

ASTRENOR

ON THE ARTIFACT TRAIL - PART 2

First Astrenor campaign

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Duration: 4-5h

For 2 to 4 players of at least level 2

Action
☆☆☆

Infiltration
☆☆☆

Dialogue
☆☆☆

Reflection
☆☆☆



SYNOPSIS

In this scenario, players will have to seek out King Toric in order to warn him of the events at Klodenn and obtain information about the artifact Galarond was seeking. Once they've arrived in Carleon, the PCs have just over 24 hours to complete this mission, before meeting up with Oriel in front of the Irdian king's castle.

<!> Warning: this script is not intended for minors. Some scenes deal with adult themes that may shock the sensibilities of some people. <!>

This scenario is entirely optional, and can be skipped by playing only the final «King's Revelations» game at Carleon Castle. However, if your players are thirsty for adventure, you can play «A False Trail» while waiting for Oriel to arrive.

This is the second part of the «On the Artifact Trail» campaign. It is therefore essential to have played Part 1 before starting this scenario.

CONTEXT

48 hours have passed since President Panorius declared war. The Asgure troops at Klodenn have been almost entirely defeated. However, clashes at the port of Kingshill Landing continue to escalate. The inhabitants of Rautha, reassured by the latest news from the front, continue their usual routine and seem to have full confidence in the armies of the Alliance.

Since the war was announced, the kingdom of Irdian has ceased most of its maritime activities in favor of guarding its borders, thus greatly reducing the number of guards present in its major cities. Long feared by other nations, the Irdian kingdom's influence has recently declined due to the emergence of the Alliance and, according to some, the arrival in power of the young King Toric. With the Republic of Rautha taking an increasingly important place on the international stage, the Irdian kingdom, formerly known for its feats of arms against the troops of Asgure, has now taken a back seat. With most of its valiant warriors having joined the Alliance on the lands of the Republic or in the bases of the Velugian Duchy, the Irdian kingdom has lost its military power and is now a nation turned towards agriculture and fishing.

Its capital, Carleon, is home to one of Rautha's largest ports, the pride of the nation. The inhabitants of this fortified city, who live mainly from fishing and shipping, find it difficult to accept the king's decisions, even if the majority remain loyal to the royal family. But if the situation persists, the kingdom's economy could be drastically affected, further accelerating the decline of an already fragile kingdom.

As the war continues, you are sent to Carleon by Oriel, a high-ranking Alliance officer, on a secret mission: to warn the King of Irdian that your enemies are trying to seize the artifact in Klodenn, and to learn more about it. It will have taken you some twenty hours to reach the capital of the Irdian kingdom. It's been a grueling journey, but you have an important mission to complete before Oriel returns.

The map of Carleon is available in the Appendix.

IN SEARCH OF THE KING

It's around 3pm when the PCs arrive at the gates of Carleon, a large fortified city several hundred years old. It lies at the center of the Irdian kingdom, at the mouth of the Snake River, which runs through the city, splitting it in two. To the east of the river lie the castle, the shopping streets and the wealthy dwellings, while to the west lie the slums, populated by the capital's less affluent inhabitants.

The PCs arrive at the west gate, next to the stables where they can park their horses. To reach the king's castle, they'll have to cross the lower quarters and see the poor state of some streets and buildings. If they ask the inhabitants of the lower quarters for information about the king, they will not be kind to King Toric, declaring that they have no interest in the crown's doings.

Once they've crossed over to the other side of the Snake River, PCs will be able to see the inequalities present in the capital. If they ask people in this part of town, they may hear a rumor that the king has gone to a dungeon to improve the crown's image and fill the kingdom's coffers. If they insist on the dungeon, the locals will tell them that it must be the Dungeon of the Damned, some 100 km to the north of here, a 2-hour ride on horseback.

It's actually a false trail. If your PCs decide to go there, go straight to the «False trail» section.

If the PCs choose to go to Carleon Castle, the gates will be blocked by two guards who will tell them that the king is away and that, consequently, the castle is closed to visitors. They don't know where the king is, but if the PCs insist, the guards will have different answers. The first may suggest that they go and see Edgar, the castle groom, while the second will tell them of a rumor concerning a heroic expedition by the king to the Keep of the Damned.

In the castle courtyard is a small stable used exclusively for the royal family's horses. Edgar, the old groom, is there. He whistles as he cleans the horses' stalls. If the PCs ask him about the king, he'll say that the king left a few hours ago without saying a word. The king is apparently used to going away on private business, so he doesn't know when he'll be back. Surprisingly, the groom will point out that the King has not taken Belfegore, his personal white stallion. If the PCs continue the conversation, Edgar will reveal that he knows someone in Carleon who always has good information. He calls himself «Roberto les bons tuyaux» and is the owner of the tavern The good slice. His tavern is on Rue de la Soif in the lower quarters (PI* 12).

If the PCs decide to go to Roberto's tavern, they'll have to go back through the lower districts. Once in the Rue de la Soif, they will have to perform a Perception test of difficult difficulty (15) in order to notice the presence watching them. Even if the test is successful, it will be impossible to know where the stares are coming from.

Carleon

Capital of the Irdian kingdom, Carleon is a magnificent fortified city overlooking the sea. It boasts one of Rautha's largest ports, and its inhabitants make their living mainly from maritime activities.

