

SHADOW OPERATIONS

BEARD | BISWAS | BLADES | BRADLEY | CHAN | GHOUSE
HOWITT | PITRE | PUNZALAN | TAYLOR | WEATHERS



SPIRE
THE CITY MUST FALL

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Rowan, Rook and Decard
15 Tufnell Court, Old Ford Road
E3 5JJ, United Kingdom
www.rowanrookanddecard.com

ISBN: 9781913032142



Main text and LIFE AND SOUL
THE LAST TRAIN
A SHOTGUN WEDDING
HOUSE OF LEAVING
HOW TO STEAL A BODY
JAILBREAK
POWDERKEG
RIME AND REASON
THE MOON BENEATH
THESE FERAL SAINTS
THE SHOW MUST GO ON

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INTRODUCTION

Spire is a campaign game first and foremost, but people don't always have time to run multiple linked sessions. At conventions and meetups, the most common form of game is the one-shot. Unfortunately, *Spire* didn't have any pre-written material for that sort of thing – until now.

What you hold in your hands (or read on your screen) is MISSION BOOK ONE – a collection of eleven scenarios for *Spire*, all designed to be run in a single session of three to four hours. Each of them includes an open-ended set of challenges, non-player characters and props, focused around an objective given to the player characters by the Ministry of Our Hidden Mistress.

To make these scenarios as simple as possible to run, we've created a system of iconic NPC types whose stats are shared between games for ease of reference. We've also included advice on running a story-game like *Spire* in a one-shot situation.

Throughout the process of making this book, we've had the pleasure of working with some outstanding authors – both veterans of the industry and complete newcomers. They all bring something different to the table, and we were so excited to see what they did with the world we built.

We hope you enjoy these scenarios, even if you don't play them. Hopefully, they will give you some ideas on how to build your own one-shots and have fun with your players.

ICONIC NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

In this section, you'll find stats for several iconic types of NPC. If you'd like to quickly throw in a character and there isn't anything suitable in the scenario that you're using, you can scan through the options below to find some ideas.

The name of the iconic type doesn't necessarily relate to the character we attach it to in each scenario. For example, in A SHOTGUN WEDDING, Brother Hellion uses the Queen iconic stats – but he's not a queen in any way. Sometimes, we let the stats guide us rather than the titles.

THE KEEN TAG

The Keen tag was introduced in *Strata*, and some of the iconic NPCs have weapons that use it. In the hands of a PC, a weapon with the Keen tag inflicts +3 stress instead of +1 for each 10 rolled. In the hands of an NPC, it inflicts triple rather than double stress on a roll of a 1.

THE ENFORCER,

who works for someone else as an agent.

Resistance: 9

Difficulty: 1

Equipment: Professional gear such as a Sword (D6) or Repeating pistol (D6, Ranged); Decent armour (2) but nothing large, heavy or exotic unless they're specifically looking for a fight.

THE FOOL,

who is stupid but important.

Resistance: 5

Difficulty: 1 (from sheer luck)

Equipment: Duelling pistol (D6, Ranged, One-shot) or Inherited sword (D6, Keen)

THE HIEROPHANT,

who tells you important information at a cost.

Resistance: 4

Difficulty: 0

Equipment: A Dagger (D3), maybe

THE MAGISTER,

who goes by a fake name and briefs you in a flashback scene.

None of the scenarios contained in this book will require you to fight the Magister, but if it does come up:

Resistance: 12

Difficulty: 2

Equipment: Altar-blades of Our Hidden Mistress (D6, Piercing, Unreliable); Flashbangs (D3, Spread, Stunning, Ranged); Sawn-off shotgun (D6, Point-Blank, Double-Barrelled); Concealed armour (Armour 2)

THE MERCHANT,

who buys or sells something you need.

Resistance: 4

Difficulty: 0

Equipment: If they're expecting trouble, a Gun to even the odds (D6, Ranged, Reload) and protective clothing (Armour 2); otherwise, nothing more than a Dagger (D3)

THE MONSTER,

who hurts people for fun.

Resistance: 9

Difficulty: 2 until you inflict stress on them, at which point it drops to 1

Equipment: Something cruel and close-ranged (D6, Brutal, Scarring); a Gun for emergencies (D6, Piercing, Ranged, One-Shot)

THE QUEEN,

who is in charge of events and whose power is under assault by dozens of conniving underlings and rivals.

Resistance: 8

Difficulty: 0

Equipment: Bodyguard (D6, Defensive)

THE RISING STAR,

who has tremendous talent but is untrained and can be taken advantage of very easily.

Resistance: 8

Difficulty: 1

Equipment: Something flashy like a Rapier or Sabre (D6, Parry) or a Repeating pistol (D6, Ranged, Unreliable)

THE VIZIER,

who is the power behind the throne.

Resistance: 6

Difficulty: 1

Equipment: Concealed armour (1); Poison blade (D6, Keen); Poison (double stress versus Blood, Unreliable)

SCENARIO BREAKDOWN

Each of the scenarios is divided into several sections. We've done our best to keep them universal throughout this book for ease of reading.

The sections are as follows:

Mission Parameters. An outline of the mission to give you (and your players) an understanding of what sort of events will take place. You can read this aloud to the players to set the scene.

Suggested classes. Most classes can fit into most missions, but these ones will have an easier time of it thanks to their typical abilities, skills and domains.

We recommend getting the players to make their characters together before the game begins, but if you're at a convention you're better off making them yourself and offering several choices.

Alternatively, *Blood and Dust*, *Eidolon Sky* and *Kings of Silver* all use pre-generated characters, and you can download them for free from our website at rowanrookanddecad.com.

Intro. Use this section to guide the players into the story. There will often be questions for the players, generally around how they arrived in (or infiltrated) the mission area. This is intentional, as it gets right to the interesting bit.

Non-Player Characters (NPCs). A list of NPCs for the GM to use as they wish. Some of these will be vital to the plot (if you've been sent to rescue or kill someone, they'll be here); others are up to you. As with all the scenarios we write for Spire, we've intentionally given you slightly too much to choose from so you can mix and match for the best experience. If an NPC uses iconic stats (see pXX for more details) they'll have the relevant iconic listed after their name in parentheses.

Suggested scenes. Events involving the NPCs that explore their characters or advance the plot. Some of these are written in order (see: THE SHOW MUST GO ON) and others are a spread of ideas to be accessed as you wish (see: LIFE AND SOUL). Keep a note of these as you play and use

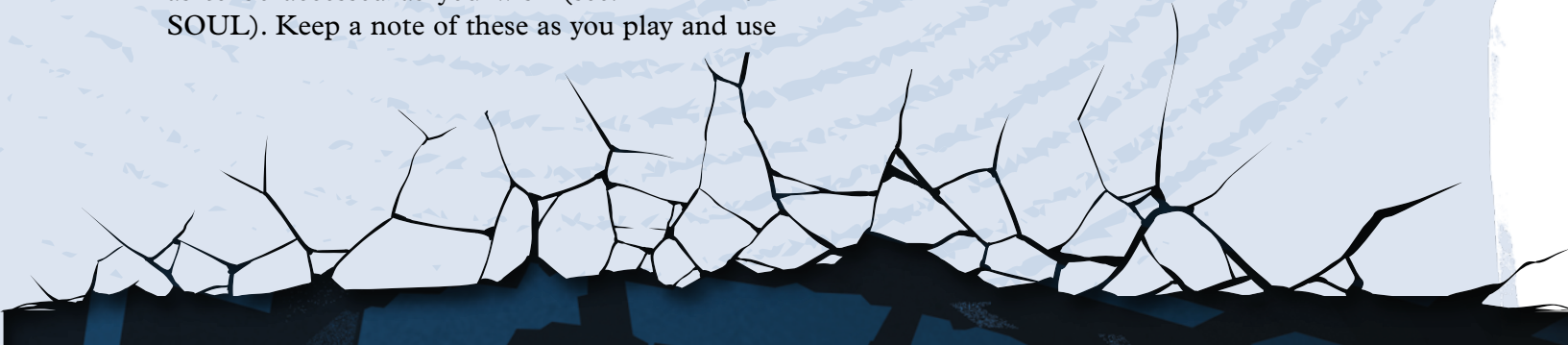
them where appropriate – for example, if the players seem directionless, you want to introduce a new character or if you need to amp up the pace.

Locations. Every situation in these missions takes place within one of the locations in this section. This doesn't have much of a mechanical effect, but should help to focus the players and maintain the game's pacing by making their position in the world as clear as possible.

Props. Props (or approaches) are small, often throw-away details that can give the players a means of influencing the story or just doing something cool. They come in two varieties: visible and hidden. As explained in the RUNNING ONE-SHOTS section, visible props are out in the open for players to use, and hidden props are within locations or are NPCs that are only revealed when the player characters investigate.

Twist. In the city of Spire, nothing is what it seems. Each of the scenarios has a defined twist that you can reveal towards the end of the session (or the middle, depending on the adventure). If you'd like to run a scenario more than once, you can get a lot of mileage out of it (and keep it interesting for yourself) by changing the twist to something else.

Reward. If you're using the mission as part of an ongoing campaign, this section has some ideas for what you can give to the player characters in exchange for completing their objectives (in addition to normal advances). If you're running the scenario as a one-shot, you can skip it.







LIFE AND SOUL

BY GRANT HOWITT

MISSION PARAMETERS

Infiltrate the birthday celebration of Mr Winters, a prominent Red Row gun-runner and gangster, and kill him. He's been secretly selling weapons cheap to the Paladins and the City Guard, and the Ministry can't keep up with the arms race. Don't make it look like an accident: send a message to anyone who'd side with our oppressors.

SUGGESTED CLASSES

Azurite, Bound, Firebrand, Inksmith, Knight, Shadow Agent.

INTRO

Describe the mansion and the party, and ask how the player characters got inside. Some options: fake invites, disguising as staff, sneaking in the back door, claiming to be the entertainment. Establish that Mr Winters is nowhere to be seen.

NPCS

MR WINTERS

[THE MERCHANT]

Alongside the drug-dealing Sisters of Threadneedle Square and Mother Moon, the Matriarch of the

bloodsoaked Arena, Mr Winters is one of the informal rulers of Red Row. No one's entirely sure of his first name, and his business is guns: he makes them cheap and sells them dear to the gangsters and contract killers that populate the district's lawless streets. Winters rose to prominence with blood and fire and betrayal, and has held onto his position with more of the same.

He spends most of the party locked in his office until he emerges to make a speech towards the end of the scenario.

SAL GRISWOLD, HEAD OF SECURITY

[THE ENFORCER]

Sal (Sally) Griswold runs security for Mr Winters' factories and business interests, acting as an on-the-ground lieutenant for his empire. She is loyal to Winters, given that he raised her up from destitution, but she's also headstrong and too proud – just like him.

She's attending the party, but is often drawn away to threaten an underling or oversee a beating. She seems frustrated with the guards who are protecting the party: they're not her usual bunch, which is odd.

PATRICIA YSSEN, PERSONAL ASSISTANT

[THE VIZIER]

Patricia is a noble-born drow, so what she's doing hanging around with gangsters in the undercity is anyone's guess. At present, she's using her prodigious organisational talents to oversee the unofficial

government contracts that are helping Mr Winters rise to prominence amongst the rulers of Red Row. She might also be trying to prove herself to her family, who disowned her a few years ago and left her addicted and penniless on the street.

She moves through the crowd smiling and shaking hands, setting up business deals for years to come.

DEVLIN WINTERS, MR WINTERS' SON **[THE RISING STAR]**

Devlin never saw the poverty and brutality that his father struggled through to reach the top, and Mr Winters has always quietly resented him for that. He's spent the last few years up-Spire getting a proper education to fulfil the wishes of his late mother. Now he's too smart for his own good and reckons he's entitled to a share of his old man's business. He's endlessly jealous of Sal Griswold, who has Winters' ear and favour. He either needs to prove he's got what it takes or overthrow his dad; honestly, attempting either of those is going to get him killed.

He's smoking on a balcony, looking out over the rooftops of his father's factories.

ELIZABETH THREADNEEDLE, **MR WINTERS' MAIN BUSINESS RIVAL** **[THE QUEEN]**

Elizabeth and her sisters run the drug trade in Red Row (and, to a lesser extent, the entire lower city of Spire) from a series of workshops and laboratories in Threadneedle Square. She wasn't expecting to be invited to Winters' birthday because the two of them are rivals, but she's attending out of curiosity and politeness.

She can be found in a haze of opiate smoke near the bar, flanked by bodyguards and caretakers, running her mouth about how important she is. After a few drinks, she might be persuaded to do something foolish.

SUGGESTED SCENES

- As the player characters look outside, they see dissent in the streets: the people who work for Mr Winters are starving, yet he's holding an opulent party. Armed guards eventually drag away those who seem to be

leading the protests; everything seems to be under control.

- Patricia Yssen approaches a player character, asks who they are and tries to drum up a conversation to develop a business relationship (she makes it clear that she's the one in charge). If the character is in disguise, she believes that they're the person they're disguised as and reminisces about prior meetings.
- The guards make a mistake – walking the wrong way to carry out an order, calling someone by the wrong name, etc. Further investigation, or an understanding of the Order domain, shows that they're City Guard drafted in for the day.
- Devlin Winters has one too many and starts loudly badmouthing his father. Griswold is nowhere to be seen; will this draw out Mr Winters? Maybe, if someone encourages him. Plus, he grew up in the house, so he knows all kinds of secret passages.
- Griswold escorts a gangster off the premises. Anyone with the Crime domain will know that the gangster is Fynster, one of Winters' favoured gunsmiths, so it seems strange that he wouldn't be invited. Fynster doesn't know why he was kicked out and seems pretty upset about it.
- Elizabeth Threadneedle makes a pass at a young gangster but he laughs in her face. Things have the potential to get out of hand if someone doesn't calm things down.

