders the countryside in a variety of guises, keeping a general eye on the state of things, and passing regular reports on to the Lyceum.

In his current guise, Schaphandre is a stooped canine with ragged grey fur and bloodshot eyes. He dresses in a heavy coat, covered in grease. He stinks terribly. When he speaks and breathes, fluid in his lungs gurgles nastily.

Body d8, Speed d8, Mind d10, Will d10

Dog d4

*Weapons:* Claws, Teeth    *Habitat:* Plains    *Sense Tests:* Smell, Listen

Spy d12

		Skills (with Favorite Use)
	d12	Cryptography
	d12	d12 Disguise (As a mad vagabond)
	d12	Fast-Talk
d4		Hiking
	d8	Lore: Bisclavret Law (high justice)
	d8	Sleight of Hand (passing secret messages)
	d12	Streetwise
	d8	Survival (Finding a place to sleep in the wilderness)
d4		Tactics
	d12	Thrown Dagger (from surprise)
d4		Tracking

**Gifts:** Claws; Howl; Teeth

**Flaws:** Coarse; Ill-Favored

**Armor:** Padded Robes (d4 & Soak d8)

**Weapons:** Claws (d6 & Strength d8)

**Equipment:** Dagger (To Hit d8; Damage d6 & Strength d8)

## Schaphandre's Motivations:

1. Survive.
2. Serve the Duke.
3. Foil the Invisible Guild.



## Ronaldo de Muire



Ronaldo is a tall and wiry fox in his late teens. He dresses in dirty trousers and a wool cloak that his master gave him. Ronaldo is a descendant of one of the defeated Triskellian knights who invaded the Bisclavret lands many years ago. At least, that's what his mother used to tell him, before he was taken away from her. For the last seven years he has served as a field hand for one of Baron Afligeant's farmers, though it was not something he was particularly good at. When Ricaner attacked, he was pressed into the invading militia, but is not much of a soldier either. He has been put on guard duty behind the lines. He dreams of finding his way to Triskellian and claiming his title.

**Body d8, Speed d12, Mind d10, Will d8**

**Fox d6**

*Weapons:* Claws, Teeth *Habitat:*

Forest

*Sense Tests:* Smell, Listen

		<b>Farmer d4</b>
		<i>Skills (with Favorite Use)</i>
	d4	Animal Handling
d6		Climbing
	d8	Diplomacy (by being obsequious to superiors)
	d4	Farming
	d4	Hiking
d6	d8	Sixth Sense (vs. getting caught making plots)
	d6	Spear (from Surprise)
d6	d8	Stealth (by looking inconspicuous)
d6		Tracking
	d4	d8 Weather Sense (in the winter)

**Gifts:** Claws, Keen Ears, Teeth

**Flaws:** Poverty, Curious, Slothful

**Aarmor:** Leather (d6 & Soak d8)

**Weapons:** Quarter-stone Spear (2d4 & Strength d8)

### Ronaldo's Motivations:

1. Survive.
2. Find his rightful heritage.
3. Avoid working.



# Henri d’Muiresud



Henri is young wolf, is his twenties. He is of average height, and has a light grey pelt, with touches of brown. While in the Méchant, he dresses as in plain, simple clothing, befitting a scribe. However, as the players may discover, he wields more than just a pen.

Henri is a pleasant, though quiet, young man. He was the fourth son born to a baron of the Muire forest, and had little prospect for a useful life. On his sixteenth birthday he decided to join the Indicateur and traveled to Harrowgate for schooling. His teachers found him very talented and intelligent, and well suited to undercover work. As such, his first assignment is as special Ducal representative and secret courier in the foothills of the Lochlan mountains.

He serves his remote community to the best of his ability. His loyalty to the Duke and to the principles of Riddock’s Dawn is absolute, but he is no fanatic. He is leery of violence, and will use his pistols as a last resort.

**Body d8, Speed d6, Mind d10, Will d12**

**Wolf d4**

*Weapons:* Claws, Teeth *Habitat:* Plains *Sense Tests:* Listen, Smell

**Spy d12**

*Skills (with Favorite Use)*

	d6	Calligraphy (when being watched)
d12	d4	Cryptography (hiding messages inside other documents)
d12		Disguise
d12		Fast-Talk
d4	d10	Forgery (copying documents)
		Hiking
	d10	Literacy (letters of state)
	d12	Streetwise
d4		Tactics
d4		Tracking

**Gifts:** Claws, Howl, Teeth, Greater Investiture: Indicateur; Nobility (Noble Blood)

**Flaws:** Coward; Duty

**Armor:** Light Leather (d6 & Soak d8)

**Weapons:** Brace of Pistols: “Foudre” and “Tonnerre” (2d8); Quarter-Stone Sword “À Gloire d’Muiresud” (d12 & Strength d8)

## Henri’s Motivations:

1. Survive.
2. Serve the Duke.
3. Foil the Invisible Guild.





# APPENDIX 1: FURTHER ADVENTURES

*Being the Seeds of Additional Escapades, to be Embellished at the Discretion of the Game Host*

## Death on the Moors

The land between the foothills of the Lochlan Peaks and the Skirfane River is a lonely and beautiful place of rolling green hills and boggy moors. Though the hills seem verdant, the soil is too thin to support anything but grass, which is closely nibbled by large herds of cumalaí and other domestic animals.

Tiny villages of herdsmen huddle in the narrow valleys between these lonely hills. The inhabitants care little about the larger schemes of the nobles that rule them, thinking only of their pastoral lives and labors. Of late, however, their quiet lifestyle has been shattered by horrible murders. Travelers and herdsmen making their way across the moors at night have been dead in the morning, their bodies broken and battered. The villagers send a message to their local lord, asking for help. He makes it known that adventurers who solve the mystery will be rewarded.

What monster haunts the hills and valleys? Perhaps it is a man-eating animal, or even some wretched lunatic, striking out at his neighbors for reasons of his own. The villagers disdain such prosaic explanations, and prefer to spin yarns about bloodthirsty ghosts, or the monstrous creations of dark wizards.

## The Lost Treasure of Gustafus

The infamous pirate Gustafus the Green was hanged in Port Spar twenty-one years ago. As the hangman pulled the fatal gallows lever, the unrepentant rat was heard to boastfully cry “My mute bones shall hold my secret forever!” No one knows what secret he referred to, though most naturally assumed the wily corsair had secreted a vast hoard of treasure in some hidden cave or island.

Since that day hundreds of “real” maps have been purchased from “former shipmates” of Gustafus. Many bold adventures have resulted, but not one has ended in the discovery of the fabled treasure hoard, or any other great secret. Still, rumors persist among the credulous and the hopeful that Gustafus’ first mate, a mighty-thewed bear known to history as One-Eared Jovario, escaped from justice after learning the secret. He has been living in hiding ever since, on the run from Bisclavret and Rinaldi bounty hunters.

The adventurers, or perhaps their patron, have heard that a one-eared bear named Neant now runs a tavern in the free pirate town of Port L’Olonaise. He fits the description of Jovario to the letter, and is evidently quite wealthy. Perhaps he could be compelled to share the secret? Even if there is no treasure, Jovario himself is worth a fortune in bounty!

If the adventurers follow the trail, they will first have to *find* Port L’Olonaise, no mean feat considering the treacherous and labyrinthine nature of the Corsair Islands. Not even the Duke’s own network of secret police are sure of its location.

The best place to find a guide might be the dingiest taverns of Thanon and Port Spar. However, these places are known to be favorite haunts of undercover Indicateur, and obvious



inquiries will no doubt arouse their attention. Once they arrive at the grubby and salt-caked pirate town, finding Neant will be another challenge. His tavern is a meeting place for the chief pirates and scoundrels, and a hiding place for the most desperate refugees. The players will have to prove they are worthy of the information, either by way of a serious underworld reputation, through bribes and threats, or by simply searching high and low.

Having found Neant, they will have to determine whether or not he is really Jovario, and whether or not he has any secrets. Neant may be amused by these persistent seekers, and string them along. He might sell them fake maps, or promise a portion of the “treasure” if they undertake certain unsavory tasks for him. The adventurers might also choose to take a visit to Gustafus’ remote abandoned fortress on the Quistonsee Coast. This will not avail them much. The tower is mostly ruined, and inhabited only by small reptilian flyers. Ambitious sorts may elect to claim the tower as their own and resurrect the legacy of Gustafus. They might do well to heed the local tales of a strange glowing green figure seen through the upper windows of the tower on stormy nights!

What was Gustafus’ secret? Does Neant really know it? Is the tower haunted by the restless ghost of the evil rat? Only you can decide. Perhaps he did have a treasure. Perhaps his secret was simply a scandalous social one - he was a noble-man in disguise. Or maybe he discovered a new civilization on his voyages. The choice rests with the game host.

## The Movements of Unseen Hands

Whisper two words to all but the most confident of Bisclavret nobles, and you may be rewarded by the sight of an involuntary chill running down their spine. The words? “Invisible Guild.”

This shadowy network of thieves, cut throats, pirates, and revolutionaries is blamed for just about every single catastrophe that befalls the fortunes of the nobility. They are thought to be spies, working hand in glove with foreign powers to undermine the power of the Bisclavret.

Their symbol, a crude circle and an X representing a skull and crossed bones, can be found daubed in alleys in any of the larger Bisclavret settlements. Paranoia about the Guild runs so high that more than one unwise youngster who painted the symbol in jest has found himself being questioned in a Harrowgate dungeon.

The Indicateur has recently captured a fairly senior member of the Guild, and managed to learn the name of his superior before the prisoner “found himself incapable of aiding their inquiries.” His chief is named Gymari, a cruel cheetah. Though he is by no means one of the leaders of the Guild, Gymari is the most senior members the Indicateur has ever had a crack at. The players are hired (or ordered) to serve as undercover agents in the Duke’s service. They are instructed to act as potential recruits for the Guild, and try to contact them in The Stumps, the Phelan settlement north of Harrowgate.

This adventure could well serve as the basis for a lengthy campaign, as the players follow false leads and rumors from town to town, rarely catching a glimpse of their elusive quarry. More than once, their carefully prepared nets will close on air. However, the game host should make sure to temper their failures with the occasional success. Perhaps they manage to capture one of Gymari’s lieutenants, who gives them one more clue to his whereabouts.

In the course of their investigations, they may uncover any number of nefarious schemes. Mass slave revolts, plots to blow up the Ducal palace, caches of powerful poison intended for barracks’ wells, the creation of armies of undead monsters - nothing is too low for Gymari and his shadowy henchmen. It is up to the game host to decide whether these plots are real, or simply part of a clever ploy to distract attention from what may be the Guild’s true goal: Frightening the fur off the nobility, and getting rich in the process.



“Put your faith in Helloise, but keep your powder dry.”