*PI = Point of Interest. They are indicated on city maps



Roberto

A big, imposing fellow with a beard and red hair. Roberto is the keeper of one of Carleon's oldest taverns. Thanks to his profession, Roberto knows a lot of people and is aware of most of the rumors circulating in the Kingdom.

It won't be long before the PCs find Roberto's tavern, which happens to be the largest in the neighborhood. This large wooden building could accommodate a hundred people, but only two customers are present. They are drinking around a table and gossiping about the king's politics. If a PC wants to listen in on their conversation, he'll hear :

Customer 1: «Have you heard the latest? Apparently, the king has gone on a quest to fill the state coffers. They say he's gone in search of the treasure in the Dungeon of the Damned!»

Customer 2: «The Dungeon of the Damned? Ha ha, don't make me laugh! This incompetent man can't do anything good for the kingdom.»

Customer 1: «Stop it, we don't know. Maybe we misjudged him, he's young after all. He's only been in power for four years.»

Customer 2: «In the time of his father, the late King Torkel, Irdian was respected! Look, today our kingdom is nothing more than Rautha's larder. A few gold coins won't change that!»

At the far end of the bar, behind the counter, stands an imposing man with red hair and beard. This is Roberto, the owner of the bar.

If questioned by the PCs, Roberto will reveal that he knows someone very close to the king, someone who must know for sure where he is. However, he will only give the name of this person if the PCs place an order with him. These being difficult times for business, Roberto will offer them the house specialty: a good plate of charcuterie with a beer per person, for a total of 7 AP each in exchange for his valuable information.

If the PCs accept, he'll serve them a good meal and give them Persephone's name. This young woman works as a dancer and waitress in one of the taverns in the Upper Town, called The Dancing Thigh (PI 11). Persephone and King Toric are said to have been frequently seen together recently. Rumor has it that she is his favorite mistress.

Once they've eaten their fill, the PCs can resume their journey towards the tavern The Dancing Thigh. But as soon as they leave The good slice, they are warmly greeted by a gang from the slums who have been watching them since they arrived in the Rue de la Soif.

These bandits attack by surprise first, unless one of the adventurers indicates that he is leaving the tavern on guard. In this case, he must succeed in a Perception roll of easy difficulty (5) to spot the ambush and avoid being attacked by surprise. If the player scores more than 15 on his Perception roll, the PCs will automatically be in a defensive position for the bandits' first attack. The bandits outnumber the PCs two to one, but only half of them will be able to attack by surprise, while the other half will play only after the PCs.

Bandits from Carleon's slums take advantage of the absence of some of the guards, sent to guard the borders, to pick the pockets of foreigners. They are well organized and know the capital's streets inside out. If the fight turns against them and they find themselves outnumbered, they'll easily flee.

A map of the Rue de la Soif and a Bandit sheet are available in the appendix.

If the PCs are defeated by the gang, they will wake up in Carleon hospital (PI 5), stripped of all their savings. However, they retain the equipment and items in their inventories.

After this confrontation, they can head for the upper-class districts, in search of Persephone.

The slum gang

A group of bandits who operate in the slums of Carleon, mainly attacking travelers and/or foreigners.

Most of them are young people who grew up in these underprivileged areas and make a living from their misdeeds, in spite of those they rob.

Shopkeepers in the slums take a dim view of them, because even if they are not directly targeted, these bandits scare off their customers.

A FALSE TRAIL

This optional act is only played if the PCs choose to go to the Dungeon of the Damned.

Getting to the Keep of the Damned from Carleon takes 4 hours round trip on horseback or 20 hours on foot, which would automatically cause the mission to fail. The dungeon is lost in the middle of the forest and the atmosphere is very heavy, even more so at night.

The PCs will need to finish the dungeon quickly or give up early if they are to have any chance of completing their mission in time.

The Dungeon of the Damned is normally uninhabited, but it is said that during the night, strange noises emanating from this place echo through the forest.