LOCATIONS

THE PARTY

Mr Winters has opened up his large but sparsely decorated mansion for the event. There's an open bar serving a variety of drinks and drugs, waiters carrying trays of nibbles and booze and a band playing music (though no-one in particular is dancing). It's an old crowd punctuated by the occasional hot-shot young gangster that's managed to impress Mr Winters. The party is held in a large square room outfitted with tables and chairs, with a mezzanine balcony around the walls which leads to Winters' office. Guests are strongly encouraged to keep to the main room, and shepherded back there if they wander off.

BACK ROOMS

There are no end of en-suite bathrooms, drawing rooms, balconies and utility rooms that can hold people who are up to no good. If the players want to catch someone alone, have it take place in one of these rooms as they sneak off to do something illicit (probably to do the sort of drugs that are frowned upon in moneyed society, like dagger or glimmer; or to get off with someone).

GUARD ROOM

Holds a few guards playing poker, betting for substantial amounts of coin; they must have been paid extra to be here. There are also a couple of spare guard uniforms and a surprising number of sawn-off rifles, pump-action shotguns and repeater pistols, even for people guarding an underworld arms dealer. At the back of the room is Griswold's personal suit of furnace-plate (Armour 4, Implacable, Heavy).

MR WINTERS' OFFICE

Well-protected (Difficulty 2 to break in, unless the player/s can come up with an excellent plan) and austere. The heavy mahogany desk in the centre of the room holds all kinds of useful evidence if the players want to find anything before they kill Winters. The most interesting thing in there indicates that the guards at the party are in fact city guard officers on retainer. Off to the side of this room is Winters' bedroom, where a portrait of his late wife (who was much posher than he was) dominates the space.

THE ROOF AND ATTIC

The least-guarded parts of the mansion. It's possible (but not very subtle) to clamber to the roof along the "ceiling" of Red Row and drop down to through the attic. There's a lot of old furniture and books under dust sheets. There's also the preserved corpse of Mrs Winters, Mr Winters' late wife, posed as though she's taking tea. Keeping dead relatives around is old-fashioned, but it's not unheard of in high society.

PROPS

Visible

- An experimental repeater rifle, a present built and gifted by Mr Winters' favoured gunsmith (D8, Extreme Range, Piercing, Unreliable)
- Protests in the district outside
- A waiter handing out malak, wine and ivory on a tray
- A dancer, waiting impatiently to perform so she can get home to her ailing mother

Hidden

- The Late Mrs Winters
- Letters proving Mr Winters' involvement with the authorities

TWIST

Mr Winters is gathering everyone in one place to kill them, because he knows they're all scheming against him. The only person he trusts is Griswold; everyone else is fair game when it comes to exerting his power. He is right: most of them are scheming against him. The first time the players will get a hint of this is if they try to leave the party: the guards will cook up some cockamamie excuse about unrest on the streets and will not open the doors.

Once everyone's got a few drinks in them, Winters will get their attention and start delivering a speech. Then Griswold and her goons will take up positions on the balcony overlooking the party, and open fire with cut-down semi-automatic rifles.

Unless the players do something smart, it will be a bloodbath – and Mr Winters will be more powerful and respected than ever.



THE LAST TRAIN

BY NATHAN BLADES

MISSION PARAMETERS

The party meets outside Polaris Station, a known entrance to the Vermissian Network. They encounter their Magister, Mote: tall, thin and wrapped in swirling black cloth, like a closed umbrella.

“Our tech-running efforts are... tech-crawling. Large shipments are too easy to intercept, and individual couriers are so flighty that some have flown away with our equipment. What we need is heavy duty, tried-and-tested technology. We need The Last Train.

“The Vermissian Network was supposed to ferry people all over Spire, but now it’s a desolate maze – except for its last running locomotive. It’s nothing like what we have on the surface; it’s lightning quick, strong as a phalanx. Perfect.

“Treat this as recon or theft, I don’t care. I must find out what makes that train tick and how we can use it to supercharge our own efforts. Succeed, and you’ll never exhaust yourself on a staircase again.”

SUGGESTED CLASSES

Blood Witch, Bound, Carrion Priest, Knight, Vermissian Sage.

INTRO

The Vermissian Network was a failed attempt to add an underground transport system to Spire around a century ago. The unreliable repurposing of ancient technology and unstable digging of tunnels has left the place condemned. Now, entropy and bizarre

psychic energies seeping from the depths have warped the tunnels into a nightmare labyrinth.

Delve into the Vermissian’s mazes to find what’s rumoured to be the world’s only running locomotive: The Last Train. It’s not the train itself that’s important, but the mysterious power that drives it. If repurposed or replicated, this could revolutionise transportation methods for the Resistance.

NPCS

MOTE ANPI

[THE MAGISTER]

The leader of the Gear Runners, a group that creates/smuggles/dismantles military tech. She’s vital in making sure the Resistance gets the tools they need for their uprising. Now she’s setting her sights on expanding her turf; in her ideal world, there wouldn’t be a courier in this district that didn’t work for her.

YANS ENTEDI

[THE MERCHANT]

The Gear Runners’ chief engineer, who is researching The Last Train. A Brazacott Technical Institute “dropout” (he was caught manufacturing illegal items to pay tuition fees). The technology skills he gleaned while at the university remain invaluable, though he never did get around to the module on ethical engineering.

NIAMH “TICKET INSPECTOR” EKSPRIME

[THE MONSTER]

A Vermissian Knight who acts as a security guard. Previously a Sage, she obsessed over learning enforcement tactics and subjugation methods (even thugs can be smart). She recently unearthed a weapon (D8, Point-Blank, Devastating) that was used in the Vermissian’s early days and is capable of punching strangely small holes through almost any object. She’s able to summon The Last Train if things get really dire, but she won’t survive its arrival.

CHESH

[THE FOOL]

A Vermissian Sage. Like all Sages, Chesh lives to hoard knowledge; but they’re strangely ambivalent on keeping the Vermissian Vault secret. They’d much rather direct someone to delve deeper and fall between the gnashing teeth of the Network by accident. They say “curiouser and curiouser” rather often, to no one in particular.

WALTER “THE CONDUCTRIX” VALE

[THE VIZIER]

A magi-engineer holding worshipful rituals on The Last Train. The maelstrom of otherworldly beings powering the train are garrulous, but holding counsel with them is an arduous and bloody task. He’s been having a furious debate with them for a while; anyone else getting in contact is not on the schedule.

SPARK OF A THIRD STAR

[THE HIEROPHANT]

Grand Telescope scholars suggest that this being is akin to the angels that appear within flashes of lightning – but why would they be deep underground? Heard but rarely seen, their voice hums in the air, making your hair stand on end. They know more about The Last Train than any living drow, but what would it take to give up their secrets? Their touch is illuminating – and immediately fatal.

SUGGESTED SCENES

- The way forward is blocked by a gate made of ancient technology. It opens if a monetary toll is paid, though it doesn’t look like it would be too hard to scale with time and effort. Niamh Eksprime, the Ticket Inspector, is nearby.
- A huge fissure has split a vital pathway; it’s always been there, but it has widened over time. Falling in would be fatal, but the chasm has also opened access to an area far below. It’s a great obstacle to introduce in the middle of a chase scene.
- Though The Last Train can move with blinding speed, it sometimes slows down during Engineer-Mage rituals as the Train concentrates on rebuffing requests to change direction. When communing, the mages’ cabin is entirely silent. Disturb them and all hell breaks loose.

LOCATIONS

POLARIS STATION

A proposed major terminus for the Vermissian during its construction. With the underground network out of service, it’s become a major hub for trading goods instead. The Gear Runners operate out of here on occasion, but don’t have the mettle to venture too deep into the Vermissian.

GEAR RUNNERS’ BASE

A discreet tower in a mid-tier commerce district. Learn how they are(n’t) successfully moving products, and discover from Chief Engineer Yans how the intel on The Last Train could help. Couriers sometimes rappel down from here when on missions.

END OF THE LINE

On one of the paths of The Last Train is a notable dead end with a complicated apparatus inside it, all copper wires and carefully faceted crystal. You may find many dead ends like this in the Vermissian – some glowing, some not. Ones that are glowing often mean that The Last Train is approaching.

VERMISSIAN VAULT

An area of the Vermissian converted into a library by secretive scholars, and the way the underground has

been psychically warped means that the library has become a maze unto itself. You can find out about almost anything here; finding it without being attacked by the librarians or the space itself is the real challenge.

PROPS

Visible

- A map of tangled, vibrantly-coloured lines. Who could even read this?
- The frantic stomping and rustling of an angry Vermissian Sage down the hall
- Old-tech gauntlets that store and discharge electricity (D6, Point-Blank, Stunning)
- Train tracks that inexplicably run along the wall or ceiling
- A university Parascientist, lost in the Vermissian; they are eager, vulnerable, foolish
- An Engineer-Mage thrown off The Last Train, more than a little bruised
- A wall in the Vermissian Vault that has been blown open with supernatural force

Hidden

- A thin, fragile sheet of quartz with visible circuitry inside; it can open Vermissian gates
- A book entitled Lachrymose Locrian Locomotive Legends (it's sad songs about trains)
- A crystal in a mesh of wires that's a conduit for The Last Train; very dangerous

TWIST

Upon the players finding or boarding the train, they learn two important facts:

1. It appears to run on a bizarre, perverse electricity;
2. The tunnels it travels through have very distinct dead ends.

Rather than crashing into solid walls, the train turns into pure electricity and moves to pre-established points using a conduit system.

Being aboard the train when this teleportation occurs results in weird effects (D6 Blood or Mind stress; Resist+Technology check to reduce). The Engineer-Mages have been teleported countless times, and it shows. What's more, it's obvious that to steal the Train's technology (or the Train itself), they'll need to study or remove one of the conduits it travels through.

REWARD

The Gear Runners are thankful for the party risking their necks for the resistance. They'll take a future request to transport, fence or carefully dismantle any one mechanical device you send them. If supplied with a rail conduit, they can make a Schedule Mine that summons the Last Train once on a time delay.



A SHOTGUN WEDDING

BY CHRISTOPHER TAYLOR

MISSION PARAMETERS

Valentin Yssen, dissident Prince of the Home Nations, is marrying Cannelure, the first-born child of Brother Hellion of the Church of the Gun. Valentin is (without his knowledge) under Ministry protection. He is a vital part of house Yssen's line of succession and will now soon provide access to the Church of the Gun, making him a powerful bargaining chip for whoever gets him on side. This wedding must go ahead; but the Ministry has uncovered rumours that several parties are interested in disrupting it. Protect Valentin and make sure the wedding happens – without attracting suspicion.

SUGGESTED CLASSES

Azurite, Bound, Firebrand, Inksmith, Knight, Lajhan, Shadow Agent.

INTRO

Describe the smoky streets of Red Row – particularly the incense-and-gunpowder reek of Kiln Street, where the Church of the Gun sits. Ask how the players have infiltrated the ceremony and what sort of preparations they have made to defend it: reconnaissance, traps, disguises, stashing equipment and bribery are all viable options. The game begins an hour before the ceremony – choose one of the suggested scenes to kick things off.

NPCS

BROTHER HELLION, HIGH PRIEST OF THE CHURCH OF THE GUN

[THE QUEEN]

As a young man Maddox Hellion was amazed at the divine miracles he saw other people perform, from the cheap tricks of Pilgrim's Walk to the wonders of the church of Limyé. Hellion had nothing – no power, no magic – until he mugged a travelling professor of Gwynn-Enforr, stealing his gun and a dozen bullets. Such power in his hands! Such righteous might!

Now Hellion takes whatever he wants (and what he thinks he and his family deserves) with overwhelming force. As his church grows and grows, it is obvious that many others follow his philosophy. He has kept the professor's revolver, which is still loaded with three unfired shots.

SISTER ARIELLA HELLION

[THE VIZIER]

Ariella began life on the streets of Red Row. Through a chance encounter with Hellion early in his evangelising career and being a dishonoured midwife (she retains the extra limbs), she became his bodyguard – and some months later, his wife. She is famously hot-tempered after a couple of drinks, and fiercely protective of her family.

VALENTIN YSSEN-DOGLOCK, THE GROOM **[THE RISING STAR]**

A charismatic Knight of the North Docks and Prince of House Yssen, Valentin put down his greatsword and picked up a shotgun after falling in love with Cannelure Hellion. As is tradition in his family – many of whom hold important positions in the Home Nations – he was sent away from home several years ago to seek glory through combat. Much to his parents' chagrin, he made a name for himself as a Knight of the North Docks rather than fighting in the war. He hopes that marrying Cannelure will estrange him from his family and the obligations they put upon him for good.

SISTER CANNELURE HELLION, BROTHER HELLION'S ONLY DAUGHTER BY BLOOD, THE BRIDE

[THE FOOL]

The most unsettling member of the Hellion household, and probably the only person in the church to be armed with a single weapon: the only gun Brother Hellion ever made himself. Initially demure and quiet, Cannelure is nevertheless a very intense young woman with a habit of staring right through you while absent-mindedly thumbing the hammer of her revolver. You don't grow up in the Church of the Gun without being able to stand your ground.

PERDITION GRYNDEL, VALERIE, ROLOFF, MINA AND WARRINGTON

[THE ENFORCER]

Perdition is furious. After months of expensive gifts and wooing of the young Lady Hellion, she has instead decided to marry Valentin. He has roused his order, the Knights of The Chalice Overflowing, and seeks to put an end to this nonsense by killing Valentin and marrying Cannelure himself then and there. The five Knights are drunk, angry and spoiling for a fight.

SUGGESTED SCENES

- Nobody can find Cannelure. Ariella is apoplectic with worry, though Brother Hellion himself does his best to calm her. Small

groups of trusted believers take to the streets in an effort to find Cannelure. She is currently completely overtaken by wedding jitters and is hiding in one of the upstairs rooms of The Angel, a nearby bar.