— old Dragoon saying

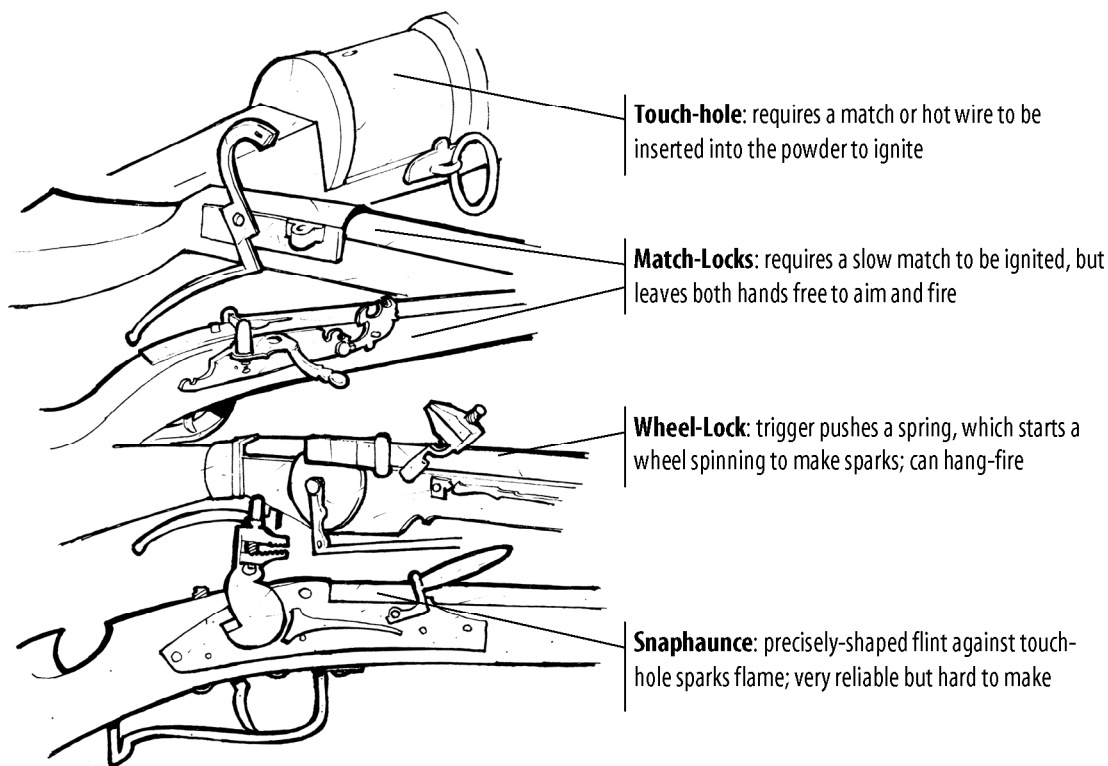
## APPENDIX 2: GUNPOWDER

*Describing the Making of Explosive Power,  
the Tools of the Trade, and the Methods of its Delivery*

### The Making of Black Powder

Working out the best recipe for gunpowder took a great deal of dangerous work. *Saltpeter* (potassium nitrate) can be found under manure piles or in mineral deposits, and the purer it is, the better the gunpowder it makes. Sifting and purifying saltpeter is difficult and tedious. An element found in nature, *sulfur* is not as difficult to make pure, but it can be hard to find, and is thus quite valuable. The primary source of sulfur is hot springs. *Charcoal* is added to let the saltpeter burn the sulfur and explode. Gunpowder containing charcoal is called *black powder*, the primary explosive in Calabria. Experimenters gradually adjusted the proportions of saltpeter, sulfur, and charcoal until they found the best amounts of each.

The powder-makers of Triskellian first learned to add water when they mixed their gunpowder, which made that safer. When they carefully broke the resulting cake up into smaller kernels, they found out that *kemelized* or *corned gunpowder* was easier to ignite and exploded with more power. Eventually powder makers also learned that different sizes of kernels made cannon, explosives, and firearms work better than if they all used the same type and recipe of powder.





High-saltpeter powder produced the most power and the least fouling, the residue that builds up in black-powder firearms. It was the most expensive. Fouled guns of any sort are very difficult to load, and burning residue from bad powder can be very dangerous if the gun needs to be fired in a hurry! Cleaning guns as often as possible was wisest and safest. Exploded black powder leaves behind sulfuric acid and water in the gun's barrel, which can quickly corrode iron guns. Bronze or brass cannon are more expensive to make, but valuable because they resisted such corrosion. Boiling water and oil were the best way to clean out firearms to slow down the effects of the fouling.

## Technology of Guns

While the delicate mechanism of the wheel-lock on a pistol tucked in one's belt is the most common gun, there are still many kinds to be found throughout Calabria, from the obsolete to the cutting-edge.

### The Touch-hole

The earliest and cheapest "gonnes" were merely iron tubes at the end of a staff. The shooter rammed powder and some kind of projectile



down the tube to load it. The first guns were set off by a flame of any sort or a hot iron thrust into the *touch-hole* at the back of the barrel. The spark or flame would set off the explosion and thrust whatever was in front of the powder out of the barrel. The modern 'match' did not, of course, exist, and flames from burning twigs or straw can go out at very bad times. Hot wires were more reliable, but to heat them requires something like a burning pot of charcoal, which is not easy to carry or use in a crisis.

The first solution to the problem of firing a gun reliably was the original *match*, a length of cord soaked in water and saltpeter. These could be made to burn for hours (often called *slow matches*), and there was a period when those with guns carried yards and yards of cord smoldering at one end. There were still problems: ramming the end of a fuse into the touchhole took the shooter's eyes off the target, which was very dangerous. Manual firing also meant that one hand had to be used for firing instead of aiming and supporting the gun.

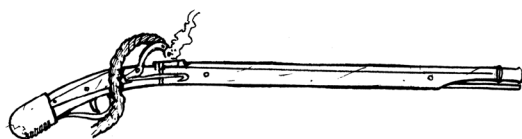
In game terms, a Touch-Hole gun requires someone to hold a match to fire the gun – this requires two Hands (or Hand substitutes, such as a Prehensile Tail). A slow-match must be Readied separately from the gun. For hand-held guns, a Touch-Hole makes any act of firing them Awkward.

Touch-Holes have a Spark Die of d12, but they also suffer from a Resolve Limit. *The Spark Die of a Touch-Hole Gun cannot be higher than the match-holder's highest Resolve Die.* For example, if the match-holder's Resolve Dice are d8, d6, then the Spark Die starts at d8. If the gun fails to fire, the gun may Hang Fire, with the usual reduction in Spark Dice. (In this case, the Hang-Fire represents the burning-down of the slow match.) If the Spark Dice drop below d4, then the match has gone out, or the match has burned down to the firer's fingers (for no noticeable damage).

In Calabria, very few guns today have a Touch-Hole firing mechanism, but almost all cannons do. Should someone want to have one made, a Touch-Hole gun costs 120 denarii per stone of weight.

### The Match-lock

The *match-lock* was the first solution to the problem of getting the match to the touchhole reliably every time. It was a refinement of a crossbow's triggering mechanism. A mechanical



lock required that the old touchhole in the back of the barrel be moved over to side of the gun, where the lock was attached to the stock. The touch-hole became the *flash pan*. The most primitive match-locks were just a lever on a pivot, but a spring-powered *serpentine* (shaped like a snake) did a better job of getting the match into the flash pan and firing the gun. Guns appeared with sights and stocks as their match-locks made it possible to shoulder and aim them more effectively. Also, a gun could be *cocked* and made ready to fire at a simple touch by setting the spring and cocking the weapon.

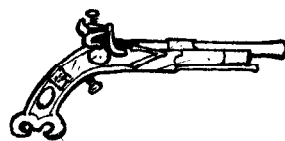
Shooters learned to add priming powder to their flash pans to make firing more reliable. Gunsmiths also learned to put covers over the flash pans to keep moisture from spoiling the powder there. There was always the problem of “blowing up” the match and keeping it burning — very difficult to do when on the move or in a strong breeze. Also, if a shooter forgot to prime the pan, blow up the match, and move the flash pan cover, the gun wouldn’t fire at all — not the easiest thing to do in a crisis! Another problem of the match-lock was that the glowing match showed exactly where the shooter was in any sort of darkness. Getting good-quality matches was also a difficulty—if a bad one burnt out, the entire weapon became useless.

In game terms, Match-locks have a Spark Die of d12. However, they must be lit before firing, which is a First-Rank Maneuver. Once lit, the Spark Die must be tested *every Round*, whether the gun is fired or not; as usual, the Spark Die drops one size for each Spark Test Failure. If the die drops below d4, the match will have burned out and will need to be replaced, which requires three Rounds (one to Ready the match, one to Ready the gun, and one to set up the match).

Match-locks are simpler than most other guns to make, and thus cost 120 denarii per stone of weight. Slow matches are bought in lots of 24 for 4 denarii.

## The Wheel-Lock

Getting rid of the match was the first way to improve firearms, and the first solution came from clockmakers! A serrated steel wheel could turn rapidly at a touch by a wound-up spring, and if a piece of iron pyrite or similar stone was held against the turning wheel, the combination would send a shower of sparks into the flash pan. After tinkering, the wheel-lock evolved into a trigger that lowered the *cock* holding the pyrites into the wheel, which began spinning at the same time and set off the powder in the flash pan and the charge in the gun. Gunsmiths soon built wheel-locks that automatically opened the flash pan cover as the trigger was pulled.



The wheel-lock is complicated. It requires a key to wind it after each shot, and since all guns are made by hand, keys from one gun rarely work in another. However, the wheel-lock is fairly trustworthy, and unlike other guns it can be pulled from concealment and be instantly ready to fire, since there is no slow match than must be kept burning. It is not until the wheel-lock that small, one-handed *pistols* become practical, and a person with a belt full of pistols has a great deal of short-range fire power. *Bisclavret* cavalry are often armed with a *brace* (pair) of pistols, kept in holsters on their saddles, and a one-handed sword to use in close-quarters (that doesn’t have to be reloaded and never hangs fire).

In game terms, the Wheel-Lock is the default firing mechanism for Guns, using the standard rules in the *Ironclaw* book. They cost 160 denarii per stone of weight.

## The Saphaunce

Fouling can jam or gum up the springs and wheels of the wheel-lock, and a bad bump or a drop could break one. Wheel-locks are also expensive and could be cranky. Simplicity tends to mean reliability, and thus the relatively new invention of the







*snaphaunce*. The cock in a snaphaunce lock holds a piece of carefully-shaped flint that strikes a *frizzen*, a mechanical arm with a curving steel surface. The frizzen then moves back and away from the flash pan. Flint on steel also produces a shower of sparks, and these shoot into the pan, spark the charge, and fire the bullet.

In some snaphaunces, the frizzen covers the flash pan. In others, like the old wheel-locks, the cover moves away as the trigger was pulled. One of its few drawbacks was the need for a new flint every fifty shots or so, as the sparks against the steel are burning bits of its stone. Also, unlike a wheel-lock, a snaphaunce does not hang fire – if it fails to spark, it must be re-wound and reset. Additionally, the mechanical arm of the frizzen is still complicated. The snaphaunce would be cheaper than the wheel-lock (as it doesn't require an expensive metal spring) if it wasn't such a rare item whose construction is still a secret.

In game terms, the Snaphaunce lock itself is an Expensive item, *separate from the Gun*. To start the game with a Snaphaunce Pistol would require two Gifts of Belongings (q.v. *Ironclaw*). The Snaphaunce has Spark Dice of 2d6; it is less likely to fail to spark, but it is also less likely to pass a Spark Test. Snaphaunces do not Hang Fire – if they fail to Spark the first time, the Spark Dice drop one size to 2d4. The second time the gun fails to Spark, the gun must be repaired, using Trade: Gunsmith.

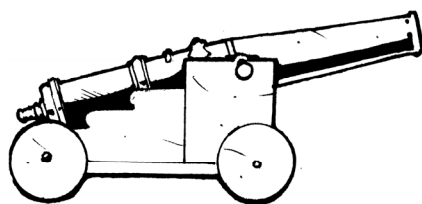
In terms of cost, the gun itself costs 160 denarii per stone of weight, and then another 48 denarii for the Snaphaunce lock.

