

13TH
AGE

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NIGHT'S BLACK AGENTS

THE VAN HELSING LETTER

SWORDS
AGAINST
THE DEAD



BY

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Pelgrane Press

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LETTER

TABLE OF

CONTENTS

Quick Background & Structure	5
Getting Started	5
The Broken Night	5
Skeletal Mook	6
Shrieking Skeleton	6
A Choice of Paths	7
Wandering Monster Montage	8
The Chained Tower	8
Entering the Tower	8
Inside the Tower	8
Xuthana's Tale	9
The Isle of Sanctuary	9
Fight for the Boats	9
Skeletal Knight	10
Skeletal Mounted Archer	10
On The Isle	10
The Bridge of Bone	10
Undead Giant	11
The Theft of the Dead	11
The Cliff Graves	11
Atop The Cliffs	12
Dungeon Delving Montage	12
Digger's Prison	12
Undead Soldier	12
Undead Cleric	13
Digger the Dwarf	13
Death and the Necromancer	13
Meet the Parents	13
Talking Hathred Down	14
Running the Fight	14
Hathred the Unfortunate	15
The Necromancer	15
Aftermath	15
CHARACTER SHEETS	
Dark Elf Paladin	16
Half-orc Rogue	17
Human Fighter	18
Dwarf Wizard	19
Human Commander	20
Halfling Sorcerer	21

CONTENTS

THE VAN HELSING LETTER	22
Backstory	23
IMPROVISED INVESTIGATION	23
Clues	23
Scenario Spine	23
The Agents	24
OPENING SCENE: GETTING THE LETTER	24
Unwelcome Guests	25
The Chase Begins	25
OPPOSITION FORCES	25
The Nachzehrer	25
Unternehmen Braun	26
Conspiracy Goons	26
PEOPLE	27
Eva Haflich	27
The Fixer	27
Castle Custodian	27
BND Agent	28
Researcher	28
LOCATIONS	28
Keilberg Retreat	28
Schloss Glockestein	29
GSV Technology	29
Abandoned Mine	30
Bucharest Nightclub	30
ITEMS	30
Van Helsing's Case	30
The Church Bell	31
Strasbourg Map	31
VAN HELSING LETTER (HANDOUT)	40
NIGHT'S BLACK AGENTS RULES SUMMARY	39
CHARACTER SHEETS	
Morgan	31
Green	32
Burroughs	33
Ali	34
Varoutte	35
Henley	36

13TH AGE

SWORDS AGAINST THE DEAD



13TH AGE IS A FANTASY ROLEPLAYING GAME BY
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SWORDS AGAINST THE DEAD

Swords Against The Dead is an adventure for 13th Age, designed to introduce gamemasters and players to the improvised, player-driven, free-rolling style of the game.

It's for 4th level player characters. Mostly pregenerated characters (missing backgrounds, Icon relationships and One Unique Things) are on pages 16-21.

The adventure begins with an attack by a horde of skeletons on an inn where all the player characters happen to be staying the night. After escaping the undead host, the adventurers discover the dead are rising all around them...

QUICK BACKGROUND & STRUCTURE

Briefly — **Hathred**, the apprentice of a local hermit-wizard, did something very stupid. Urged on by a malicious dwarf named **Digger**, he stole a very powerful spellbook from his mistress, a spellbook that was once owned by the Lich King himself. Hathred's been taken over by the book and is now animating an army of the undead to serve his new master.

After the opening fight scene, the players could choose to escort those fleeing the undead army to an offshore sanctuary, visit the tower of the local wizard, or go to the graveyard to search for the necromancer. Hathred's location isn't fixed — if you need to stretch things out, he's at the graveyard if the PCs go to the sanctuary or tower first, or he's besieging the sanctuary if they strike at the graveyard or tower first.

GETTING STARTED

Hand out the pregenerated characters. The situation — all the player characters are wandering adventurers. They don't necessarily know each other; some might have been travelling together for years, others might have met the evening before when they arrived at this lonely little roadside inn, *The King's Rest*. Get the players to fill in their One Unique Things, Backgrounds and Icon Relationships, and point out that since it says *Swords Against The Dead* on the cover of this booklet, at least some of the players should consider taking relationships with the Lich King (negative, preferably).

Roll Icon Relationships at this point, but don't give benefits for a 5 or 6 yet. Work them into the story; we've suggested rewards at various points in the adventure.

If the players ask, the *King's Rest* lies on the trail between the holy city of Santa Cora and the Archmage's citadel at Horizon, running along the Demon Coast. There was a road here, long long ago, but it was destroyed in a cataclysm, and now a well-worn trail picks its way through the broken lands. Due north, far across the sea, is the fabled isle of Necropolis, where the Lich King sits on a throne of bone.

Don't worry about extensive backstory — get down to dice rolling as quickly as possible!

THE BROKEN NIGHT

You're all in an inn. Roll for Initiative!



Also roll initiative for the first wave of skeletal mooks that are about to attack the inn.

When a player's turn comes up, ask that player what their character was doing just before the attack began. Sleeping? Drinking? Performing arcane rituals? Staring out soulfully at the stars?

Also, get the player to briefly describe their character's dramatic appearance into the fray — does she smash through an interior wall, waving her battleaxe? Appear mysteriously out of the shadows to backstab a skeleton? Stumble down the corridor pulling on armor just in time to run into a pack of undead?

Finally, as part of their opening narration before their attack roll, ask each player one of the following questions to build up a picture of the scene. (There are suggestions in brackets for indecisive players.)

- *The inn's got a notable architectural feature that you've never seen in a roadside inn before — what is it?* (Ancient shrine/swimming pool/was built into the remains of an ancient temple/all the furniture's halfling-sized)
- *You arrived at the inn on an unusual mount — what is it, and what can you hear from the stables outside as the undead swarm in?* (mechanical horse/unicorn/riding lizard/vat-grown monstrosity)
- *One of the other guests at the inn caught your eye last night. Who was it and why?* (known thief/pilgrim heading to Santa Cora/estranged relative)
- *The innkeeper wasn't very welcoming when you arrived last night. Why not? Describe him.* (snooty/prejudiced against elves/thinks adventurers attract mysterious old men who sit in the corner by the fire and never order drinks)
- *What's the terrain like immediately around the inn? It's near the coast — how close? What else is notable?* (Bucolic farmland/broken wilderness/flooded marsh)
- *These, you can tell, are ancient skeletons, from a previous Age. What's unusual about them?* (Jeweled teeth, as was the style at the time/all ritually murdered/extra arms)

There are two waves of undead. The first wave consists entirely of skeletal mooks, who are there purely to give the players a chance to get used to the combat system and look cool. Give the players opportunities to work together — don't run six independent fights, make it a mass brawl. For example, if a PC damages but doesn't kill a mook, describe how that skeleton gets hurled across the common room of the inn to be a target for the next PC in initiative order.

When the escalation die hits 3, the second wave of undead arrives. This group includes a number of tougher undead creatures — shrieking skeletons. These monsters wail and scream in combat, shrieking lines like “*the King's Herald is come!*” or “*the Book is the Way, and the Way is Open!*”

Number of PCs	Wave 1 Mooks	Wave 2 Mooks	Shrieking Skeletons
3	10	6	1
4	12	8	2
5	15	12	3
6	20	15	4

SKELETAL MOOK

Bones! Not brains, bones! Bones!

3rd level mook [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +5

Vulnerability: holy

Bony Claws +8 vs. AC — 6 damage

AC 19
PD 17
MD 13

HP 11 (mook)

Mook: Kill one skeletal mook for every 11 damage you deal to the mob.

SHRIEKING SKELETON

Not just shrieking. Laughing, giggling, mocking. Like death's detention, and they're playing truant.

4th level spoiler [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +8

Vulnerability: holy

Bony Claws +9 vs. AC — 10 damage

Natural 14+: The skeleton may make a free Shriek attack.

Natural 1-5: The shrieking skeleton may make a free Bony Leap move.

C: Shriek +9 vs. MD (up to 3 nearby enemies) — 5 thunder damage

[special trigger] *Bony Leap:* The skeleton springs away, automatically popping free of any engagements and making a huge jump across the battlefield.

AC 20
PD 18
MD 14

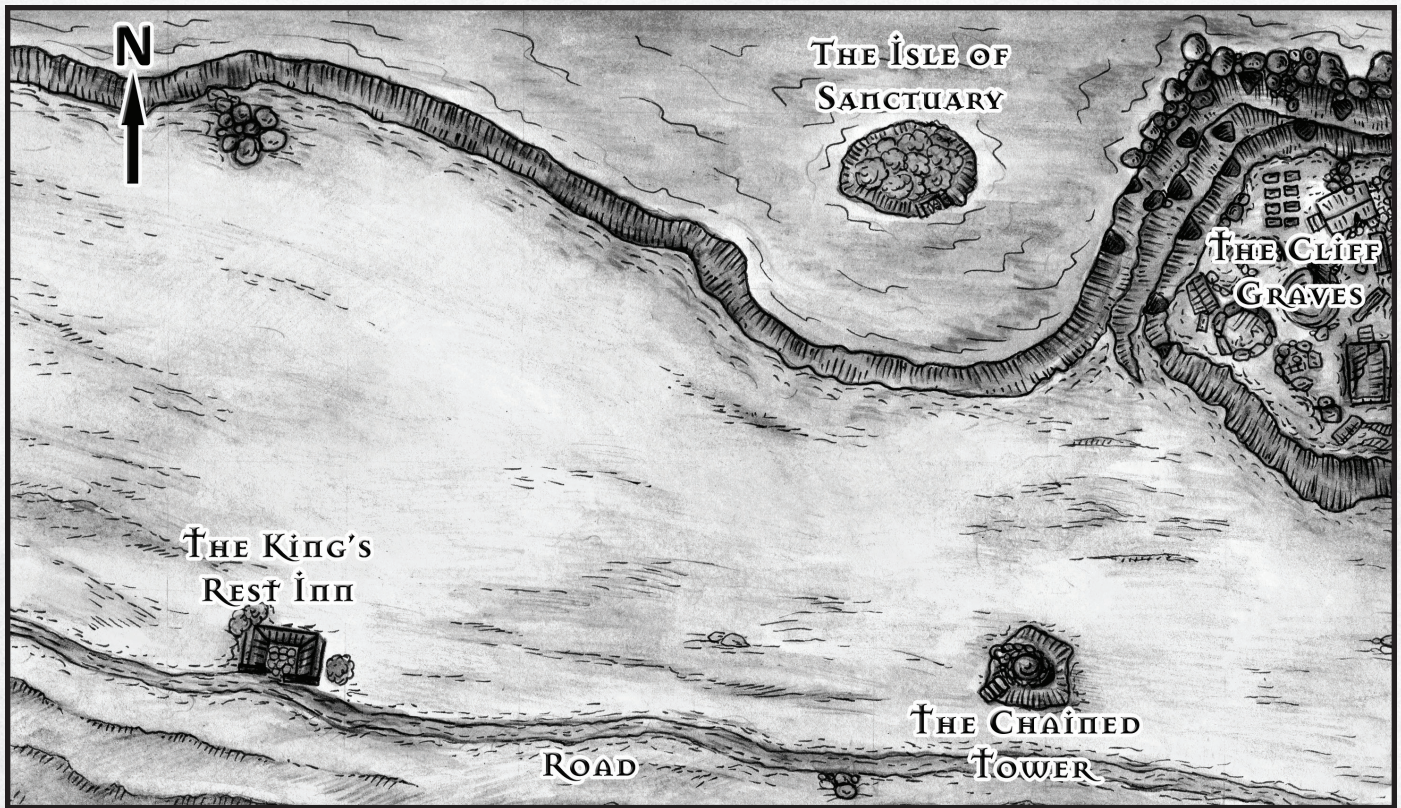
HP 50

ICONIC REWARDS

Dwarf King/Emperor/Crusader: You're on a mission to hunt down a notorious criminal named **Digger**, a deserter from the Crusader's forces. As such, you've got the authority to demand help from, say, wandering adventurers you happen to meet in an inn. Digger's a thief and tomb robber.

Priestess: Divine power flows through the PC, making all her attacks *holy* for the rest of the fight.

Lich King: The undead sense the Lich King's chill touch on the PC's soul; they don't attack that character unless attacked first.



MAGIC ITEMS

(Looted from the smashed-up remains of skeletons)

Jagged Sword: A +1 weapon, plus it doubles your miss damage. *Quirk:* Finds death amusing

Ring of Gathered Shadow: While wearing this ring, you can touch shadows as though they were made of cloth. By wrapping shadow around yourself, you get a +2 bonus to any stealthy skill checks. You can also “illuminate” objects by pulling shadows off them. Shadows flow back to their natural positions after a few minutes. *Quirk:* Fingers never stop moving

A CHOICE OF PATHS

The defeat of the second wave of undead turns the tide. There are still a few skeletons marauding around the inn and the surrounding farms, but without the shrieking skeletons, they lack direction and can easily be dealt with. Survivors and shaken travelers alike gather in the wreckage of the *King's Rest*, and look to the player characters for guidance.

It's clear from the behavior of the undead that they were newly-animated, and under orders to kill any living beings they came across. Some of the locals who fled outlying farms report seeing skeletons dragging away the corpses of people they murdered, suggesting there's some necromancer out there intent on adding to his army of the undead. They must be powerful indeed, to have created so many horrors.

If any of the players have relevant icon relationships or backgrounds, give them the following information directly. Otherwise, they can piece it together by questioning the locals.

- (*Emperor/Lich King/Priestess*) There's an ancient burial ground along the coast, where the dead are interred in sea-caves that riddle the chalky cliffs. If there is a necromancer out rousing the dead, maybe they're holed up in the Cliff Graves (p. 11)
- (*Priestess/High Druid/Great Gold Wyrm*): Off the coast, there's an island that's said to be warded against the undead. Most of the locals are planning on taking refuge there, at the Isle of Sanctuary (p. 9).
- (*Archmage/Diabolist/Three*): Not too far away dwells a powerful sorceress, Xuthana of the Chained Tower. Little is known about her; she's said to be powerful and secretive, and doesn't welcome visitors. She is, however, extremely well-informed — she might know what's going on.
- None of the locals have ever met Xuthana — on the very rare occasions when she needs something, she sends an apprentice. Her current apprentice is a lad named Hathred; she took him in after his parents died at sea.

The locals have all sorts of wild stories about the Chained Tower (p. 8) — the usual superstitions about weird rituals, summoned monsters and curses (“*she turned my cow into a slightly different cow! I can tell the difference!*”). One story of note; several people speak of seeing a mysterious dwarf lurking near the tower — doubtless some creature of Xuthana's. (It was actually the dwarf, Digger.)

The locals give directions to any of the three locations if the PCs need them, before heading towards the coast and the hope of safety.

WANDERING MONSTER MONTAGE

The countryside around the *King's Rest* crawls with undead. Optionally, run a quick montage sequence; have one player describe some hazard or undead monster the company encounter en route, and have the next player describe how their character overcomes this obstacle. It's only a short distance, so two or three hazard/response narratives are plenty.

THE CHAINED TOWER

The Chained Tower stands on a huge outcrop of rock some miles inland. It's a spiky finger of black stone, wrapped almost entirely in thick chains like metal ivy. In fact, it's a single huge chain of varying girth that snakes around and around and around the tower, running in and out of holes in the walls, until it goes into a high window and vanishes. The other end is tied to a huge rune-engraved ring of metal, thirty feet across, which protrudes from the rocky outcrop.

The tower is dark and seemingly lifeless, but the chains rattle and clink even when the wind isn't blowing. Listening closely, though, the characters can also hear someone... snoring?

ENTERING THE TOWER

The Door: Narrow and well-worn steps lead up to what must be a door, although the player characters have to push away several hanging lengths of the chain to find it. The door is made of metal, and there's an animated golden face instead of a handle. Someone's scrawled a magical rune across the door-face's forehead; it's clear that this rune has put the door to sleep. (The rune was drawn by Digger; Hathred then opened the insensate door from the far side.)

The characters can easily erase the rune and wake the guardian; it's the only way to get through the door. The door slept through Hathred's betrayal of Xuthana and theft of the book — it has no idea that its mistress is bleeding to death upstairs.

"Yawn... first nap in centuries...urm... five more minutes, I'll just snooze a little more..."