- Whilst Valentin and the other Knights are en route to the church flanked by celebrants, Perdition Gryndel and his cronies challenge him to a duel for Cannelure's love. Cannelure isn't interested in marrying Perdition, but Valentin is keen to defend his family's honour.
- A fairly lengthy sermon from Brother Hellion is punctuated at appropriate moments by peals of gunfire. The bride and groom are genuinely happy and the ceremony itself is oddly touching; several believers in the pews are crying while they fumble shotgun shells into receivers to prepare for the next psalm.
- During the ceremony, several suspicious characters come in late wearing heavy cowls. Upon investigation – maybe after the players have taken things just a little too far – they are revealed to be Valentin's aunt and her husbands, come to wish the happy couple well. They can't be seen attending due to the scandal it would cause.
- The doors of the church are thrown open after the ceremony and the plaza outside fills with tables and revelers celebrating the union. Soon the streets are packed as people flood into the plaza, drawn by the promise of free food and a party.

LOCATIONS

THE CHURCH GARDEN

An oddly well-curated little garden ringed in wrought iron. It would look almost idyllic if the tops of the fences weren't sharpened and several heavily armed believers weren't glaring at anyone who walks past.

THE ROOF

Riddled with bullet holes and repaired by the sort of people who can field strip a firearm blindfolded but have zero carpentry skills. It gives easy access to the church if you can find a safe way across the perforated surface (and dodge the bullets flying through it).

THE MAIN HALL

A warm room, hazy with choking gunsmoke. There's intermittent gunfire at relevant times during the service (usually during good bits). A hodgepodge of items have been stolen, borrowed or reclaimed to outfit the church with pews, folding chairs and benches.

THE SEPULCHRE

A rather unpleasant breach in one of the burial alcoves links directly to the sewers. It's wet, it stinks and there's uneven footing due to the sheer amount of shell casing and effluvia.

THE PLAZA

A large square outside the Church of the Gun holds a once-grandiose fountain in its centre. Traders hawk their wares from the square's borders, and there is a bustle and energy to the place as makeshift tables and chairs are set out and braziers lit in preparation for the wedding reception.

PROPS

Visible

- Incense burners, spilling thick smoke
- Easily excitable congregation, all of whom are armed
- Crowds eager to get their hands on free food and drink
- A dented footlocker with a slot cut in the top to hold donations for the church's extensive and continual roof repairs
- Out-of-their-depth journalist from The Silhouette, sent to report on the wedding
- A run-of-the-mill Red Row gun stall selling loaded, cobbled-together firearms

Hidden

- A dead celebrant, riddled with stab wounds, that the Yssen agents hid somewhere after killing them on their way in
- Pews which are, upon closer inspection, just planks balanced on top of barrels of powdered spireblack

TWIST

House Yssen are most displeased. They have sent four steel-masked agents to reclaim the wayward Prince, who is to be returned to the Home Nations for punishment and subsequent reintegration into his duties as an Yssen Noble. The agents' only orders are to return the Prince alive, and they have little care for the lives of anyone else involved. They sneak in through the sewers, the roof and various other clandestine entryways, taking advantage of any available distractions to mask their approach and killing whoever stands in their way. They'll try to lure Valentin away from the main group, then abduct him. They are all competent killers and skilled in the art of stealth (use the NPC stats for The Monster to represent the Yssen agents).

REWARD

Defending Valentin will ensure that he remains a valuable asset to the Ministry, even if he isn't fully aware of it. Gain House Yssen-Doglock as a Street-level Bond.



POWDERKEG

BY J P BRADLEY

MISSION PARAMETERS

Two allies of the Ministry – The Knights of the Thirsty Maiden and The Eyed Sceptre – are at each other’s throats. The Ministry needs them both, and tasks you with making them bury the hatchet before the aelfir intervene and this powderkeg explodes. Historically the two groups have fostered an uneasy truce, but recent differences between their two leaders have become personal. Now both ends of the Tellwall Bridge are being fortified as they both prepare for a turf war. The Ministry cannot abide this. The fighting must end tonight.

SUGGESTED CLASSES

Azurite, Firebrand, Idol, Inksmith, Knight.

INTRO

Banners flutter in the streets of the North Docks, but the festivals are ended. Swords are sharpened, lances dusted off and moody guns are traded on street corners. Twin pubs – The Thirsty Maiden and The Eyed Sceptre – square off down the length of the Tellwall Bridge, their leaders out for blood while the aelfir look on.

The mission begins as the player characters enter one of the pubs (ask how they got past the guards). Some ideas: letter of introduction from their Ministry contact, membership of one of the orders, using a forged search warrant in First-Last-Gloaming’s name, disguised as the Guard making their rounds.

NPCS

SER TOBBIAS BELK, KNIGHT-CAPTAIN OF THE THIRSTY MAIDEN

[THE FOOL]

Ser Tobias is a living legend, master of the lance and almost a Duke in his younger days. Much like the Thirsty Maiden itself, Ser Tobias is sagging around the middle and past his prime, growing bitter at the wearing of time on his abilities. He took up with the Ministry as an opportunity to throw himself into one last fight worth having, but seems content to fight Agenchek just to prove he still can.

FRANZIS PRIM ESQUIRE

[THE VIZIER]

A quiet young man, Prim is entirely satisfied to be Belk’s squire and the real power behind the barstool in The Thirsty Maid. He works hard to avoid Ser Tobias’ numerous attempts to knight him. Prim likes his position, and until the war he was confident he could maintain it for as long as Ser Tobias lived. Now, with his master more belligerent, Prim is losing control of him and is considering whether he might be better off elsewhere.

SER ANNOCHUS AGENCHEK, KNIGHT BANNERET OF THE EYED SCEPTRE

[THE RISING STAR]

A veteran of Far Nujab, Agenchek returned from war with a head full of radical thoughts inspired by that distant land. Under his command, The Eyed Sceptre has become a hotbed of esoterica, radicalism and

WHAT IS THE QUARREL ABOUT ANYWAY?

Neither Ser Tobbias or Ser Annochus can be drawn on the specific matter of their quarrel, only that the other party started it and are being entirely unreasonable. This is because neither of them can remember. If it should become important, feel free to roll on the table of petty disagreements below, or simply choose the one you find most entertaining.

1D6 Quarrels

- 1 The matter of a codpiece, and whether it was loaned or a gift.
- 2 An argument over who was the winner of the Year of Sour Lizards Ducal Cup Joust.
- 3 The placement of a garishly coloured banneret within full view of the other pub.
- 4 They have been enjoying illicit rendezvous which have soured in recent months.
- 5 One pub has been caught ‘borrowing’ the other one’s bins.
- 6 A disagreement over the correct hour to practice Nujabian Glottal Chanting.

mind-altering chemicals. This has drawn many younger Knights of a more artistic bent to the Sceptre, and Agencheck sees it as his duty to shape these young minds into dilettantes modelled after a worthy subject, such as himself.

DAM ISLA PLANCHET [THE MERCHANT]

Agenchek’s long suffering second, Dam Isla served under him in Far Nujab. She doesn’t share his fondness for strong drugs and exotic poetry; instead, she busies herself with keeping The Eyed Sceptre from going bust – a battle she seems to be losing. Part of the reason is that Isla has been embezzling money to pay for treatment for her sister, who is sick with a mysterious ailment of the blood.

LADY ITHANA FIRST-LAST-GLOAMING [THE MONSTER]

First-Last-Gloaming considers herself to be a “moderate” aelfir; a kindly mother to the ‘children’ drow. This is a paper-thin veneer, but one she enjoys keeping. In truth, she has been prodding the Knights to war for a while and grows impatient at their inaction, looking for other ways to rid herself of them so she can enact her real plan (see Twist).

METTE PARCHAIR [THE ENFORCER]

A dirty and unkempt drow who serves as First-Last-Gloaming’s servant. They speak little and are quite curt, though stiffly polite. Coming near them with

an open flame makes them react violently, though they refuse to explain why. Parchair is doggedly loyal to First-Last-Gloaming and buys into her matronly act, genuinely believing that she cares. They are quite wrong.

SUGGESTED SCENES

- One group of headstrong Knights rushes the other, cheering, waving their swords around and taking pot shots with heavy repeaters. The cell is caught in the crossfire and must choose between saving their own hides or trying to de-escalate the situation.
- The player characters see Mette Parchair rushing through the streets with a few servants, each of them carrying bundles swaddled in blankets. Further investigation will reveal these to be small kegs of spireblack powder.
- One of the Knights is arrested for bearing an illegal weapon, provoking a protest that threatens to escalate into a full on fight with the City Guard.
- First-Last-Gloaming summons one of her favourite Knights and gives them a quest that will take them far away from the fight – a request intended to keep them out of harm.

LOCATIONS

THE THIRSTY MAIDEN PUB

The Thirsty Maiden is an aged and much storied pub built around a statue of its namesake, which was blessed by Saint Benefras, on the flooded ground

floor. Raucous festivities take place on the first floor as everyone politely ignores that The Maiden is sinking. Her Knights are a bunch of old sots, fond of tradition and strong drink, jovial in nature but prone to hold a grudge.

THE EYED SCEPTRE PUB

The Sceptre is the place for more discerning Knights to display exotic treasures, wear flash codpieces and find enlightenment in lurid cocktails and strange drugs. They are an eclectic bunch sporting styles pilaged from distant lands and avant garde ideas. In the back is the Vault where some of the more dangerous trophies are kept under lock and key, along with the fastidious ledgers attended by Dam Isla.

TELLWALL BRIDGE

Spanning a tributary that spills into the North Docks, this long bridge has been a prime jousting ground for the Knights of the twin pubs which sit at either end. Despite the swaggering Knights and hasty fortifications being built, the bridge can still be crossed as long as you don't mind being hassled at either end as a potential spy.

JOUSTING

There are no horses in Spire. A brief dalliance with jousting on boats proved dangerous in the wrong way (quarterplate is heavy and the docks are deep), so jousting on the bridge is done in the traditional style. Two Knights in full armour run full pelt at each other until one falls and cannot rise. Draws are scored based on broken lances, knockdowns and elan.

THE YACHT: WANDERLUST PARABLE

A spacious yacht, the Wanderlust Parable is made of ancient pale wood, ivory and silver. It is opulent, beautiful to behold and in an inspired piece of anti-planning has been constructed in an estuary landlocked by the Tellwall Bridge. The yacht is patrolled by guards, but otherwise open to guests. The exception is First-Last-Gloaming's private quarters, which are locked (Difficulty 1 to break in) and contain a scale model of the district and her plans for it.

PROPS

Visible

- Ser Tobbias' Lance (D6, Piercing, Surprising) hanging over the bar in The Maiden
- Exotic drugs behind the bar of The Sceptre
- The blessed statue of The Thirsty Maiden
- Eyed Sceptre Vault Key held by Ser Annochus or Dam Isla

Hidden

- A scale model aboard The Wanderlust Parable of the surrounding district, in which the Tellwall Bridge and the two pubs are not present
- Letters from First-Last-Gloaming egging on both sides, found in her offices
- Ledgers in the vault indicating Agenchek is in serious debt
- Kegs of spireblack powder placed under the Tellwall Bridge and rigged to blow

TWIST

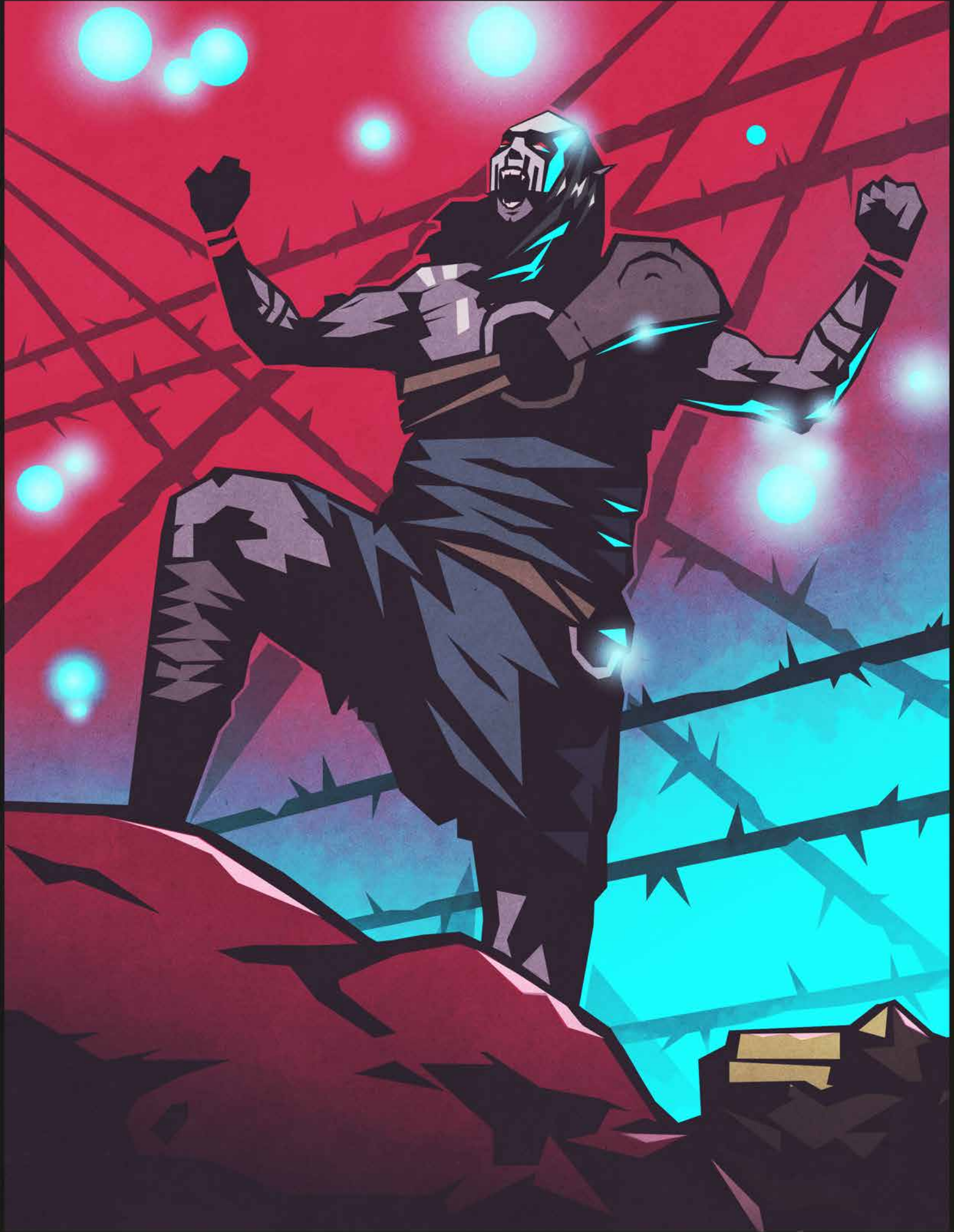
First-Last-Gloaming wants to turn the subdistrict into a personal riviera built around her yacht, which means evicting the current tenants. She has coaxed the Knights to blows, hoping they would take care of each other; however, she is growing impatient and needs a more immediate solution.