## Types of Guns

Firearms evolved from bigger to smaller, as gunsmiths refined the monster cannon down to the concealable pistol of the modern Age of Reason. Almost any kind of lock could be and was fitted on any kind of weapon. Early gun barrels were literally made like barrels, with flat pieces hammered around a dowel and soldered or welded or held in place with hoops. Later on the gun bore was drilled out of a forged blank, and the more carefully that was done, the more accurately the gun would shoot. A stock was something to hold on to that wouldn't burn your fingers and that would keep the gun's recoil from knocking it out of your hands. Lock, stock, and barrel made up a complete gun.

### Cannon

Cannon started out as pots of stone or wood, with a touch-hole drilled in one end and the muzzle at the other. Later on, cannon were made of iron bars welded loosely together. Some are *breech-loaders*, with iron plugs at one end that could be removed to put in powder and ball, then dropped back into place and locked in by wedges; unfortunately, improper seals on the breech can cause blow-back or a nasty explosion. *Cast cannon*, made in one piece and loaded from the front, are less likely to blow up when fired and are thus more popular. Bronze and brass cannon were easier to cast than iron guns. Cannon balls are usually made of iron or stone. Cannon of the modern design are still much too heavy to be put on wheels, although many smiths are trying to solve that problem.



In game terms, Cannon are too large to be personal weapons. A typical castle Cannon would weigh fifty Stone and be two Paces long. The low-slung carriage and wooden wheels would allow the gun to be moved by a crew of four, along a ship's deck or a castle floor. (The suspension would be too fragile for the outdoors.) This Cannon would fire quarter-stone cannonballs of iron or stone, which is capable of making Exploding Clusters of 5d12 damage at range, but with almost no accuracy. (In Game Terms, Cannon are better suited to instances

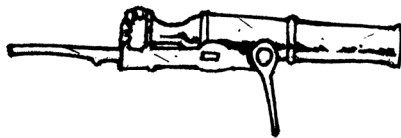


of Warfare Tests, adding 2d12 Difficulty or more, at the Game Host's discretion.) It would take 120 days to make with a team of skilled workers, and thus its cost would be somewhere around 120 aureals (2880 denarii).

### Arquebuses

Very small cannons are made with a hook on the barrel so that they could be wedged over a wall, instead of the shooter trying to hold them in place alone. Early "hand-gonnes" used a staff to take up the shock of firing them. Combining the idea of a staff and a front support for the gone produced a large weapon with its front end supported by a U- or Y-shaped staff that freed the shooter's hands to fire the gun with a match or wire at the touch hole. Very heavy weapons kept the staff and size of the earlier weapons, and were called arquebuses from the *haken-busche* ("hook-gun"). They could have barrels three feet long, and fire a shot as large as an inch and a half in diameter, or *caliber*. They shot very slowly, and took a long time and two men to reload and fire. They could be as heavy as ten kilograms (22 pounds) or more.

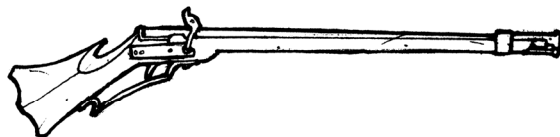
In game terms, Arquebuses are usually Full-Stone Guns.



### Muskets

A musket is a heavy weapon one man could handle. Since cavalry are still dangerous, a *musket* is designed to kill an attacking knight's mount. Such weapons usually weighed around seven kilograms (fifteen pounds), and fired a bullet about a quarter of a hand in diameter (about 2 cm, or .75 caliber). A good musketeer with prepared loads could fire as often as three times a minute with a maximum accurate range of a hundred paces.

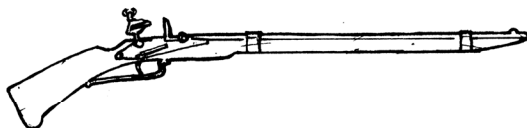
In game terms, Muskets are usually Three-Quarter Stone Guns.



### Fusils

*Fusils* are long weapons, like a musket, but of smaller weight and caliber. A fusil's ball will travel as far as a musket's, but heavy armor might defeat it. They are favored by hunters and light troops called skirmishers or *fusiliers*.

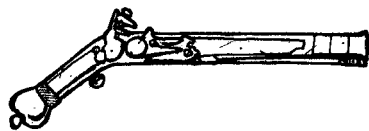
In game terms, Fusils are usually Half-Stone Guns.



### Carbines

A *carbine* is a smaller, lighter weapon with a much shorter barrel than any other kind of long-arm. A carbine could not match a fusil or a musket in range and power. Their advantage is that they could be loaded more easily than either, including on the back of a mount or while laying down.

In game terms, Carbines are Quarter-Stone or Half-Stone Guns.



### Pistols

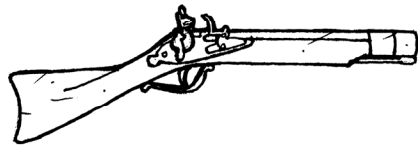
A weapon that could be fired with just one hand, the true handgun, allows its user to do something else with the other hand, such as carry a sword, open a door, or hang on for dear life. The cost is that pistols necessarily have less range power and accuracy than larger guns. On the other hand, carrying many pistols allows more short-range shots in less time than any other tactic in the early days of gun use. In game terms, Pistols are Pistols.





## Blunderbusses

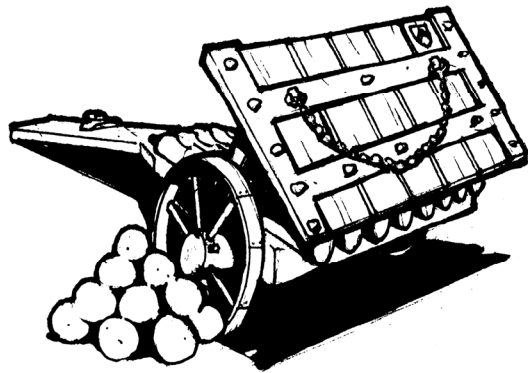
The *blunderbuss* fires a handful of shot in order to kill a flying bird or running small animal more easily. The belled end of the blunderbuss was supposed to help the shot spread out, it certainly made the weapon more easy to load. At very close range, the blunderbuss could be murderous, at anything else, the small shot it fired would not have killing power. Blunderbusses can come in all sizes and lengths, and there were pistol varieties for boarding combat or similar situations.



In game terms, a Blunderbuss is treated as a special kind of *Exploding Attack* (instead of a Targeting Attack). After passing a Spark Test, the shooter rolls their *Speed Dice*, *Guns Skill Dice* (if any), and *Gun Damage*; the target rolls their *Speed Dice*, *Dodge Dice* (if any), *Cover Dice* (from shield or otherwise), *Range Defense Dice* (for range), *Soak Dice*, and *Armor Dice* (if any). Since the blunderbuss is an Exploding Attack, it does not score Special Hits. The spread on a Blunderbuss, once it gets more than one pace wide, is too widely scattered to hurt more than one target – therefore, the Blunderbuss only attacks one normal-sized target. A Blunderbuss can be any size of Gun, from Pistol to Full-Stone.

## Ribauldequins

The *ribauldequin* or “organ-gun,” is a specialized invention used in special circumstances. It looks like a pipe-organ, barrel after barrel laid side by side, with either matches or a powder-train in between them firing off the barrels in succession. A ribauldequin could fire off a volley of shots — as many as can be fitted on its wheeled carriage. Obviously, it takes a great deal of time to clean and reload an organ-gun. Bisclavret



gunsmiths came up with one solution, which was a revolving triangular base that could hold three sets of barrels at a time — one being fired, the second being loaded, and the third cooling. Such weapons are cumbersome and expensive, but, at the right time and place, devastating.

In game terms, fire from a Ribaldequin is an Exploding Attack, that travels in a straight line away from the device. A typical Ribaldequin, made of twelve Half-Stone Guns, fires for Exploding Damage against all targets in a column two-paces wide. The attacker rolls 4d12. Targets roll their *Speed Dice*, *Dodge Dice* (if any), *Cover Dice*, *Soak Dice*, *Armor Dice*, *Retreat Dice* (if they Retreat out of the column of fire) and an extra d10 for every 4 paces they are distant from the Ribaldequin. When the Ribaldequin is triggered, some guns might not fire due to rain or elements; to simulate this, include any *Spark Difficulty Dice* with the target's Soak (q.v. *Ironclaw*). Such a Ribaldequin would cost about 1,000 denarii.

## Explosives

Shooting a projectile was, of course, not the only way to make use of gunpowder. Explosive charges of differing sizes had their differing uses.

## Mines

The practice of *mining* involves digging a tunnel or other kind of hole under an area, putting a large charge of gunpowder in it, and setting it off to create a huge explosion. Setting the fuses and arranging the powder for a very large black powder explosion is difficult and requires



experience and skill. A mine could bring down a city or a castle wall, however, unless somehow prevented from exploding.

In game terms, a Mine is an Exploding Attack for 9d6 Damage. Constructing one requires a Build Test against Trade: Demolitions of at least 2d6. Failure allows for a re-try (which may be difficult if folks are attacking!). A Botch results in premature explosion!

Mines are not usually found outside of wartime, and thus are not usually sold in markets. They require 12 man-days of skilled labor to make, and cost about 100 denarii.

## Petards

A *petard* usually takes the form of a large clay pot or a barrel filled with gunpowder, carried by two or more men and left next to a target, most often a castle or manor-house gate. Sometimes a petard is a sack filled with powder tied to a spike, where one man runs up to the structure to be destroyed, hammers the spike, lights the fuse, and runs away before it explodes. Getting a fuse of the right length lit was vital. Those setting the petard had to get out of its blast radius and yet have the device explode before the enemy could react and put out the spark.

In game terms, a Petard requires a Build Test against Trade: Demolitions of at least 2d6 to set properly (often made more difficult by attackers). A Successful Petard detonates from 1 to 12 Rounds later (builder's choice) and does 5d6 Damage to the object it is attached to. Failure allows for a re-try; Overwhelming Failure or worse results in a premature explosion of 5d6 Damage.

## Grenades

A *grenade* is a clay plot or leather sack filled with nails, rocks, and gunpowder. Lighting and throwing a grenade takes great ability, and there was always the danger of the grenade being thrown back, or the fuse simply pulled out by the target.

A typical grenade weighs 1/8 stone, requires a Lift of zero, and Explodes in a Cluster for 4d10 damage. A larger grenade — 1/4 stone, requires a Lift of 2 — Explodes in a Cluster for 6d10 damage. They require about 3 man-days to make and cost 24 denarii.



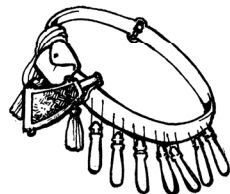
Grenades have a Fuse whose length is measured in Rounds – generally two. After being lit, the Grenade will explode at the End of the Round after the fuse has burned out. Thus, a combatant can light a grenade in the first Round, throw it the second Round, and it will explode at the End.

Unexploded Grenades can be picked up and thrown aside, but it requires tricky timing. Picking up an object from the ground and throwing it is an Awkward Maneuver and requires a free hand.

## Gun Accessories

There were various things the wise shooter carried or could get to help with shooting. It is always vital to “keep your powder dry” if you don’t want your shot to be a “flash in the pan” or a “backfire.” *Leather lock-covers* are one way of keeping a gun usable in the rain, though they won’t work with a burning match-lock.

*Cartouches* are small wooden bottles with a measured amount of powder and a lead ball of the right size, hanging over the shooter’s shoulders. Some powder went into the flash pan, the rest into the gun, then the ball, and finally the *ramrod* to ram the two together down to the end of the barrel and to compress the powder for better





firing. Usually the ramrod was stored in a slot in the stock under the barrel. A good cartouche runs about 3 denarii.