Roused to full wakefulness, the door-guardian remembers what it's supposed to be doing.

"Ah! Right! Know, o traveler, that this is the tower of my mistress Xuthana, called by some the Keeper of Forbidden Lore, she who slew the devil Hydra. Present your authorization or a letter of introduction, and I shall open for thee. Otherwise, I bid you flee from this place lest you irritate Xuthana and she turns you into, I don't know, what's your least favorite animal? Mine's woodworm."

To get past the door, the characters could:

- **Cash in an Icon benefit:** Open in the name of the Emperor/ Archmage etc.

- **Try persuading the door:** *"Undead armies? Not my problem, mate. Not Xuthana's either. You look like adventuring-types — you sort it out."* With a successful DC 20 Charisma check (remembering to add on any appropriate backgrounds), the door agrees to summon Xuthana down to speak to the characters. (*"Ding dong. Ding dong. Um. Mistress? There are some beggars here to speak to you. Mistress? Mistress?"*) Once the door realizes something is dreadfully wrong upstairs, it lets the PCs in.
- **Break down the door:** Technically, the door is unbreakable. The nose of the door-guardian isn't so invulnerable — a successful Strength check (DC 25) gets the guardian to shriek for help. When no help comes, it realizes that something's wrong and lets them in.

The Window: Climbing the tower requires a Dexterity check (DC 25). If the check fails, the character doesn't fall; instead, the chains shift and move to catch the would-be burglar's foot. Wrenching the foot free costs a Recovery.

INSIDE THE TOWER

The tower's clearly been hastily ransacked. Someone's run amok in here, stealing valuable items. The burglars must have left in a hurry, as there are treasures here of great worth.

Hathred's Chamber: One room is unlike the others. It's clearly the room used by Xuthana's apprentice. It's humble, spartan, with few ornaments. The only personal item is a crystal, which any spellcaster recognizes as a Glass of Heart's Desire — a simple magic item made as an exercise by many apprentices. It's a way to practice conjuring images. Touch the glass, and it fills with an illusionary scene drawn from the creator's deepest dreams.

This particular glass was made by Xuthana's apprentice Hathred. When touched, it conjures up images of a kindly-faced couple, seated by a fishing boat. She's mending nets while he's scraping barnacles off the hull. They must be Hathred's parents.

Atop the Tower: The uppermost level of the tower is a library (and, weirdly, it's much, much too big to fit into a building the size of this tower). The adventurers immediately notice the following:

- Lying on the floor in a pool of her own blood is Xuthana. Tailor her race and personality to the player characters — if you've got an elf in the group, she's an elf. If someone took a relationship with the Diabolist, then Xuthana's a demonologist or a half-demon or something similarly infernal. Give the characters a connection to her.

In addition to the knife in her back, she's been blasted with a necromantic spell that left her skin rotted and withered like dead flesh. She's only semi-conscious; she needs a healing spell or a suitable skill check before she can talk to the player characters.

- There's an empty lectern near Xuthana. Whatever book once rested there must have been immensely heavy and immensely powerful, as the lectern is carved from Koru bone and engraved with spells of binding and containment. Nearby, the broken end of the massive chain whips back and forth, lashing and hissing like a wounded snake. Broken links of chain lie scattered nearby.

XUTHANA'S TALE

Once healed enough to talk, Xuthana whispers what happened to her. Long ago, when she was young and foolish, she claimed a spellbook, which was written by the Wizard King himself — the first ruler of the Empire, who later became the Lich King. The evil of the Lich King consumed the book, and nearly consumed her. There's an evil spirit, or perhaps an evil will, living within the book. She was defeated by the Archmage, who wrested the book from her and saved her soul. As penance, she was condemned to be the guardian of the book, now called the Chained Tome.

Her young apprentice, Hathred — he betrayed her. She doesn't know why; she took the boy in when a storm left him an orphan. He stabbed her without warning. There was someone else there, a dwarf who meddled with the chain holding the book — then there was a blast of dark light, and she knew no more.

She begs the player characters to find Hathred and recover the book. She knows, from her own experience, that the book is flooding Hathred's mind with necromantic secrets that no living mortal should ever contemplate. He will become powerful and terrible, a threat to the whole Empire. She knows, too, that the Archmage or some other champion of the Empire will see the danger and strike Hathred down. She doesn't want the player characters to save the Empire — she wants them to save the *boy*. Save him before there is no choice but to destroy him.

Xuthana's Injuries: Xuthana was stabbed with one of her own knives, the *Eager Dagger*. If a player has a suitably bloodthirsty Icon benefit (Diabolist, Orc Lord, Three etc), then the weapon slides easily from Xuthana's wound when the PC touches it. Enjoy your new murder-stick, O lucky player character. If none of the PCs are the sort to wield such a weapon, then it stays lodged in Xuthana's side. Either way, she's too badly hurt to move and may yet die.

THE EAGER DAGGER

Cursed Champion-Tier Dagger +3

If the *Eager Dagger* strikes the first hit in a battle, that hit is automatically a critical. However, if someone else strikes the first hit, the *Eager Dagger* becomes irritated with its wielder; for the rest of the battle, if the wielder rolls a natural 1, the dagger bites for 4d8+3 damage.

Quirk: Quick to anger

Xuthana's Blessing: Pick the player who offered the most comfort to the wounded sorceress (or anyone who's got a suitable Icon benefit left to collect — the Archmage, Emperor, Elf Queen, Dwarf King or Priestess would all be good options). Xuthana whispers a magical secret into that character's ear. It's a spell that commands the magical chain wrapped around the tower. Once during this adventure, if the character touches someone or something and speaks a word of command, the chain whips out (growing longer as needed), wraps itself around

that target, and drags it back to the tower. The chain takes the most direct route, so it may end up smashing through the cliffs or crashing across the Isle of Sanctuary depending on where the player invokes the blessing.

If used as an attack, treat the chain as an attack that uses the character's highest ability modifier + level vs the target's Physical Defence, and on a hit deals 4d10 damage, plus another 10 ongoing damage per round. A target 'killed' by damage from the chain is dragged away and imprisoned. If the attack misses, the character can try again later in the game.

THE ISLE OF SANCTUARY

The little island off the coast is a blessed place. Even in the time before the Archmage tamed the seas and quelled the storms, the little forested isle was a land of peace and contemplation. The island is only a short distance offshore, close enough for an exceedingly strong swimmer to brave the currents, but most of those fleeing the advancing undead have taken to fishing boats to cross the waters.

A few boats still wait at the jetty for stragglers.

If the PCs came straight from the Inn or the Chained Tower, then there are still crowds of people desperately fleeing the horde of undead.

If the PCs went to the Cliff Graves first, then the bay is nearly empty; most of the survivors have already crossed to the isle, and there are only one or two boats left.

FIGHT FOR THE BOATS

Turn this fight scene into a montage if you're running short on time.

If you need another fight scene, then a swarm of fast-moving undead are attacking one of the few remaining boats as the crew struggle to cast off from the wooden jetty. The boat wallows low in the water, laden down by the many passengers who've climbed about to escape the undead.

The attackers are skeletal riders, mounted on spectral horses that can run on the water. The skeletal riders intend to kill the living crew, seize the ship, and use it to carry more skeletal infantry across to the island.

Number of PCs	Skeletal Knights	Skeletal Mounted Archers
3	3	2
4	4	3
5	5	3
6	6	4

SKELETAL KNIGHT

They were loyal to the Emperor until death — but not beyond.

3rd level troop [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +6

Vulnerability: holy

Rusted Sword +8 vs. AC — 7 damage

Natural 16+: The skeletal knight pops free of its target.

Deadly Charge +9 vs. AC — 12 damage. A skeletal knight may only make a deadly charge if it starts its turn unengaged.

AC 19

PD 17

MD 13

HP 40

SKELETAL MOUNTED ARCHER

Their arrows are made of bone, and carry death with them.

3rd level archer [undead]

Initiative: +6

Vulnerability: holy

Rusted Sword +8 vs. AC — 7 damage

Natural 16+: The skeletal mounted archer pops free of its target.

R: Bone Arrow +8 vs. AC — 10 damage

Natural even miss: The archer kills one of the NPCs on the boat.

AC 19

PD 17

MD 13

HP 40

ON THE ISLE

Survivors from the mainland console one another on the beaches of the isle, or try to light signal fires to attract the attention of passing ships. Others discuss sending messengers along the coast to Santa Cora or Horizon, or speculate about how long it will be before the Imperial Legions arrive to put down the outbreak of undeath, or just kneel down in the sand and give thanks to the merciful gods. Almost everyone appears certain that the magic of the Isle will protect them from the undead — they believe the next few weeks will be hard, and then there will be long years of rebuilding, but here at least they are safe.

They're wrong, but we'll get to that in a moment.

- If the players have visited the tower, then asking about Hathred and the death of his parents gets several accounts of how dangerous it is to go past the isle. The waters near the coast are safe enough, but travel out into the sea and the Archmage's spells can't always keep the storms at bay. Out there, the people whisper, the magic of the Lich King battles with the spells of the Archmage.
- If they haven't visited the tower, then they overhear people speculating about the magic of the island, and its limitations. Shipwrecks and drownings are mentioned as cases where the isle's protection isn't absolute.

Use the players' Icon Relationships when describing the island. If you've got a preponderance of Great Gold Wyrms fans, then mention the crumbling draconic ruins, the golden glow of the sands, the crash of the waves like swords on shields. If your players lean towards the High Druid, then describe how the island is a wellspring of nature magic; how elementals and spirits dance at the edge of perception, how the whole place is actually a tangled knotwork of roots holding the sand together.

ICONIC BENEFITS

Great Gold Wyrms: The adventurer receives a prophetic vision of the Bridge of Bone encounter, giving added time to prepare for that fight. Also, the escalation die starts at 1 for that encounter.

High Druid: Spirits of the island cluster around the character, bolstering her spirit. Have two bonus Recoveries.

Priestess: The adventurer recognizes that the sands of the island were blessed by some great cleric and are infused with divine power. By throwing sand from the beach at the undead, the character can cast *Turn Undead* as a level 3 spell once during the rest of the adventure.

THE BRIDGE OF BONE

The Isle of Sanctuary is safe. The isle is protected. The unquiet dead cannot trespass here.

That's true. But there are other powers at work in the Dragon Empire.

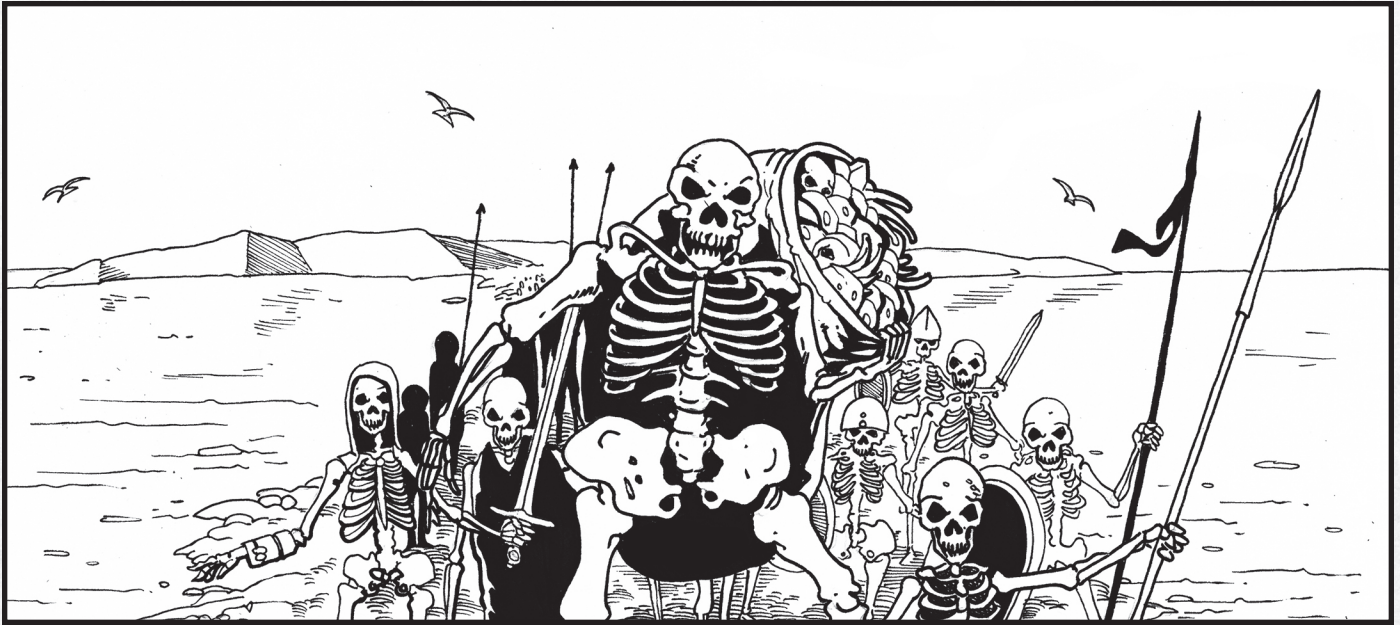
At a suitably dramatic moment, the earth shakes and shivers. A huge cloud of white dust rises from the direction of the Cliff Graves. Then everyone in the island, adventurers and common folk alike, see this strange phenomenon snaking out from the shore towards the island.

Bridge isn't quite the word — it's a causeway, a half-submerged ridge of dirt and rocks, held together by millions of fragments of bone. It races out from the shore, and runs up the beach of the Isle of Sanctuary. It tries to force its way over the island, slithering like a stony worm, yearning to splash down in the waters on the far side. A tentacle of grave-dirt, the extension of the necromancer's will.

Hathred's looking for the remains of his parents, who drowned in the waters off the isle some years ago. The undead he's raised, though, just want to kill the living and expand the empire of the dead.

Marching across the Bridge of Bone comes a host of the undead — skeletons, zombies, more skeletal knights. The bridge protects them from the magic of the island — the isle's protective enchantments war with the necrotic power of the bridge. If the undead step off the bridge, they instantly start to crumble.

Run the first part of this encounter as a montage or series of skill checks. There are too many undead for the characters to fight individually, so they've got to rally the survivors/use the magic of the isle/cover the retreat away from the Bridge of Bone/



partially smash the bridge so the undead lose its protections. Anything cool works.

UNDEAD GIANTS

They have a cave troll. Wait, no, they *had* a cave troll, but it died long ago and now it's a giant shambling skeleton. These brutes come tramping along the bridge, carrying huge sacks full of bones and earth. They intend on using this to expand the Bridge of Bone so it can reach the ocean on the far side of the isle and recover the remains of Hathred's parents.

Number of PCs	Undead Giants
3	1
4	1
5	2
6	2

UNDEAD GIANT

Crush! Crush!

Large 5th level wrecker [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +6

Vulnerability: holy

Giant Bone Club Smash +8 vs. AC — 30 damage

Natural even miss: The giant may make another Giant Bone Club Smash attack against another nearby foe. It can't target the same foe more than once per round.

C: Throw Grave Dirt +9 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies) — 12 damage, and the target is *dazed* (-4 to attacks). Normal save 11+ or immersion in water ends both effects).

Drop The Bag: When the Undead Giant first becomes staggered, it makes a free *Throw Grave Dirt* attack, but can't make any more *throw grave dirt* attacks after that.

AC 20

PD 19

MD 15

HP 170

THE THEFT OF THE DEAD

If the players have already visited the Cliff Graves and this is the final scene, skip *The Theft of the Dead* and run *Death and the Necromancer* instead.

The goal of the Bridge of the Dead and the attack on the isle is to recover the remains of Hathred's parents. Once the bridge makes it across the isle, it dives into the water, and then rises up again, carrying two sets of skeletal remains. Weeds and coral encrust the recovered bones. Skeletal knights ride in and carry the remains away to the Cliff Graves.

The adventurers may have saved the survivors, but it's clear that whatever the Necromancer's plan is, those two corpses are key to it.

THE CLIFF GRAVES

The sea-cliffs along the Demon Coast have been used as a burial ground for many ages. At first, the dead were interred in natural sea-caves at the base of the cliff, looking across the waves to the Isle of Sanctuary. Over the ages, the fame of the site grew, and many wealthy nobles or fallen heroes were laid to rest here. The faithful dug tunnels and galleries into the limestone cliffs, and carved more burial chambers higher up on the cliff face, all the way up to the temples they built atop the cliffs.