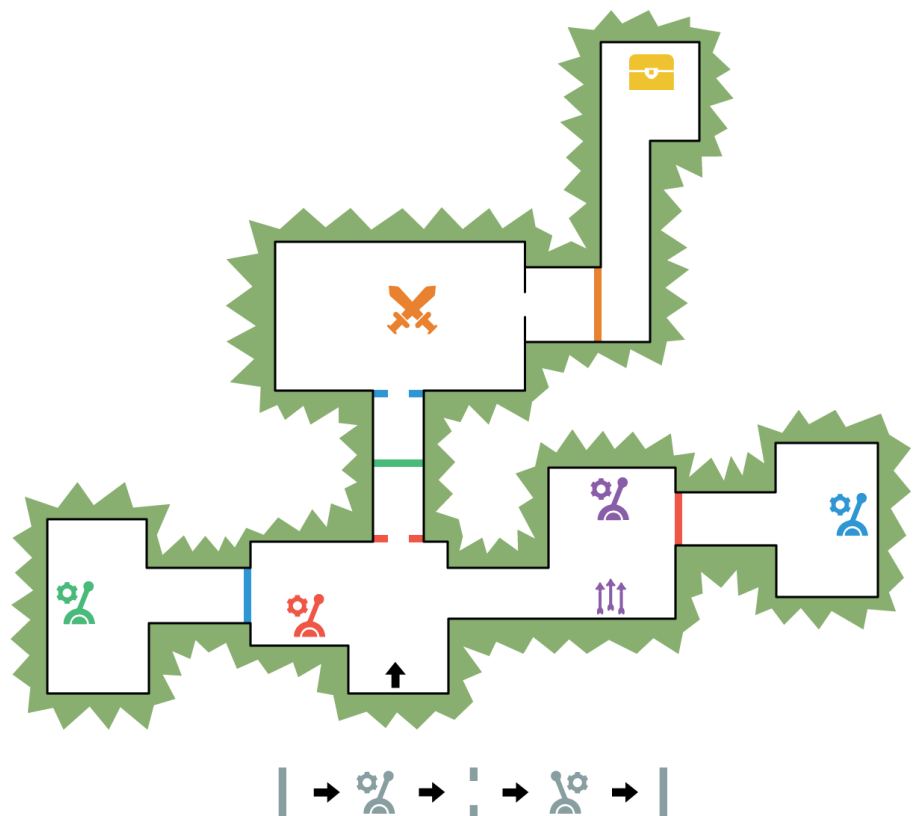
The PCs will need a torch to navigate the ruins. The place is covered in cobwebs and the ground is strewn with debris. To find the treasure in the Dungeon of the Damned, PCs will have to solve the riddle of the levers and defeat its otherworldly inhabitants.

Refer to the Damned - Mechanics dungeon map below to describe the location and events to your players. This plan must not be divulged to your players.

The Dungeon of the Damned

The Dungeon of the Damned is said to have been the former laboratory of a powerful magician, who performed numerous morbid experiments on decomposing corpses. According to legend, he tried to restore life to his wife and children, who had all perished in a fire. Unfortunately, necromantic magic caused him to lose his mind and he committed suicide by casting a final resurrection spell. His spirit, along with those of all his guinea pigs, has haunted the premises ever since.

Plan of the Dungeon of the Damned



To better understand the map: The coloured levers are actually large wooden planks protruding from the ground, which open and close thick stone doors that can't be forced. Both the levers and the doors are similar, with no distinguishing features. The colors are only there to help the GM find his way around. The green, red and blue levers open and close doors of the corresponding color, while the purple lever is a trap that triggers a volley of arrows (1d10 damage). The trap can be avoided if the PCs inspect the room. A medium-difficulty Perception test (10) will reveal a few rusty-tipped arrows on the floor. If the roll is particularly successful (15 or more), PCs may notice strange gaps in the wall facing the lever.

To reach the great hall behind the three doors, PCs must activate the levers in this order: Red, Blue, Green, Blue and Red.

Once in the great hall, the PCs are confronted with a vision of horror: piles of decomposing bones and flesh are strewn across the floor. On their right, the only way forward is closed: it's guarded by a statue as strange as it is terrifying. Opposite them, a huge circular slab covers the center of the great hall. If a PC steps on it, the doors behind them will close and the piles of bones and flesh will begin to animate, forming an army of skeletons and zombies. These creatures have been brought to life by the statue of the necromancer in the room to the right.

PJs can hear when a door opens or closes, but they can't see it if it's behind a closed door.

If there are 3 of them, PCs will have to face 1 zombie, 2 skeletons and 1 motionless necromancer.

If there are 4, the players will have to face 2 zombies, 3 skeletons and 1 motionless necromancer.

If there are 5, PCs will have to face 3 zombies, 4 skeletons and 1 immobile necromancer.

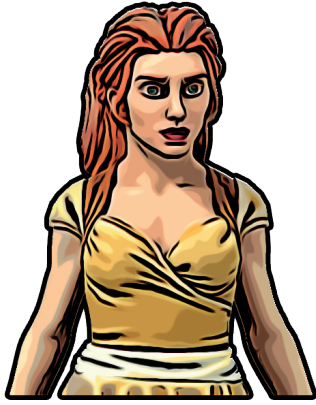
Note: zombies and skeletons are undead creatures. They can continue to attack even if their HP is below 0, and can be reanimated by the necromancer's reanimation spell.

The map of the great hall of the Dungeon of the Damned and the zombie, skeleton and necromancer files are available in the appendix.

Once the otherworldly enemies have been defeated, all the dungeon doors will open, clearing the way to the treasure room. The chest is now in the PCs' possession, but there's no trace of the King. They must leave as soon as possible if they are to complete their mission.

A STRANGE INVESTIGATION

Once they reach the street of bars and restaurants (11), the PCs quickly spot a lively tavern, where music and cheers are particularly loud. This is The Dancing Thigh.



Persephone

A seductive young woman with red hair and bewitching eyes. Her pretty face and dance steps turn the heads of many men in the capital. Rumor has it that she is King Toric's new mistress.



Luigi

The cook at The Dancing Thigh, Luigi is an extravagant, jovial character with a passion for his job. He doesn't mince his words and loves to gossip.

A hundred or so customers - mostly men - crowd around a splendid young woman with long red hair, twirling and twirling to the music. They form an almost impenetrable circle right up to the dancer: the PCs will have to elbow their way in if they want to call on the young woman before the end of her performance. The performance should be over soon, however.

The tavern is slightly more spacious than The good slice, but what sets it apart is of course the atmosphere.