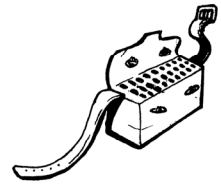
**Powder horns** also keep the powder dry, but a shooter has to measure the powder at every shot, which takes time and a steady hand. A powder horn has to be wax-sealed against the elements but also strong enough to take abuse; their price starts at 2 denarii and rapidly increases.



**Flints** (for snaphaunces) have to be carefully shaped for reliable ignition, and of exactly the right kind of stone – a good shooter carries spares. Flints often cost 3 or 4 denarii apiece.




Since all guns are hand-made to different standards, almost every gun comes with a **bullet mold** of stone or metal, to make bullets of the correct size and shape for a particular gun. With some bulk lead (rather cheap), a ladle, and a decent fire, a shooter can make their own bullets for their own gun as needed. A good bullet mold sturdy enough for the rigors of the adventurer sells for about 2 denarii.



## APPENDIX 3: NEW MANEUVERS

<i>Maneuver</i>	<i>Rank of Initiative</i>	<i>Move</i>	<i>Defense</i>	<i>Effect</i>
<b>Sing a Bardic Song (Lyric)</b>		Third Stride	Abort	Cast a Bardic Spell; targets resist with Body, Mind, Will & Race
<b>Sing a Bardic Song (Canticle)</b>	Long (2 full Rounds)	Stride	Abort	Cast a Bardic Spell; targets resist with Body, Mind & Will
<b>Sing a Bardic Song (Chantey)</b>	Long (5 full Rounds)	Stride	Abort	Cast a Bardic Spell; targets resist with Mind & Will
<b>Sing a Bardic Song (Ballad)</b>	Long (one full Scene)			Cast a Bardic Spell; targets resist with Mind
<b>Ready a Match and Touch-Hole Gun</b>	First, Second, Third	Stride	Normal	First, pull out the match; second, light the fuse; third, prepare the fuse to fire
<b>Fire a Gun that has Hanged Fire</b>	See <i>Ironclaw</i> , p. 177	None	Normal	Fire a Touch-Hole or Match-Lock gun that did not fire earlier in the Round
<b>Fire a Touch-Hole Gun</b>	Second	Stride	Normal	Requires two Hands
<b>Light a Match-Lock</b>	First	Stride	Normal	Light a Match-lock for firing <i>next</i> Round
<b>Reload a Gun</b>	Long (10 full Rounds)	None	<i>Abort</i>	Reload a gun, with the proper equipment





“In all confidence, I have never understood the veracity ascribed to the higher spheres, which as near as I fathom have no more purpose in their motions than the flowing of the rivers or the calling of the breeze. But since I am of the Bat-Race, and since I style myself a master of the mystick arts, I was once asked to give a Zodiac reading for the Prince Mausein. After depositing the commission moneys, I retired to my orrery, later to return with the answer that there was a strong possibility the boy would become Duke.”

— Kolenka the Wizard,  
in a private letter to an unknown person

## APPENDIX 4: THE REPENSE ZODIAC

In the lands of the Bisclavret, along the banks of the Skirfane River dwell a minor house known as the Repense — a diminishing bat nobility reigning from their observatory towers over a domain populated primarily by mice. Among the Repense nobility, it is a long-standing tradition to study the heavens, and to discern portents amongst the stars and wandering bodies, and thus to determine the best way to go about one’s life. The sheer complexity of the Repense system of interpreting these portents is beyond most commoners to even hope to comprehend, but one of the more widely known features of the Repense notion of the heavens is that of the Zodiac.

The Repense Zodiac consists of twelve constellations of stars lying on the Plane of the Ecliptic — that is, the path that the sun traverses during its yearly trek through the heavens. These constellations — if one has sufficient imagination — might be thought to describe twelve images: six treasures placed in the heavens, and six creatures to guard them. Through the year, the sun passes through a different constellation, and thus each constellation is associated with a different time of the year; the particular constellation that the sun is passing through at the time of one’s birth is considered to be one’s sign, and figures heavily into horoscopes. Furthermore, as the wandering bodies of the heavens (that is, the visible planets) also lie upon the Plane of the Ecliptic, they pass through the constellations as well, and their presence is believed to have an influence on anyone born under the sign that they pass through.

### The Composition of the Sky

By the reckoning of Repense astrologers, the people of Calabria live in the center of the universe, on *terra-firma* (or simply The World.) Modern navigators agree that the world is round, and that it would be possible to *circumnavigate* the globe — that is, to sail completely around the world, but no explorer has yet accomplished such a feat.

The *heavenly bodies* of the sun, the moon, and the stars are rooted in *spheres* that spin around the world. The nearest object, the Moon, is on the closest sphere, which is still a great distance beyond the clouds, although there is still some dispute about how far away it is. The Moon rotates around the world, in a pattern that is not quite a smooth circle.



Next is the Sun, on its own sphere. The path of the Sun's rotation around the world is called *the plane of the ecliptic*.

Further out are the *planets*, often fancifully called "the Wanderers". Each planet resides in its own sphere, rotating around the world in patterns similar to the Moon's. The paths of the planets are called *the planes of the deferents*, at an angle to the ecliptic of the Sun. However, keen observation with modern telescopes show that the planets deviate in their paths across the sky. By Repense reckoning, the planets are situated on smaller spheres called *epicycles*, rotating on a smaller sphere seated in a larger one. When a planet is doubling-back on its path because of its epicycle, it is said to be *retrograde*.

The final, largest, and furthest sphere is home to the *stars*. The Repense astrologers agree that the stars must be all on the same sphere, because they all move at the same rate. There is a popular conceit among the Calabrese that the stars are made of the legendary "fifth element" of *Quintessence* – a immutable substance too pure to be found on the lower, changing world. If this is true, then perhaps the legendary beings thought to be *Paragons*, elementals of this pure substance, would call this realm their home. This idea is seen as fantasy in many other parts of the world – for example, the people of Zhongguo know that the Races of Heaven hold their Court above the moon, near the River of Stars, and thus the notions of Repense astrology are laughable.

## Terminology

For navigation purposes, a circle is divided into 360 *degrees*. When two planets are observed as very close to each other (zero degrees apart), they are said to be in *conjunction*. When a planet is on the opposite side of the world (180 degrees apart), they are in *opposition*. (By definition, planets in opposition are not visible in the same sky, and thus requires skill in astrology to know.) A *sextile* is 60 degrees; when a planet is 60 degrees from a constellation, it is said to be *observant* to that constellation. A *semi-sextile* is a separation of 30 degrees; a *trine* is 120 degrees, and a *quincunx* is 150 degrees.

Sometimes symbolic terms are applied, based on the context. The Wolf Star sometimes is "on the hunt" when approaching a constellation, the Mouse Star often "flees," etc.

In addition to the planets, every so many years, a comet will join the visible stellar host, and it is considered an omen of great importance. The most famous of these among the Repense is called the *Poluplankta*, or "Wandering Star," a comet that appears in the night skies roughly once every 78 years, and it is not bound to the plane of the ecliptic.

It should be noted that in horoscopes, the constellation of the Sword is sometimes alternately called the Dagger, and the Destrier is sometimes alternately called the Burindent, depending upon the symbolism appropriate to the prediction to be made.

## The Five Planets, or "Wandering Stars"

To the ancient eye, the night sky was composed of but the stars and moon, and the hazy trail of stars that that the Repense have dubbed the *Spilled Wine*. But some of these stars refused to stay in place upon the velvety canvas where they belonged. These wandering stars perplexed ancient observers. If their movements are tracked over time, they move — occasionally turning back — along an unseen trail that passes through the constellations that comprise the Repense Zodiac.

In ages past, the Repense assigned names to these "Wandering Stars," and dutifully recorded them in their observations. It is more proper to call them *planets*. Other cultures





have assigned names to the planets – for example, the Heliodromes of Avoirdupois demesne gave the planets the names of the various incarnations of their god, Anu the All-Father.

Before the advent of the worship of S'Allumer in the lands of the Bisclavret — and, by extension, the Repense — the Wanderers were supposed to be heavenly beings in service to the court of the gods. Hence, they traveled through the heavens, doing the bidding of the gods, while the gods stayed in their rightful stations. When the Bisclavret declared that S'Allumer was the state religion and that other faiths were against the law, the Repense modified their mythology accordingly. Where the Wanderers were once believed to be mortals that had been granted immortality by the gods, now they are “saints in the service of the Light of Creation.”

In the year 441 *Après de Miracle*, Jordane le Gris de Repense submitted his manuscript *Almagest: Describing the Nature of the Higher Spheres and their Mathematics* to the Dunwasser Academy in Triskellian. Le Gris' book was the most comprehensive book on astronomy in the known world. Very few people have read all thirteen of the book's volumes — today, the most useful parts of the book are for navigators. Without knowledge of the stars, it would be impossible to cross the ocean without becoming lost. The *Almagest* used the Repense astrologers' names for the planets, and thus those names have become common among the Calabrese.

To the Repense, it is very important to know what constellation one is born under. For greater accuracy in the reading, astrologers must also take into account the position and phase of the moon, as well as the positions of the planets, at the time of the subject's birth. If one of the planets should be passing through the dominant constellation at the time of one's birth, this is seen as having an additional influence upon one's life.

### St. Brangaine – The Mouse Star

Brangaine is the fastest of the Wanderers, though she keeps close to the sun, meaning that when she is visible, it is only shortly before sunrise or after sunset, depending on her position. According to tradition, she is the scroll-bearer and messenger of the heavens. Her rune is therefore that of the Scroll.

Her role in horoscopes is that of a courier of omens — for better or for worse — from the heavens.



### St. Condan – The Cougar Star

When viewed through telescopes, Condan appears to be slightly elliptical in shape. It is said that in the most powerful telescopes of the Repense, it is possible to see that the Cougar Star actually has a ring around it. In legend, Condan is a brilliant architect, engineer and artist, serving the court of Heaven. His rune is the Compass.

In horoscopes, the Cougar Star is far less ominous in its alignments than the other Wanderers. However, if one is born under a sign that the Cougar Star is passing through, it raises expectations that the child will grow to be especially inclined toward artistic and scientific pursuits.







### St. Trahern – The Bear Star

Trahern is the smith of the heavens, possessed of legendary strength and skill, and he is known as a formidable wrestler. His rune is that of the Anvil.

In horoscopes, whereas the Wolf Star is often seen as a harbinger of conflict, the Bear Star is a harbinger of the end of conflicts ... one way or another. In horoscopes, his role is multi-fold; he plays a role in predictions concerning conflict, whether martial or commercial, and he is associated with traits of strength, courage, and craftsmanship.



### St. Weylyn – The Wolf Star

Weylyn is noticeably red in color. His role in the heavens is that of a huntsman and archer. His rune is that of a Bow and Arrow; the Bow of the Zodiac belongs to him, and a conjunction of the Wolf Star with the Bow is seen as a significant portent.

In horoscopes, the Wolf Star is sometimes a harbinger of war and conflict; he is also associated with searching (hunting), and when the Wolf Star approaches one of the six "beasts" of the Zodiac, he is referred to as being "on the hunt."

### St. Wynne – The Doe Star

Wynne is distinctive for being the brightest of the Wanderers; through a telescope, she can be seen to shine a faint blue-green. She is typically seen either in the late evening or early morning; like Brangaine, she does not depart far from the sun. Her role in the heavens is that of a servant and water-bearer. Her rune is that of the Vase.

In horoscopes, she figures heavily into predictions concerning romance.