And then the earth quaked, and the hollowed-off cliff partially collapsed and fell into the sea, and the renown of the cliffs faded. The locals continued to use the upper levels of the cliff as their graveyard, burying their dead in the rubble of the temples, but the cliff graves were mostly forgotten by the people of the Dragon Empire.

Or, to put it another way: it's a partially-flooded vertical dungeon full of undead.

ATOP THE CLIFFS

It's obvious that the Cliff Graves is the main source of the undead; there are dozens of skeletons stumbling around. Some mindlessly patrol, following the same paths they walked when these ruins were temples. Others stagger back and forth, blindly pawing at the ground as if looking for missing rib-bones.

There are two things of interest here:

- The main entrance to the grave complex. It's guarded by more shrieking skeletons (p. 6), and every time they shriek, they draw the attention of more of the wandering skeletal mooks. If you want another fight scene, then the party has to fight their way through these undead, but you can also resolve this as a skill check (say, a Dexterity check, DC 20, to sneak past the undead, or a Wisdom check to distract them).
- One grave catches the attention of the PCs. It's one of the newest graves, in the part of the cliffs that's still used by the locals to bury their dead. It is, in fact, a cenotaph — a marker for an empty grave, because it reads "HATHDIR AND ELIA, LOST AT SEA." Unusually, there's a magical ever-burning flame atop the grave. This is the memorial for Hathred's parents, and the flame was a gift from Xuthana to her new apprentice.

DUNGEON DELVING MONTAGE

There are three ways into the Cliff Graves.

- **In through the main entrance and dungeon crawling down:** Run this as a montage with teeth. One player describes some obstacle or challenge the group faces as they climb through the dungeon. The next player describes how they overcome it. Optionally, the GM then asks for a suitable skill check (DC 15); if the check fails, the party still overcomes the obstacle, but one of the PCs loses a Recovery.
- **Climbing down the cliffs:** Why dungeon delve when you can get some fresh air and exercise by climbing down a perilous, crumbling, near-vertical cliff face? The cliff route requires a single skill check (likely Dexterity, DC 20); fail, and it's a very nasty drop (6d6 damage). At the bottom of the cliff, the sea-caves lead up into the grave complex proper.
- **By Boat:** The PCs could head to the shore, get a boat (see *Fight for the Boats*, p. 9), sail to the sea-caves, and make their way in there.

Exploring the dungeon, the PCs find their way to Digger's Prison.

DIGGER'S PRISON

In many ways, this is all Digger's fault. He's a dwarven tomb robber and treasure hunter. He'd call himself an adventurer, but that's not very accurate — he's more the sort of rogue who ambushes the adventuring party when they crawl, bloodied and exhausted, out of the dungeon.

He heard of the treasure of the Chained Tower, and decided to steal it. He has a gift for overcoming magical locks, and he recruited Hathred by playing on the melancholic boy's grief over his lost parents — Xuthana gave Hathred a home, but she's not exactly the warmest or most comforting foster-parent. Digger's original plan was to have Hathred distract Xuthana, Digger would grab the book and escape. Digger's sure some wizard somewhere in the Empire will pay a king's ransom for the Wizard King's old spellbook.

That plan failed — now Hathred's possessed by the book, and he's imprisoned Digger in a crypt. Technically, the dwarf is a guest, not a prisoner, and Hathred still thinks Digger is his friend. He just wants to make sure his friend is there to see him resurrect his parents and set the world to rights. That's why Digger helped him, right? This is what Digger wants, isn't it?

Digger's 'guest room' is a crypt. The dwarf's waiting there, feeling sorry for himself, when the PCs arrive.

Negotiating with Digger: Digger immediately realizes that the player characters can be his Plan B. If they take down Hathred, then Digger can grab the spellbook and escape. Therefore, he'll launch into a sob story as soon as they arrive, claiming that he was a servant of Xuthana, and she was betrayed by her crazy apprentice, and only with their help can Digger save the day. He promises to bring the PCs to Hathred so they can stop the necromancer from completing his evil scheme.

If he can, Digger will tag along with the player characters in the hopes of stealing the book.

The Prison Guards: At a suitably inconvenient moment, undead guards arrive to escort Digger to Hathred. On seeing the PCs, they attack. Digger will only take part in this fight if the PCs attack him; otherwise, he'll cower and hide.

UNDEAD SOLDIER

The King's herald has called them to service once more.

4th level troop [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +6

Vulnerability: holy

Rusted Sword +9 vs. AC — 13 damage

Unlucky Number: The undead soldier may immediately make a free *rusted sword* attack on any foe it's engaged with who rolls a natural 13.

Group Ability - Honor the Fallen: One undead soldier in the group may immediately make a free *rusted sword* attack on any nearby foe who kills another undead soldier or undead cleric.

AC 21
PD 19
MD 15

HP 45

UNDEAD CLERIC

In life, they worshipped Gods of Light and Darkness. Now, they venerate only the chill silence of the void.

4th level caster [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +6

Vulnerability: holy

Rusted Mace +9 vs. AC — 13 damage

R: Death Spell +8 vs. PD — 9 damage, plus 5 ongoing negative energy damage (save ends)

Chant of the Void: Once per battle, the Undead Cleric may alter an enemy's natural d20 roll by -1 or -2. Use this power to set up 13s for the Undead Soldier's *unlucky number* power.

AC 20

PD 16

MD 19

HP 40

DIGGER THE DWARF

Cursed treasure, unholy treasure, dangerous treasure — the keyword there is treasure.

4th level spoiler

Initiative: +9

Knife in the Side +9 vs. AC — 14 damage

C: Box of Tricks +9 vs. PD (varies). See sidebar.

R: Rune of Treachery +7 vs. MD (one nearby or far away enemy with a melee weapon) — 5 damage, plus the target must immediately make a basic melee attack on a nearby ally.

AC 20

PD 15

MD 15

HP 50

DEATH AND THE NECROMANCER

If the PCs went to the Isle of Sanctuary, then the Cliff Graves, then they saw undead minions recover the remains of Hathred's parents from the waters beyond the isle. Hathred now intends to resurrect them in a ruined temple deep within the cliff complex.

If the players took the other route, and went to the Cliff Graves first, then Digger tells them that Hathred's gone to get his parent's remains. Run *The Isle of Sanctuary*, then segue into this scene.

So, the setting's either a creepy underground temple, damp and cold, or else it's on the Isle of Sanctuary, with Hathred crossing the Bridge of Bones. Either way, the final battle is against Hathred and his minions — and his Book.

The Necromancer is a strange and sorry sight. He's a young boy, rake-thin and pale, dressed in a night-gown that's still soaked with the blood of his mistress Xuthana. He clutches the

Number of PCs	Undead Soldiers	Undead Clerics	Digger
3	2	1	1
4	3	1	1
5	3	2	1
6	4	2	1

DIGGER'S TRAP COLLECTION (WONDROUS ITEM)

Digger owns a set of cunningly made miniature traps, like killing machines for dolls. When activated, a trap magically grows to full size, burrowing into the walls to set itself up the instant before it is triggered. The trap vanishes at the end of the fight.

- 1: Pit Trap.** Attacks 1d3 nearby foes. On a hit, 1d6 damage and the victims need to spend a move action climbing out of the pit.
- 2: Wall Darts.** Attacks one nearby foe. On a hit 2d6 damage, plus 5 ongoing poison damage (save ends).
- 3: Bear Trap.** Attacks one nearby foe. On a hit, 2d6 damage, plus that foe is stuck (save ends).
- 4: Gas Bomb.** Attacks all nearby creatures, friend or foe. On a hit, 2d6 damage.
- 5: Secret Door.** A secret door opens. The trap-user may vanish from the battlefield and reappear somewhere nearby at the start of her next turn.
- 6: Portcullis.** A portcullis slams down from nowhere. All nearby enemies must choose — either pop free of the trap-user, or take 2d6 damage.

Digger can choose whichever trap he wants to use.

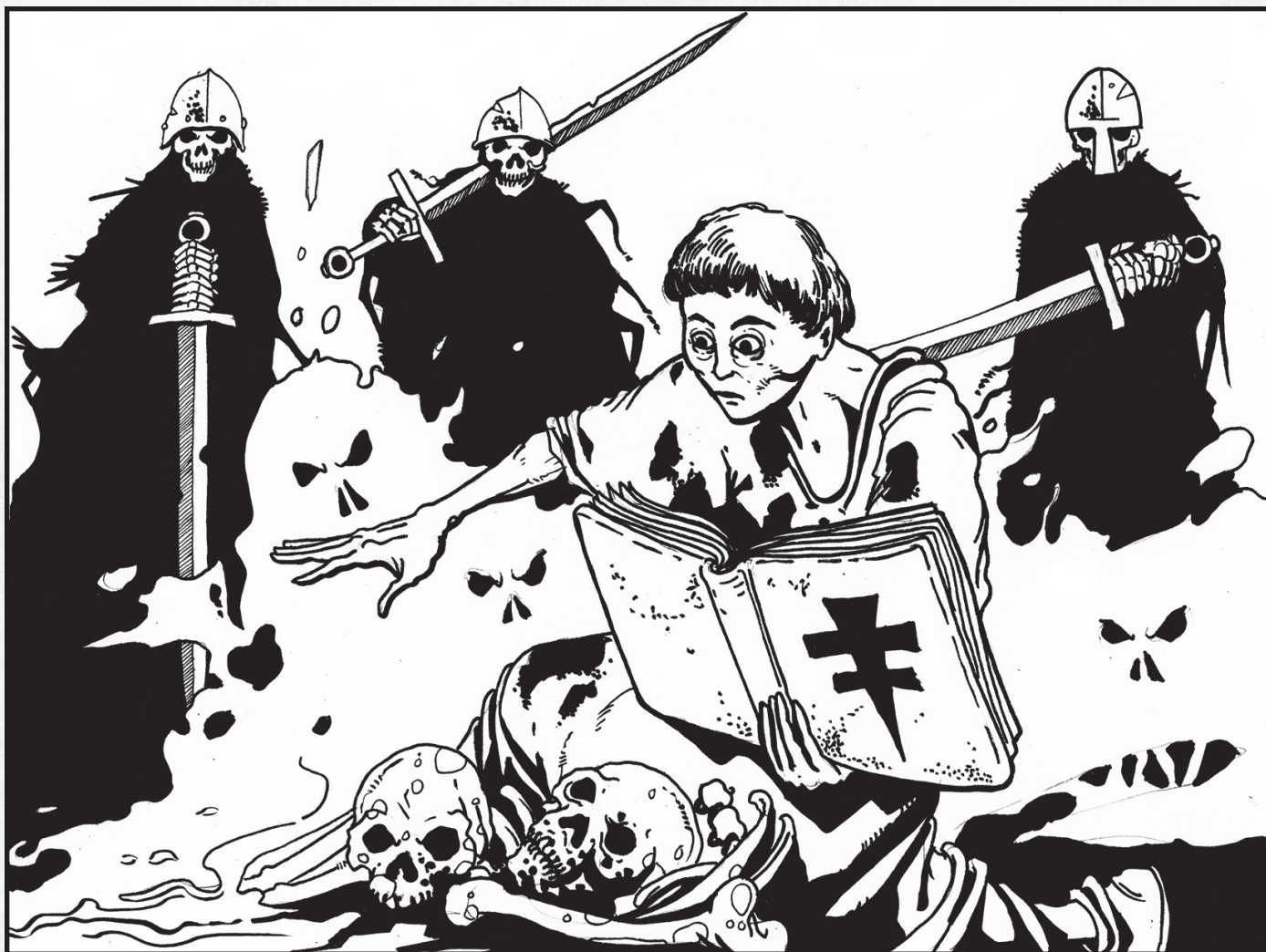
If a player character obtains this magic item, the player must roll to see which trap is created, and the item can only be used once per battle. *Quirk:* Prefers absurdly overcomplicated solutions to problems.

heavy spellbook of the Lich King. He moves like a sleepwalker — he's clearly mostly unaware of his surroundings. It's like he's in a waking nightmare.

He's surrounded by his undead guardians. Unlike their master, they have the stately mien of the dead; they see Hathred as nothing but the vessel for the spirit of the Book, the Herald of the Lich King.

MEET THE PARENTS

Hathred's focus is on resurrecting his parents. This is a fool's errand — the book's tricking the poor boy into making a suitable vessel for its indwelling spirit. Little remains of his mother and father, just a few bones in the wreckage of their sunken fishing boat, but now these remains are bathed in an unearthly light as



Hathred embarks on his necromantic ritual. (If this is happening in the temple, then the remains are on the altar; if it's on the Isle, then they're on the beach).

Sinister spirits writhe in the air around the remains; whatever those specters are, they're definitely not the ghosts of Hathred's parents.

TALKING HATHRED DOWN

It's possible for clever players to get close to Hathred before starting the fight. They could try:

- Playing on Hathred's guilt about stabbing Xuthana
- Asking him about his parents, and playing up the contrast between the specters he's summoning and the simple fisher-folk he describes
- Helping Digger the dwarf get close to his 'friend'

Getting close means the adventurers can slip through the defensive line of undead soldiers escorting Hathred. If they roleplay really well/come up with a cool plan, then they might even be able to convince Hathred to drop the book — in which case, skip right to the Necromancer phase of the fight.

RUNNING THE FIGHT

Initially, Hathred's mostly engaged in resurrecting his parents, and just throws the occasional necromantic blast at the PCs. Soon, though, the evil Book he carries finishes making the remains of his parents into a more suitable host, and Hathred's discarded in favor of a skeletal horror called the Necromancer.

- This happens when the escalation die reaches 3.
- If Hathred's killed before then, then the spirit of the Book possesses his corpse. Replace Hathred with the Necromancer immediately, but the Necromancer starts off at ½ hit points.
- If the PCs somehow manage to get the book away from Hathred, or convince him to give it up, then the Necromancer jumps into its new host body prematurely; it forms immediately, but starts off at ½ hit points.
- If Digger steals the book, it possesses him and he gets turned into the Necromancer.

HATHRED THE UNFORTUNATE

3rd level caster

Initiative: +6

R: Necromantic Blast +8 vs. PD (1 nearby or far away enemy)
— 10 negative energy damage

Protect the Master: If a foe is engaged with an undead soldier, then any melee attacks made by that foe targeting Hathred are automatically redirected to the undead soldier instead.

AC 19
PD 13 HP 30
MD 17

THE NECROMANCER

The Lich King's spells, given form and voice.

5th level double-strength caster

Initiative: +9

Bone Claws +10 vs. AC (2 attacks) — 18 damage

C: Necrotic Rite +10 vs. PD (all nearby enemies) — 11 damage,
plus add one skeletal mook to the battle.

R: Necromantic Blast +10 vs. PD (1 nearby or far away enemy) — 20 negative energy damage. If a foe knocked out by a necromantic blast dies in this combat, the foe rises as a skeletal mook.

AC 21
PD 15 HP 100
MD 19

Number of PCs	Undead Soldiers	Skeletal Mooks	Hathred
3	2	5	1
4	3	7	1
5	4	9	1
6	5	13	1

AFTERMATH

Defeating the Necromancer cuts the undead host off at the head — all the other skeletons fall to the ground, suddenly inanimate. Across the ocean, in the citadel of the Necropolis, the Lich King clenches one cold fist in bitter anger.

The best thing for the world is for the player characters to put the book back in the Chained Tower. If Xuthana's still alive, then she can resume her watch over it; if she perished, then perhaps one of the player characters might take on that duty.

If the adventurers saved Hathred's life, then he is desperate to atone for his misdeeds. He dare not return to the Chained Tower, in case the book seizes control of him once more. Perhaps one of the adventurers needs an apprentice...



NAME
CLASS Paladin

RACE Dark Elf
LEVEL 4

STR	CON	DEX	INT	WIS	CHA	ARMOR CLASS	PHYSICAL DEFENSE	MENTAL DEFENSE
18	12	10	9	15	17	22	15	18
+4	+1	+0	-1	+2	+3	HIT POINTS 54	RECOVERIES 9	RECOVERY ROLL 4d10+1
+8	+5	+4	+3	+6	+7			

ONE UNIQUE THING

RACIAL POWER

INITIATIVE +3

Cruel: Once per battle, when you hit a foe, deal 20 ongoing damage to that enemy (save ends).