Toward the end of the night, she summons both groups of Knights to a final showdown: a single joust between their two leaders across the Tellwall Bridge, which she will observe from her yacht. She will wait until both Knights tilt, and then as they run at each other she will instruct Parchair to detonate the spireblack beneath the bridge.

The cell must act quickly to prevent the detonation or the bridge will blow, killing everyone on it.

REWARD

If you side with either faction of Knights, gain a Street-level Bond with them. Settling the dispute results in a Street-level Bond with both.



THE SHOW MUST GO ON

BY JASON PITRE

MISSION PARAMETERS

A travelling group of players (some of them definitely wizards displaying Inksmith/Idol traits) are putting on a show in Ivory Row. It's a new desang performance that stirs the heart and fires the minds of the populace towards revolution. The Ministry is very interested in making sure that the show – which will run for one night only – goes off without a hitch. The aelfir would much rather it didn't. Also, the longer the show goes on, the more reality becomes unstitched around the players.

SUGGESTED CLASSES

Firebrand, Idol, Inksmith, Knight, Masked, Midwife.

INTRO

Everyone has heard about the new desang theatre show which will be performed tonight in Ivory Row. The Masked Heart is a controversial blood opera about forbidden romance and brutal vengeance against an oppressive regime. Apparently, this performance has sparked revolts in the streets of Aliquam and disorder in the eastern kingdoms. Tickets have been sold out for weeks, and rumour has it that Lady Theryn Thorns-on-Silk will be in attendance. The Ministry is quite interested in protecting the event from the Censors of Solar Flame.

NPCS

FALAYN-HERALDING-GLORY AKA ANTON [THE RISING STAR]

Anton is one of the leading actors in the travelling troupe; a charismatic aelfir with a river of golden

hair draped over his shoulders. He has taken centre stage to play the role of a noble and passionate aelfir lordling. This is Anton's first performance with the troupe, and he is desperate to earn the adoration of the crowd.

PLAYWRIGHT PHILEMON

[THE VIZIER]

No one truly knows Philemon. Are they an idol of the stage, renowned for their androgynous beauty and social graces? Is he instead an innovative Inksmith and storyweaver, obsessed with creating true art? Is she instead a hot-headed Firebrand who seeks to sow a glorious revolution? The only truth is that Philemon calls the shots – in every sense of the word.

MS JANAR

[THE ENFORCER]

Ms Janar is the perilously quiet and brutally efficient handmaiden-assassin of Lady Theryn Thorns-on-Silk. She is under strict orders to sabotage the performance and make a brutal example of the actors who dared to perform in her domain. Ms Janar leads a small group of Hidden soldiers who are spread throughout the audience.

AELON, THE AVATAR OF AUTUMN

[THE MONSTER]

Archbishop Wynn has heard of the performance and dispatched his most faithful of followers to observe the events. Aelon was one of the 27 orphans chosen for service to Scythes-Cull-The-Weeping, known also as Brother Autumn. This silent, graceful and beautiful aelfir assassin takes advantage of the spectacle to perform grisly murders.

RADIANT-IS-THE-PURE **[THE HIEROPHANT]**

Radiant-Is-The-Pure is a retired Paladin who took on a position as elder Censor of the Solar Flame. Fully aware of the Ministry's interest in the desang performance, she seeks to warn the right people about the dark energies that are being channeled. She knows that the gossamer veils of reality are already being torn by something beyond.

SUGGESTED SCENES

ACT 1: JEANVAL'S FOLLY

Jeanval was the eldest son of a large family, stealing common mushrooms and jars of algae-paste to feed his younger sisters. He was caught and sentenced to a decade of durance under Lord Falayn-Heralding-Glory. After this act concludes, a sense of pervasive hunger and resentment bleeds out into the Ivory Row.

ACT 2: CHAINS OF GOLD AND FIRE

Jeanval hated Falayn on first sight, but was sentenced to work as the lord's agent, killer and finally duelist. This has led to a series of dramatic duels in public and private sparring with Falayn in his palace. Members of the audience are invited to spar with Jeanval. As the years pass, the anger transforms into affection and lust between the drow criminal and the aelfir lord.

ACT 3: ALLEYS OF SMOKE AND BLOOD

After Jeanval took revenge on the captain who imprisoned him, the City Guard retaliated. Jeanval and Falayn fled to Ivory Row together. They took secret vows and lived among the Hidden in joyful squalor. They were happy until the captain's troops broke in and murdered one of them. Members of the audience are invited to fight as soldiers.

ACT 4: THE MASKED PRINCE

The survivor, either Falayn or Jeanval wearing his mask, infiltrated the higher levels of Spire. He moved in like a force of nature, took over the Council of Suns and purged the ranks of the soldiers for the slightest fault. The audience members who fought in Act 3 are dragged on stage, stuffed full of mushrooms and algae paste and roasted alive. An orgiastic celebration ensues.

LOCATIONS

THE CENTRE STAGE

The main stage, crafted of beautifully etched black stone and lit by flaming braziers that emit sweet smoke. Dozens of hand-crafted backgrounds and props make the performance convincing.

BACKSTAGE

Behind the scenes are the prop rooms, changing rooms and ritual spaces used by the stage hands. Here you can find actors changing costumes and engaging in heated arguments.

THE COMMON SEATS

Wooden benches that surround the stage, crammed with passionate onlookers and a disturbing number of hidden blades. The body heat of the attendees make the common seats uncomfortably warm.

THE GALLERY

The rich and the powerful have their own private boxes, where they can look down upon the performance with imperious judgement. These boxes shine with ice crystals, and bundled-up servants deliver a constant influx of ice wines.

THE ALLEYS

A warren of servant's passages, hidden alleys and cultist quarters allow for private discussions and subterfuge.

THE SKY THREADS

High above the stage are a series of perilous, black silk rope walkways. Nimble children crawl along the sky beams to adjust the galvanic lights, release bags of snow or drop blades upon the stage.

PROPS

Visible

- The Hidden, those desperate inhabitants of Ivory Row, are enraptured by the performance and will gladly rise as a mob to prevent anyone from disrupting it. As the performance progresses, their methods will become more...enthusiastic

- There are a dozen masked stagehands who move the backgrounds, change costumes behind the stage, sacrifice troublemakers to fuel the ritual and generally keep the show on track
- The agents of Lady Theryn Thorns-on-Silk and Archbishop Wynn are quick to squabble among themselves. Ms Janar and Aelon are more interested in bloodshed than their respective missions and can be easily manipulated
- Radiant-Is-The-Pure behaves in a puzzling manner and with remarkable decorum. She accords the drow an extraordinary measure of respect, and seems to genuinely care about ending a dark magic ritual that will harm countless innocents. Strategic alliances are possible

Hidden

- The dagger wielded by Jeanval is, in truth, a Bewitching Blade; a love potion in blade form, severing all previous loyalties in favour of undying devotion. Anyone stabbed by it during the desang duels is compelled to protect Jeanval at all costs

TWIST

As the performance progresses, reality comes unstitched and elements of the fictional setting appear to bleed out into the nearby environs.

Act 1: A sense of pervasive hunger and resentment bleeds out into the Ivory Row and sweet smoke curls around the audience.

Act 2: Weapons appear throughout the Ivory Row in the hands of the Hidden (D3 weapons for the unarmed, D6 weapons for those who were already armed).

Act 3: Fires and smoke begin to bring joy to the Hidden; arson gives pleasure and the immolation of living beings results in ecstasy. This inner fire allows them to walk the frozen halls of Amaranth in comfort.

Act 4: The Masked Heart is actually a ritual in service of the Masked God (Spire, p199). All of the Hidden are transformed into members of that

cult, putting on their Jeanval Masks and dispersing throughout Amaranth to infiltrate high society.

REWARD

The Jeanval Mask. This enchanted aelfir mask is secrecy made manifest, and does not arouse suspicion despite its fame. Every aelfir who sees the mask knows Jeanval as a friend and trusted associate.

The true benefit of the Jeanval Mask is that it slowly replaces the memories of the wearer in times of stress. Add the following three Fallout options when you wear the Jeanval Mask.

MINOR

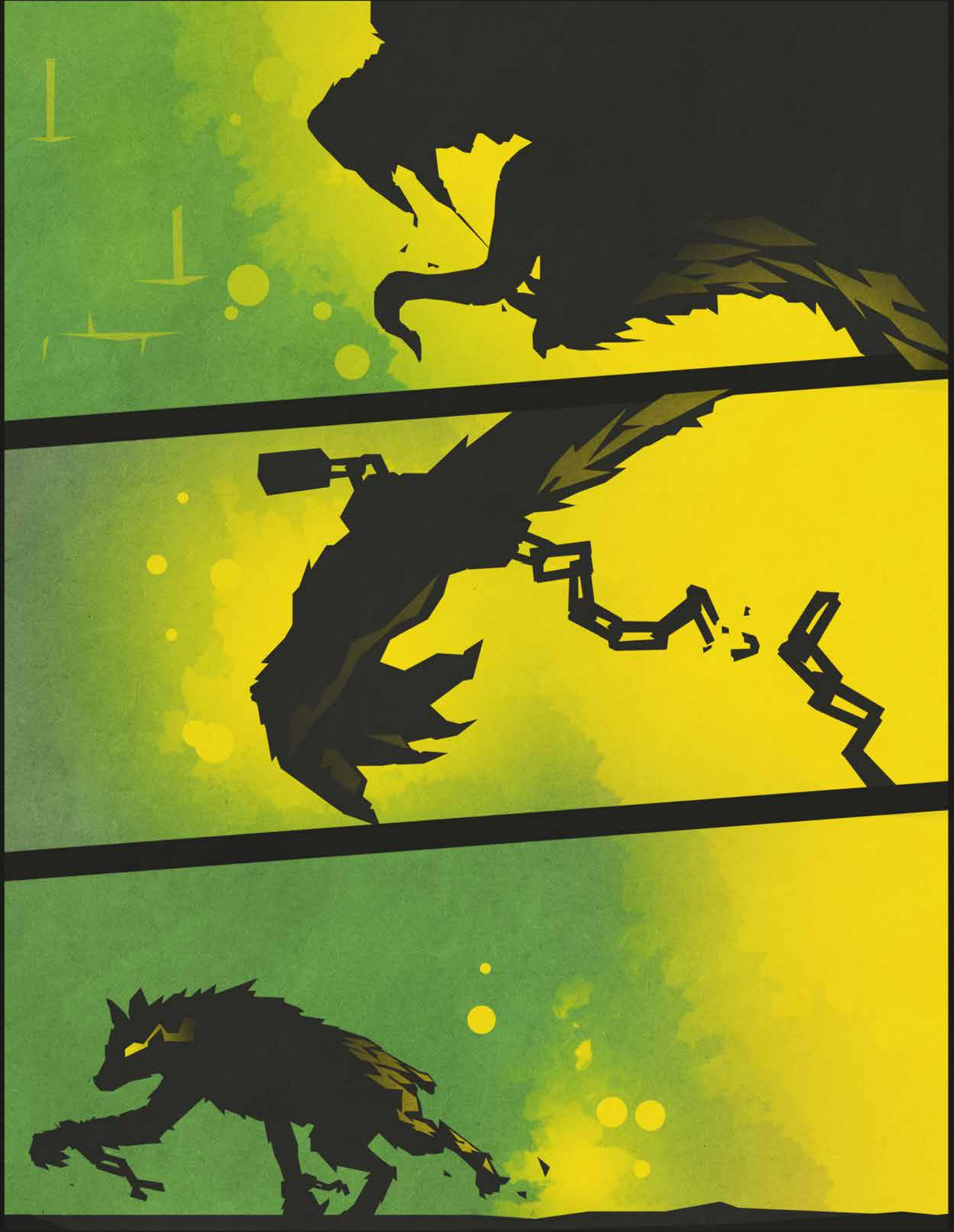
JEANVAL'S HEART [Any]: Your memories are selectively reworked, replacing one minor memory with one belonging to Jeanval. Perhaps you remember how your mother was murdered by the City Guard, or recall a younger sister you never had.

MODERATE

JEANVAL'S BLADE [Any]: Your body remembers Jeanval's skills. Replace one of the advances you already hold with another of the same level from The Bound, The Firebrand, The Masked or The Masked God.

SEVERE

REMOVING THE MASK [ANY]: The mask melts into your face and Jeanval is reborn in your flesh. You immediately seek out a retinue of Inksmiths, Idols and actors to bring with you for a new performance of The Masked Heart.



JAILBREAK

BY BASHEER GHOUSE

MISSION PARAMETERS

Infiltrate the Hive, Spire's greatest prison, and free the gnoll warlord Brakesh Gold-Tongue. His capture has been an enormous symbolic victory for the aelfir armies, and his execution is imminent. Denying them both will be of singular value, so make sure that the papers know that he's escaped. Be messy.