If the PCs ask one of the tavern's patrons for the dancer's name, they'll quickly get confirmation that it's Persephone.

Once the young woman's act is over, she'll be much more willing to answer the adventurers' questions. She'll lead them out of the crowd and into the kitchens, where they can have a more audible conversation. In the kitchens, chef Luigi is busy at work, paying no attention to them.

If the PCs ask her about her relationship with King Toric, Persephone will reply that it's none of their business. She won't appreciate the implication, especially in the presence of Luigi, who has a reputation for being a real gossip.

If the PCs tell her about the rumor of the King's presence in the Dungeon of the Damned, Persephone will chuckle and say she's surprised.

The young woman knows where the king is, but will only reveal this information on one condition: that the adventurers complete a mission for her. If they present themselves as an adventurer or member of a Castle City guild, the young woman will say the following words to them:

"I may indeed know where Riri, er... I mean, our king, is. I agree to tell you if, in exchange, you carry out a mission for me. You are adventurers, after all. Besides, how come you're here right now? Shouldn't you be out fighting Asgure's troops? Are you deserters? Maybe I should report you to the guards myself... Ha ha, just kidding! Complete my mission and I'll tell you how to find him.."

Persephone is far more concerned with her personal affairs than with the geopolitical situation. She won't be impressed by the PCs' warnings, especially as she knows she can count on the King's protection whatever happens. If they accept the mission or ask for more information, the young woman will lead the PCs to the tavern staff's rest room. This room is only accessible via the kitchens. It is used by

the tavern's employees to take their breaks, eat their meals and deposit their personal belongings.

Persephone heads for her locker and explains straightforwardly what she expects from the adventurers. For the past few weeks, she has sometimes been unable to find her underwear in her locker. Her initial suspicions were that the tavern's regulars were involved, but access to the rest room is forbidden to customers and its only door leads to the kitchen. She suspects the tavern's other employees of being odious perverts. She asks the adventurers to find the thief and scare him enough not to do it again.

With the information in their possession, the PCs can begin the investigation. Here's a list of actions likely to reveal information that could clear or incriminate a suspect.

Inspecting lockers in the break room

If the PCs examine Persephone's locker, they'll find a strange letter at the bottom. The young woman hadn't noticed it, and says it doesn't belong to her.

See appendix for the letter from the secret admirer.

She doesn't recognize the handwriting, but it only confirms her suspicions about the tavern's shady customers. If the PCs ask her to name the strangest customer, she can give the name Delmad: a man with an ungainly face and a disturbing gaze.

The lockers of Adam the bartender and Luigi the cook are accessible, but you'll have to be careful to check them discreetly: having strangers in the rest room is unusual, so they're particularly vigilant and will swoop in at the slightest suspicious noise. They may not appreciate this surprise search.

Le casier d'Adam est bien banal. Les PCs peuvent trouver une veste, des chaussures de ville et une boîte à cigare. Quelques pièces d'argent se trouvent au fond des poches de sa veste.

Luigi's locker is somewhat similar, with the exception of a locked briefcase leaning against the bottom of his locker. The case can be hooked using the locksmith's trump card and a lock-picking kit. Dexterity roll difficulty is medium (10). The case can also be opened by force, without damaging it, with a difficult Strength roll (15).

Inside the case is a fine collection of men's naughty magazines with depictions of naked, muscular orcs in suggestive positions.

If a PC steals or damages anything in these cases, he automatically loses one morale point.

Inspecting kitchens

The kitchens feature a central island with a number of drawers for

Letter from the secret admirer

Handwritten letter from a Persephone admirer, left in his locker. The letter is well written, but covered with grease stains.



Delmad

A shady customer at The Dancing Thigh, Delmad is a strange, uneducated man with a diction problem. He regularly hangs out alone in the tavern and seems to worship Persephone.



Adam

Barman at The Dancing Thigh, Adam is a man who cares about a job well done. He is often called upon by the tavern's customers, but always remains very professional. His only moments of relaxation are his cigar-smoking breaks.

cutting meat and vegetables, and for storing cooking utensils. A large fireplace is used for cooking.

If the PCs rummage through the kitchen drawers and cupboards while Luigi is still in the house, they will incur the wrath of Luigi, who will deem their behavior unacceptable. Successful Charisma rolls are then required to obtain information from him.

The PCs may, however, find the key to Luigi's briefcase in one of the drawers in the central island. They'll have to be careful not to be spotted, though, as Luigi won't take kindly to this, and may well send a hot frying pan flying at their heads (1d8 damage).

Inspecting the great hall

The large room has a dozen tables, a small stage for entertainment and a drinks counter behind which works Adam, the establishment's bartender. Next to the counter, just behind the stage, is a door leading to the office of the owner: Riza.

If the PCs try to enter, Adam will warn them that the boss doesn't like to be disturbed for nothing.

The place is bustling with activity: some thirty customers are still on hand to eat and drink, but most are just waiting for Persephone to return. Among all these customers, one man catches the PCs' eye. He's the only customer to be alone at his table, he has a glass in front of him that he doesn't touch, and he's not eating anything. It's Delmad, the suspicious customer Persephone suspects.

Questioning Delmad, the shady customer

Delmad is a great fan of Persephone, coming every day to watch her dance.