BASIC MELEE ATTACK

ATTACK	HIT	MISS
+8 vs. AC	4d10+4	4

ICON RELATIONSHIPS

POWERS & SPELLS

BASIC RANGED ATTACK

ATTACK	HIT	MISS
+4 vs. AC	3d8	—

BACKGROUNDS

EQUIPMENT

Heavy Armor
Longbow
Greatsword

CLASS FEATURES

Smite Evil: Once per battle, plus three extra times per day, you may Smite Evil as part of a melee attack. You get a +4 bonus to hit, +1d12 to damage and deal half damage if you miss.

FEATS

Smite Evil
Lay on Hands
Domain: Justice
Bastion

TALENTS

Lay on Hands: Twice per day as a quick action, one person you touch heals using a recovery, +6.

Bastion: Once per battle, when a nearby ally is hit, you can take half the damage instead.

Divine Domain: Justice: Once per turn, when an enemy scores a crit against you or a nearby ally, or drops you or a nearby ally, you may give an attack-reroll blessing to yourself or a different ally. A character can only have one such blessing at a time.

Once per day, you may invoke justice as a quick action. For the rest of the battle, add 8 to the miss damage of your attacks and the attacks of your nearby allies.

MAGIC ITEMS



NAME

CLASS Rogue

RACE Half-orc

LEVEL 4

STR	CON	DEX	INT	WIS	CHA	ARMOR CLASS	PHYSICAL DEFENSE	MENTAL DEFENSE
14	14	19	14	11	9	18	18	14
+2	+2	+4	+2	+0	-1	HIT POINTS 48	RECOVERIES 8	RECOVERY ROLL 4d8+2
+6	+6	+8	+6	+4	+3			

ONE UNIQUE THING

RACIAL POWER

INITIATIVE +8

Lethal: Once per battle, reroll a melee attack and use the result you prefer.

BASIC MELEE ATTACK

ATTACK	HIT	MISS
+8 vs. AC	4d8+4	4

ICON RELATIONSHIPS

POWERS & SPELLS

Bleeding Strike (melee attack): +7 vs. AC, 4d8+4 damage on a hit, and, if your natural attack roll was even, your foe takes 1d4x4 ongoing damage (1d6x4 against large or huge foes).

Deadly Thrust (melee attack, only usable against staggered non-mooks): +9 vs. AC —deal 4d8+4 damage on a hit, 6 on a miss.

Flying Blade (ranged attack with dagger): +8 vs. AC, 4d4+4 damage, and if your attack roll is even and your target is engaged by an ally, add your Sneak Attack damage. On a miss, 4 damage.

Sure Cut (melee attack, costs momentum, only usable when you can use Sneak Attack): +8 vs. AC, 4d8+4 damage on a hit, 4 on a miss. Add your Sneak Attack damage on a hit or miss.

Thief's Strike (melee attack): +8 vs. PD —Deal half normal melee damage (including any Sneak Attack damage) to an enemy and roll a save. On an 11+, steal an item from your target that they are not holding. On a 16+, they don't notice you pickpocketed them.

Roll With It (interrupt): Spend your momentum to take half damage from a melee attack that targets AC.

Deflection (interrupt): Spend your momentum when a melee attack misses you. That attack hits a different enemy you're engaged with instead, but only deals half damage.

BASIC RANGED ATTACK

ATTACK	HIT	MISS
+8 vs. AC	4d6+4 (shortbow) 4d4+4 (dagger)	4

BACKGROUNDS

CLASS FEATURES

Momentum: Gain *momentum* when you hit a foe. Lose *momentum* when you're hit. Spend *momentum* to fuel some of your class powers.

Sneak Attack: Once per round, deal +2d6 damage against an enemy engaged with one or more of your allies.

Trap Sense: If you make a skill check to spot or disarm a trap, and it's even, you may reroll it once. If a trap attacks you and its attack roll is odd, you may reroll it once.

TALENTS

Murderous: Against staggered enemies, you get a +2 attack bonus and your crit range expands by 2.

Swashbuckle: Once per battle as a quick action, spend your momentum to do something awesome and acrobatic without rolling.

Thievery: You get a bonus Thief background at +5 and the *thief's strike* power.

EQUIPMENT

Light Armor
Daggers
Shortbow

MAGIC ITEMS

FEATS

Murderous
Thievery
Bleeding Strike
Deadly Thrust



NAME
CLASS Fighter

RACE Human
LEVEL 4

STR	CON	DEX	INT	WIS	CHA	ARMOR CLASS	PHYSICAL DEFENSE	MENTAL DEFENSE
19	17	14	8	11	12	21	17	14
+4	+3	+2	-1	+0	+1	HIT POINTS 66	RECOVERIES 9	RECOVERY ROLL 4d10+3
+8	+7	+6	+3	+4	+5			

ONE UNIQUE THING

RACIAL POWER

INITIATIVE +6

Quick to Fight: Roll initiative twice and choose the best result.

BASIC MELEE ATTACK

ATTACK	HIT	MISS
+8 vs. AC	4d10+4	4

ICON RELATIONSHIPS

POWERS & SPELLS

Carve an Opening (flexible melee attack): On a natural odd roll, expand your crit range by a cumulative +1. It drops back to normal when you crit.

Heavy Blows (flexible melee attack): On a natural even miss, add the value of the escalation die to your miss damage.

Steady Now (flexible melee attack): On a natural even miss, gain 3 temporary hit points.

Hack & Slash (flexible melee attack, escalation die 2+, usable once per round): On a natural even roll, make another melee attack against another target

BASIC RANGED ATTACK

ATTACK	HIT	MISS
+6 vs. AC	4d8+2	4

BACKGROUNDS

EQUIPMENT

Heavy Armor
Greataxe
Longbow

CLASS FEATURES

Extra Tough

Threatening: When an enemy attempts to disengage from you, it takes a -3 penalty.

TALENTS

Cleave: Once per battle when you drop a foe to 0 hp, make another melee attack as a free action.

Heavy Warrior: Twice per battle when you are hit by an attack that targets AC, you take half damage.

Comeback Strike: Once per battle when you miss, make another attack immediately as a free action.

FEATS

Reach Tricks: Once per battle, roll a 6+ on a d20 to do something cool with your long-hafted axe.

Strong Recovery: Reroll one of your recovery dice when using a recovery and use the higher result.

Comeback Strike

Deadly Assault

Heavy Warrior

MAGIC ITEMS



NAME
CLASS Wizard

RACE Dwarf
LEVEL 4

STR	CON	DEX	INT	WIS	CHA	ARMOR CLASS	PHYSICAL DEFENSE	MENTAL DEFENSE
10	16	15	19	12	9	16	16	17
+0	+3	+2	+4	+1	-1	HIT POINTS 54	RECOVERIES 8	RECOVERY ROLL 4d6+3
+4	+7	+6	+8	+5	+3			

ONE UNIQUE THING

POWERS & SPELLS

INITIATIVE +6

1st Level Spells (2)

Acid Arrow (ranged, daily): +8 vs. PD. On a hit, 4d10 acid damage and 5 ongoing acid damage; on a miss, 5 ongoing acid damage, and you get the spell back when you have a quick rest.

BASIC MELEE ATTACK

ATTACK	HIT	MISS
+4 vs. AC	4d4	—

ICON RELATIONSHIPS

Shield (close-quarters, 1/battle; recharge 11+): When an attack hits your AC, you can use a free action to make the attacker reroll.

BASIC RANGED ATTACK

ATTACK	HIT	MISS
+6 vs. AC	4d4+2	—

BACKGROUNDS

3rd Level Spells (6)

Force Salvo (ranged, daily): Targets up to 5 different creatures. Attack +8 vs. PD against each, 4d10 force damage on a hit. You can keep targeting the same creature until you hit with a bolt.

EQUIPMENT

Daggers

CLASS FEATURES

Cantrips: Cast minor spells at will.

Ritual Magic: You can cast spells as freeform rituals.

TALENTS

Abjuration: When you cast a daily spell, you gain a +4 AC bonus until the end of your next turn.

Evocation: Once per battle, when you cast a spell that targets PD, you can make a quick action to max out the spell's damage dice instead of rolling.

Wizard's Familiar: You've got a talking ground animal of some sort. It gives you a +1 to saves.

RACIAL POWER

That's Your Best Shot?: Once per battle as a free action after an enemy hits you, heal using a recovery by making a roll. If the escalation die is 0 or 1, you only get half the normal healing. You cannot use this ability if the attack drops you to 0 hp or below.

Teleport Shield (close-quarters, daily): For the rest of the battle, once per round when an enemy engages you, roll +8 vs. PD as a free action; on a hit, teleport them somewhere nearby. You can place them in combat with an ally, but you can't place them in an otherwise dangerous situation.

Lightning Bolt (close-quarters, daily): Targets 1d3 enemies in a group. Roll +8 vs. PD; on a hit, 7d8 lightning damage. On a miss, half damage.

Crescendo (close-quarters, at-will): Target one or more enemies engaged with you, rolling +8 vs. PD (-2 for two targets, -3 for three targets, etc.). If you hit, 4d6 thunder damage and the target pops free. On a miss, 3 damage.

Magic Missile (ranged, at-will): Auto-hits one target for 2d8 force damage, or two targets for 1d8 each

Utility Spell (2/day): Pick one of the following effects: *disguise self*, *feather fall*, *hold portal*, *levitate*, *message*, *speak with item*.

MAGIC ITEMS

FEATS

Wizard's Familiar
Utility Spell
Force Salvo
Magic Missile



NAME

CLASS Commander

RACE Human

LEVEL 4

STR	CON	DEX	INT	WIS	CHA	ARMOR CLASS	PHYSICAL DEFENSE	MENTAL DEFENSE
14	12	9	15	13	18	17	15	18
+2	+1	-1	+2	+1	+4	HIT POINTS 48	RECOVERIES 8	RECOVERY ROLL 4d8+1
+6	+5	+3	+6	+5	+8			

ONE UNIQUE THING

RACIAL POWER

INITIATIVE +7

Quick to Fight: Roll initiative twice and choose the best result.

BASIC MELEE ATTACK

ATTACK	HIT	MISS
+6 vs. AC	4d8+2	4

ICON RELATIONSHIPS

POWERS & SPELLS

Hit Harder! (interrupt): Spend 1 CP to let a nearby ally reroll damage. The new result must be kept. They get to add +8 to the damage.

You Are a Precious Snowflake! (interrupt): Spend 1 CP and roll a d20 when a nearby non-human ally uses a once-per-battle racial power. On an 11+, they get to use it again this battle.

Rally Now (interrupt): Spend 1 CP (2 if they're unconscious) to let a nearby ally rally as a free action. An ally who has already rallied this combat must succeed on a save.

Try Again (interrupt): Spend 2 CP to let a nearby ally reroll an attack. The new result must be kept.

Basic Tactical Strike (quick action, 1/battle, recharge 11+): A nearby ally gets to make a basic attack as a free action.

Just Stay Calm (quick action, usable only when the escalation die is 2+; Recharge 15+): Reduce the escalation die by 1. 1d3 nearby allies can heal using a Recovery.

Outmaneuver (quick action, 1/round, usable only when you've got 0 CP): Roll +7 vs. the nearby enemy with the highest MD. If you hit, gain a command point.

BASIC RANGED ATTACK

ATTACK	HIT	MISS
+3 vs. AC	4d8-1	—

BACKGROUNDS

EQUIPMENT

Light Armor
Longsword
Longbow

CLASS FEATURES

Command Points: you start each battle with 1 command point (CP), which you use to fuel your powers.

Fight from the Front: if you hit with a melee attack, gain 1d3 command points.

Weigh the Odds: as an action, gain 1d4 command points. Once per day, add +4 to the number gained.

TALENTS

Battle Captain: if you have 1 or more command points left after giving a command, you may use an interrupt action to command another ally before the start of your next turn.

Moment of Glory: Roll a d4 when you roll initiative and note the result. As a free action in battle, give that result as a bonus to an ally's attack roll, save, or skill check after they roll.

Martial Training

FEATS

Improved Initiative

Battle Captain

Moment of Glory

Weigh the Odds

Hit Harder

MAGIC ITEMS



NAME
CLASS Sorcerer

RACE Halfling
LEVEL 4

STR	CON	DEX	INT	WIS	CHA	ARMOR CLASS	PHYSICAL DEFENSE	MENTAL DEFENSE
8	16	17	13	10	17	19	18	15
-1	+3	+3	+1	+0	+3	HIT POINTS 54	RECOVERIES 8	RECOVERY ROLL 4d6+3
+3	+7	+7	+5	+4	+7			

ONE UNIQUE THING

RACIAL POWER

INITIATIVE +7

Small: +2 AC vs. opportunity attacks.
Evasive: Once per battle, force an enemy that hits you to reroll with a -2 penalty.

BASIC MELEE ATTACK

ATTACK	HIT	MISS
+3 vs. AC	4d4-1	4

ICON RELATIONSHIPS

Diabolist

POWERS & SPELLS

Burning Hands (close-quarters, at-will): +7 vs. PD, targets up to two nearby enemies in a group. On a hit, deal 1d8+3 damage. If you miss, roll damage anyway—if you roll an 8, you do 8 damage to that enemy.

BASIC RANGED ATTACK

ATTACK	HIT	MISS
+7 vs. AC	4d6+3	—

BACKGROUNDS

Scorching Ray (ranged, at-will): +7 vs. PD, targets one nearby enemy. On a hit, 3d6+3 fire damage. If your attack roll is even, add 2d4 ongoing fire damage. On a miss, 4 damage to that enemy.

EQUIPMENT

Dagger
Javelin

CLASS FEATURES

Dancing Lights: As a standard action, you can conjure a number of varicolored light globes that bloom within 5 to 30 feet of you every two to five seconds. You have little control over them.

Gather Power: If you spend a standard action on gathering power, you deal double damage next round when you cast a spell.

Chaos Pulse (ranged, at will): +7 vs. PD targets one random nearby enemy. On a hit, 3d10+3 random energy damage. On an even miss, half damage, on an odd miss, 4 damage.

MAGIC ITEMS

TALENTS

Spell Fist: You can use ranged spells in melee without drawing opportunity attacks. And other stuff, already factored in to your rolls. If you miss with a sorcerer spell against a foe you're engaged with, add +4 damage to the damage you deal.

Infernal Heritage: Once per day, as a quick action when the escalation die is 1+, you can enter a spell frenzy. While frenzied, roll 2d20 when attacking with spells and use the higher result. For each die that misses, you take damage equal to twice the level of the target.

Blood Link: Gives an extra relationship die with the Diabolist.

Lightning Fork (ranged, 1/battle; recharge 16+): +7 vs. PD, targets one nearby enemy. On a hit, 7d6 damage. On a miss, half damage. If your attack roll is even, make another attack with this spell. Once per battle, reroll an attack roll with this spell.

Echoing Thunder (ranged, at-will): +7 vs. PD, targets one nearby enemy. On a hit, 3d6+3 damage and the first foe to hit you in melee before the start of your next turn takes 2d6 thunder damage (an empowered spell does not double this aftershock damage). On a miss, 4 damage.

Dragon's Leap (ranged spell, 1/day): As a quick action, you make a huge leap at your normal move rate. For the rest of the battle, roll a d20 at the start of your turn. On a 16+, you can leap again this round.

FEATS

Burning Hands

Lightning Fork

Ritual Casting: You can cast spells as freeform rituals.

Spell Fist

NIGHT'S BLACK AGENTS

**THE VAN
HELSEING
LETTER**

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THIS IS A MISSION FOR *NIGHT'S BLACK AGENTS*. Specifically, it's part of the *Dracula Dossier* series, an epic improvisational campaign that pits the player characters against the original vampire, Count Dracula. You don't need a copy of the *Dracula Dossier: Director's Handbook* or *Dracula Unredacted* to run this adventure; you do, however, need the *Night's Black Agents* rules.

Like that campaign, *The Van Helsing Letter* is an improvised mission. Instead of a series of scenes linked by clues, most of this mission consists of write-ups of NPCs, locations and items, coupled with advice on how to link them together and how to pace the game.