SUGGESTED CLASSES

Bound, Carrion-Priest, Lajhan, Midwife, Shadow Agent.

INTRO

Describe the interior of the Hive and ask the players how they got inside and how they're going to leave once they grab Brakesh. Establish the guards, the labyrinthine interior and the fact that all of the cells can be easily jettisoned into the air below. Options for infiltration include being disguised as guards or prison staff, dropped into the Hive from above, climbed into the Hive from below or hidden inside a supplies shipment.

NPCS

DEW-IN-SHATTERED-MOUNTAINS

[THE RISING STAR]

Dew is a rising poet-interrogator in the Hive's staff, though he is rather more talented at the poetry part of his job than the interrogation part. A string of straightforward cases and immensely powerful

connections has meant that this doesn't matter, but it has also landed him the prestigious and dangerous case of Brakesh Gold-Tongue.

Dew's poetry from the case has been haunting, beautiful and immensely popular. However, his intelligence results have been rather lacklustre, and he is utterly ignorant of Brakesh's murder spree or the truth of his psychology. This is likely to continue until the moment he is murdered.

SMILING KAS

[THE ENFORCER]

Smiling Kas entered the guard as a drow with ideals. She wanted a better Spire! A safer Spire! A Spire where her family wouldn't be afraid on the streets, and the world would become just a bit kinder than when she entered it. Unfortunately, she was assigned to the Deep Cells. She now spends her days ensuring that political prisoners don't improve the world and that mad poets aren't harmed as they draw inspiration from serial killers.

Now more people turn up dead every day, more prisoners are found torn to shreds in their cells and more guards disappear while trying to track down the killer. Kas is suddenly more senior than most in her section of the Deep Cells, and she's learned not to ask questions or check on mysterious occurrences. She just wants to survive long enough to get sent somewhere else.

DAWN-UPON-ICE

[THE MERCHANT]

Dawn is a member of the menagerie: a bloated, modified pet project of some aelfir noble. She needs assistance to walk due to a leg injury, but can create valuable poisons and alchemical reagents from the

potent chemical laboratories grown within her gut. More importantly, she has made the Hive her home, and is indispensable to the lives of those around her. She manages a network of contraband and vice from within her cell; guards, nobility and prisoners alike purchase her services.

She knows much about the recent goings-on in the Hive, including the murders, Brakesh's interrogation (and Dew's role in it) and even his location – but she will demand goods or valuable information in recompense.

QADIV LOVE-MAD

[THE FOOL]

Qadiv is a gnollish prisoner: a master of disguise and consummate liar who was captured in Nujab some months ago. He pretended to be a valuable officer and has been feeding his interrogators elaborate fictions to prolong his life as an intelligence asset. Not enough time has yet passed for the aelfir armies to truly run afoul of the poor information from their most cooperative prisoner. The other gnolls in the Hive view him as either a collaborator or an idiot.

He is the only gnoll in the prison who will not recoil at the mention of Brakesh Gold-Tongue, and will happily offer to help the players if they give him a way out of the prison. He doesn't really know much – besides that Brakesh was a jack-ass and probably deserved whatever he got and the location of his cell – but will happily pretend to know more if he thinks it'll get him out.

BRAKESH GOLD-TONGUE

[THE MONSTER]

Brakesh Gold-Tongue was a warlord in the Nujab and, by the standards of gnollish warlords, an unpleasant one. He was unreasonable, aggressive and had little respect for tradition or custom. This served him well for a time, until he was betrayed by an associate. His lands and armies were taken from him and his surviving loyalists were killed by Snow-On-Stone in a skirmish. Brakesh himself was taken prisoner, a trophy for the High Elves, and in theory a grand boon of information.

They did not account for the gnoll's ingenuity, nor his anger.

After being thrown into the Hive, he quickly learned how to escape his cell; but he's got nowhere to go, no way to return home and no way to reclaim his land if he did. So, he has instead endeavoured to

make his captors miserable. He has been stalking the halls since his capture, murdering at will and avenging himself on his drow and aelfir foes – and on the gnollish prisoners who once served his many enemies. The Hive has increasingly become a place of paranoid terror as a result. Little suspicion falls on him, as when the guards check he is always back in his cell. Those who have reason to believe otherwise tend to be his next victim.

SUGGESTED SCENES

- Someone discovers a dismembered corpse tucked in a corner; guards rush to the scene, though none seem too surprised.
- An aelfir poet loudly talking to a prisoner; cooperative in the menagerie, less so in the Deep Cells.
- A breakout attempt that leads the guards to jettison a cell.
- Smiling Kas spots the characters as she escorts Dew about the Deep Cells. She asks precisely no questions and accepts any excuse or alibi, no matter how ridiculous. If the characters have not threatened her and seem new to the Hive, she warns them not to stay in the Deep Cells too long.
- Dawn-Upon-Ice spots the players and asks them what they'd like to purchase. If they seem unfamiliar with her, she'll realize that they're not staff and seek to purchase information from them in exchange for goods and/or services.
- A group of gnoll prisoners watches the characters pass, jeering if they're disguised as staff or guards. If the characters ask about Brakesh, they immediately shut up, refusing to speak of him.
- Qadiv speaks up from his cell, offering the characters a bribe for some better food. If they tell him why they're there or he realizes that they're not staff, he will offer them what he can if they break him out.

LOCATIONS

THE MENAGERIE

The outer wards of the Hive are populated by aelfir experiments and maddened warriors. They pose little risk of escape. Many haven't committed crimes, but are deemed unsuitable for life outside the Hive

by themselves or others. This ward is safe, and many cells have had the quick-detachment mechanisms disabled. It is not uncommon to see its specimens walking the halls under supervision.

THE OFFICES

These chambers host meetings between the guards and visiting dignitaries, as well as the staff of the Hive. Meals are cooked, clothes are cleaned, paperwork is kept (and, at least as often, carefully and quietly destroyed).

THE GUARD QUARTERS

The guards assigned to the Hive live here. It also hosts a number of off-shift guards at any given time, as well as an armoury with uniforms, riot armour (Armour 3, Heavy), shotguns, pistols and batons.

WATCH POSTS

Posts overlooking the various cells, holding controls that can drop prisoners into the abyss (these controls can be easily sabotaged). Note that the nature of the post means that a guard inside is unlikely to see what's going on elsewhere. The nature of the Hive means that the posts largely watch open spaces and intersections. Orders to drop the cells have to be given by a runner.

THE DEEP CELLS

Cells containing political prisoners, prisoners of war and other dangerous, valuable types. There are few lights and everything is unlabeled – an additional barrier to escape attempts.

Brakesh's cell is here, though figuring out exactly where will be difficult.

PROPS

Visible

Patrolling guards

- Resentful prisoners: Gnoll POWs and drow political prisoners
- Experiments in the menagerie, speaking between their cells or calling to the guards

Hidden

- Stashed bodies – Brakesh's previous victims, not yet found by guards
- Dew's psychology report about Brakesh, indicating that he was betrayed rather than defeated in battle

TWIST

When the players find Brakesh and reveal their plan, Brakesh explains his current exploits. He is uninterested in giving up his protracted revenge to serve the purposes of some drow feud he has no interest in, and bids the players leave so he may continue his slaughter.

The players will have to figure out something Brakesh will actually accept to coerce him to leave the Hive, or remove the angry, violent gnoll from the prison against his will. Options include:

- helping him kill the other NPCs in this mission;
- offering him a shot at Snow-on-Stone with the help of the Ministry;
- killing him, disposing of the corpse so the execution can't happen and exfiltrating Qadiv Love-Mad instead to pass him off as Brakesh to the papers and authorities.

What's important is that Brakesh is not a reasonable negotiator. If he was, he likely wouldn't have been betrayed in Nujab.

REWARD

If Brakesh Gold-Tongue is rescued, the characters gain two bonds: one with Brakesh Gold-Tongue: Serial Killer, and one with whatever newspaper they have break the story. Brakesh is an Individual Bond, and the newspaper is a Street-level Bond.

If Qadiv is rescued, the characters gain the Individual Bond Qadiv Love-Mad: Con Artist in addition to any other bonds.



HOW TO STEAL A BODY

BY PAULINE CHAN

MISSION PARAMETERS

You were supposed to steal the body of Dardinere Vane from a Necropolis morgue and deliver it to a Charnelite temple in New Heaven – but when you found Vane’s body, a Mortician was already attending to it. Now that Mortician is dead too, the carrion birds and ghosts are raising a ruckus and you still have to escape with a corpse that’s starting to decay. Complete the mission however you can, while dealing with guards, ghosts and whatever else comes your way.

SUGGESTED CLASSES

Bound, Carrion-Priest, Inksmith, Knight, Lajhan, Vermissian Sage.

INTRO

Describe the Necropolis antechamber the players are in: its cryptlike interior, Vane’s body on a stone slab and Marrow, the Mortician they’ve just unintentionally killed. Ask the players what happened and how Marrow died. In the background, but growing louder as the players chat, Marrow’s pet vulture is keening from the rafters. The temperature in the room drops, and they hear murmuring and footsteps in the corridor.

NPCS

MARROW [THE DECEASED MORTICIAN]

Marrow’s death left a messy murder scene, and his ghost is trying to draw attention to the party to stop them. It turns out that Marrow has been trying to purge an infection from the body, and fears the party will infect the rest of Spire.

DARDINERE VANE [THE CORPSE TO STEAL]

In life, Vane was a noble-born drow who led an expedition into the Heart. He accidentally set off a trap that rattled the cavern, left him delirious and killed the rest of his expedition. Vane died shortly after he was hauled back to the surface. His father (a Mortician adherent) sent the body off to the Necropolis while his mother (a Charnelite devotee) was running an errand. His body is perfumed and dressed in finery, but has decomposed faster than expected because it’s been infected by a corrupted fungus that is now seeking to pass on its spores by contact or consumption.

JAZRA, THE DISGRACED BODYGUARD [THE ENFORCER]

Jazra, Vane’s gruff bodyguard, survived because she was scouting when the trap went off. Though fired after returning Vane’s body, she arrived early for the funeral procession to New Heaven, hoping to follow from a distance to find closure and assuage her guilt (despite disliking him in life). She tracks the players through the voices that haunt her, seeking to prevent anyone else from falling under its sway. She blames the voices on Vane’s body, unaware that she is also infected.

LISETTE, THE MORTICIAN ACOLYTE [THE RISING STAR]

Lisette is a hapless young Mortician who’s just learned how to speak with the dead. The players can run into her preparing for the procession or running errands outside. She’s a stickler for rules, but very gullible and knows all the best shortcuts.

MERILDE, THE GUARD CAPTAIN **[THE ENFORCER]**

As the party leaves the morgue, Merilde arrives to confirm Vane's funeral procession route so her guards can stay out of the way. When informed about the possible infection, she sends runners with instructions for her guards to arrest any suspicious people transporting a body (but not to touch the body themselves) and then leaves to personally search for the party. To her immense irritation, The Morticians didn't provide a good description to reference.

ATHOS, THE CARRION-PRIEST CONTACT **[THE HIEROPHANT]**

As a family friend, Athos agreed to administer to Vane's body after work, and will therefore be irritated if the party is late. However, they'll recognize the infection immediately and ask the party to help cleanse the body – the holy hyenas can't eat it like this. They don't know the party is from the Ministry.

SUGGESTED SCENES

- Suspecting the party may be cultists, or upon seeing them mishandle Vane's body, Jazra confronts them in private and demands to know what their intent is. If the party assuages her suspicions, Jazra will share what she knows (though not the family drama unless asked) and offer to accompany them; she'll follow regardless.
- Marrow's ghost stalks the party, chilling them, fluttering papers and such; it's the only way he can communicate without a medium. He stops if the players can banish him, or when the players are aware of the corruption and seem to be moving at what he judges to be an appropriate speed.
- On the street, Merilde arrests a shabbily-dressed drow while another guard shouts at the drow's terrified partner to drop the body he's holding, despite their bewildered insistence that the body was not stolen. Everyone else is giving them a wide berth.
- While prowling the streets of New Heaven, a pack of three hungry hyenas sniff out Vane's body and emerge from several directions, eager to feast. They wear the collars of the Charnel-sworn, but their Charnelite handler is nowhere

in sight. Overhead, vultures circle, looking for an opening to get at the body or the hyenas. Each are resistance 3, Difficulty 0 to fight and Difficulty 1 to evade, fighting with teeth/beaks and claws (D3).

LOCATIONS

MORTICIAN MORGUE

The three-storey morgue has been carved into a tunnel wall more than halfway up the Necropolis. Candlelight flickers from stone arches into preparation chambers, where Morticians prepare corpses for their final services under a haze of incense.

NECROPOLIS STAIRWELL

The Necropolis is a vertical tunnel, and its main thoroughfare is a tangle of staircases that spiral from the Gardens up to New Heaven, interspersed with landings to narrow alleys cut into the walls. Aside from the bustling street market of Choke and the funeral processions, the stairwell is empty – which is good, since there are no railings. The quality and width of the steps increases the higher one climbs toward the posh Mortician offices (i.e. the ones reserved for aelf-ir consultations), but so does the guard scrutiny.

TOWERS OF SILENCE

Carrion birds circle the tall white spires under the exposed sky (too high and too bright for any uncovered drow) at the edge of New Heaven. The streets here are lively with incense, drums and mourners trying to follow overlapping funeral processions. The skies are thick with carrion birds fulfilling their sacred duties upon the bodies stretched out on the balconies above.

NEW HEAVEN STREETS

Temples large and small line the streets of New Heaven, fluttering with banners promising enlightenment, forgetfulness and power. People mingle, their debates as common as flowerpots; the emptier streets are occupied by hyenas, elaborate beehives or both.