If the PCs wish to question him, they'll quickly realize that he couldn't possibly be the author of the letter found in Persephone's locker.

Indeed, the poor man is not very educated, he can't read or write and expresses himself with a hair on his tongue.

Questioning Adam, the bartender

At the counter, a few customers are waiting to receive their beverages. Adam is very busy, so it will be difficult to get any more information, his only interactions boiling down to:

«I don't have time for this nonsense. Do you really think that's all I've got time for?»

During his breaks, Adam usually goes off to smoke a cigar outside the establishment. It would be wiser to meet him there for a chat. If the PCs suggest that they suspect Luigi, Adam will laugh and say that Persephone doesn't really suit the cook's tastes.

Adam seems honest, and far too preoccupied with his job to be stealing panties. A medium-difficulty Perception test (10) will show the PCs that he has a nervous twitch in his right eye, symptomatic of overwork.

Questioning Luigi, the Cook

Luigi is very talkative, and won't hesitate to answer the PCs' questions unless they've been disrespectful to him.

If he's in a good mood, he'll answer the adventurers' questions with a smile, while continuing to cook. If not, you'll have to charm him back with a difficult Charisma roll (15), or a 5 if you're a male orc.

If the PCs ask him about Adam, he'll say he can't imagine him doing that sort of thing.

If the players ask him about recent access to the kitchens, he'll say that only tavern staff can enter the kitchen. After a moment's thought, he'll add that certain suppliers can also drop off their goods. Luigi remembers receiving a delivery of spirits, cold meats and vegetables this week. But he can't remember the days or the names of the suppliers.

Questioning Riza, the Boss

Riza is a busy businesswoman. She runs several establishments in the neighborhood. Unless the PCs have a specific question for her that only she knows the answer to, she'll ask them to take it up with someone else, as she has an important job to finish before leaving.

If the PCs ask her for a list of suppliers and delivery dates, she'll be somewhat reluctant to look for this document. Eventually, however, she'll accede to the request, understanding that only she can provide this information.

The list of suppliers is available in the appendix.

Questioning Persephone

Persephone is a carefree young woman who enjoys life. She has many admirers and doesn't really know which one could have done this. She doesn't think it's one of her colleagues, but after all she's only known them for a few weeks and only they have access to the break room.

If the PCs ask her a question about when it happened, she'll say it happened the day before yesterday (it's Friday), last Wednesday and another time before that, but she can't remember the date.

Survey solution

Once all the pieces of the puzzle have been put together, the PCs will understand that this is dear Roberto. The grease stains on the letter and the deli delivery dates coincide with the time of the incident, and are



Riza

Owner of The Dancing Thigh, Riza is a strong-willed woman in her forties. Her sharp business sense has enabled her to build up one of Carleon's most prolific businesses. She now runs several restaurants and inns.

List of suppliers

A note listing all the tavern's suppliers and their delivery dates for the current month.

Among the list of suppliers is Roberto's tavern, The good slice.

clues to the owner of The good slice.

If the PCs return to The good slice, Roberto will still be there. If he is accused of stealing the knickers, he will initially deny all the charges against him. A difficult Intelligence roll (15) will reveal signs of nervousness on Roberto's part. A difficult Perception roll (15) will draw a PC's attention to a piece of lace protruding from Roberto's pants. The old rascal is currently wearing one of Persephone's panties. The young woman's other lingerie is hidden in one of his counter drawers.

If the PCs put a little pressure on him, a Charisma test of medium difficulty (10), or if they find an item of underwear on him or in his drawer, the poor man will break down and confess everything in a low voice.

“Okay, okay, I admit it! But please, keep your voice down. Yes, I'm the one who stole Persephone's underwear. Are you happy now? At first, I just wanted to scare her. I wanted to make her believe that a dangerous psychopath was hiding among the tavern's clientele, so that she'd leave The Dancing Thigh... Since she arrived there, I've been steadily losing customers, to the point where I'm now forced to deliver my own cold cuts to my own competitors! What a shame. And then, when she didn't leave, I started again for the next two weeks. But by going there and seeing her smile, I, like so many others, fell under her spell... Now you know everything!”

Terribly embarrassed by the situation, Roberto then fetches the young woman's underwear, and takes a few extra minutes to remove the one he's wearing. He entrusts them to the PCs, asking them not to divulge his name to Persephone. He swears never to do it again, and that this incident has taught him a lesson.

With the mystery solved, the PCs can then set off in the direction of The Dancing Thigh to report his underwear to Persephone.

If the investigation has been quickly solved and your players are thirsty for a fight, you can integrate a new fight scene in the Rue de la Soif with the gang from the lower quarters. The latter have recruited a few extra hands to take on the PCs, their last defeat having taught them a lesson (or not, for that matter).

A DUNGEON LIKE NO OTHER

Back at The Dancing Thigh tavern, the PCs will find Persephone serving customers. They can return her personal belongings and beg for what they're owed. Persephone will want to know the name of the culprit: the PCs can choose whether or not to denounce poor Roberto. Whether they decide to name the thief or keep quiet, if they assure her it won't happen again, the young woman won't insist.

Persephone will thank the adventurers warmly with these words:

"Thank you for your help. I see that the reputation of the [P]s guild is not usurped. Well, a promise is a promise. I'll tell you where Riri is... Er, the king!