The players drive the investigation. In the opening scene, they acquire a century-old letter from Abraham Van Helsing. They can follow the clues in that handout in any order.

BACKSTORY

Dracula isn't a novel. It's the heavily redacted after-action report of genuine events that took place in 1894, when British Intelligence attempted to recruit

a vampire. That operation became Operation Edom; in the present day, Edom's still around, trying to use vampires to win the War on Terror. In the *Dracula Dossier* campaign, the player characters get hold of an unredacted, annotated copy of the original mission report, the original *Dracula*, and must use the information to hunt down the Count before he kills them.

Edom isn't the only clandestine operation to recruit or control vampires. There's a German vampire program, codenamed *Unternehmen Braun* that's also more than a century old. Edom has long suspected that Van Helsing was obscurely connected to this German program.

Early in its history, *Unternehmen Braun* created or summoned a *nachzehr*, a vampire that prefers to feed from its own family. Van Helsing's son was involved in this project, and he was killed by the monster. Later, after the events of *Dracula*, Van Helsing made an attempt to destroy the monster once more.

Now, the player characters are about to obtain a letter from Van Helsing to the director of the hospital where his son

DEATH NOTICES

The origins of the *nachzehr* and the subsequent murders are key to the investigation. Quick summary of what happened (secret, your-eyes-only events are in brackets):

1880: Mine collapse near Keilberg results in the creation of a *nachzehr* from the mortal remains of Fritz Haflich. Some of the victims are brought to the nearby health spa and hospital at Keilberg.

1880-1882: The Haflich family all mysteriously die, with the exception of one daughter who moved to Bucharest with her employer in 1878.

1884: A young man (Van Helsing's son) is injured by a 'wild boar' while climbing near Schloss Glockenstein. He dies of his wounds at the Keilberg Retreat.

died, a letter that hints at that second failed attempt. The clues in that century-old letter will lead the Agents to cross paths with modern-day minions of Dracula...

IMPROVISED INVESTIGATION

The *Dracula Dossier* is an improvised, collaborative campaign, and this teaser uses the same approach. Instead of a series of fixed scenes, we give the players a number of documents containing clues, and we give the Director an arsenal of flexible NPCs, locations, items and organizations — building blocks, out of which you can quickly assemble a mystery in response to the players' actions. The players pick the hooks and plot threads they find the most tantalizing; the Director improvises responses to their actions. Every improvised campaign remixes the same material; each one is similar, but each one is unique and unpredictable.

The titular *Van Helsing Letter* is the clue document for this adventure. The players obtain it in the first scene; everything after that is improvised.

After that first scene, you'll find write-ups for:

OPPOSITION FORCES: The vampiric *nachzehr* and some Conspiracy criminals

PEOPLE: Eva Haflich, the Fixer, Castle Custodian, BND Agent, Researcher

LOCATIONS: Keilberg Retreat, Schloss Glockenstein, GSV Technology

ITEMS: Van Helsing's Case, The Church Bell

All of the write-ups give multiple interpretations of the subject; a Person might be an Innocent, an Asset of some clandestine organization, or a Minion of Dracula. A location can be Hot or Cool; hotter means more action as the Agents approach the end of the adventure. Items can be minor or major. Use these to pace the game — the first people the Agents meet will be Innocents, then mix in some Assets, and then some Minions. The first place they go is Cold, then a bit warmer, then Hot.

CLUES

GUMSHOE is all about following clues and connection. Each write-up includes connections to other people/location/items, and most connections are associated with an Investigative ability. These are **core clues**, in GUMSHOE parlance; if an Agent has the right Investigative ability, they get the clue. No need to roll or spend points.

SCENARIO SPINE

Even in an improvised adventure, some facts are always true. There's always a monster, a *nachzehr*, lurking in the ruins of Schloss Glockenstein, and the Conspiracy are plotting to regain control of it. They might be trying to replicate the Haflich bloodline so they can feed it its preferred victims, or they might be attempting to replicate the church bell so they can target it as a weapon. They might even have

moved the monster from its original haunt in Germany to the Conspiracy redoubt in Transylvania.

Eva Haflich (p. 27) is the only living descendant of the nachzehrer — as the creatures prefer to feed on their own blood kin, she's about to become a person of interest to both the Conspiracy and the Agents.

In the opening scene, the player characters get hold of Van Helsing's last letter. The clues in that point to three locations near the German-Czech border — the Keilberg health spa (p. 28), the ruins of Castle Glockenstein (p. 29), and the mine tunnels in the valley between the two (p. 30). The letter also points to Eva Haflich (well, to her ancestor).

From there, the game's driven by the players. As Director, you need to decide if the nachzehrer is still a free agent, lurking near the castle ruins and preying on random passers-by, or if it's already under the control of Dracula's Conspiracy.

If it's still operating independently, then the game may look something like this: the Agents go to Keilberg and discover that the nachzehrer is still active. After some research on the nature of the beast, they head to Bucharest to collect Eva Haflich to use her as bait. There, they run into more conspiracy interference.

Back in Germany, they start laying a trap for the nachzehrer while fending off more Conspiracy attacks. They succeed with unexpected help from a covert Unternehmen Braun operative like the BND Agent (p. 28) or the Researcher (p. 28).

If the Conspiracy control the nachzehrer, then you need to decide how they're controlling it. The gothic, blood-opera version casts Eva Haflich as a willing lure for the monster. In this scenario, pick a target for the Conspiracy like GSV Technology (p. 29) or the owner of Club Gadarene (p. 30), and have Eva get close to a key figure there. To thwart the Conspiracy, the Agents need to kidnap Eva and use her to draw the monster into a trap. The techno-thriller option puts GSV Technology as the Conspiracy's method of controlling the monster, either through cloned DNA or by wiring the church bell into the mobile phone network. In this setup, Eva's an innocent that the Agents can use to blindside the Conspiracy.

You don't need to decide anything in advance — run the opening scene, make sure the players always have at least one lead to follow like a Connection or some other clue, and aim to get to a final fight between Agents and the monster after three to five scenes.

THE AGENTS

The player characters are the usual mix of burned spies, ex-criminals and other shady types that populate the underworld.

- **Morgan**, ex-mercenary networker
- **Burroughs**, ex-MI5 wheel artist
- **Ali**, ex-Turkish asset handler
- **Greene**, ex-MSF medic
- **Varoutte**, ex-DCRI black bagger
- **Henley**, ex-Scotland Yard bagman

The characters are built on 20 Investigative points. If you have fewer than five players...

4 players	+2 Investigative points each
3 players	+4 Investigative points each
2 players	+12 Investigative points each

As it's a one-shot adventure, each PC has reduced Cover and Network.

They all know that vampires exist, and that Dracula is the master of a vast sinister conspiracy. They all know they're targets of Dracula's wrath.

OPENING SCENE: GETTING THE LETTER

One of the Agents has a contact, a fence who deals in rare books and stolen art, named Pierre Athanese; he's an old scoundrel and a crook, but he knows the stakes. Athanese runs a small bookstore in the French city of Strasbourg, close to the German border, and the game begins as the Agents arrive there.

The occult bookshop is called *Athanor*. It's at the end of a narrow, winding dead-end street in the medieval Grande Île district of the city. (The Grande Île, by the way, is an island, with the River Ill on one side and a canal on the other. If you're a rare book dealer with a sideline in vampire-related material, it helps to live surrounded by running water in the shadow of five churches...)

Athanese is an old, phthisic man, with a face like a skeleton dipped in yellow wax, but he's got a childish enthusiasm for the document he recently acquired from a London auction. He ushers the player characters into the back room of his musty little shop to explain what he's found.

Give them the Van Helsing handout (p. 40) at this point.

Athanese explains the following:

- After 1894, Van Helsing returned to his home in Amsterdam, but made several other mysterious journeys to parts of Europe.
- He vanished in 1908; rumors claimed that he hurriedly left for Romania, but no-one knows for sure what happened to him

- For that matter, no-one is quite sure who Van Helsing was. Athanese theorizes that the name was a cover identity, and that Van Helsing was part of some secret society — perhaps an ancient order of vampire hunters co-ordinated by the Vatican.
- Now, now, though, he has found a clue that might unlock the mystery of the famed scholar. He has obtained a copy of what might be the last letter Van Helsing ever sent!
- Both the Keilberg Retreat and Schloss Glockenstein are located in Saxony, near the German/Czech border. The Keilberg Retreat is a private hospital; Castle Glockenstein is a ruin.

UNWELCOME GUESTS —

The Agents aren't the only people interested in the Van Helsing letter. Athanese was indiscreet in his enthusiasm, and boasted about his acquisition to several other people less trustworthy than the player characters. Dracula's Conspiracy has sent a team to recover the letter. If the Agents were nicely paranoid and have someone watching the street outside, they see a pair of cars with Romanian license plates show up, blocking the exit from the street. Otherwise, it's time for Sense

Trouble tests (Difficulty 4) when the doorbell jingles and several unusually big and nasty-looking 'customers' walk in.

Treat this fight scene as a rules demo; the Conspiracy are expecting to beat up one old bookseller, not a group of tough-as-nails Agents.

Possible complications or motifs:

- Car chase through the narrow streets and bridges of the medieval quarter
- The Conspiracy goons set the bookstore on fire

- Using the bells of the nearby cathedral to disguise the pop of silenced gunshots, avoiding the attention of the police
- A Conspiracy-sponsored anti-Muslim riot targeting the Grand Mosque, across the River Ill, aimed at distracting local police away from the bookstore

THE CHASE BEGINS —

Once the players are clear of Strasbourg, encourage them to follow any of the leads in the letter.

OPPOSITION FORCES



THE NACHZEHRER —

According to German myth, a nachzehrer is a breed of vampire born from sudden deaths, especially tragedies that took multiple lives such as plague outbreaks. The first to die rises again as Un-Dead. Nachzehrers prefer to feed on the corpses of their family members, starting with those who were buried in the same grave as the vampire. Listen closely, and you can hear the crunching of dry bones and the ripping of burial shrouds.

It's also said that the nachzehrer bring death to anyone who falls under their shadow, or who hears church bells rung by the creatures. They can be killed only

by placing a coin in their mouths and then removing the head.

Nachzehrers can also shapeshift into the form of a pig or boar — all the better to dig out buried bodies to eat them.

- **Vampirolology or Research** gets all the above vampire lore.

The particular nachzehrer in this adventure was once a miner named Franz Haflich. He and several other miners were killed in a mining accident near Schloss Glockestein, and he became a vampire. He was captured by the scientists of Unternehmen Braun. The monster looks like a pale young man, horribly disfigured and missing his left thumb, dressed in rags. He remembers almost nothing of his former life. He escaped from Unternehmen Braun during the chaos of World War II, and spent the last few decades half-slumbering or preying on those unlucky enough to come too close to the graveyard.

- If they've met her, then **Notice** or **Diagnosis** spots the resemblance between Eva Haflich and the creature.

The myths about shadows and bells are partially true — the nachzehrer is easily distractible, and can only focus on targets it has 'attuned' to. Van Helsing's Case (p. 30) was designed to counter the monster's powers. So, if you can avoid its shadow, and avoid hearing the church bells, you've got a much better chance of surviving an encounter with the monster.

INDEPENDENT: If the nachzehrer is operating independently, then it's still hiding out near Schloss Glockestein (p. 29) in Germany, attacking anyone who becomes a valid target for its hunger (touched by its shadow/hearing church bells). The Conspiracy intends to capture and use the monster.

CONSPIRACY: If Dracula's already acquired the nachzehrer, the Conspiracy may have moved it to Romania (if the players investigate all the German locations first, then have the finale in Romania, and vice versa). The Conspiracy uses the monster as a weapon, either through Eva Haflich (p. 27) or GSV Technology (p. 29).

DEATH TOUCH: If the nachzehrer's shadow touches you, or if you hear the nachzehrer ringing church bells (see GSV Technology, p. 29, for the modern twist on this), the nachzehrer may spend 1 Aberrance to mark you with its Death Touch. Until sunrise, the creature knows exactly where you are at all times and can spend 1 Aberrance to teleport to somewhere nearby. Furthermore, it loses its Confusion compulsion when hunting you. It's this teleportation ability that makes the monster really valuable to the Conspiracy.

GENERAL ABILITIES: Aberrance 12, Hand-to-Hand 15, Health 15

HIT THRESHOLD: 5

ALERTNESS MODIFIER: +1

STEALTH MODIFIER: +1

DAMAGE MODIFIER: +2 (Claw) or +3 (Pig Bite)

ARMOR: -2 (Unfeeling; -3 in Pig Form)

FREE POWERS: Animal Senses, Tunneling, Vampiric Strength, Regeneration (regains all lost Health after 24 hours, unless decapitated and a coin placed in its mouth)

OTHER POWERS: Necromancy (spend Aberrance to interrogate recently dead), Alternate Form, Death Touch

BLOCKS: Can't cross running water

COMPULSION: Nachzehrs are easily confused and are creatures of instinct. If distracted by loud noises/bright lights/alarms, it needs to make a Difficulty 6 Health check to stay focused on the victim at hand. If it fails, it turns back into pig form and heads for the nearest graveyard to grub around for dead meat before returning to its lair to sleep.

Nachzehrs prefer to feed on the blood and flesh of their blood kin before any other food. They delight so much in familiaphagy that their kinfolk's blood is like a drug to them.

DREADS: Crucifixes, Holy Water, Garlic, Sunlight

UNTERNEHMEN BRAUN

The German Vampire Program. They possibly employed Van Helsing to spy on the original 1894 Dracula operation, and definitely created a bunch of monsters. These days (if they still exist), they're a secret conspiracy within the German BND intelligence agency. Depending on the needs of your game, Unternehmen Braun might be a bunch of old, tired spies trying to clean up the mistakes of their predecessors, a sinister cabal of monster-makers determined to close the vampire gap with the Americans and British, or

ANTAGONIST REACTIONS

The bad guys might mix things up by:

AMBUSHING THE AGENTS: A bunch of Conspiracy goons show up and try to beat up/murder the Agents.

KILLING A CONTACT: The Castle Custodian (opposite), Fixer (opposite) or Researcher (p. 28) might all meet their fates at the hands of the Conspiracy.

TARGET OF THE NACHZEHRER: The Conspiracy tries to make the Agents into sanctified targets for the vampire. This might mean calling the Agents and playing them the sound of the church bell (p. 31) over the phone (which may require stealing a phone),

or getting Eva Haflich (or, at the very least, her blood) close to them.

RELEASE THE NACHZEHRER!: Once the PCs are sanctified targets, the Conspiracy can send the teleporting vampire after them.

DRACULA

The Count himself lurks at the fringes of this adventure. He doesn't need to intercede directly (and that's a good thing, as he's incredibly powerful), but it's fun to give the players a glimpse of their ultimate foe. He might show up in the Bucharest Nightclub (p. 30) or just be spotted lurking in the ruins of Schloss Glockenstein (p. 29).

maybe they got infiltrated and suborned by Dracula or one of his other minions.

They created or tamed the nachzehrer back in 1880, but lost track of it in the chaos of World War II. Today, they might not even know it still exists; once they find out, their aim may be to regain control of the beast, or just put an end to it.

CONSPIRACY GOONS

Romanian Mafioso, Ruvari Szgany (Roma clan sworn to Dracula), or just hired muscle. Capturing one of these guys and using **Interrogate** could point the Agents at Conspiracy versions of GSV Technologies (p. 29), the Fixer (opposite) or the BND Agent (p. 28).

GENERAL ABILITIES: Athletics 4, Driving 2, Hand-to-Hand 4, Health 4, Shooting 4

HIT THRESHOLD: 3

ALERTNESS MODIFIER: -1

STEALTH MODIFIER: -1

DAMAGE MODIFIER: -2 (Fist), -1 (Knife), +1 (9mm)

If you need a tougher Conspiracy boss for a mid-game fight, use this guy.



GENERAL ABILITIES: Athletics 10, Driving 8, Hand-to-Hand 12, Health 8, Shooting 6, Weapons 8

HIT THRESHOLD: 4

ALERTNESS MODIFIER: +2

STEALTH MODIFIER: +0

DAMAGE MODIFIER: -2 (Fist), -1 (Knife), +1 (9mm)

ARMOR: -1 (concealed body armor)

The **Possible Role** entry for each person suggests ways you could bring them into the game.