CARRION ROW

The Carrion-Priest awaits the party at a makeshift temple in Carrion Row at the far end of New Heaven. Sacred hyenas wander the streets with their handlers while the winds howl through rows of hanging bone

decorations, making them rattle and whistle through precisely drilled holes.

PROPS

Visible

- Vane's corpse is dressed in finery which will fit whoever wears it like a glove
- A rope ladder from an exiled bridge builder in Choke that she swears is at least 75% reliable; her rival in the next stall disagrees
- A kebab cart left out in front of a tavern with a sign that says "Back in 15 minutes". It's wide enough for a body
- A gaudy aelfir palanquin parked in front of an upscale Mortician office, currently unattended
- A fortune teller in her tent offers to read someone's palms

Hidden

- On Marrow's body, there is a whistle to call his pet vulture and sic it on someone. His vulture obeys the first time it's used, but grows more distrustful with time (if called to eat its master's body, that's Difficulty 1; if failed, the Difficulty for future checks is bumped up by 1)
- A conveniently-placed beehive kept by renegade druids is hidden in New Heaven. It's like a chandelier that can follow its target

TWIST

Discovering the infection:

- During the game, anyone who is nearby or touching the corpse for more than a few minutes starts hearing a low, indistinguishable murmur. Spending more time with Vane's body or listening to the voices makes them grow louder, increases sensory hallucinations and amplifies paranoia.
- Effects may include: writhing shadows, perceiving more hostility than there actually is when interacting with others, vision flickering between reality and a warped and decaying version of it, oversensitive senses, the sky

splitting open, Vane's body twitching, being intensely aware of one's own body (e.g. bones creaking, muscles pulling, skin stretching, lungs feeling heavy)

- Except for the voices, most effects are momentary impressions. Jazra is more affected and can show what can happen: she startles easily, is paralyzed at times and is slow to react. She's aware enough not to attack the party.
- Vane's body degrades as time progresses: bruises like spilled ink, a foul odour, bloating.

Events happen in plot time. The corruption does not start bleeding into reality until the party gets to Athos.

When they deliver the body, here are a few things that can happen:

- Athos gets the party to help purify the body before it can be eaten; otherwise the hyenas will get infected.
- When Jazra sees the purification ring set up, she breaks down and lunges at Athos, and must be subdued or killed. She can be purified along with Vane.
- The party helps Athos perform the ritual:
 - Resist+Religion to focus on the ritual as the corruption starts warping the room or take D3 to Mind. The body shudders and arches, bones snapping when a dark cloud bursts from its chest. The walls start to crack and bleed ichor, and the voices overwhelm everything else.
 - The ichor coalesces into a tear between realities, an enormous eye peering in. Roll Resist+Occult or mark D6 to Mind.
 - Once the eye is closed, the ritual is completed: there's a bright flash and it's over. The room is a wreck but the cracks and ichor are gone.

REWARD

Athos, as a mid-level Carrion-Priest, becomes a Bond after the party helps them purify the body. They can help dispose of bodies, answer esoteric questions and so on.

If Jazra survives, she also becomes a Bond with the party. She's good muscle, and has worked with the drow noble houses enough to know a lot of dirt.



RIME AND REASON

BY CHRISTINE BEARD

MISSION PARAMETERS

A revolution lives and dies with its leaders; without a strong voice to lead the charge, it will surely fizzle out. While the aelfir might present themselves as an indomitable monolith, there are individuals who are sympathetic to the plight of the drow (much to the frustration and chagrin of the majority).

The aelfir known as Scatter-the-Ashes, a staunchly anti-establishment figure, has vanished mere days before his next prominently advertised engagement. Those organising the event are doing their best to keep a lid on the chaos, but word is getting out through different channels that the powers-that-be have silenced another voice for the people. Word is Scatter-the-Ashes was last seen in the custody of the Black Guard, being taken away for a reassessment of his priorities.

You and your cell are to infiltrate a secure cold-storage facility in Amaranth to liberate him, smuggle him back down Spire and make sure he is fully prepared to give his speech.

INTRO

The prison/storage facility that currently has custody of Scatter-the-Ashes is on the outer edges of Amaranth, the better to be out of sight and mind of the law-abiding citizens. The corridors are labyrinthine and only labeled at irregular intervals. That would have been challenging enough, but now that you have your charge, he's waking up far sooner than anticipated. Delirious and still ready to fight, he's begun to sing, and the ice around him is reacting.

How did the cell infiltrate the facility, and how do they plan to keep Scatter-the-Ashes under wraps so they can avoid the Black Guard on their way out?

NPCS

SCATTER-THE-ASHES

[THE FOOL]

In and out of consciousness and not entirely aware of what he's doing, Scatter-the-Ashes is equal parts help and hindrance. He can be pacified and coaxed into silence, but will resume his song at any given moment without notice. When he isn't singing, he's babbling quietly to himself; the snatches that make sense might be him rehearsing his speech.

When Scatter-The-Ashes sings, roll a D4 to determine the random effect:

1. ice begins to melt;
2. frost and ice begins covering every surface in a 10' radius;
3. ice begins to animate into small, delicate figures that can follow simple orders. They "deactivate" again after completing their task;
4. ice begins to reshape itself to the singer's will.

CASPAR FIRS

[THE ENFORCER]

This is the head of the Black Guard patrolling the facility. While the position was sold to him as an easy assignment after some time in dangerous service, he is bitter about the thinly-veiled punishment for some unknown infraction. Depending on the cell's interactions with him, he might either be eager to see action again or disaffected enough to wait and see how the situation resolves (especially once magic gets involved).

ADRIENNE BLOC

[THE RISING STAR]

Adrienne is the newly-appointed overseer of the facility; it's another insult to those imprisoned to have a drow watching over them. Her duties involve making sure there are no meltdowns by maintaining the magic that keeps everything frozen. She's ecstatic to have been put in charge of something, eager to implement new methodologies and all too happy to prove she's the smartest in the room. She knows the facility inside and out, and will go on at length about it and its defenses (including the gaps in them) to a suitably awed audience.

ELLIE SKALD

[THE VIZIER]

The organiser of Scatter-the-Ashes' engagement. Having an aelfir as a figurehead suits her well, and she does most of her work alongside him. Though she occasionally feels overshadowed by the authority he exudes, she knows how important it is to have allies among the ruling class. There are substantial rumours that the quality of Scatter-the-Ashes' speeches increased dramatically when they started working together, and many suspect she writes or edits them for him.

EYE-OF-THE-STORM

[THE HIEROPHANT]

True to her name, Eye-Of-The-Storm's temperament is calm and even – cold, yes, and calculating, but no less contained for it. She is methodically planning her rise from the outskirts and subsequent return to esteem in the eyes of the other aelfir. In the meantime, she's more than happy to drag a few down to her level. She latches onto any gossip she can find, spreading rumours with zeal and sometimes making up her own. Invisible to most of society as long as she keeps to herself, there isn't much she doesn't know. Unfortunately, she is frightfully expensive — buying information (or her silence) could easily lead to prices as costly and esoteric as a child sworn to her for their duration.

SUGGESTED SCENES

- The cell encounters Adrienne, who is fascinated by what's going on with the ice. Her interest is clinical as she assumes the party is under orders to move the prisoner, but she wishes to take him in to discuss his abilities. He is under her jurisdiction after all; what's a bit of time out of storage for study when the sentence is half a century?
- In an effort to keep himself and his squad from dying of boredom, Caspar has adjusted the patrol schedule of the Black Guard. Can the cell adapt on the fly and avoid discovery (or at least bloodshed)?
- There's a massive protest going on at the border when the party manages to escape with their charge. The crowd, a mix of drow and radical aelfir, rush the party when they're caught emerging from their escape route. Though the chaos might work to their benefit, can they keep Scatter-the-Ashes under wraps and prevent recapture?
- Eye-Of-The-Storm stumbles upon the group as she's returning home and is willing to bargain instead of turning them directly over to the authorities. She'll do that too, of course, if things don't get her way; can they come to an agreement?

LOCATIONS

THE PRISON

A labyrinthine construction of hallways, antechambers and alcoves, the facility seems to be almost deliberately confusing. Surprises could lurk around any corner, from guards shirking their rounds to failing equipment. Getting in was the easy part; getting back out is the problem, especially with the slippery coatings of ice and watery runoff on nearly every surface.

ESCAPE TUNNELS

Drainage channels for ice, supply tunnels to keep the floor clear of obstacles, safe routes for non-security personnel; these secluded areas are patrolled less and unlikely to be populated by anyone armed. Though some of the more well-used paths might be behind sturdy, locked doors, garbage chutes and drainage pipes aren't so heavily guarded.

THE OUTSKIRTS

The edges of Amaranth are seedy, even for drow. New Heaven's shadow falls particularly heavy on the ragged borders between drow and aelfir territories. Populated by destitute aelfir (most in denial about their state), the outskirts turn the grandeur of Amaranth's pure snow and clear ice to murky slush and cloudy rime. While those wandering the streets might be few, anyone out and about is keen and wary, looking for a way to reclaim their "proper" place.

THE READY ROOM

A private room in the down-Spire establishment where Scatter-The-Ashes is due to give his speech. Among its most useful properties are the concealed doors that lead into the speakeasy and then out into the streets. It's a convenient bolthole where a small group can stay hidden from authorities until the coast is clear. It's crowded but comfortably furnished, and a bit cool in anticipation of the aelfir's arrival.

PROPS

Visible

- Work uniforms for the holding facility
- Black Guard's patrol schedule
- A blowgun with five darts, capable of knocking someone unconscious for thirty minutes (D3, Knockout)

THE KNOCKOUT TAG

Knockout: Items with this tag render targets unconscious. They are unresponsive, unable to move under their own power and unable to use any special abilities. They may be roused with moderate effort.

Hidden

- A map of the holding facility
- Swiftly-Comes-the-Tide, a closeted radical aelfir who quietly supports Scatter-The-Ashes

TWIST

Scatter-The-Ashes' magical voice was actually keeping him encased in his icy prison. When he's lucid enough, he confesses to the group that he's being forced to perform his famous speeches. The arrest was supposed to be his path to freedom, a way to go into hiding.

Ellie is actually working against Scatter-The-Ashes, and resents him for taking all the credit for her work. Having him arrested would have kept him out of the way and let her take the spotlight. She will do anything to prevent him from taking the stage.

The party arrives at the speakeasy with Scatter-The-Ashes to find the place swarming with authorities who were ordered to investigate as soon as the guards realized such a high-profile prisoner was missing. Attendees are being rounded up and carted off, and anyone who isn't physically being held down is scattering.

REWARD

As thanks for helping him, Scatter-The-Ashes presents the group with a small token: a small, flute-like instrument and a three-note melody. Together, the flute and the song will allow the user to make minor changes to any ice around them, much as he does with his singing. When activating the flute, roll a D4 to determine the effect as above or mark D3 stress to Mind to choose it.



HOUSE OF LEAVING

BY SHARANG BISWAS

MISSION PARAMETERS

Cerys Duval is a hotshot researcher at the University of Divine Magic. She recently uncovered a huge secret: solid evidence of a drow religion older than the cult of Damnou, from which the concept of the Solar Pantheon descended. This information could be a potent ideological weapon, and both the aelfir and the Ministry are desperate for it.

Trouble is, she has disappeared and taken her office with her: both have vanished from the university building. You need to descend into the depths of the Infinite Library, find her and bring her back for questioning.

SUGGESTED CLASSES

Azurite, Inksmith, Knight, Masked, Midwife, Vermissian Sage.

INTRO

The massive door that separates the front desk from the Stacks Antechamber slowly closes behind the characters, grating against the ground like claws on a slate board. Ask how they got past the librarian; options include charm, fake library cards, impersonating a scholar or even old-fashioned fisticuffs.

The characters are in a round antechamber lined with arches leading to different wings. A carving on the floor depicts a complex map of the library, with numerous strikethroughs, annotations, footnotes and arrows confusing its information. The annotations are in a different font from the original text.

NPCS

CERYS DUVAL

[THE HIEROPHANT]

Cerys hails from a noble drow family, and has used her position of privilege to further her research into the divine whilst collaborating with the aelfir. She is fiercely intelligent, devoted to the pursuit of knowledge and almost entirely unaware of her surroundings. She often forgets to eat or sleep.

BLAZE

[THE ENFORCER]

A human mercenary hired by Softly-Burns-the-Ice, a powerful aelfir academic, to gather the information Cerys holds. What she thought would be a simple theft of research materials (with maybe a dash of interrogation thrown in) has turned into a much more complex expedition into the Infinite Library. This has been trying her patience.

CREED

[THE FOOL]

Creed just showed up last week at the Lunar Font looking for work. They're diligent, punctual, obey orders without question and are generally a good worker. They don't talk much, dress shabbily and shrug a lot instead of answering questions – so no-one cares to notice they're there.

Unknown even to themselves, Creed is a Living Secret, housing the knowledge of where Cerys' office and research materials are. Cerys may feel a vague, psychic pull towards them (see Twist).

CARTOGRAPHER SECRETS-WHISPERED-THROUGH-GOSSAMER

[THE HIEROPHANT]

An Aelfir cartographer obsessed with the Library, Secrets-Whispered-Through-Gossamer roams its halls armed with peculiar gear dangling on leather straps. He made the map annotations in the ante-chamber and knows many of the library's secrets and goings-on. He might also have noticed something odd about the missing office.

WORD ELEMENTAL

[THE MONSTER]

An elemental of swirling words in multicoloured ink, this creature overwhelms the mind with unbound morphemes and assaults the body with razor-sharp syllables. It's either mindless or too alien to comprehend—either way, the general outcome of chaotic violence is the same.

ALFRON, THE OVERSEER

[THE QUEEN]

All Alfron wanted was to be an alchemo-retroengineer, nurturing the marvellous equipment used for alchemical processes. Unfortunately, Alfron now oversees the entire Lunar Font since being promoted into management. His daily concerns are keeping the Alchemists happy, wrangling with the manual labourers known as the Glass-Shines, repelling unruly scholars and fending off the Library's occult weirdness. His hands are perpetually sweaty from all the hand-wringing.