They say he's in a dungeon... To tell the truth, that's not entirely untrue. But I know exactly what kind of dungeon he likes. He's already tried to take me there, but it's not really my thing...

A few miles east of Carleon is a small hamlet, known for its libertine club called the Lewd Dungeon. You can be sure to find him there. He usually goes there once a month and spends two or three nights. It's a very select club, so you won't be able to get in so easily, especially dressed like that. No offense."

The PCs are due to meet Oriel at Carleon Castle at 7pm the following day. Unfortunately, it will be too late if they decide to wait for the King's return.

If the PCs ask Persephone how to get into the establishment, she'll first suggest they dress in smart (15 PO) or even luxurious (30 PO) clothes. She also knows that a secret code is required to enter the club. Unfortunately, it changes every week and she doesn't know it. She knows all this from a friend of hers, Rebecca, who works there. Persephone will only mention the name of her friend Rebecca if the PCs are convincing in expressing the urgency of the situation. It's also possible to try your hand at seducing the young woman, subject to a Charisma test of difficult difficulty (15). If the PCs present themselves as Persephone's friends, Rebecca can help them get in and find the king once they're there.

The Lewd Dungeon is about 30 minutes away on horseback, or 2h30 on foot. The tower of the Lewd Dungeon overlooks the hamlet and can be seen in the distance: it emits red lights and strange music. The few people present in the hamlet seem to be concentrated inside the establishment, the streets being completely deserted.

As they approach the club, the PCs will catch a glimpse of the wealthy bourgeoisie. Wearing black evening masks, they enter one after the other. From a distance, it's possible to see that the customers knock several times on the large wooden door of the dungeon, wait a few seconds for the peephole on the door to open, then approach it (to give the password) and enter the club once the door has been opened by what appears to be a security guard.

Lewd Dungeon

A very select libertarian club frequented only by the nobles and wealthy bourgeois of the Kingdom, where discretion is the watchword. The password changes every week to prevent unwanted intrusion, and only club members are allowed in.

If the PCs go around the establishment, they'll find a small door hidden behind some large waste containers: it gives access to the kitchens. If they wait a few minutes, they'll see the first cook taking out the rubbish, then a few minutes later, a second one coming out to smoke a cigar.

The PCs then have several options for entering:

Through the main entrance

To do this, the PCs need to find the password spoken by the club's customers. There are very few places to hide, and approaching them undetected is particularly complex. The Concealment spell may be a good solution. Alternatively, a PC can attempt a Dexterity roll of difficult difficulty (15) followed by a Perception roll of medium difficulty (10) to get close enough to hear the password without being detected. However, if during this attempt the security guard sees a PC's spying face, he will not be able to enter.

The PCs can take an approaching middle-class couple aside. They are difficult to corrupt, given their financial affluence. They can reveal the password under threat, but this will cost each PC a morale point. Alternatively, they can try to charm them with a Charisma roll of difficult difficulty (15).

The password is «The moon is full tonight».

The security guard will only open the door if he hears the password. There's no point asking him to call Rebecca or trying to bribe him.

Once inside the establishment, the security guard will ask the PCs to deposit their belongings and pay their share of the evening, i.e. 10 PO per person. In exchange, the checkroom attendant will give each of them a black mask. PCs are obliged to leave their bags with their personal belongings if they wish to pass through the entrance lock.

Through the kitchen door

If the PCs choose to break down or pick the door, they'll come face to face with the establishment's kitchen brigade. They'll be forcibly escorted outside by a dozen or so cooks ready to do battle if they resist.

If the PCs wait long enough, they may run into Charles, a cook on a break. They can ask him to fetch Rebecca for a small sum of money, 5 PO minimum. After a few minutes, Charles will return with the young woman and go back to work.

If the PCs introduce themselves as Persephone's friends, Rebecca will be indebted to her friend. She'll be able to confirm that the King is indeed present this evening, and will even agree to help the PCs gain entry. Unfortunately, the employees of the Lewd Dungeon don't know the password - only the club members and security staff do. Employees can only enter and move around the Lewd Dungeon thanks to the

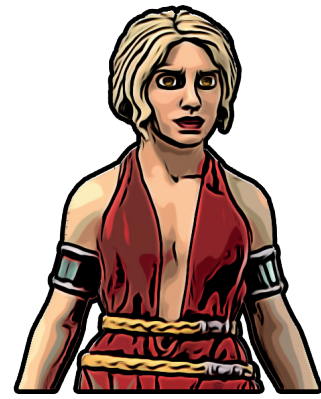
badge sewn onto their work clothes.

Rebecca works here as a courtesan. After a few minutes' thought, she'll offer to give the PCs some of the establishment's outfits to let them in.

As the customers of the Lewd Dungeon have very diverse tastes, the establishment has made a habit of hiring courtesans of all origins and sizes. As a result, she's sure to find outfits to suit every PC's body type. She'll bring a small veil for each man so they can hide their faces.

If they accept, Rebecca will fetch them clothes that fit. Courtesan clothes are very light, leaving little to the imagination. Before entering, the adventurers will need to hide their belongings, as they won't go unnoticed with their bags on their backs.

Once they've put on their costumes, PCs can enter through the kitchens without arousing suspicion, but not without a certain amount of embarrassment.