EVA HAFLICH

POSSIBLE ROLE: Bait, Conspiracy assassin, innocent victim

DESCRIPTION: Early-20s, attractive, short spiked hair, teashade sunglasses, headphones always in ears

INNOCENT: Eva's an art student in Bucharest, dabbling in photography and graphic design; she works part-time in a nightclub as a dancer. She's utterly unaware that she's the direct descendant of Franz Haflich, the man who became the nachzehrer (p. 25). (Eva's great-great-grandmother was Haflich's daughter, who worked as a domestic servant in Bucharest and so escaped the fate of the rest of her family).

Art History or **Data Recovery** tracks Haflich down through her social media presence; **Streetwise** finds her in the Bucharest Nightclub (p. 30).

She may be under observation by the Fixer (below) or the BND Agent (p. 28); the Researcher (p. 28) may have a sample of her blood.

ASSET: As above, but when Van Helsing visited her great-grandmother in 1908, he left her in the care of a secret sect of vampire hunters backed by the Catholic Church. Fast-forward a hundred years, and Eva's the latest scion of a line of vampire hunters. She's a secret foe of the Conspiracy; killing the nachzehrer will be the end of her family curse. **Tradecraft** or **Vampirology** spot that she's been trained. Again, she's under surveillance by one of the Conspiracy's Minions.

MINION: The Conspiracy found Haflich when she was young. They can't control the nachzehrer, but they can use it — it's always drawn to her, so she lures the beast towards its intended target, then uses a relic given to her by the Conspiracy to vanish. She's the Black Widow of Bucharest; she's had affairs with several politicians or criminals who the Conspiracy wanted removed. Eva gets them alone, the Conspiracy

releases the nachzehrer, and as soon as its shadow falls across the victim, she flees. **Criminology** or **Streetwise** digs up her sinister background; tracking her or her phone leads the Agents to wherever the Conspiracy are keeping the nachzehrer (the Abandoned Mine, p. 30, or GSV Technology, p. 29). Her handler might be the Fixer (below) or the BND Agent (p. 28).

INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES:

Art History 2, Flirting 2, Streetwise 1, Urban Survival 1

GENERAL ABILITIES: Athletics 6 (Asset or Minion: Weapons 10, Shooting 6)

ALERTNESS MODIFIER: +1

STEALTH MODIFIER: +1

THE FIXER

REAL NAME: Karel Korbel

POSSIBLE ROLE: Black-market supplier; Conspiracy dupe

DESCRIPTION: Mid-40s, chain smoker, tubby, hacking cough

INNOCENT: The closest Korbel comes to "innocent" is "honest criminal". He's a criminal fixer, able to supply the Agents with whatever they need — weapons, transport, odd equipment, useful contacts. (If you can bring Korbel in as a Network contact, so much the better.) He's in the Conspiracy's bad books for supplying weapons to their enemies, so he might be a target for the nachzehrer — he gets killed off when he hears the bells (from GSV Technology, p. 29) or when he meets his new "girlfriend", Eva Haflich (above). **Reassurance** picks up that he's a bit shaken and nervous — he knows he's made enemies.

ASSET: Korbel's working for German intelligence, reporting to the BND Agent (p. 28). She's got enough on him to put him away for the rest of his life, so he's trading information to avoid a prison sentence. He'll report the Agents to her. **Bullshit Detector** suggests he's lying to the player characters; **Intimidation** can flip him back again.

MINION: Korbel might be Eva Haflich's handler (above), or a field operative for GSV Technology (p. 29). Either way, he'll be sent to deal with the player characters. Take him down, and either **Interrogation** or (if he's killed) **Data Recovery** on his cellphone gives a clue.

INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES:

Criminology 1, Streetwise 2, Urban Survival 1

GENERAL ABILITIES: Driving 4, Explosive Devices 6, Hand to Hand 4, Shooting 8

ALERTNESS MODIFIER: +0

STEALTH MODIFIER: +0

CASTLE CUSTODIAN

REAL NAME: Marcus Stueck

POSSIBLE ROLE: Custodian of Schloss Glockenstein; DeepThroat-style informant

DESCRIPTION: Late '60s, white-haired, remarkably healthy, white mustache, carries an ornate walking stick

INNOCENT: Stueck's the custodian of Schloss Glockenstein (p. 29); he keeps the ruin from being overgrown, shows the occasional tourist around, cleans up graffiti. Get him talking with **Flattery**, and he can tell the Agents all sorts of local legends about the mine collapse (p. 23), about lost tunnels (p. 30), and myths of the nachzehrer (p. 25).

ASSET: Stueck was an officer in the East German Stasi secret police when he was a young man, and knows about mysterious Soviet occult experiments that took place in this region. **Tradecraft** or **Notice** spots that he carries a slim little *Pistolet Samozaryadny Malogabaritny (PSM)*, the weapon of choice for some Stasi agents. He's heard that GSV Technology (p. 29) have recreated some of the old Soviet experiments; he might also know that the Soviets discovered the location of Van Helsing's Case (p. 30) but were unable to dig it up before the fall of the Berlin Wall. He knows the BND Agent (p. 28).

MINION: Depending on when the Agents meet him, Stueck might be the Conspiracy's watcher at the castle,

or an unlikely assassin (who'd suspect the kindly old man?), in which case he swaps out his PSM for a sniper rifle (+2 damage). **Interrogation** of the dying man gets a clue. For a left-field twist, he's actually Count Dracula in disguise!

INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES:

Archaeology 1, History 1, Tradecraft 2

GENERAL ABILITIES: Conceal 4,

Sense Trouble 6, Shooting 6

ALERTNESS MODIFIER: +2

STEALTH MODIFIER: +1

BAD AGENT

REAL NAME: Helena Vasser

POSSIBLE ROLE: Rival investigator, deus ex machina, Conspiracy mastermind

DESCRIPTION: Mid-40s, longraincoat, always tired, could pass for the protagonist of a depressing Danish murder mystery show, recently divorced

INNOCENT: Vasser's an agent of the *Bundesnachrichtendienst*, the German intelligence service. She specializes in organized violent crime, and might be called in to investigate the Agents (especially if they caused havoc escaping in Strasbourg). She's also investigating a series of deaths tied to the Conspiracy. Get her trust with **Reassurance**, and she shares her files on Conspiracy assets (the Fixer (p. 27), GSV Technology (opposite) or Eva Haflich (p. 27)). Vasser knows nothing about vampires or the supernatural.

ASSET: As above, but Vasser's also working for Unternehmen Braun. She's been ordered to regain control of the nachzehrer. If she has to, she'll fill the Agents in on the nachzehrer (p. 25) and Schloss Glockenstein (p. 29). **Bullshit Detector** guesses she's got an ulterior motive.

MINION: Vasser is a senior member of the Conspiracy. She might be Eva Haflich's handler (p. 27) or a troubleshooter called in to deal with troublesome player characters. She'll use her position as a BND Agent to tag the player characters with lots of Heat, blaming them for any carnage in Strasbourg.

INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES:

Criminology 2, Human Terrain 1, Interrogation 1, Streetwise 1, Urban Survival 1

GENERAL ABILITIES: Driving 6,

Hand to Hand 4, Shooting 6

ALERTNESS MODIFIER: +1

STEALTH MODIFIER: +0

RESEARCHER

REAL NAME: Corinne Axelson

POSSIBLE ROLE: Scientific advisor, random encounter at Keilberg, Dr. Exposition

DESCRIPTION: Mid-50s, matronly, white lab coat or warm duffle coat, always has a notebook to hand

INNOCENT: Axelson's a medical researcher, either at the Keilberg Retreat (below) or at GSV Technology (opposite). She's the local history expert, too, and can fill

the Agents in on the mine collapse and other events (see the sidebar on page 23). Her genealogical research even points to a living Haflich descendent in Bucharest (p. 27).

Corinne's helpful and generous with her information; **Forensic Pathology** on her corpse after the bad guys kill her could point to a PSM bullet (fired by the Castle Custodian (p. 27) or the Fixer's nicotine-stained presence (p. 27).

ASSET: Axelson's trying to regain control of the nachzehrer for Unternehmen Braun; she might be undercover in GSV Technology, or trying to find the right bloodline via research at Keilberg. Steal her notebook with **Filch** and break the cipher with **Cryptography** to discover her true intent.

MINION: Not only is Axelson the Conspiracy's handler for the nachzehrer, she's also the creature's lover. She's obsessed with death, and has taken to stealing human tissue samples and eating them herself to grow closer to her undead charge. She'll lead the Agents into a trap if she can; **Bullshit Detector** picks up on her weird obsession.

INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES:

Diagnosis 1, History 1, Chemistry 2, Forensic Pathology 2, Pharmacy 1

GENERAL ABILITIES: Medic 6

ALERTNESS MODIFIER: +0

STEALTH MODIFIER: +0

LOCATIONS

KEILBERG RETREAT

The Keilberg Retreat is a hospital and sanitarium, located in the mountains along the German/Czech border near Schloss Glockenstein (opposite). According to legend, this has been a place of healing for centuries. It was a thermal spa and sanitarium in the 19th and early 20th century, with rich tourists coming here to take the waters. During the Cold War, it was used to house the chronically ill, and was the site of questionable medical experiments; now, it's back to its original purpose as a private hospital and retreat.

From the outside, it looks like a quaint 19th century hillside mansion; inside, it's a modern treatment facility for the most part, although some of the older buildings lie disused and are locked up.

High Society or a good **Cover** is needed to get in here.

There are tunnels beneath the retreat, part of an old copper mine (p. 30).

COOL: The retreat's exactly what it appears to be. **Archaeology** or **Data Recovery** (or **Research** through the retreat's old archives; see also the sidebar on page 23) discovers the

location of Van Helsing's Case (p. 30) and/or the Church Bell (p. 31), buried by the Doctor more than a century ago. The Agents might run into the Researcher (above) doing some genealogical research in the Archives, or the Castle Custodian (p. 27), here to take some patients on a walking tour of the valley near Schloss Glockenstein (opposite). **Notice** spots a van from GSV Technology (opposite) delivering some medical equipment.

HOT: Two possibilities: first, the retreat is now a Conspiracy base, the control

center for the nachzehrer. It might be run by the Researcher (opposite) or the BND Agent (opposite); depending on how they're controlling the nachzehrer, the Church Bell (p. 31) or a lab sequencing Haflich DNA/a captured Eva Haflich might also be here.

Option two: Keilberg is a genuine medical facility catering to wealthy clients. One of those clients (a Russian mob boss? An executive at GSV Technology?) is a target of the Conspiracy, and they intend to assassinate him with the nachzehrer. Eva Haflich (p. 27) might be there, posing as the target's girlfriend; her handler's also lurking around.

SCHLOSS GLOCKESTEIN —

Schloss Glockestein consists of the ruins of a medieval castle and church atop a high rock in the mountains along the German/Czech border. The castle once guarded a valuable copper mine, but the mine was worked out long ago and the castle has mostly crumbled. The still-standing bell tower of the church rises defiantly against the mountains beyond.

The castle was used as a research facility by Unternehmen Braun at various times, when they studied the nachzehrer and the telluric or occult energies that created it. **Archaeology** might find a spooky 1930s research lab hidden in the dungeons, like an abandoned set from *Frankenstein*; alternatively, there might be another entrance to the Abandoned Mine tunnels (p. 30) from the castle.

COOL: The castle is a ruin; the only thing of interest here is the Castle Custodian (p. 27).

HOT: The castle is the lair and resting place of the nachzehrer (p. 25). The Church Bell (p. 31) has been restored to its place in the bell tower; there may be a Conspiracy force here disguised as an archaeological preservation team, prospecting company, Neo-nazi group or just lurking around ("why is this ruined castle full of oddly pale Mafioso-types?").

GSV TECHNOLOGY —

This company develops advanced medical devices and other precision instruments. It's German-owned, but has subsidiaries wherever you need them (Romania, for example). The GSV Technology building is all white walls and clean rooms and photogenic staff, like a glossy corporate brochure come to life.

The Researcher (opposite) may work for GSV; they supply the Keilberg Retreat (above) with diagnostic equipment.

If it's wholly innocent, then GSV may be a target for the Conspiracy; maybe the Conspiracy wants to acquire the company, and intends to have the nachzehrer assassinate a corporate executive who's blocking the deal.

If the Conspiracy are running GSV, then it's connected to controlling the nachzehrer. Two options:

- They're trying to isolate whatever draws the nachzehrer to devour the flesh and blood of its kin; they might

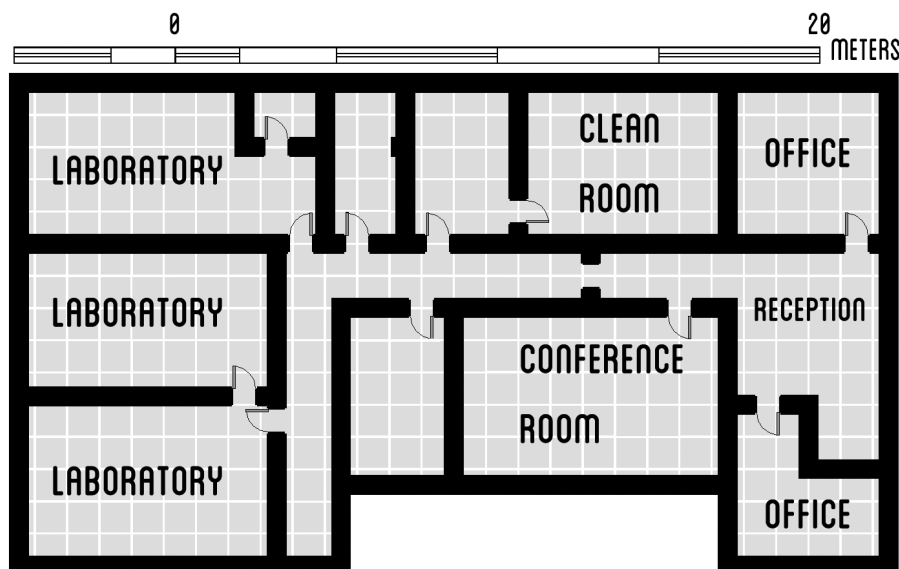
be trying to sequence Eva Haflich's DNA (p. 27) or conducting medical experiments on her. **Diagnosis** or **Data Retrieval** gets details on their experiments and Eva.

- They're using the connection between the nachzehrer and church bells (p. 31); they can relay the magical resonance of a church bell through a mobile phone, so they can lock the nachzehrer onto a new target with a phone call.

Traffic Analysis or **Electronic Surveillance** lets the agents backtrack from GSV to the church bell (p. 31) which might be at Schloss Glockestein (above) or in the Abandoned Mine (p. 30) — assuming it's not in a cleanroom here at GSV.

COOL: The cool interpretation of this encounter is that GSV is just a cover or a minor part of the Conspiracy. No guards, tight-but-not-overwhelming electronic security — just a normal corporate office. Sneaking in with **Infiltration** or **Disguise** (or a Cover) and a little poking around gets clues, perhaps pointing to Eva Haflich (p. 27) (surveillance photos in the Bucharest Nightclub (p. 30), perhaps), Keilberg Retreat (above) or the Researcher (opposite).

HOT: If it's a Conspiracy stronghold, then there's plenty of armed private security, plus some occult weirdness (experiments involving blood, rooms with warped dimensions, machines mapping telluric currents). Cross a high-tech research lab with the atmosphere of Dracula's castle, and you've got the idea.



RESEARCH FACILITY

ABANDONED MINE —

There's an abandoned copper mine near Schloss Glockenstein (p. 29)/Keilberg Retreat (p. 28) in the mountains along the German/Czech border; it partially collapsed in 1880, resulting in the creation of the nachzehrer. Alternatively, there are plenty of abandoned mines in Romania, any of which could serve as a new lair for a transplanted nachzehrer. Van Helsing's Case (below) or the Church Bell (opposite) might be hidden in a mine.

Spooky encounters:

- The distant sound of bones being crunched, chewed and sucked as the pig-form nachzehrer masticates the remains of some victim over and over again.
- Weird noxious fumes rising from cracks in the floor — Difficulty 4 Health test to avoid suffering from hallucinations
- Cramped, dark tunnels illuminated only by muzzle flashes as some Conspiracy goons ambush the Agents
- Secret exits leading to the cellars of Schloss Glockenstein (p. 29), Keilberg (p. 28) (or, if in Romania, Castle Dracula!)