SUGGESTED SCENES

- A shelf of gnoll ethnographies topples over, revealing a cursing Secrets-Whispered-Through-Gossamer. He's examining a strange black map with a lamp that sputters out a pale, white light. He'll happily supply information in exchange for some distilled moonlight.
- A crew of Glass-Shines is gossiping and gambling (using paper fortune-tellers instead of dice). They might idly talk about Creed and how they were adopted by the Shines. If befriended, they might confess that many think

Creed is a little strange, since they like to spend time in the weirder parts of the library.

- Blaze arrives at the Lunar Font with an attitude, seeking Cerys. When she receives only confused hand-wringing from the Overseer, she begins questioning Glass-Shines and Alchemists.
- An argument between the Glass-Shines, the Alchemists and the Overseer. The Shines, tired of the blasphemous uses of distilled moonlight, are on strike. The Alchemists, unable to work without the Shines, stand helpless. The Overseer is trying to bully the Shines back to work. The situation is tense and any spark could ignite the whole thing.
- The sounds of struggle and a jumble of random words pop into the player characters' heads. This leads them to where a bedraggled Cerys is desperately fending off the Word Elemental.

LOCATIONS

Pick one location for where Cerys and Creed are, then another for where characters can learn that information.

THE LUNAR FONT

(see Spire p86)

THE SHINE-SHANTIES

A slum of tents and huts set up in a room of empty shelves, this is where the Glass-Shines (manual labourers at the Lunar Font, some migrant, some permanent) live. Gambling, illicit malak and erotic poetry smuggled in from the Stacks run rampant. Occasionally, a few Alchemists blow off some steam here too. Underneath the raucousness simmer tensions about work conditions and the heretical use of moonlight.

THE MASKOGRAPHIES

Some mad aelfir from long ago decided that every mask in his household deserved a complete biography. Upon his death, his descendants ceased the practice and bequeathed his entire collection to the Infinite Library. The annex it is housed in has become a pilgrimage spot of sorts for devotees of The Masked God (see Spire p198–9). Some say that the combination of cultish fervour and the annex's location within the University of Divine Magic has awoken the mask biographies, creating sentient identities

that are wracked with despair and horror at having never really existed.

THE BOOKMARK MANDALA

Someone turned this study room into an altar to visual overstimulation. Bookmarks of a thousand hues and forms line the floors, walls and ceiling, and dangle from above in paper chains. The colours shift and warp weirdly. If you can't find what you're looking for (or if you're not caught by whatever's hiding here looking for you) you risk serious mental stress without a successful Resist + Academia roll.

THE TATTOOTORIUM

Many zealots tattoo sacred writings onto their skin as a devotional act or as a desperate attempt to coax some luck out of the gods. A decade ago, Librarian Gently-Falls-The-Viper-Fang strove to excise, preserve and display under glass as many of these sacred tattoos as she could find. Rumour has it that not all of the donors were willing – or dead.

THE NEW CHIMES

An obscure annex, this dramatically vaulted chamber is decorated with murals pointedly referencing the majesty of the Solar Pantheon. It is hung with heavy metal wind-chimes, each carved with a hymn to one of the New Gods (see Spire Appendix 1). Soft music emanates from this chamber from time to time.

CIRCULATION CHANNELS

Originally built to transport books, this series of dumbwaiters and conveyor belts was infected by Vermissian energies. Now a cabinet might bring you books you never ordered; if you're lucky, it's nothing more sinister than that.

THE MOON-LEARNER'S NEST

A gang of desperate scholars—mainly failing students and burned-out professors—has set up camp in a reading room in an attempt to acquire samples of distilled moonlight. Some of them believe it's crucial to their scholarship; some are just in it for the ride. Either way, boredom, animosity from the Glass-Shines, the Overseer's repeated refusals and the macabre animal heads mounted throughout the room has left a few of the scholars on edge.

PROPS

Visible

- A Glass-Shine on the brink of revolutionary zeal
- A daredevil grad-student itching for action
- “Those of the Unknown,” a crudely-made pamphlet filled with half-sensical writings about the New Gods Carabys, Miah and the Masked God
- A miniscule bottle of distilled moonlight
- An oblivious Alchemist just trying to feed his family

Hidden

- A banned tome on Damnou moon-rites
- A god-bound compass with a quill-shaped needle that points towards whatever is most narratively interesting
- A set of soft pencils that make very smooth marks, but whose lead is deadly poisonous

TWIST

Give players clues about the following:

Creed is a Living Secret of the God Miah (Spire p194 – 5) and houses the location of Cery's Office. The Office isn't missing at all: it's the power of Miah that's preventing anyone from finding or accessing it. A distraught Cerys ventured into the Library for answers when it “vanished”.

Pascal Malaise, a high-up devotee to Miah, decided that Cerys' research was dangerous. Not knowing the particulars, they decided to seal up the knowledge of the location of Cerys' office within a Living Secret. They were in the office itself when their ritual took effect a week ago.

REWARD

LOW ADVANCE: Deific Exchange [Divine]

Your time in the secret chambers of the Infinite Library has forged a link between you and the divine texts held in the stacks. You may make a donation of a suitably rare text or artefact to the Infinite Library in exchange for a single use of a Medium advance from any of the New Gods (see Spire Appendix 1), the Midwife or the Lajhan. Each time you use this ability, you must select a new advance to emulate.



THE MOON BENEATH

BY JABARI WEATHERS

MISSION PARAMETERS

The forbidden Church of Damnou has seduced an influential Ministry Lajhan named Celune to their cause of absolution, wishing to reverse their unjust exile from Spire two centuries ago.

During an attempted coup in Amaranth, one of Celune's comrades guided her into the Heart, having made the journey for his aelfir overseer many times before. However, he soon realised that she was slipping into a divine madness there.

He fled the congregation she was forging deep within the Heart and has offered to guide a cell back to the 'Cathedral of the Eclipse', which is nested in a field in the City Beneath, to deal with the rogue Lajhan for the Ministry. With his help, the group must retrieve Celune from her occult thrall or kill her before she becomes more of a liability.

SUGGESTED CLASSES

Blood Witch, Bound, Lajhan, Midwife, Vermissian Sage.

INTRO

The group's guide, Daris, has tied the group to himself and to each other with a waxed, silvered thread. The Heart does its best to confound and separate the party, but your guide proves well prepared as he chases the paths that lead back to the cathedral he once fled. Exultations from followers of the forbidden goddess greet the group as they step into an open field, signalling the cell's arrival to their task. A black sphere the size of a large building levitates ahead of and above the group, casting a shadow across the meadow of night blooming flowers. Daris leads the group into the shadow and urges the group to "blend in".

NPCS

CELUNE, LAJHAN OF MANY FACES

She divines the memories of the world around her, which is a blessing that has been instrumental to the Ministry; but Celune has now turned down another path. She can only see in total darkness, and that dark clarity and peace brought her to the Cathedral. Bringing her back is a matter of reminding her of the merits of her work in Spire, or of casting doubt on the effectiveness of her current cause. Good luck with the two other long-gone Lajhan whispering their faith into her ear.

Resistance: 8

Difficulty: 1 ('Unseeing' is not blind)

Equipment: Fellow Lajhan 'siblings' (D6, Divine)

DARIS, THE 'RETRIEVER' OF CELUNE

[THE RISING STAR]

His lavish leather mask, a gift from his 'master', hides both his warm humour and his drive. When asked, Daris explains that his allegiance to Celune is because she gave him more purpose in Amaranth than an errand boy. He hopes to return her mask to her – a visage of stained glass and mirror shards.

Equipment: Eight well-concealed single-shot pistols (D6, Ranged); Celune's blessed mask (Armour 3); A half-used box of 'Moonstruck Matches', able to light by striking on any solid surface.

THE DOUBTFUL

A handful of humans and drow who have seen the Cathedral's baptism and how it changes people for the worse. They indicate that they have been kept far from the Cathedral's Chapel of Midnight ever since the newest Lajhan seemed to pause her work after her friend fled after his baptism.

THE SHROUDGUARD

Eleven guards circulate between the Chapel of Purpose, Labyrinth, the Dorms and occasionally the Garden. A twelfth guards the entrance, and a thirteenth guards the Chapel of Midnight. They are bundled in well-padded fabrics that are uninviting to a blade, though not as effective on a bullet.

Resistance: 6

Difficulty: 1

Equipment: Protective clothing (Armour 3, Padded); if they're at the entrance to the Cathedral or in the Chapel of Midnight, a silvered Shortsword (D6, Keen).

THE PADDED TAG

If an article of clothing is tagged as 'Padded', it is an indication that the armour will protect against melee weapons just fine. However, a well placed bullet or concussive damage from an explosion sees the Armour treated as 0.

THE CONGREGATION

Followers from Spire who have congregated here under the guidance of Celune and others. Most of the congregation share the same face. Some who have not yet been subsumed in the Goddess's silver blessing speak of the "righteous eclipse of absolution" among other proclamations, coercing the less enthused to do the same.

SUGGESTED SCENES

- Upon entering, Daris guides the group to his old Alcove of Solace. Within, he explains his baptism and escape back to Spire a fortnight ago, revealing his mask as one of the Goddess. He details the Cathedral's layout: the Alcoves, Dorms and the Chapels of Midnight and Purpose (the latter of which he hasn't been to). He then distributes a match or two to each member of the party, telling them to use the light if they get lost or separated.
- If any guards hear Daris's voice, they subdue him and force him to the Dorms, interrogating anyone with him at that moment.
- A follower has a crisis of faith within her alcove after her baptism. She contemplates her choice,

and will offer her holy vestiges to one of the group as they arrive.

- A Doubtful is coerced into proclaiming exultations of the Church by a guard in the Dorm; their hollow attempts to comply lead to their death if no one intervenes.
- Celune can be told apart from the two other Lajhan in the compound through two details: irises that sparkle silver, and a more personal pattern of speech than her cohorts. The others speak as an extension of the goddess and are removed from any individual identity.
- It becomes apparent that the two other Lajhan who lured Celune here kept her in the dark about the full magnitude of her divine mission. This is shown by her reaction to the Machinations of the Goddess if they are presented to her.

LOCATIONS

THE LABYRINTH OF PEACE

Within the shadow is a staircase leading into a network of confounding hallways and alcoves in near-total darkness. The floor swims underneath the group's feet with every step and acolytes wander the maze contemplatively. The corridors lead nowhere unless the traveller is guided, offers the Cathedral a memory (D3 Mind) or illuminates the halls with light. Guards circulate the Labyrinth, quelling any illumination from new travellers and enforcing meditative quiet.

ALCOVES OF SOLACE

Rooms for private contemplation and discussion can be manifested. Many of these rooms appear with a flash of silver light, but doors and archways separate them from the Labyrinth. The group may manifest a place of solace for their own use, but they must leave behind a safe memory to do so (D3 Mind).

DORMS OF DOUBT

Dissenters, noise-makers and illuminators are brought down a spiralling staircase into the Dorms: conical cells with a reverberant quality of sound. The handful of occupants are watched by guards and subjected to 'participatory' sermons.

THE CHAPEL OF PURPOSE

Guards and the occasional Lajhan circulate to and from this small chapel. It is lit by candles throwing

silver light similar to moonlight. Arms, armour, costumes, centuries-old scriptures and other esoterica of a morbid disposition can be found here, as well as a map to the Cathedral and the ‘thoughts’ needed to call forth its geography with ease.

THE CHAPEL OF MIDNIGHT

The Chapel can be accessed through being guided by a guard or Church member. Here a congregation supplicates in darkness and silence, filling a large, upside-down dome of a room. In its middle lie two shallow pools, which are occasionally disturbed by someone’s entrance or exit. Waist deep in each pool, visible in the flashes of divine silver, are two identically clad Lajhan.

THE GARDEN OF CATHARSIS

Worshippers and attendants of the Cathedral travel through the divine darkness of the structure and the night-blooming field outside of it. Followers wander the field, shouting proclamations of their faith and the forthcoming absolution of Spire. They don’t seem to expect this reverence from those coming to the Cathedral, but they demand it (violently) of those who leave.

PROPS

Visible

- Vestiges of Our Glorious Lady, worn by many converts for all-eclipsing glory
- An attentive clergy attending the lost to guide them within the Cathedral
- A baptism, allowing the blessed to navigate the Cathedral more freely and coherently at the cost of their face and possibly more (D6 Mind)

Hidden

- ‘Impure’ light from beyond the Cathedral helps hold it together; the building is fragile, since it is constructed of the memories of the faithful just as much as cracked ebony and ceramic. If any light stays on for an extended amount of time, it will maintain the geography

of the illuminated area after the light is extinguished but cause that area to fall apart if it is reilluminated.

- Machinations of the Goddess, which display on paper the widespread, destructive consequences of the planned eclipse. As punishment for the unjust exile of the religion, Spire will collapse to nothingness as the faithful spread Her umbral influence with their shadows. This is found in a book on an altar that is only revealed if the Chapel of Purpose is illuminated in impure light.

TWIST

By her abandonment of the Church or through her death, Celune’s extraction from the Church rips a literal hole in the space. This causes the Cathedral to begin falling apart from the sustained exposure to outside light. This happens more violently if the other Lajhan renounce or die, and anyone within the increasingly unstable space is subject to the implosion – all the more reason for a quick escape before the whole sphere crashes to ground and crushes the group inside.

REWARD

Gain a Medium advance for collapsing the Cathedral. If Celune survives and returns with her wits about her, establish her as a Bond under the moniker ‘The Amaranthine Facade’ to indicate that she’s gotten back to her operation in Amaranth. Though she remains blind outside of total darkness, her clarity of purpose frames the beginning of a powerful allegiance.