Rebecca

Courtesan and waitress at the Lewd Dungeon, this ravishing young blonde with luscious lips is a childhood friend of Persephone.

It was thanks to Persephone's new contact that Rebecca was able to get this new job, for which she is very grateful.

CLIMBING THE DUNGEON

Inside the Lewd Dungeon, the atmosphere is in full swing. In the large hall on the first floor, dozens of courtesans are dancing to lascivious music, much to the delight of the customers, all wearing masks and smart clothes.

Most customers are seated at tables, enjoying the food and beverages offered by the establishment. At the far end of the room is a large bar, from which the waitresses collect the various cocktails and bring them to the customers. To the right of the bar is the door to the kitchens, and to the left a staircase leads to the upper floors.

On the second floor are several rooms devoted to carnal pleasures, to which all customers have free access. The second floor resembles the first in every way, except that only VIPs and staff members have access to it. Finally, the third floor is accessible only to VIP members and a select few courtesans. Most of the locals don't know what's going on, and don't really want to know.

If the PCs wear courtesan outfits, they can continue their ascent to the second floor. They will, however, be regularly solicited by the club's customers, for various and sundry purposes...

If they try to access floors that are off-limits to them, they'll be blocked by 2 imposing guards, responsible for checking access to VIP areas.

The Lewd Dungeon is a very select club, with a rule never to divulge the identity of its members. If the PCs ask for information about King Toric, the staff and members of the club will say nothing, and they won't appreciate anyone trying to break the club's rules.

If the PCs are attentive, they may notice that some customers are wearing different masks: golden masks studded with small precious stones.

These are VIP members' masks, giving them access to floors 3 and 4.

Attempting to retrieve one of these masks will not be easy. The PCs will have to be ingenious to get hold of them without using force.

Here's a list of possible actions for each floor:

1st Floor

If they haven't already, the PCs can try to make contact with Rebecca by asking one of the employees where she is. The young woman is currently in charge of the cocktail service, so she'll be easy to spot by the other employees. Once in contact with Rebecca, the PCs will only be able to obtain her help if they introduce themselves as Persephone's friends.

Floor access rules

Allowed to travel to

1st: Everyone

2nd: Everyone

3rd:: VIP members and facility staff

3th: VIP members and accompanying courtesans only.

Floors 3 and 4 are guarded respectively by 2 guards responsible for enforcing these rules.

In the event of a confrontation, the guard sheet is available in the appendix.

Depending on the PCs' questions, Rebecca can :

- confirm that the King is indeed present this evening, and that he is on the top floor.
- tell them that golden masks give access to the VIP floors.
- provide them with courtesan outfits.

The large hall on the first floor is an ideal meeting place. If disguised as courtesans, a PC can attempt to seduce a VIP client by succeeding at a Charisma roll of medium difficulty (10) or difficult difficulty (15), depending on his approach. If he succeeds, he can take the client to one of the rooms on floors 2 or 3, where he can steal his golden mask out of sight. Once in one of the rooms, you'll need to distract or gag him for the duration of the operation, so that he doesn't alert the guards.

2nd Floor

Of the ten or so rooms available, only two are unoccupied. Most of the occupied rooms are locked, but some have been left open, intentionally or not. The PCs can try to break into one of the rooms to steal a courtesan's outfit. They will not, however, find a golden mask in these rooms. The concealment spell may be a good solution, or a PC could attempt a medium-difficulty Dexterity roll (10) to steal the clothes of a courtesan hanging around the room without attracting the attention of the people there, who are very busy anyway...

Doors to locked rooms can be opened with the Locksmith's trump card, or broken down with a difficult Strength roll (15). However, by force, the PCs risk terrorizing the occupants and alerting the guards.

The staircase to floor 3 is blocked by 2 guards, who will only let through people wearing gold masks or members of staff. Breaking through without weapons or equipment is purely impossible, if not suicidal.

3rd Floor

Of all the rooms available, only two are occupied: the first is locked and the second has been left open.

If a player decides to listen behind the closed door, he'll be able to hear snoring by succeeding at an easy difficulty Perception roll (5). If a player has locksmith skills, he can try to open the door without waking the occupant. Picking requires a Dexterity test of medium difficulty (10). Once inside, it will be very easy to retrieve the sleeping person's golden mask, which is prominently displayed on the bedside table next to the bed.

If a PC decides to enter the open room, he'll come across a torrid scene between several individuals, including a VIP member of the club, who is still wearing his golden mask. The man in question is not averse to additional courtesans, which is why his door has been left open. To get his mask back, you'll either have to distract him or do it the hard way. Care must be taken, however, not to attract the guards, as the PCs are unarmed.

The staircase to floor 4 is blocked by 2 guards, who will only let through people wearing gold masks and the courtesans accompanying them. Breaking through without weapons or equipment is purely impossible, if not suicidal.

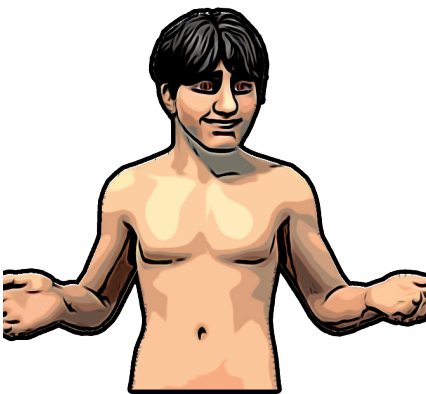
4th Floor

Once they reach the top of the stairs, the PCs can hear men shouting and whipping noises echoing down the corridor. Most of the rooms are empty, but 4 of them are occupied and locked.