The tunnels are likely to be uninhabited, although the Agents could run into an eccentric Castle Custodian (p. 27) or be followed by the BND Agent (p. 28). Or maybe the Fixer (p. 27) uses the mines as a hiding place for illegal arms caches?

COOL: Spooky, underground tunnel, dangerous and unstable.

HOT: As above, but the nachzehrer's here...



BUCHAREST NIGHTCLUB —

Club Gadarene, in the Lipscani district, is the hot new scene in Bucharest nightlife, featuring throbbing dance beats, swaying girls in cages, a crowded floor, and a few private rooms for VIPs. The rich go slumming here sometimes. No-one comes here for the music; you come here to be seen, or to pick someone up, or to get high. The local mob run Club Gadarene (possibly for the Conspiracy).

Eva Haflich (p. 27) dances here; the Fixer (p. 27) might do business here. Conspiracy goons might slink back here to report to their masters if the PCs beat them up and then let them go.

COOL: Get in here with **Streetwise** or **High Society**; **Urban Survival** spots the exits, the dealers, the bouncers — and the blind spots, in case you need to beat up an informant. Asking around

could get the PCs a meeting with Eva Haflich (p. 27).

HOT: Maybe the Conspiracy don't run Club Gadarene — yet. Maybe their plan is to have the nachzehrer eliminate the owner, so they can seize the club and the associated lucrative drug trade. In that case, the Conspiracy intend to kill the owner (a brutal mob boss named Drago) using the nachzehrer. If Eva's the targeting mechanism, then she's under orders to get close to Drago and then spill her blood to attract the monster. If the church bell is the targeting mechanism, then they need to get Drago to hear the bell, and the mobster is infamously paranoid about being tracked so he doesn't carry a mobile phone. In that case, the Conspiracy plan is to play the church bell noise over the club's sound system, making everyone in Club Gadarene a valid target for the nachzehrer.

ITEMS

VAN HELSING'S CASE —

A heavy case, bound in iron, engraved with the letters VH. Inside are items collected by Van Helsing to help him fight the nachzehrer. There's some wax and a bandage (for blocking his ears), some powerful electric lamps strung on a belt (to keep shadows

from getting too close to him, and a light but sturdy collapsible spear, as might be used by a boar hunter. The head of the spear is of different manufacture to the shaft; the shaft is made of telescoping aluminum, but the head is a holy relic sacred to St. George. There's also a bag of coins (400 year old Greek, Hungarian and Turkish gold coins,

oddly). Finally, there's a well-used surgical saw, suitable for beheadings.

There's also some very old, very unstable dynamite (**Explosive Devices** needed to safely handle and remove the sweaty sticks).

The wax and the electric lamps have long since decayed into uselessness, but the

Agents can easily replace them with noise-cancelling headphones and high-powered LED torches (or night-vision goggles). All these preparations give an 8-point pool that can be spent on Athletics, Scuffling, Sense Trouble or Weapons tests made in combat against the nachzehrer.

The spear still works, and has the supernatural virtue of ignoring the nachzehrer's armor.

Van Helsing left the case in the care of the Director of the Keilberg Retreat, with the intent of returning to destroy the nachzehrer. Now, that task falls to the Agents. The case might be:

- In the cellars of the Keilberg Retreat (p. 28)
- In the nearby Abandoned Mine (opposite)
- In the possession of the Castle Custodian (p. 27), who found it years ago
- Stolen by the Conspiracy, in which case it's in a lab at GSV Technology (p. 29)

THE CHURCH BELL

This is the church bell that once hung in the bell tower at Schloss Glockestein (p. 29). It rang to mark the deaths in the 1880 mine collapse, and Franz Haflich heard his own death toll as he lay buried alive; he rose again as a nachzehrer with that dolorous note echoing forever in his undead brain.

Anyone who hears the ringing of the church bell is, until sunrise, sanctioned prey for the nachzehrer. A recording doesn't cut it; ironically, only a live performance works for the Un-Dead.

The bell might be:

- Still safely buried in the Abandoned Mine (opposite)
- Restored to the crumbling church tower at Schloss Glockestein (p. 29). When the nachzehrer hungers, it scales the cliffs and tower, then rings the bell. The sound echoes out across the valley as far as Keilberg (p. 28), giving the vampire its choice of victims.

- Back in the church tower, but now wired with microphone pickups. A dedicated mobile phone mast transmits the sound back to GSV Technology (p. 29); the Conspiracy techs then relay the sound to the mobile phone of the nachzehrer's next target, and the vampire then teleports to the vicinity of that victim. In this setup, the Castle Custodian (p. 27) might be the Conspiracy's sinister campanologist, or maybe they've set up a small remote-control motor to ring the bell (no doubt with a mummified hand on the bell-rope, to ensure there's a human element in the circuit).
- In a clean-room at GSV Technology (p. 29).

STRASBOURG

- | | |
|---|----|
| Palais du Rhin | 1 |
| Gare routière des Halles | 2 |
| Opera du Rhin | 3 |
| Hotel de la Préfecture | 4 |
| Palais du Gouverneur | 5 |
| Médiathèque Olympe de Gouges | 6 |
| Hôtel DeVille | 7 |
| Temple Neuf | 8 |
| Église Saint-Étienne | 9 |
| Cathédrale Notre-Dame | 10 |
| Église Méthodiste de Sion | 11 |
| Cabinet des Estampes et des Dessin | 12 |
| Église Réformée | 13 |
| TJP Centre Dramatique National D'Alsace | 14 |
| Église Sainte-Madeleine | 15 |
| Église Saint-Thomas | 16 |
| Musée Alsacien | 17 |



INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

ACADEMIC

Accounting	___	___
Archaeology	___	___
Architecture	___	___
Art History	___	___
Criminology	I	___
Diagnosis	___	___
History	___	___
Human Terrain	___	___
Languages	I	___
▪	▪	
▪	▪	
▪	▪	
Law	I	___
Military Science	I	___
Occult Studies	I	___
Research	___	___
Vampirology	I	___

INTERPERSONAL

Bullshit Detector	I	___
Bureaucracy	___	___
Cop Talk	I	___
Flattery	___	___
Flirting	___	___
High Society	___	___
Interrogation	I	___
Intimidation	2	___
Negotiation	I	___
Reassurance	___	___
Streetwise	I	___
Tradecraft	I	___

TECHNICAL

Astronomy	___	___
Chemistry	___	___
Cryptography	___	___
Data Recovery	I	___
Electronic Surveillance	I	___
Forensic Pathology	___	___
Forgery	___	___
▪	▪	
▪	▪	
Notice	I	___
Outdoor Survival	I	___
Pharmacy	___	___
Photography	___	___
Traffic Analysis	I	___
Urban Survival	I	___
▪	▪	
▪	▪	
▪	▪	

MORGAN

DESCRIPTION You were an assassin, until they sent you up against a man who wouldn't die. Now, you hunt the monsters, redeeming yourself by destroying things that shouldn't exist.

BACKGROUNDS: Wet worker

DRIVE: Slayer

PREVIOUS PATRON: Best not to ask.

SOURCES OF STABILITY

- **SYMBOL** Lucky silver bullet with your name on it
- **SOLACE** Girlfriend in Paris, Natalie
- **SAFETY** A villa you own in Morocco

COVERS

-
-
-
-
-

NETWORK CONTACTS

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-
-
-

WEAPONS/ARMOUR/GEAR

-
-
-
-
-

HIT THRESHOLD [4]

SPECIALS

SHOOTING MOS: Automatically succeed on one Shooting test

PARKOUR: Refresh 3 Athletics points with a cool description of action

OPEN SESAME: Open basic locks for free

TECHNOTHRILLER MONOLOGUE: Refresh 3 Shooting points with a cool description of your weapons

PORTRAIT

GENERAL ABILITIES

Athletics	10	___
Conceal	___	___
Cover	5	___
Digital Intrusion	___	___
Diguipe	4	___
Driving	2	___
▪	▪	
▪	▪	
Explosive Devices	___	___
Filch	___	___
Gambling	2	___
Hand-to-Hand	4	___
Infiltration	8	___
Mechanics	4	___
Medic	4	___
Network	5	___
Piloting	___	___
▪	▪	
▪	▪	
Preparedness	___	___
Sense Trouble	4	___
Shooting	10	___
Shrink	___	___
Surveillance	4	___
Weapons	4	___

HEALTH

STABILITY

			10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

					8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

ACADEMIC

Accounting	—	—
Archaeology	—	—
Architecture	—	—
Art History	—	—
Criminology	—	—
Diagnosis	1	—
History	—	—
Human Terrain	1	—
Languages	1	—
▪	▪	—
▪	▪	—
▪	▪	—
Law	—	—
Military Science	—	—
Occult Studies	1	—
Research	1	—
Vampirology	1	—
—	—	—
—	—	—

INTERPERSONAL

Bullshit Detector	1	—
Bureaucracy	1	—
Cop Talk	—	—
Flattery	—	—
Flirting	1	—
High Society	—	—
Interrogation	1	—
Intimidation	—	—
Negotiation	—	—
Reassurance	1	—
Streetwise	—	—
Tradecraft	1	—
—	—	—
—	—	—

TECHNICAL

Astronomy	—	—
Chemistry	2	—
Cryptography	—	—
Data Recovery	—	—
Electronic Surveillance	—	—
Forensic Pathology	1	—
Forgery	—	—
▪	▪	—
▪	▪	—
Notice	1	—
Outdoor Survival	1	—
Pharmacy	2	—
Photography	1	—
Traffic Analysis	—	—
Urban Survival	—	—
▪	▪	—
▪	▪	—
▪	▪	—
—	—	—
—	—	—

GREEN

DESCRIPTION You volunteered as an aid worker in some of the most dangerous parts of the world. You uncovered evidence of an unseen force that seemed to feed on human misery, an international conspiracy that promoted atrocity and suffering. It has to be uncovered and destroyed.

BACKGROUNDS: Medic

DRIVE: Mystery

PREVIOUS PATRON: Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)

SOURCES OF STABILITY

▪ **SYMBOL** A crucifix, given to you by a missionary

▪ **SOLACE** Your family, especially your young niece

▪ **SAFETY** Family holiday home in Spain

COVERS

▪	—	—
▪	—	—
▪	—	—
▪	—	—
▪	—	—

NETWORK CONTACTS

▪	—	—
▪	—	—
▪	—	—
▪	—	—
▪	—	—
▪	—	—
▪	—	—
▪	—	—
▪	—	—
▪	—	—

WEAPONS/ARMOUR/GEAR

MOD	—	—
—	—	—
—	—	—
—	—	—
—	—	—
—	—	—
—	—	—
—	—	—
—	—	—
—	—	—

HIT THRESHOLD [4]

SPECIALS

ATHLETICS MOS: Automatically succeed on one Athletics test

PARKOUR: Refresh 3 Athletics points with a cool description of action

QUINCEY MORRIS' BOWIE KNIFE: Throw Weapons without penalty

PORTRAIT

GENERAL ABILITIES

Athletics	8	—
Conceal	4	—
Cover	5	—
Digital Intrusion	—	—
Diguipe	—	—
Driving	2	—
▪	▪	—
▪	▪	—
Explosive Devices	—	—
Filch	—	—
Gambling	—	—
Hand-to-Hand	4	—
Infiltration	4	—
Mechanics	—	—
Medic	8	—
Network	5	—
Piloting	—	—
▪	▪	—
▪	▪	—
Preparedness	6	—
Sense Trouble	2	—
Shooting	4	—
Shrink	8	—
Surveillance	4	—
Weapons	8	—
—	—	—
—	—	—

HEALTH

HEALTH					8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11

STABILITY

STABILITY						8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

ACADEMIC

Accounting	_____	_____
Archaeology	_____	_____
Architecture	_____	_____
Art History	_____	_____
Criminology	1	_____
Diagnosis	_____	_____
History	_____	_____
Human Terrain	1	_____
Languages	1	_____
▪	▪	_____
▪	▪	_____
▪	▪	_____
Law	1	_____
Military Science	1	_____
Occult Studies	_____	_____
Research	_____	_____
Vampirology	_____	_____

INTERPERSONAL

Bullshit Detector	1	_____
Bureaucracy	1	_____
Cop Talk	2	_____
Flattery	1	_____
Flirting	_____	_____
High Society	1	_____
Interrogation	_____	_____
Intimidation	_____	_____
Negotiation	_____	_____
Reassurance	1	_____
Streetwise	2	_____
Tradecraft	1	_____

TECHNICAL

Astronomy	_____	_____
Chemistry	_____	_____
Cryptography	_____	_____
Data Recovery	_____	_____
Electronic Surveillance	1	_____
Forensic Pathology	_____	_____
Forgery	_____	_____
▪	▪	_____
▪	▪	_____
Notice	1	_____
Outdoor Survival	1	_____
Pharmacy	_____	_____
Photography	_____	_____
Traffic Analysis	1	_____
Urban Survival	1	_____
▪	▪	_____
▪	▪	_____
▪	▪	_____

BURROUGHS

DESCRIPTION You specialized in pulling MI6 friendlies and assets out of danger. A year ago, a man bled to death in the back of your car, and whispered that there were vampires pulling the world's strings. You've gone rogue to find out the truth.

BACKGROUNDS: Wheel Artist

DRIVE: Patriotism

PREVIOUS PATRON: MI6

SOURCES OF STABILITY

- **SYMBOL SIS** ID card
- **SOLACE** A congresswoman in Washington you can trust
- **SAFETY** Childhood home

COVERS

-
-
-
-

NETWORK CONTACTS

-
-
-
-

WEAPONS/ARMOUR/GEAR MOD

-
-
-
-
-

HIT THRESHOLD [3]

SPECIALS

DRIVING MOS: Automatically succeed at one driving test

GRAND THEFT AUTO: Spend 1 Driving to automatically steal any standard vehicle

GRAND THEFT AERO: Spend 1 Piloting to automatically steal any standard boat or plane

SWISS ARMY PREP: Use Mechanics as Preparedness for home-made gadgets

GEAR DEVIL: Refresh 3 Piloting or Driving with a cool description

COMBAT INTUITION: You use your Sense Trouble rating, not pool, for initiative

PORTRAIT

GENERAL ABILITIES

Athletics	4	_____
Conceal	_____	_____
Cover	5	_____
Digital Intrusion	_____	_____
Diguipe	_____	_____
Driving	10	_____
▪	▪	_____
▪	▪	_____
Explosive Devices	2	_____
Filch	_____	_____
Gambling	_____	_____
Hand-to-Hand	2	_____
Infiltration	2	_____
Mechanics	8	_____
Medic	4	_____
Network	5	_____
Piloting	8	_____
▪	▪	_____
▪	▪	_____
Preparedness	4	_____
Sense Trouble	8	_____
Shooting	4	_____
Shrink	_____	_____
Surveillance	4	_____
Weapons	4	_____

HEALTH

	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	----

STABILITY

	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
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0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

ACADEMIC

Accounting	1	
Archaeology		
Architecture		
Art History		
Criminology		
Diagnosis		
History	1	
Human Terrain	1	
Languages	1	
▪	▪	
▪	▪	
▪	▪	
Law		
Military Science	1	
Occult Studies		
Research	1	
Vampirology	1	

INTERPERSONAL

Bullshit Detector	2	
Bureaucracy	1	
Cop Talk	1	
Flattery	1	
Flirting	1	
High Society	1	
Interrogation		
Intimidation	1	
Negotiation	1	
Reassurance	1	
Streetwise		
Tradecraft	1	

TECHNICAL

Astronomy		
Chemistry		
Cryptography	1	
Data Recovery		
Electronic Surveillance		
Forensic Pathology		
Forgery		
▪	▪	
▪	▪	
Notice		
Outdoor Survival		
Pharmacy		
Photography		
Traffic Analysis	1	
Urban Survival		
▪	▪	
▪	▪	
▪	▪	

ALI

DESCRIPTION You worked for the Turkish national intelligence agency, running spies into Russia and the former Soviet bloc. Four of your operatives got killed in a single night, and you realized you'd gotten too close to something big. You were forced out of the agency — you want back in, but you need proof of the existence of a vampiric conspiracy to make them believe you.