THESE FERAL SAINTS

BY PAM PUNZALAN

MISSION PARAMETERS

Drow Saints – Hallows – reincarnate when they die. Most of them do it in the Home Nations, but the Ministry has tracked down a reborn Hallow to the ramshackle streets of Pilgrim’s Walk. She’s built up something of a following by performing healing miracles and feeding the hungry. Your job is to bring her in as an operative before a) the Church of Our Glorious Lady shows up and kidnaps her, believing her earthly vessel to be their property; or b) the Crimson Vigil sacrifice her to their goddess, sending the unholy mess of Pilgrim’s Walk into fire and chaos.

SUGGESTED CLASSES

Blood Witch, Carrion-Priest, Inksmith, Knight, Lajhan, Masked, Vermissian Sage.

INTRO

Describe Pilgrim’s Walk and how it has changed since the Hallow Brianna – also known as Rose-Blooming-in-the-Void – has started walking its streets and spinning her miracles. There’s a strange buzz about the Walk, hushed and reverent for the most part; yet it’s just a few steps away from exploding with fiery zeal. The literal energy of the place has also changed. For reasons undetermined, spots of unreality are appearing within Pilgrim’s Walk, threatening the populace.

NPCS

BRIANNA, HALLOW ROSE-BLOOMING-IN-THE-VOID [THE RISING STAR]

The Saint Herself. The moniker “Rose-Blooming-in-the-Void” is what her followers have taken to calling her; there is a perpetual aura of pulsing shadow around her, and wherever she walks, roses as black as night grow. She claims that she has walked through the Moon Garden, and can thus intercede for any who wish to become whole again by Her Lady’s Grace – or any who wish to bring their loved ones back to life. Her brand of miracles involves powerful healing and resurrecting the dead.

But Brianna is not actually a Saint. She is an Enlisted named Ariadne whose mind and body have been invaded by her fetch (Spire, p137). Enough triggers will enable her to return to herself, but recovering her memories may just get her and everyone else around her killed.

TREV [THE ENFORCER]

A Knight, and a member of the resistance much like the party. He’s been sent to assist the group with ascertaining the nature of the Hallow Brianna and figuring out how to deal with her before everything goes down the shitter. The Ministry gave him some syrettes that are supposed to be able to deactivate

the Hallow's powers temporarily, should the Rose-Blooming-in-the-Void prove to be not so friendly.

VYRA

[THE MONSTER]

At first glance, it would seem that Vyra is much like any other member of the Sect of Our Crimson Vigil: dogged, tenacious and possessed of the belief that their divine purpose means razing all aelfir to the ground along with anyone who sympathizes with them. However, she seems even more obsessed with the idea of being the one to sacrifice Brianna. She'd sooner hurt her own comrades than let them have the honour of killing this Saint.

LILITH PETALS-SCATTERED-IN-THE-NIGHT

[THE MAGISTER]

Once a Skald of renowned beauty even among all other Skalds, and recently ascended to the esteemed rank of Warrior-Poet among their peers. They've been shaking things up by regularly bringing Skalds who admire them into Pilgrim's Walk. They claim they're entertained by the curiosity that this resurrected Hallow presents amidst the monotony of life in Spire. Once the Saint stops being amusing, they'll pluck the Rose-Blooming-in-the-Void themselves. It seems as though they collect whatever is left in the wake of Brianna's "miracles".

SUGGESTED SCENES

- The party observes a procession of the Hallow Brianna, Rose-Blooming-in-the-Void, down the Street of Gods. The darkness that surrounds her, and the black roses that sprout wherever her feet fall, are equal parts beautiful and eerie. They may witness some of her miracles such as the restoration of a lost arm on a lowly ex-soldier or a dead child rousing back to life in the arms of his weeping mother.
- George, chosen of multiple sects around the Walk, is oddly sober these days. He desperately avoids contact with the Hallow Brianna. When pressed, he will ramble and rave about how his gods forbade him from looking upon "the false Saint".
- The people of Pilgrim's Walk scramble away as Lilith Petals-Scattered-in-the-Night sweeps through the area after the howling and dancing

procession of her Skald companions. They will often be seen observing Brianna, but never approaching.

- Firebrands, led by Vyra, burn down a temple erected in Brianna's name, not caring for the fact that there are worshippers inside. They scream for Rose-Blooming-in-the-Void to save them.
- A memory, disjointed and strange, directly invades the minds of the party and everyone within a block of the Hallow Brianna. It is from the perspective of Vyra, who is standing near Lilith. It is as though they are all watching through Vyra's eyes. They witness Ariadne hesitate, profoundly disturbed by a mirror of her own face staring woefully up at her; they cry out too late in warning as the fetch's arm grows black and bladed, and look on as Lilith attempts to rush towards Ariadne to stop what is coming. The fetch stabs Ariadne from behind, gutting her. More black limbs sprout out from it, entangling Lilith. Several come rushing forth towards Vyra.
- Another vision, from the perspective of Lilith. First, there is Vyra bleeding on the ground. Next, there is the fetch across a distance of black limbs and blades, standing over Ariadne's body. There is dread as the fetch's jaw unhinges and it swallows Ariadne whole. There are flashes of violet light, and reality tears all around as the fetch remakes itself into Saint Brianna, Rose-Blooming-in-the-Void.
- There is a woman howling in the streets, clutching the corpse of her son. The corpse is slowly turning into strange black stone. As the party looks on, the stone will crumble into black dust. The woman screams of the cruelty of this Rose-Blooming-in-the-Void for giving her a false miracle.

LOCATIONS

BRIANNA'S REST

This isn't really one place, but several locations that are sprouting all over Pilgrim's Walk. There are multiple temples being erected in the name of the Rose-Blooming-in-the-Void, all full of worshippers who have witnessed her miracles. Devotees wear robes of black to symbolize the darkness that cloaks their Saint, and they attempt to tend to the black roses that grow wherever she walks.

PILGRIM'S ROW BACKSTREETS

Countless temples, all different shapes and sizes, share these cramped and dismal spaces with rickety shanties of the faithful. There are plenty of places that the party can disappear into when things get too hot.

TREV'S HIDEOUT

Nestled within a maze of residences – Difficulty 1 to break in if you end up on Trev's bad side or otherwise have to sneak in. It's a hovel mostly for sleeping and camping out, although Trev has started taking down some of his observations on Brianna. Some correspondence found here will match what may be recovered in Lilith's Manor, hinting at Lilith's connections to the Ministry. Trev is not aware that Lilith is the Magister in charge of his cell.

LILITH'S MANOR

One of the only nice places in Pilgrim's Walk, temporarily claimed by Lilith Petals-Scattered-in-the-Night and the Skalds who are accompanying her. Well-protected (Difficulty 2 to break in, unless the party somehow convinces Lilith or a Skald to let them in). The entire place is riddled with the remnants of Brianna's "miracles". Lilith's office has evidence of the ill-fated expedition, along with proof of Brianna's true nature. There are also love letters to Ariadne, and telling correspondence that hints at Lilith being a Magister for the Ministry.

LILITH, THE AELFIR MAGISTER

While it's plausible for aelfir to be sympathetic towards the drow cause, having an aelfir within the Ministry itself is exceedingly rare; having an aelfir Magister is even more uncanny. This presupposes that in your campaign, she may be the only one with such political leanings and the machinery to support it. When you're running this scenario, consider the following questions:

What has Lilith gone through that has changed an aelfir like herself?

Who in the Ministry may know about Lilith's identity as an aelfir? Are they pleased or suspicious?

Who beyond the Ministry may suspect Lilith's actions? How much trouble could this potentially cause for Lilith and those around her?

PROPS

Visible

- Four syrettes, guarded by an overprotective Trev. At first glance, the substance within them looks like liquified cold iron; prolonged observation will reveal that there are weird, glowing violet ripples within its depths (see boxout for more details)
- Devotees of Brianna, Rose-Blooming-in-the-Void
- Addahyr, a pilgrim who Brianna "healed"; their injuries have returned and worsened since her ministrations
- Strange black stones are left behind after those that Brianna has returned to life crumble to dust and die once more. Each contains a distorted memory of the expedition; activate by marking D3 stress to Blood or Mind
- The chaos and disruption along Pilgrim's Walk that is left in the Saint's wake

THE SYRETTES

The Syrettes are fragile, and the substance within is highly reactive to oxygen. Breaking them causes an explosion of magic and glass, causing D8 stress to anyone caught within the blast (Resist+Occult to reduce the damage).

Administered to any other target but Brianna, the target will feel enervated and weak for the next 24 hours. Their sleep will be plagued with nightmares about running through a white, crumbling, reverse version of Pilgrim's Walk – a version that's being devoured by black roses. The target will suffer minor Blood fallout and moderate Mind fallout.

If a Syrette is used on Brianna, her sanity will be restored for a few minutes of terrifying clarity. However, the stress she suffers as a result will cause her newfound powers to go out of control for that same period, causing disruptions to the fabric of reality in the area around her. These disruptions – singing, rippling black tears – last only as long as Brianna maintains her memories unless they swallow something alive; then they will remain in place and grow in size. From within the rifts come the voices of lost loved ones, imploring the listener to join them in the Moon Gardens. Contact with the disruptions causes D6 stress to Mind or Blood.

The substance within the syrettes hurts Brianna; she marks D6 stress each time she's injected.

Hidden

- Lilith's love for Brianna, her sympathy for the drow cause and her position as a Magister. You may be able to use this to your advantage, or it may be knowledge that the Ministry sees fit to bury, taking you down along with it
- Vyra's love for Brianna, and her identity as the surviving soldier of the doomed expedition team. The strange reality-warping infection within her is a result of being invaded by the remnants of her fetch, and gives her the uncanny ability to seek Brianna out like a homing pigeon. We note that Vyra's love for Ariadne, the drow Brianna once was, was unrequited. She never had the chance to speak of her feelings to Ariadne

TWIST

Brianna, Rose-Blooming-in-the-Void, is no Hallow. Her real name is Ariadne, one of the Enlisted who turned into a guinea pig for the Special Tactics Corps of the Allied Defence HQ. The pain and trauma of her "rebirth" have scrambled her mind. With enough triggers, the party will be able to push Brianna aside and let Ariadne shine through again – but who knows what kind of effect that will have on her psyche?

The Special Tactics Corps were doing some research on the Heart. They selected the hardest drow soldiers they could find among the troops to accompany some of their aelfir magicians to the Vanishing Point (Spire, p137). Their intent: to see what would happen if one managed to destroy their fetch and use its remains for magic.

What the Special Tactics Corps discovered was that using the fragments of a fetch for magic creates portals to the Moon Gardens (Spire, p134). The Gardens, however, recognize this as a direct intrusion and punish infiltrators by killing them. Furthermore, a fetch is never really destroyed: the fragments simply latch on to biological matter that is most similar to their "original", and invade it like a virus. Fetches want nothing more but to replace their original, believing that they are sacred and perfected copies

of the flawed creature that exists in the so-called "real world".

Lilith was the officer in charge of this Expedition; coming back alive is what made her a Skald. Vyra is the only Enlisted who survived. The fetch fragments within her have now infected her enough to amplify the rage she feels over the death of her comrades, the love she feels for Ariadne and the hatred she feels for Lilith.

Ariadne was one of the last Enlisted to die. Vyra and Lilith witnessed Ariadne's fetch besting her. However, Vyra did not see how the fetch devoured the object of her affections later, or how it remade itself into Saint Brianna, Rose-Blooming-in-the-Void.

Ariadne's soul still struggles within Brianna, re-programming the fetch. It seeks to bring healing and joy to the masses, but is woefully unaware of the fact that the wishes it grants have expiry dates.

There's no saving Brianna. Every "miracle" she performs spreads more unreality within Pilgrim's Walk. Every memory she recalls drives her a little more insane. The best she can hope for is a painless death.

RUNNING ONE-SHOTS

There's an art to running one-shot games, especially in a game like *Spire*; thankfully, we can help you master it.

The most important thing to remember is: **be up-front with your players.** You don't have time for subtleties and grand misdirection. You have about three hours and a group of people who you might not even know to entertain. Don't be coy about dropping plotlines in players' laps, delivering exposition with gusto or ostentatiously hinting at approaches and props that might be fun.

The best way we've found to do this is to **write nearly everything down on index cards.** You can use scraps of paper if you want, but the nice thing about index cards is that you can fold them in half and they stand up like little tents, so they're more easily seen by everyone at the table.

The first thing you'll need to write down is the **locations** detailed in each scenario. Arrange them in front of you facing the players, and outline what each of them are. If some of them can't be reached without a challenge, tell the players that. If a player character is taking part in the scenario, they should be in one of these locations. If they come up with something clever and you have to improvise a new location, write it down on an index card and carry on.

Try to group the locations with a nod to the physical space they occupy. You can get abstract with this, but placing the Guard Room next to the Main Office and far away from the Gardens implies that the first two locations are close to one another, but distant from the third.

Place any **NPCs** or **props** you're interested in using next to the locations where they can be found and lie them down flat. It's generally better to go for more than less; players can always ignore them if they're not interested, and you don't need to use them if you don't want to.

As with locations, it's a good idea to write down new NPCs and props if and when you create them, especially if you think they'll

be important to the plot. If a player grabs a prop or brings an NPC along with them, give them the card and let them look after it (or stick it in front of them) so everyone can see what's happening.

Explain visible props to players if they ask about them. If you're using hidden props, you can tuck them underneath the locations where they can be found. Reveal them when a player character has explored the location to your satisfaction.

Finally, get the players to write down their **character names** on index cards. As play progresses, get them to place their respective card in the correct location for their character.

This might sound like obvious advice, but it's really useful for one-shots because it cuts out so much of the work of reminding players where they are in relation to everyone else. You no longer need to ask who's in a particular location because it's all in front of you on the table. Players have an up-to-date map of the scenario as it stands, and can react appropriately.



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ISBN 9781913032142



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