## The Twelve Constellations of the Repense Zodiac



### The Bow (Yule 21 to Snow 18)

The three primary stars that comprise the bow are very easily picked out in the night sky, and one of the more readily recognized constellations from the Repense Zodiac. It is a popular conceit that the "arrow" of the bow can be followed to point at the North Star, though the Bow's aim in this regard is not quite perfect. (Some astrologers have held to the belief that certain of the stars gradually change their positions in the skies, and that the arrow once did point perfectly at the North Star ... and that at such time that it lines up again, some cataclysmic event shall occur — varying depending on the teller, but generally associated with dire



predictions of the end of the world. It's quite possible that in the time it would take for those stars to line up, if ever they do, the world will in fact be long gone.)

Folks born under the sign of the Bow are often thought to live lives of greater importance ... for better or for worse.

### Sample Predictions for the Sign of the Bow

1. The Wolf and Doe Stars are square to the Bow. You will gain one prize, only to lose another.
2. The Doe Star is in conjunction. Tragedy threatens, as you put at risk one you wish to protect.
3. The Mouse Star flees. A misunderstanding will result in a missed opportunity.
4. The Wolf Star departs in retrograde. Faltering courage will result in failure at a time of need.
5. The Wolf Star is in conjunction. The signs are auspicious to start a new journey.
6. The Wandering Spirit approaches. You will encounter a dark stranger after a long journey.
7. The Bear Star is in conjunction. You will run into an old friend.
8. The Mouse Star is in conjunction. The meek will display surprising strength.
9. The Wolf Star passes by. Discretion is the better part of valor.
10. The Cougar Star is at trine. You will meet a tall stranger wearing blue.
11. The Wolf Star is at sextile. Today is a good day to visit the wilderness, away from urban trappings.
12. The Doe Star is at quincunx. You will come across a new trail that will lead you to fortune.



### The Fish (*Snow 19 to Sap 20*)

The exact creature depicted by this constellation is open to some interpretation, as some charts depicting the Repense Zodiac show a generic sort of clear-water fish, such as one that might be found in the River Skirfane, while others depict a more fanciful creature (a whale, sometimes) presumed to dwell in the depths of the ocean. In legend, the Great Fish guards the Bow.

People born under the sign of the fish tend to be wistful and adventurous.


### Sample Predictions for the Sign of the Fish

1. The Mouse Star is in conjunction. A vital piece of information will elude you.
2. The Mouse Star flees. Violent overtures will not be rewarded.
3. The Doe Star flees. You will experience a great sorrow.
4. The Bear Star is retrograde. You will encounter an old enemy.
5. The Cougar Star is at trine. This is a good day for quiet reflection.
6. The Cougar Star is in conjunction. Give heed to superstitions that may carry hidden truths.
7. The Bear Star approaches. This is a good day to make new friends.
8. The Wolf Star departs in retrograde. A setback today will lead to a significant breakthrough.
9. The Doe Star is in conjunction. Today is a good day for a journey by water.
10. The Mouse Star observes. You will make great progress where you are most at home.
11. The Wolf Star is in conjunction. Watch for any sign of the Fish as an omen of good fortune.
12. The Wandering Spirit approaches. You will encounter a unique and marvelous wonder.



### The Sword (*Sap 21 to Grass 19*)

This is sometimes alternately referred to as "The Dagger", given the fairly stubby proportions of the blade compared to the cross guard. Whatever name is chosen often depends upon what role the constellation is playing when various of the wandering bodies pass through or line up with it — as the Sword, it is involved in portents of war; as the Dagger, it is involved in portents of assassination (or



attempts thereof). In either case, all but the most optimistic horoscopes drawn up for those born under this sign lean heavily toward predictions of conflict.

To some, when the Sword is ascendant in the sky is an auspicious time to begin a battle. People born under this sign tend to be argumentative and domineering.

### Sample Predictions for the Sign of the Bow

1. The Bear Star is in conjunction. Tools of destruction are forged anew.
2. The Mouse Star flees the Stranger. You will be opposed by one who does not know your true nature.
3. The Wolf Star is retrograde. Fear of the unknown will weaken your resolve.
4. The Bear Star is retrograde. Rash action will result in misfortune; caution is advised.
5. The Bear Star observes. Careful observation of your foes will yield new insights.
6. The Wolf Star observes. Those who try to avoid your notice will instead draw your attention.
7. The Doe Star is in conjunction. One under your protection will be shielded from harm.
8. The Mouse Star approaches. A messenger will bring important news of a distant threat.
9. The Wolf Star is in conjunction. You will triumph over an enemy in red.
10. The Bear and Wolf Star are at semi-sextile. You will find courage and strength to endure pain.
11. The Cougar Star is in conjunction. You will be protected against hexes and witchcraft.
12. The Doe and Cougar Stars observe. A song of encouragement will strengthen your resolve.



### The Destrier (Grass 20 to Flower 19)

This sign is associated with strength and power, and it is often considered a good portent to be able to say that a Repense lord's heir was born under this sign. (If he wasn't, it's quite possible a few truths have been stretched over the centuries in order to claim otherwise.) In legend, the Destrier guards the Sword. The Destrier is sometimes shown as being carried by the monstrous Giant.

Those marked as born under the sign of the Destrier are thought to be meant for higher things, and to live by a higher code.

### Sample Predictions for the Sign of the Destrier


1. The Wolf Star hunts the Burindent. Your enemies come at you, unseen.
2. The Bear Star approaches the Burindent. There will be a great conflict, followed by peace.
3. The Mouse Star flees the Burindent in retrograde. You will flee a danger only to encounter it again.
4. The Doe Star is in conjunction. The strong trample beauty to the ground.
5. The Bear Star is in conjunction. This is a day for action, not talk.
6. The Doe and Wolf Stars are opposed. Success is in reach, if you are willing to make sacrifices.
7. The Wolf Star departs. You will notice that which others overlook.
8. The Bear Star is at semi-sextile. That which brings harm to others, you have the strength to resist.
9. The Mouse Star approaches. You will meet a stranger who wears yellow.
10. The Cougar Star is in conjunction. Today is an auspicious day to ride or sail rather than walk.
11. The Bear Star is at quincunx. You will observe a dark stranger from afar.
12. No Wanderers are nearby. You will be at your best in wide open places, not among trees or walls.



### The Chalice (Flower 20 to Strawberry 20)

This sign is associated with abundance and plenty, as one of the stars in this constellation is believed to represent a drop of wine spilling out of a cup flowing over, and the constellation seems to pour out into the hazy expanse known as the "Spilled Wine." It is a favorite constellation to work into faux fortune-telling meant to flatter the recipient and promise good times ahead — and because of





this connotation, when an “authentic” astrologer starts invoking the Chalice as part of his explanation for a favorable forecast, many a cynical layman automatically holds the good news suspect.

Folk born under the sign of the Chalice are said to be frivolous and entertaining.

### Sample Predictions for the Sign of the Chalice

1. The Bear Star is in conjunction. Drink and merriment will blind you to a present threat.
2. The Doe Star is in opposition. Your generosity will not be well-received today.
3. The Wandering Spirit is in conjunction. Beware treachery amongst those you call friends.
4. The Mouse Star flees. Your attempts to help others will be faced with misunderstanding and failure.
5. The Mouse Star approaches. A close friend will have need of your counsel.
6. The Wolf Star is in conjunction. Timely aid to an enemy may result in gaining a new friend.
7. The Doe Star is in conjunction. Strive to put others before yourself, and they will benefit greatly.
8. The Mouse Star is in conjunction. A gift given will be well received today.
9. The Cougar Star is in conjunction. Mend the broken, and you will be guided by unseen hands.
10. The Doe and Mouse Stars are in conjunction. Today is auspicious for celebration and feasting.
11. The Cougar and Doe Stars are observant. Dance and music will bring joy to the troubled heart.
12. The Bear Star is in retrograde. A hidden ally will protect you from darkness.



### The Natheireun (*Strawberry 21 to Thunder 21*)

In art, this constellation is often depicted as one of any number of varieties of flying feathered lizards found in the skies of the Ironclaw world. The sky lizards are associated with grace and beauty, thanks to their bright plumage and scale patterns, and (at least among some varieties) their pleasing songs, so this sign is seen as especially fortuitous to be born under for women, or for men with poetic or artistic aspirations. In legend, a magical Natheireun guards the Chalice; its song is able to put people to sleep, and it possesses powers of regeneration that allow it to quickly heal even the most grievous of wounds.

More than one person has become a healer by citing their birth under the sign of the Natheireun. Those born in this sign tend to be gentle and compassionate, and are also said to be great Bards.

### Sample Predictions for the Sign of the Natheireun

1. The Mouse Star flees. Appearances will be deceiving, leading to misunderstanding.
2. The Wolf Star is in retrograde. If you do not control your feelings, your feelings will control you.
3. The Doe Star is in opposition. You will suffer a great setback in matters of the heart.
4. The Doe Star departs for the Coffer. You will be passed over; a rival will gain what you have lost.
5. The Doe Star is in conjunction. You will be blessed with great luck in matters of the heart.
6. The Mouse and Doe Stars are opposed. You must intercede on behalf of your friends.
7. The Mouse Star is in conjunction. Your thoughtfulness will bring good fortune to a close friend.
8. The Doe Star observes. An ally of a rival will entertain notions of turning to you instead.
9. The Mouse Star is in semi-sextile. A close friend will come to your aid in a time of need.
10. The Wolf Star is at trine. Today is auspicious to pay a visit to an old friend.
11. The Bear star is at trine. Today is auspicious to make peace with old enemies.
12. The Bear and Wolf Stars are opposed. You will find yourself in the role of peacemaker.



## The Coffer (Thunder 22 to Green 21)

If there is a sign more fortuitous than the Chalice to be born under, it would have to be the Coffer, which is prominent in the summertime. The Coffer is associated with material wealth, and hence is about as popular a sign to invoke in favorable-sounding bogus astrological forecasts as the Chalice. One peculiarity about the constellation of the Coffer, as it appears on star charts, is that one of the stars describing the outer “box” no longer exists (or, at least, it’s not visible). Some centuries ago, the star vanished from the heavens, prompting all sorts of dire predictions amongst stargazers; most star charts still show the “phantom star” in its original position.

As might be expected, those born under Coffer are thought to be avaricious and penny-wise.

### Sample Predictions for the Sign of the Coffer

1. The Mouse Star is opposed. You will receive news of a loss of fortune.
2. The Mouse Star is in retrograde before the Wyrn King. Beware enemies who use charms against you.
3. The Doe Star departs. You will have to sacrifice something of great value.
4. The Doe and Wolf Stars are opposed. You will have to make a difficult choice, with no right answer.
5. The Cougar Star approaches. Hidden treasure may be found in what others dismiss.
6. The Mouse Star is in conjunction. Today is auspicious for making new and bold investments.
7. The Bear Star approaches. You will meet a stranger who bears a distinctive mark.
8. The Doe Star departs in retrograde. An opportunity that eludes you once will visit again soon.
9. The Cougar Star is in conjunction. Today is auspicious for the working of the arcane arts.
10. The Cougar and Bear Stars are observant. Study, practice and research will be greatly rewarded.
11. The Wandering Spirit approaches. Today is auspicious to experiment in a new venture.
12. The Mouse Star departs. You have the opportunity to profit in secret at the expense of a rival.