BACKGROUNDS: Asset Handler

DRIVE: Restoration

PREVIOUS PATRON: Millî İstihbarat Teskilatı (MIT)

SOURCES OF STABILITY

- **SYMBOL** Your laptop
- **SOLACE** Brother, still an agent with MIT
- **SAFETY** A hotel room in London, rented under a false name

COVERS

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NETWORK CONTACTS

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WEAPONS/ARMOUR/GEAR

- MOD
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HIT THRESHOLD [3]

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PORTRAIT

GENERAL ABILITIES

Athletics	4	
Conceal		
Cover	8	
Digital Intrusion	8	
Diguipe	2	
Driving		
▪	▪	
▪	▪	
Explosive Devices		
Filch	5	
Gambling	4	
Hand-to-Hand	6	
Infiltration	4	
Mechanics		
Medic		
Network	10	
Piloting		
▪	▪	
▪	▪	
Preparedness	2	
Sense Trouble	5	
Shooting	6	
Shrink	8	
Surveillance	8	
Weapons		

HEALTH

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
STABILITY										4	3	2	1
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

STABILITY

	4	3	2	1								
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

ACADEMIC

Accounting	___	___
Archaeology	___	___
Architecture	I	___
Art History	I	___
Criminology	I	___
Diagnosis	___	___
History	___	___
Human Terrain	I	___
Languages	___	___
▪	▪	___
▪	▪	___
▪	▪	___
Law	I	___
Military Science	___	___
Occult Studies	___	___
Research	I	___
Vampirology	I	___
	___	___
	___	___

INTERPERSONAL

Bullshit Detector	I	___
Bureaucracy	___	___
Cop Talk	___	___
Flattery	___	___
Flirting	___	___
High Society	___	___
Interrogation	I	___
Intimidation	I	___
Negotiation	I	___
Reassurance	___	___
Streetwise	I	___
Tradecraft	I	___
	___	___
	___	___

TECHNICAL

Astronomy	___	___
Chemistry	___	___
Cryptography	___	___
Data Recovery	I	___
Electronic Surveillance	I	___
Forensic Pathology	___	___
Forgery	I	___
▪	▪	___
▪	▪	___
Notice	I	___
Outdoor Survival	___	___
Pharmacy	___	___
Photography	I	___
Traffic Analysis	I	___
Urban Survival	I	___
▪	▪	___
▪	▪	___
▪	▪	___
	___	___
	___	___

VAROUSTE

DESCRIPTION DCRI had a warrant to bug a Romanian company, and you led a team of four into their offices at night to wire the place. There was a monster there — it killed the rest of your team and left you for dead. Next morning, the offices were empty, burned, leaving no proof except the scar where it bit you and the corpses of your men.

BACKGROUNDS: Black Bagger

DRIVE: Revenge

PREVIOUS PATRON: Direction Centrale du Renseignement Intérieur (DCRI)

SOURCES OF STABILITY

- **SYMBOL** Scar on your left hand, from the monster's teeth
- **SOLACE** The widow of one of your fellow agents
- **SAFETY** Your former home in Paris

COVERS

-
-
-
-

NETWORK CONTACTS

-
-
-
-

WEAPONS/ARMOUR/GEAR

- MOD
-
-
-
-

HIT THRESHOLD [4]

SPECIALS

INFILTRATION MOS: Automatically succeed on an Infiltration test

PARKOUR: Refresh 3 Athletics points with a cool description of action

OPEN SESAME: Open basic locks for free

NO SLIPUPS: Spend Filch on a 2-for-1 basis after rolling the die

PORTRAIT

GENERAL ABILITIES

Athletics	8	___
Conceal	4	___
Cover	5	___
Digital Intrusion	4	___
Diguipe	2	___
Driving	___	___
▪	▪	___
▪	▪	___
Explosive Devices	2	___
Filch	8	___
Gambling	___	___
Hand-to-Hand	6	___
Infiltration	8	___
Mechanics	2	___
Medic	___	___
Network	5	___
Piloting	___	___
▪	▪	___
▪	▪	___
Preparedness	4	___
Sense Trouble	2	___
Shooting	6	___
Shrink	___	___
Surveillance	4	___
Weapons	2	___
	___	___
	___	___

HEALTH

STABILITY

					8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

					8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

ACADEMIC

Accounting	2	
Archaeology		
Architecture		
Art History		
Criminology		
Diagnosis		
History		
Human Terrain		
Languages	1	
▪	▪	
▪	▪	
▪	▪	
Law	1	
Military Science		
Occult Studies		
Research	1	
Vampirology		

INTERPERSONAL

Bullshit Detector	1	
Bureaucracy	1	
Cop Talk	1	
Flattery		
Flirting	1	
High Society		
Interrogation	1	
Intimidation	1	
Negotiation	1	
Reassurance		
Streetwise	1	
Tradecraft	1	

TECHNICAL

Astronomy		
Chemistry		
Cryptography	1	
Data Recovery	1	
Electronic Surveillance	1	
Forensic Pathology		
Forgery	1	
▪	▪	
▪	▪	
Notice	1	
Outdoor Survival		
Pharmacy		
Photography		
Traffic Analysis		
Urban Survival	1	
▪	▪	
▪	▪	
▪	▪	

HENLEY

DESCRIPTION You're a gamekeeper turned poacher turned ... well, the metaphor breaks down. You worked for Scotland Yard, investigating financial crime and money laundering, until you went to the private sector. You knew K&B were dodgy, but you had gambling debts and you were tired of losing. It was only when you were on the inside that you realized how dodgy K&B were — they were a front for something terrible, something with minions everywhere.

You blew up their offices in Canary Wharf and vanished into the criminal underworld, determined to bring them to justice.

BACKGROUNDS: Bagman

DRIVE: Atonement

PREVIOUS PATRON: K&B Financial Services

SOURCES OF STABILITY

- **SYMBOL** Your gun
- **SOLACE** The barman in the King's Arms
- **SAFETY** Scotland Yard

COVERS

-
-
-
-

NETWORK CONTACTS

-
-
-
-
-

WEAPONS/ARMOUR/GEAR

MOD

-
-
-
-
-
-

HIT THRESHOLD [4]

SPECIALS

EXPLOSIVE DEVICES MOS: Automatically succeed on one Explosive Devices test

PARKOUR: Refresh 3 Athletics points with a cool description of action

PERFECT HOLDOUT: Flawlessly hide one small object around your body

PORTRAIT

GENERAL ABILITIES

Athletics	8	
Conceal	8	
Cover	5	
Digital Intrusion	8	
Diguiue	2	
Driving	2	
▪	▪	
▪	▪	
Explosive Devices	2	
Filch		
Gambling	2	
Hand-to-Hand	4	
Infiltration	2	
Mechanics		
Medic		
Network	6	
Piloting		
▪	▪	
▪	▪	
Preparedness	4	
Sense Trouble	6	
Shooting	6	
Shrink		
Surveillance	5	
Weapons	2	

HEALTH

HEALTH						8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

STABILITY

STABILITY						8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

PLAYER						
AGENT	Morgan	Green	Burroughs	Ali	Varoutte	Henley
Previous Patron	Don't ask	MSF	MI6	MIT	DCRI	K&B Fin. Serv.
Drive	Slayer	Mystery	Patriotism	Restoration	Revenge	Atonement
Health	10	8	8	4	8	8
Stability	8	8	8	4	8	8
Symbol	silver bullet	crucifix	SIS ID	laptop	left hand scar	gun
Solace	girlfriend in Paris	family, esp. niece	congresswoman	brother	agent's widow	King's Arms barman
Safety	Morocco villa	Spain home	Childhood home	London hotel room	former Paris home	Scotland Yard
Cover	5	5	5	8	5	5
Network	5	5	5	10	5	6
Contact 1						
Contact 2						
Contact 3						
Contact 4						
Contact 5						
Accounting [A]				1		2
Archaeology [A]						
Architecture [A]					1	
Art History [A]					1	
Astronomy [T]						
Bullshit Detector [I]	1	1	1	2	1	1
Bureaucracy [I]		1	1	1		1
Chemistry [T]		2				
Cop Talk [I]	1		2	1		1
Criminology [A]	1		1		1	
Cryptography [T]				1		1
Data Recovery [T]					1	1
Diagnosis [A]		1				
Electronic Surveillance [T]	1		1		1	1
Flattery [I]			1	1		
Flirting [I]		1		1		1
Forensic Pathology [T]		1				
Forgery [T]					1	1
High Society [I]			1	1		
History [A]				1		
Human Terrain [A]		1	1	1	1	
Interrogation [I]	1	1		1	1	1
Intimidation [I]	2			1	1	1
Languages [A]		1	1	1		1
Law [A]	1		1		1	1
Military Science [A]	1		1	1		
Negotiation [I]	1			1	1	
Notice [T]	1	1	1		1	1
Occult Studies [A]	1	1				
Outdoor Survival [T]	1	1	1			
Pharmacy [T]		2				
Photography [T]		1			1	
Radiotelegraphy [T]						
Reassurance [I]		1	1	1		
Research [A]		1		1	1	1
Streetwise [I]	1		2		1	1
Tradecraft [I]	1	1	1	1	1	1
Traffic Analysis [T]	1		1	1	1	
Urban Survival [T]	1		1		1	1
Vampirology [A]	1	1		1	1	

On your sheet, you've got **General Abilities** and **Investigative Abilities**.

Investigative Abilities are how you find clues.

GUMSHOE is all about acquiring and using information. Investigative Abilities let you find information.

They're divided into three categories — Academic, Interpersonal and Technical — but they all work the same way.

You never need to roll for these abilities — **if you've got the right ability for the current situation, you'll get a clue.** Say you're looking around a library — if you point out to the Director (GM) that you're using your **Research** ability, you'll find any Research-related information automatically. You'll never fail to find information because you rolled badly — you just need to ask the right questions. Sometimes, the Director may volunteer information that would be obvious to your character. ("Because you've got **Criminology**, you instantly identify those guys in the bar as Serbian mafia...").

If you've got a rating in an Investigative ability, you can always find clues related to that topic. It's not enough to just shout out the name of ability — you've got to actually say how you're using it to get the clue. You never need to spend points to get key (or "core") clues.

Instead, you **spend points for advantages** like extra information, bonus General Ability points, or story twists. Your Director will suggest opportunities to spend points; you can also suggest possible benefits for spending Investigative points.

Spending points from an Investigative ability does not prevent you from using that ability to find clues.

GENERAL ABILITIES

General Abilities are how you get things done. They're how you actually use the information you gained with your Investigative Abilities.

You have to roll for General Abilities. GUMSHOE uses an **ordinary six-sided die**, and you usually need to **roll a 4 or higher** (usually, but the Director gets to secretly pick the difficulty you need to beat). You can **spend points** from the appropriate General Ability to boost your chances before rolling; **every point spent gives you a +1 to the roll.** So,

if you're trying to use Digital Intrusion to hack into a computer, you could just take your chances by rolling the die, or spend 3 points to be certain of getting at least a 4.

THRILLER COMBAT

You've got several General Abilities related to combat — Hand-to-Hand, Shooting and Weapons are the obvious ones. To hit a foe, you need to make a test using that ability and beat your target's Hit Threshold (3 for most people, 4 for exceptional foes, 5+ for some vampires).

If you hit, roll damage. Bare-handed attacks do -2 damage (1d6-2); attacks with a weapon do -1 to +1 damage depending on how big and sharp it is; firearms attacks usually do +1 or +2 damage.

HIT THRESHOLD MODIFIERS

	Defender Exposed	-1
	Partial Cover	+0
	Full Cover	+1
Night:	+1 beyond close range	
Dark:	+1 at close range; +2 beyond	
Pitch Black:	+1 point blank, +2 close, +3 beyond	
Illuminated:	If you're carrying a light source, -1	

CALLED SHOTS

	Torso	+1
	Chest	+2
	Hand or Limb	+2
	Heart or throat	+3
	Eye	+4

Add the increased Difficulty to the Damage if you hit (so, going for the Chest does +2 damage if you hit; hitting an eye is +2 damage but blinds; hitting a throat is +2 damage but can decapitate a foe)

RECKLESS ATTACKS

Spend 1 Athletics to lower your Hit Threshold and that of *one* foe by -1 for one round; max -3

SMASHES & THROWS

Spend 2 extra Hand to Hand after hitting for -1 damage by hitting foe off a hard surface (+0 damage if it's hard and sharp), or to throw foe (-2 damage)

JUMPING IN

Spend 4 Athletics or 3 points from Shooting/Hand to Hand/Weapons to act or attack immediately; change in combat order is permanent

COVER, NETWORK & PREPAREDNESS

Spend points from your **Cover** pool to declare you've got an already-existing Cover identity, complete with documentation. The more points you spend, the stronger the Cover,

Spend points from your **Network** pool to declare you've got an old friend/contact/ally/guy who owes you a favor. The more points you spent, the more reliable and useful the Contact.

Make a **Preparedness** test to retroactively obtain equipment ("of course, I had a rocket launcher in the back of my car the whole time"). The more unlikely or hard-to-acquire the equipment, the harder the Preparedness test. If your Preparedness is 8+, you can retroactively put plans into effect.

REFRESHING POOLS

Investigative Abilities: Refresh at the end of game

HEALTH:

- Medic restores 2 points of Health per Medic point spent...
- ... unless you're treating your own wounds, in which case it's 1 for 1
- Rest gives back 2 points per day unless you're Seriously Wounded (-6 or less Health)

STABILITY

- Shrink restores 2 Stability per Shrink point spent
- Regain 1 point by drawing strength from your Symbol
- Regain 1 point if your place of Safety is safe
- Regain 2 points by spending time with your Solace

OTHER ABILITIES:

- Refresh any three pools by finding a Haven
- Refresh Athletics, Driving, Hand-to-Hand, Piloting, Shooting and Weapons after 24 hours
- Refresh 3 points of Athletics, Driving, Hand to Hand, Weapons or Shooting with a suitably dramatic descriptive monologue, but only if you've a pool of 8+ in that ability
- A suitable Investigative Spend could refresh 3 points at the Director's option.

Keilberg Retreat,
Saxony, Germany

FOR ARCHIVE OPERATION EDOM

3/10/48

Begijnhof, Amsterdam,
31st August, 1908

NACHZEHREN

Kind Sir -

It has been many years since that terrible time when my son was - alas, all too briefly - under your care, and once again I must express my gratitude for your efforts. You know as well as I do that little could have been done for my boy, given the horror that followed him. Forgive me that I have so rarely written to you. The pain of that time, coupled with the madness of my dear wife, was almost too much to bear. Also, the burden of the great work kept me from writing of the heart, when there was writing of the head to be done.

You recall Friend John, who was so dear to me - and to you also, I think? He called me to England in 1894, and events there, and subsequent work in Roumania, put me on a new path. I think at least head and heart are in alignment, and I can return to Schloss Glockenstein and put an end to the error of Unternehmen Braun.

I have business in Bucharest to attend to first, to put affairs in order, but then I shall come presently to your house of healing, and by force of arms find the peace I have long desired. I shall bring with me a young woman of the family of Haflich, and you know well the significance of that.

I ask no more of you than this, my friend - that you make ready such supplies and things that are needed for the journey to Glockenstein, and that you ensure that which I left hidden in the tunnel near Keilberg all those years ago is made ready for transport.

Pray God, and the error shall be expunged before the New Year!

Yours,

Abraham Van Helsing

P.S. If I am not with you before St. Andrew's Day, then I am detained and much has gone awry. Should that happen, then you or other good people in whom you trust must fetch Miss Haflich from Bucharest and bring her to Glockenstein, that you might draw out the evil and put an end to it with such tools as you have. Remember, the coin in the mouth first, to pay the ferryman, and then remove the head, whether it be in human form or animal shape. I beg you, if ever you loved me, do not shirk this duty, even though it is much to ask of you, being as you are a healer. You know as well as I do that an infection, unpurged, will spread and grow more damaging. I dread to think what the thing might become given a century or more.

FOR ARCHIVE — OPERATION EDOM
3/10/48

Keilberg Retreat, Saxony, E. Germany"
NACHZEHREN

Begijnhof, Amsterdam,
31st August, 1908
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