## The Spider (Green 22 to Harvest 21)

There is some discrepancy in how the stars of this constellation are worked into the whole. One way is to think of this cluster of stars as representing the body of an eight legged spider, with two stars, one brighter than the other, in the center representing the body. However, those with keen eyesight can actually tell that the brighter “star” is not one but eight pinpricks of light closely clustered together. From this have spawned two variant ways of picturing the constellation — one is that these eight pinpricks represent the spider’s eight eyes, and that the other spot is the fly that it is having for lunch. The other is similar in that the second star still represents a fly, but that the eight pinpricks are actually the spider (marking its legs), and the other stars of the constellation are the web upon which it sits. In Repense lands, this sign is of importance to weavers and seamstresses; the making of special garments is sometimes put off until it can be done while this sign is dominant, for good luck. In legend, the Spider guards the Coffer, and it is in close proximity to a magical Spinning Wheel, with which it weaves strands of gold.

Folks born under the sign of the Spider tend to be meticulous and have a strong attention for detail.





## Sample Predictions for the Sign of the Spider

1. The Wolf Star is in conjunction. Beware a trap set for you; the hunter becomes the hunted.
2. The Bear Star is at quincunx. Offending a potential ally may create a potent rival.
3. The Cougar Star is opposed. Take another day to prepare, for today will be fraught with setbacks.
4. The Doe Star is in retrograde. A well-wishing friend's assistance will turn into an obstacle.
5. The Doe Star is in conjunction. A stitch, in time, saves nine.
6. The Cougar Star is in conjunction. Your handiwork will be blessed with inspiration.
7. The Bear Star is at semi-sextile. Accept the assistance of others, for they will bring you good fortune.
8. The Bear Star is in conjunction. With care and perseverance, the spider weaves silver and gold.
9. The Wolf Star departs. Today is an auspicious day to do favors for traveling friends.
10. The Bear Star approaches. Be watchful for someone who bears a sign of the Spinning Wheel of Gold.
11. The Bear Star departs. Today is auspicious to finish one task and to begin another.
12. The Wandering Spirit approaches. New developments will come from unexpected quarters.



### The Scepter (Harvest 22 to Hunter 22)

The Scepter is similar to the Spider in that the “gem” at its top is not actually a single star, as some suppose, but a tight cluster of six smaller stars ... though they are not so densely packed together as the cluster to be found in the Spider. This is another sign that it is considered fortuitous for a ruler to be born under, since the Scepter is naturally associated with reigning — especially since it is held in the hand of the larger meta-constellation of the King. However, it also happens to be located during a time of the year when a great many birthdays happen to cluster anyway, therefore it's not so rare that a new lord is born under this sign.

People born under the sign of the Scepter prefer to be in control of things.

## Sample Predictions for the Sign of the Scepter

1. The Doe Star opposes the Scepter. Your position will work against you in matters of romance.
2. The Mouse Star departs in retrograde. Rebellion will hinder your ambitions.
3. The Cougar Star is opposed. All that glitters is not gold.
4. The Wandering Spirit approaches. Beware of foreigners bearing gifts.
5. The Cougar Star is in conjunction. The artist admires worthy craftsmanship.
6. The Bear Star is at semi-sextile. The craftsman stands proudly beside his handiwork.
7. The Mouse Star approaches. You will be asked to make an important decision for others.
8. The Cougar Star approaches. Consider the counsel of your advisors, for you may find special insight.
9. The Doe and Mouse Stars are opposed. You must be the judge for a disagreement between friends.
10. The Bear Star approaches. Today's enemy may become tomorrow's friend.
11. The Wolf Star departs. Delegate wisely, for one who serves you will experience good fortune.
12. The Doe Star is in conjunction. Your prestige will bring you into contact with great beauty.



### The Serpent (Hunter 23 to Frost 22)

Right next to the Scepter is the Serpent — which is considered a far less favorable sign to be born under. Those born under this sign are believed to tend toward being sly and shifty, and less than forthright. (Thanks to such suppositions in Repense society, this can be seen as something of a “self-fulfilling prophecy.”) It is not unheard of for a mother giving birth to a child under the earliest or very latest days of this sign to lie about the birth-date, pushing it a few days forward or back into the Scepter or Scythe instead. In legend, the wise and shrewd Serpent guards the Scepter, and whispers advice into the ear of the King.



Those born under the sign of the Serpent tend to be insightful, but they also tend to see the worst in themselves and in other people.

### Sample Predictions for the Sign of the Serpent

1. The Mouse Star observes. Deception will be revealed at your expense.
2. The Mouse Star flees. Gossip-mongering and lies will challenge your position.
3. The Doe Star approaches. Sweet words and false appearances will lure away a close friend.
4. The Cougar Star is retrograde. Enemies will seek to discredit you despite your achievements.
5. The Doe Star observes. Be on the watch for a youth wearing green.
6. The Cougar Star is in conjunction. Charm will attract the company of distinguished individuals.
7. The Cougar Star is observant. Articulate words will win you a sympathetic ear.
8. The Wolf Star departs. A kind word turns away wrath.
9. The Bear Star is at trine. Your intuition serves you well; trust your first instinct today.
10. The Doe Star is retrograde. A fool who holds his tongue is considered wise.
11. The Wolf Star is in retrograde. Today is a day to make amends and settle old grievances.
12. The Wandering Spirit approaches. You will struggle with an unknown enemy.



### The Scythe (Frost 23 to Night 21)

This sign is strongly associated with harvest, and often figures into attempts to predict fortune or misfortune in the year's harvest. In more optimistic forecasts, it may be associated with omens of bounty and plenty. In more gloomy ones, it may be invoked in the imagery of a "harvest of souls", in times of war, or a harsh winter that will tax the storehouses. It's considered fortuitous for a farmer to have a child born under this sign.

The Scythe-born are thought to be humble, preferring the honesty of simple labor over more lofty, self-important occupations.

### Sample Predictions for the Sign of the Scythe

1. The Bear Star is in opposition to the Scythe. The craftsman rejects his handiwork as unworthy.
2. The Wolf Star is in conjunction. A catastrophe will befall you by an act not of mortal origin.
3. The Doe Star is in retrograde. Now is not the time to journey afar, for a threat is at home.
4. The Cougar Star departs. If you rely too much on your own ability alone, you will be disappointed.
5. The Wolf Star is observant. Be wary of someone who dresses in red.
6. The Cougar Star observes. The advice of an expert will offer you valuable insight.
7. The Bear Star observes. Be humble and patient, for your hard work will not go unnoticed.
8. The Bear Star is in conjunction. Hard labor and honest work will be rewarded with unexpected gain.
9. The Wolf Star is retrograde at quincunx. A rival's hesitation will give you a brief opportunity.
10. The Mouse Star is in conjunction. Generosity at great personal cost will result in later blessings.
11. The Cougar Star is in conjunction. Consider new methods which may increase your productivity.
12. The Wandering Spirit approaches. A surprise bounty awaits the one who labors diligently.



### The Comhach (Night 22 to Yule 20)

The name for this sign originally comes from the land of the Phelan, and although it technically refers to a number of small lizard-like creatures to be found there, to the Repense the name has become associated with a particular variety of comhach — at times charming, and often a pest — that is capable of standing up on its hind legs like a little person, and is often given anthropomorphic characteristics in children's stories popular in Repense lands. It



is popularly regarded as being a clever little thief. In legend, the Comhach guards the Scythe; sometimes, a companion constellation (the Lesser Comhach) is joined with it as a pair.

Being born under this sign is a mixed blessing where the superstitious are concerned, leading adults to expect nothing but mischief out of such a child (and, again, thanks to self-fulfilling prophecy, bound to eventually find it).

### Sample Predictions for the Sign of the Comhach

1. The Wolf Star hunts the Comhaches. Beware the enemy who pursues you.
2. The Bear Star is in conjunction. Stealth will avail you not; you are watched by wary foes.
3. The Mouse Star is before the King. Your shortcomings will be made known to those above you.
4. The Doe Star begins retrograde. An admirer will have doubts about your virtue.
5. The Cougar Star is in conjunction. A comhach in the hand is worth two in the bush.
6. The Wolf Star is in retrograde. You will evade those who seek to do you ill if you are observant.
7. The Doe Star is in conjunction. You will discover something of great beauty and value.
8. The Doe Star observes from the Tuntre. Your skills will impress a secret admirer.
9. The Bear Star is in retrograde. One's oversight will bring profit to another.
10. The Wolf Star departs. Be ready to exploit a fortuitous distraction.
11. The Comhaches are flanked by Mouse and Doe. Treat your friends generously and keep them close.
12. The Wandering Spirit observes. Your deeds will be noticed by a stranger from afar.

## The Special Trait of **“Birth Sign: [Planet of Choice] with [Sign of Choice]”** *Requirements: the Flaw of “Superstitious” and the two appropriate Flaws for the Birth Sign*

Your character puts great stock in the Repense Zodiac signs ... and with just cause. When the character was born, one of the planets was in conjunction with the constellation of the character's birth sign. The character has a particular aptitude for certain abilities, but you also share the typical failings of the sign. A character gains these Flaws the same as an Extra Trait (q.v. *Ironclaw*).

In game terms, the character has one of the sixty Special Traits below. To qualify for this Trait, the character must have both the Flaw of Superstitious and two particular Flaws specified with the trait. A character can only have one of the sixty Birth-Signs.

<b>Birth Sign</b>	<b>Include with:</b>	<b>Requires “Superstitious” and</b>
Brangaine with Bow	Bow; Hiking; Literacy; Observation	Heroic; Skittish
Brangaine with Chalice	Carousing; Hiking; Literacy; Trade: Dancing	Gregarious; Skittish
Brangaine with Coffe	Bribery; Hagglng; Hiking; Literacy	Greedy; Skittish
Brangaine with Comhach	Dodge; Hiking; Literacy; Stealth	Scofflaw; Skittish
Brangaine with Destrier	Hiking; Literacy; Resolve; Riding	Honorable; Skittish
Brangaine with Fish	Boating; Fishing; Hiking; Literacy	Overconfident; Skittish
Brangaine with Natheireun	First Aid; Hiking; Literacy; Trade: Singing	Skittish; Soft-Hearted
Brangaine with Scepter	Administration; Hiking; Leadership; Literacy	Proud; Skittish





<b>Birth Sign</b>	<b>Include with:</b>	<b>Requires "Superstitious" and</b>
Brangaine with Scythe	Digging; Hiking; Literacy; Trade: Farming	Morose; Skittish
Brangaine with Serpent	Diplomacy; Hiking; Literacy; Psychology	Envious; Skittish
Brangaine with Spider	Craft: [of choice]; Hiking; Literacy; Sixth Sense	Single-Minded; Skittish
Brangaine with Sword	Hiking; Literacy; Sword; Tactics	Skittish; Wrathful
Condan with Bow	Bow; Ciphering; Craft: [of choice]; Observation	Curious; Heroic
Condan with Chalice	Carousing; Ciphering; Craft: [of choice]; Trade: Dancing	Curious; Gregarious
Condan with Coffer	Bribery; Ciphering; Craft: [of choice]; Hagglng	Curious; Greedy
Condan with Comhach	Ciphering; Craft: [of choice]; Dodge; Stealth	Curious; Scofflaw
Condan with Destrier	Ciphering; Craft: [of choice]; Resolve; Riding	Curious; Honorable
Condan with Fish	Boating; Ciphering; Craft: [of choice]; Fishing	Curious; Overconfident
Condan with Natheireun	Ciphering; Craft: [of choice]; First Aid; Trade: Singing	Curious; Soft-Hearted
Condan with Scepter	Administration; Ciphering; Craft: [of choice]; Leadership	Curious; Proud
Condan with Scythe	Ciphering; Craft: [of choice]; Digging; Trade: Farming	Curious; Morose
Condan with Serpent	Ciphering; Craft: [of choice]; Diplomacy; Psychology	Curious; Envious
Condan with Spider	Ciphering; Craft: [of choice]; Craft: [of choice]; Sixth Sense	Curious; Single-Minded
Condan with Sword	Ciphering; Craft: [of choice]; Sword; Tactics	Curious; Wrathful
Trahern with Bow	Bow; Craft: [of choice]; Observation; Wrestling	Heroic; Stubborn
Trahern with Chalice	Carousing; Craft: [of choice]; Trade: Dancing; Wrestling	Gregarious; Stubborn
Trahern with Coffer	Bribery; Craft: [of choice]; Hagglng; Wrestling	Greedy; Stubborn
Trahern with Comhach	Craft: [of choice]; Dodge; Stealth; Wrestling	Scofflaw; Stubborn
Trahern with Destrier	Craft: [of choice]; Resolve; Riding; Wrestling	Honorable; Stubborn
Trahern with Fish	Boating; Craft: [of choice]; Fishing; Wrestling	Overconfident; Stubborn
Trahern with Natheireun	Craft: [of choice]; First Aid; Trade: Singing; Wrestling	Soft-Hearted; Stubborn
Trahern with Scepter	Administration; Craft: [of choice]; Leadership; Wrestling	Proud; Stubborn
Trahern with Scythe	Craft: [of choice]; Digging; Trade: Farming; Wrestling	Morose; Stubborn
Trahern with Serpent	Craft: [of choice]; Diplomacy; Psychology; Wrestling	Envious; Stubborn
Trahern with Spider	Craft: [of choice]; Craft: [of choice]; Sixth Sense; Wrestling	Single-Minded; Stubborn



<i>Birth Sign</i>	<i>Include with:</i>	<i>Requires "Superstitious" and</i>
Trahern with Sword	Craft: [of choice]; Sword; Tactics; Wrestling	Stubborn; Wrathful
Weylyn with Bow	Bow; Observation; Survival; Tracking	Heroic; Showoff
Weylyn with Chalice	Carousing; Survival; Tracking; Trade: Dancing	Gregarious; Showoff
Weylyn with Coffer	Bribery; Hagglng; Survival; Tracking	Greedy; Showoff
Weylyn with Comhach	Dodge; Stealth; Survival; Tracking	Scofflaw; Showoff
Weylyn with Destrier	Resolve; Riding; Survival; Tracking	Honorable; Showoff
Weylyn with Fish	Boating; Fishing; Survival; Tracking	Overconfident; Showoff
Weylyn with Natheireun	First Aid; Survival; Tracking; Trade: Singing	Showoff; Soft-Hearted
Weylyn with Scepter	Administration; Leadership; Survival; Tracking	Proud; Showoff
Weylyn with Scythe	Digging; Survival; Tracking; Trade: Farming	Morose; Showoff
Weylyn with Serpent	Diplomacy; Psychology; Survival; Tracking	Envious; Showoff
Weylyn with Spider	Craft: [of choice]; Sixth Sense; Survival; Tracking	Showoff; Single-Minded
Weylyn with Sword	Survival; Sword; Tactics; Tracking	Showoff; Wrathful
Wynne with Bow	Bow; Etiquette; Observation; Seduction	Heroic; Lustful
Wynne with Chalice	Carousing; Etiquette; Seduction; Trade: Dancing	Gregarious; Lustful
Wynne with Coffer	Bribery; Etiquette; Hagglng; Seduction	Greedy; Lustful
Wynne with Comhach	Dodge; Etiquette; Seduction; Stealth	Lustful; Scofflaw
Wynne with Destrier	Etiquette; Resolve; Riding; Seduction	Honorable; Lustful
Wynne with Fish	Boating; Etiquette; Fishing; Seduction	Lustful; Overconfident
Wynne with Natheireun	Etiquette; First Aid; Seduction; Trade: Singing	Lustful; Soft-Hearted
Wynne with Scepter	Administration; Etiquette; Leadership; Seduction	Lustful; Proud
Wynne with Scythe	Digging; Etiquette; Seduction; Trade: Farming	Lustful; Morose
Wynne with Serpent	Diplomacy; Etiquette; Psychology; Seduction	Envious; Lustful
Wynne with Spider	Craft: [of choice]; Etiquette; Seduction; Sixth Sense	Lustful; Single-Minded
Wynne with Sword	Etiquette; Seduction; Sword; Tactics	Lustful; Wrathful

## Map of the Hemispheres

From their vantage point in Calabria, the Repense have mapped the sky as it appears overhead. Naturally, different regions of the sky are visible at different times of year, and you would need to do sophisticated math and observation to see the differences.

Dunwasser scholars cite a Zhonggese influence in some of the names and descriptions, but whether this is verification of the "Kingdom of Heaven" or a simple borrowing of classification is something of debate.







“A wizard keeps his secrets.”

— Kyndranigar the Shadow-Mage, in regards to Mystery



## APPENDIX 5: THE MYSTERY SPELL LIST

The legends say that after Kyndranigar the Shadow-Mage created the School of Thaumaturgy, he was still disappointed that his many students failed to embrace his ideal of what the “ultimate wizard” should be. To this end, he wrote seven spell lists, often called the *Seven Virtues of Kyndranigar*, and he taught these spells to those pupils he felt had the most promise.

Whereas the practice of Thaumaturgy is relatively common, with numerous practitioners to be found, only a select few have learned even one Virtue. Kyndranigar forbade having any of the techniques of casting the Virtue Spells written down ... but that failed to stop a few brave souls. Books on the Seven Virtues are very rare, and when found they command a heavy price.

After finding the book *On the Virtue of Mystery*, any character with Literacy may study the book to learn its secrets. To cast these seven spells, one must buy the “Virtue of Mystery” Trait, which applies to Literacy, Meditation, and Kyndranigar Lore. It is a Wizard Trait, so it adds to one’s Magic Points. Once the character has at least a d4 in “The Virtue of Mystery” (or simply “Mystery”), they may cast these following spells.

### Interdiction of Mystery

*Cost:* 1    *Difficulty:* 1d8    *Type:* Defense    *Effect:* Cancel any one Mystery Spell as it is cast.

You can cancel any one spell from this Virtue of Mystery List, as it is cast. No opposed roll is needed — the spell is *instantly* cancelled. Can be used as a Defense upon any target that you can see.

Works on all seven spells in this list, including another person’s casting of *The Interdiction of Mystery*. Naturally, someone else may cast Interdiction of Mystery against *your* Interdiction. Two rival wizards can “burn” Magic Points at each other to counter each other’s Interdictions, until one of them yields or runs out of Magic to spend.

### The Distracting Riddle

*Cost:* 2    *Difficulty:* 2d8    *Type:* Regular    *Effect:* Include Mystery Trait with deceptions

As part of casting the spell, you ask your target a question. Then you roll a Test of your *Mind Trait and Mystery Trait Dice* vs. your target’s *Mind, Will, Career, and Psychology Dice*. If your target *Fails* or worse, the riddle you ask them makes them pause to think about the answer, distracting them from their current affairs – in game terms, your target is sent *Reeling*.

You must be able to speak to cast this spell, and your target must be able to hear you. Other people who hear your riddle will probably wonder why the target paused, if the question was especially simple.





## Inscrutability

---

*Cost:* 3 *Difficulty:* 3d8 *Type:* Regular *Effect:* Include Mystery Trait with deceptions

---

You cast this spell upon yourself. For the remainder of this Scene, you may include your Mystery Trait with any uses of Fast-Talk, Diplomacy, and the Sleight-of-Hand Skills. At the Game Host's option, you may include your Mystery Trait with other Tests that involve keeping secrets.

## Chariness

---

*Cost:* 4 *Difficulty:* 4d6 *Type:* Regular *Effect:* Know when someone sees you

---

You cast this spell upon yourself. The magic lasts until someone sees you, whereupon the spell ends, and you become aware that someone has seen you.

The spell does not tell you how well they saw you. It does not tell you when someone has heard you (with a Listen Test) or smelled you (with a Smell Test) or even if they have found you through Echolocation. It will tell you when someone spots you well enough to use a spell upon you, or to target you with something better than the 3 Penalties one suffers for Blindness. This spell will alert you to an Ambush Test (q.v. *Ironclaw*), always allowing you to include your Mind Trait when you are the target.

## Subtlety and Quickness

---

*Cost:* 5 *Difficulty:* 3d12 *Type:* Regular *Effect:* Avoid gestures and speaking when casting spells.

---

For the rest of this Scene, you don't have to speak or make gestures to cast spells. This *will* let you cast spells when Silenced, but the spell itself doesn't cure the Silencing... so if you've been Silenced, you must have had this spell Delayed previously and you call upon it now.

## Lethe

---

*Cost:* 6 *Difficulty:* 3d12 *Type:* Regular *Effect:* Group must test Mind or forget what just happened.

---

This spell imposes forgetfulness on a Group of targets. Roll your Mystery Trait vs. the Mind Traits of your targets. Those that *Tie* are sent Reeling and forget everything that happens in the current Round. Those that *Fail* are sent Reeling and forget everything that happens in this Round and that happened in the two previous Rounds. Those that *Overwhelmingly Fail* are sent Reeling and forget everything that happens in this Round and previous to that, in this Scene (that is, the last five minutes). Those that *Botch* become *Confused* for the rest of this Scene and experience total amnesia – forgetting who they are and what they are doing, until cured by magic or by helpful, knowledgeable allies.

The Game Host may have to make judgment calls about what forgetful characters can do or act. For example, this spell is quite useful for running up to a guard, imposing the Lethe, and then running away before they recover their wits.

Lethe is a form of mind-control that forces the subject to not remember what happened. However, if interrogated under *Mesmerism*, the target will remember everything that was clouded by the Lethe, truly and accurately. (In fact, a Mesmerized target can be ordered to remember what the Lethe made them forget – usually something the target doesn't mind doing.) At the Game Host's option, other kinds of assistance can help the character remember things as well, such as an interrogator pointing out holes in one's story and offering evidence of things that might have happened.



## Imperceptibility

Cost: 7    Difficulty: 3d12    Type: Regular    Effect: Target becomes Imperceptible.  
(Illusion)

When you cast this spell, a mystical fog surrounds your target, shielding them from prying eyes.

The target of this spell becomes *Imperceptible*. In order to perceive an Imperceptible target, you must win a test of your Mind Dice, Observation Skill Dice, and Sixth Sense Dice vs. your Mystery Trait Dice and the target's Stealth Dice (if any). *Racial Senses do not help you find Imperceptible targets at all.*

If you can *Tie* or better, then you can perceive the target and the Imperceptibility is instantly dispelled. If you *Fail* to see the Imperceptible target, then they remain undetected.

The target of this spell is "shrouded" in a magic mist, which covers them and all the things they carry, up to their maximum Encumbrance (q.v. *Ironclaw*). They may only hide other people if they physically pick them up and carry them. Items picked up "disappear," as if receding into a fog, and dropped items suddenly "appear" — such events should allow onlookers to make rolls to perceive the target, as above.

The Imperceptibility will also be dispelled if any of the following events happen:

- *If the Imperceptible combatant chooses to attack.* If they choose to do so, however, roll an Ambush Test (q.v. *Ironclaw*), including your Mystery Trait Dice with the combatant's Ambush Dice, as the Imperceptibility will offer an advantage of surprise.
- *If the Imperceptibility is dispelled with counter-magic.*
- *If the target casts a spell by speaking.* If they sub-vocalize (suffering +1 Magic Point cost), that will prevent the spell from ending. However, if the spell is an attack, that will start an Ambush and break the spell.
- *If the Imperceptible target "trips up" or is otherwise blatantly revealed.* This includes, but is not limited to, failing a Resolve Test, making a Loud Noise, and many Botches or Overwhelming Failures on other kinds of rolls. If the Imperceptible combatant makes any attempt to communicate, whether from speaking or through spell (such as Thought-Sending), that will also break the magic.

Once the target is no longer Imperceptible, the spell ends.

It may be subjective what reveals an Imperceptible target and what doesn't. As a rule, casting any Exploding, Homing, or Targeting Spell will reveal an Imperceptible caster. If you're casting a beneficial spell on an ally, the ally may attempt to "not notice you", by rolling their Will and Meditation Dice vs. the spell's Effect Dice, scoring a *Success*. Some spells, by definition, are always noticeable, such as *Thought-Sending*. The Game Host should decide when an action does and does not reveal an Imperceptible target.

You may cast this spell on a destrier or other war-mount, rendering it and all it carries (including rider) Imperceptible. If the mount is Skittish or otherwise not war-worthy, it will spook and instantly reveal itself.

Rumors abound that Kyndranigar the Shadow-Mage acquired the secrets of this spell from the mysterious Druids. It is the subject of many debates whether Kyndranigar was a Druid himself or just a thief of their magic ways, which would make this spell an ironic commentary on how he felt about Druid Magic.



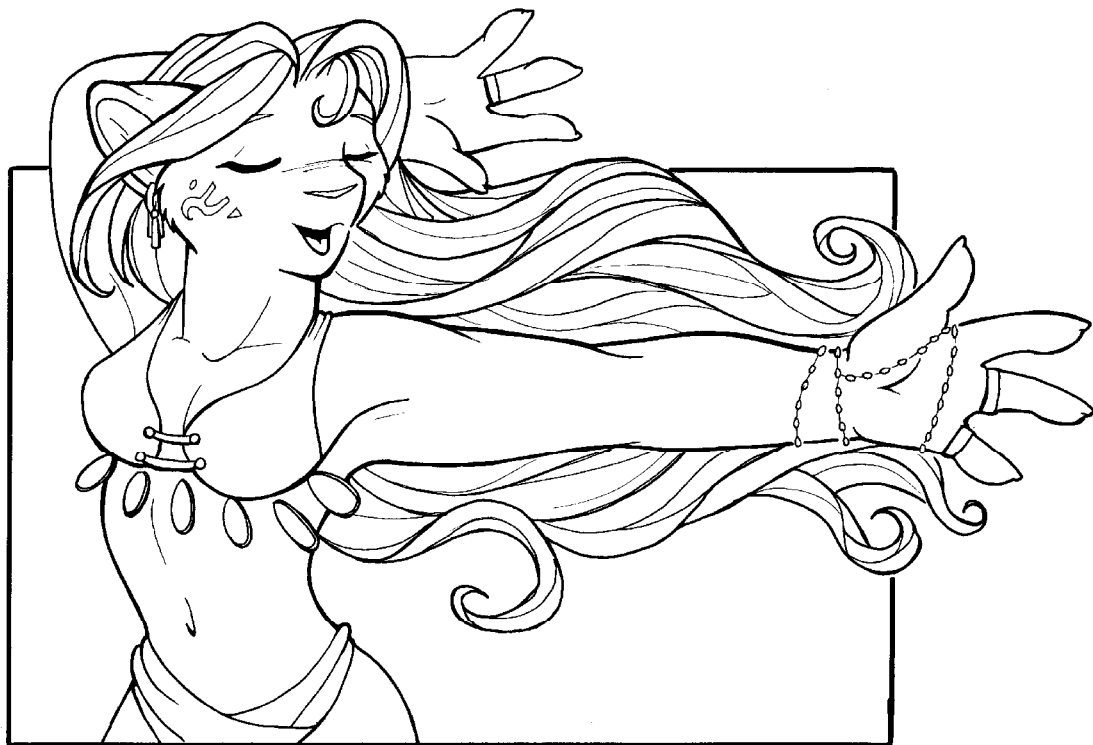
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*Heather Wasneuski 2001*



## Other Books for *IRONCLAW* Gaming System

### Rinaldi (SGP-1002)

Through their cleverness and guile, the ancient Rinaldi made themselves the unquestioned rulers of Calabria. Their city of Triskellian became a haven of culture, technology, and commerce. But all things change with time. Generations of misrule and neglect have reduced the once-proud bloodline to fops and schemers. Now the Guild Masters rule the city, playing each Noble House off one another for their own advantage. But the title of nobility still carries certain privileges...

This supplement for *Ironclaw* describes House Rinaldi, from their humble beginnings, to their peak of power, to their degenerate state today. It also contains an adventure involving the fate of the true heir — a strange turn of events that will decide the future of Rinaldi rule. Also included is a map of the city of Triskellian, detailed descriptions of the people, locations, and history, and details on mounted combat and the code of chivalry, as befits the landed gentry.

### Doloreaux (SGP-1003)

To outsiders, they appear brutish and stubborn, thinking of nothing but their own interests. To themselves, however, they feel a kinship with the ways of their world and a pity for everyone else who does not share their understanding. The boars of Doloreaux stand defiant against all Noble Houses of Calabria, content to bide their time and gain ground by inches... but ambition stews in the heart of every soldier, and some daring plot cannot be too far off.

This supplement for *Ironclaw* describes House Doloreaux, from their arrival on Calabria to their slow and measured rise to power. Included within are details on Doloreaux lands, from the idyllic peace of Vosges to the bloody battlefields of Lyore. Features include new people to meet, new careers to learn, and the ultimate Doloreaux secret of the Blessed Paths, the supernatural power inherent in all living things. For the truly brave, there is also an adventure where a secret from the past results in betrayal and bloodshed.... Can the obstinate Doloreaux be persuaded to put aside their pride to recognize the danger?

### Phelan (SGP-1004)

Older than the rolling green hills they now inhabit, the wolves of the Phelan crossed the seas from their faraway shores to claim Calabria as their own. Although their way of life has not changed in more than a thousand years, they now face challenges from the other Noble Houses, with their new sciences of magic and technology. Armed with the nigh-forgotten powers of their primal ancestors, the Phelan stand as one defiant against all others ...but can they hope to stand for long?

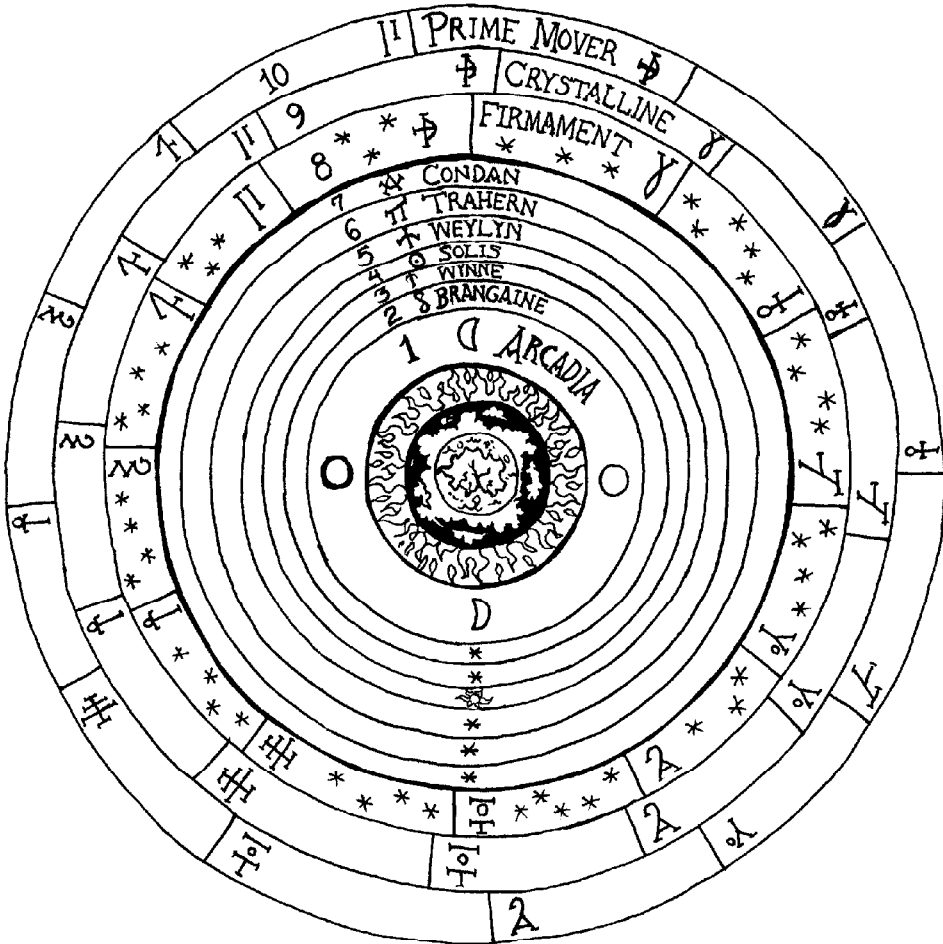
This supplement for *Ironclaw* describes the five clans of the Phelan in detail, from their struggle against the monsters of the past, to their rise to political prominence today. Included are details on their customs, laws, and government; rules for playing a Phelan character or one of their allies; the specialist magic of the Druid; new Atavist powers; and the specialist abilities of careers unique to the Phelan, the Ululant and the Fool. Also presented is an adventure of a rescue mission where a brave group of outsiders must journey deep into Phelan domain, in a test not only of their fortitude in battle but also their wits to understand the ways of a strange and fantastic land.



## Avoirdupois (SGP-1005)

Steeped in their tradition, stern in their judgment, and stubborn in their undertakings, the horses of the Avoirdupois continue to build upon their great works, assembling one of the largest armies in the known world. It is uncertain which is stronger: their devotion to the old ways of chivalry, or their commitment to the religion of S'Allumer. As both the church and the state grow in wealth and influence, it looks inevitable that eventually the two will be at odds for power ... but who would win?

This supplement for *Ironclaw* describes House Avoirdupois, from their first landings upon Calabria, to their conversion to the ways of Penitence, to their current state today. Included are details on their stratified society, from the ranks of the nobility to the orders of the Church. Also included are the secret ways of White Magic, which the Avoirdupois claim are the true forms of wizardly spells.



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IT IS TIME TO HONOR THE SPIRIT OF MIDCHAIN, TO SWEEP AWAY TRADITION, TO TAKE US TO OUR FINAL DESTINY. THE STARS, THEY ARE PORTENTOUS, AND NOW I KNOW IN MY HEART OF HEARTS THAT WE MUST CAST OUT THE OLD, OBSOLETE WAYS AND BECOME A NEW RACE OF RULERS CHOSEN BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

— attributed to Riddock Déanamh-Gaisce,  
last Chieftain of Binfael, first King of Bisclavret

Forsaking their old ways, the wolves of the gathered up the trappings and the tools of the modern world and immediately began their ascension by any means they could. In a short time, their house has risen to be a peer to the other Noble Houses of Calabria. While their leaders look upon other lands with green eyes, their demesne erodes from within, as mercenaries and schemers spread corruption within all ranks. Will the Bisclavret rise to dominate the known world, or will they collapse upon their own web of promises, debts, and lies?

This supplement for the IRONCLAW Gaming System describes House Bisclavret, from their humble origins as a tribal society to their rapid climb to nobility today. Included within are details on their modern technology of gunpowder, to the compelling enchantments of their Bards, to the secrets of their Indiciateur spies. Also within is an adventure that calls for heroes to that most dangerous of hazards in Calabria — the cannons of war.

*You will need a copy of IRONCLAW: Anthropomorphic Fantasy Role-Play to use this book.*



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