If the PCs listen at the doors, they'll hear moaning and curious invectives such as «Heel, you miserable tramp» or «Obey your mistress» ... If they listen at the third door, they'll hear «You've been a naughty boy... Riri deserves a big punishment.» King Toric is behind this door.

If the PCs knock on all the doors for no reason, customers who have been disturbed may alert the guards. The guards are not in the habit of bothering VIP members of the club. For this reason, they will first warn the PC wearing the golden mask to stop bothering the other customers, otherwise they will be forced to intervene.

Si les PCs frappent à la porte de la chambre du roi (la troisième), ils will have to introduce themselves as members of the Alliance and say that Father Luther has left him an important message, or that the temple at Klodenn has been attacked. Otherwise, King Toric will not understand the urgency of the situation and, being very busy, will ask the PCs to come back later, and if possible in another place.



Riri's secret

Riri is the nickname given to King Toric by his mistresses. He takes advantage of his secret visits to the Lewd Dungeon to indulge in BDSM practices with his mistress Stella.

If the PCs fail to convince the king to open his door, or if they are chased away by the guards, they will have to leave the Lewd Dungeon empty-handed and wait for the king to return to the castle. Fortunately for them, the king doesn't stay long and returns the next day, just a few minutes before their rendezvous with Oriel. The PCs will then be able to get their information in time.

In this situation, you should play «The King's Revelations» as if the scene took place in the castle, without the club context.

If the PCs can convince the king of the urgency of the situation, he will ask Stella, his mistress, to open the door. The PCs will witness a curious scene in which the king asks about his friend Luther while naked and tied hand and foot to the bed frame. King Toric doesn't seem bothered by the situation, and is far more concerned about his old friend. As the discussion progresses, Stella will untie him, whip in hand, and give him his clothes.

THE KING'S REVELATIONS

After learning of the events in Klodenn, King Toric will be deeply affected by the PCs' revelations, especially if he learns of Luther's death. Luther's family and that of the king have always been very close. Before Klodenn's independence, Luther worked as an advisor to his father, the late King Torkell, and has known Toric since he was a child. However, unaware of the danger, the young king is not overly concerned by the threat of Asgure, especially as he is no longer in possession of the artifact that used to reside in Klodenn.

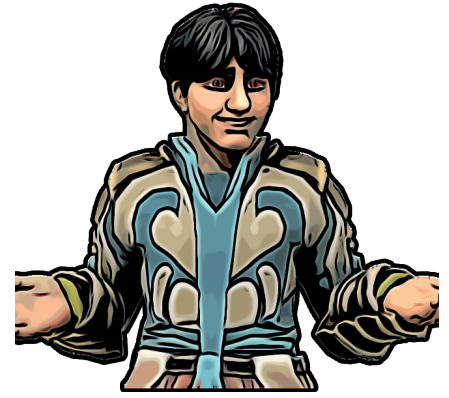
If the PCs ask him about the artifact, the king will reply as follows:

"Why are you all so interested in this damned family heirloom? It's been gathering dust in the castle treasure room for years, so much so that I'd completely forgotten it was stored in Klodenn before the formation of the republic. Unfortunately, it's no longer in my possession. I sold it to King Guldrak on his last visit, and for a very good price! The castle's coffers were running low, and someone had to bail them out. Fortunately, your good King Toric is a fine negotiator. I got 200 PO for a souvenir... Why are you looking at me like that? Do you think it was worth more?"

The PCs will be somewhat stunned by the king's revelations, as he doesn't seem to understand the extent of his mistake and is unaware of the artifact's true nature.

If the PCs ask him about the artifact's appearance, Toric will say that it's a blue egg-shaped object, about 20cm wide and 30cm high.

Once the warning has been given and the information retrieved, the PCs can meet Oriel outside Carleon Castle at the appointed time.



King Toric

Current king of the Irdian kingdom, son of former king Torkell. Toric is a carefree young man with little regard for his position as king. He loves the company of pretty young women and has little interest in anything else.

CONCLUSION

The PCs know that the artifact is in the possession of Guldrak, king of the kingdom of Drukh, and they have accomplished their mission by warning the king of Irdian of the danger.

They meet up with Oriel, who has just returned from Alliance headquarters in Castle City. She arrives at Carleon Castle on schedule. Once they have reported back to Oriel, she tells them that time is running out and that they must leave for Wolforge as soon as possible to meet King Guldrak. Oriel seems to have taken note of some of the information. However, she is very evasive about the purpose of this mission. If the PCs ask her about what she's learned in Castle City, Oriel will reply that it's confidential information and that they'll find out in due course, if all goes well. In the meantime, the PCs have no choice but to trust her and continue obeying the Alliance.

The road to Wolforge is likely to be long and perilous. Climbing Gigantic, the highest mountain in Rautha, will be no easy task. But there's no doubt that if the PCs are looking for answers, they'll find them there.

AWARDS

Here is the list of end-of-scenario rewards available, depending on the objectives reached:

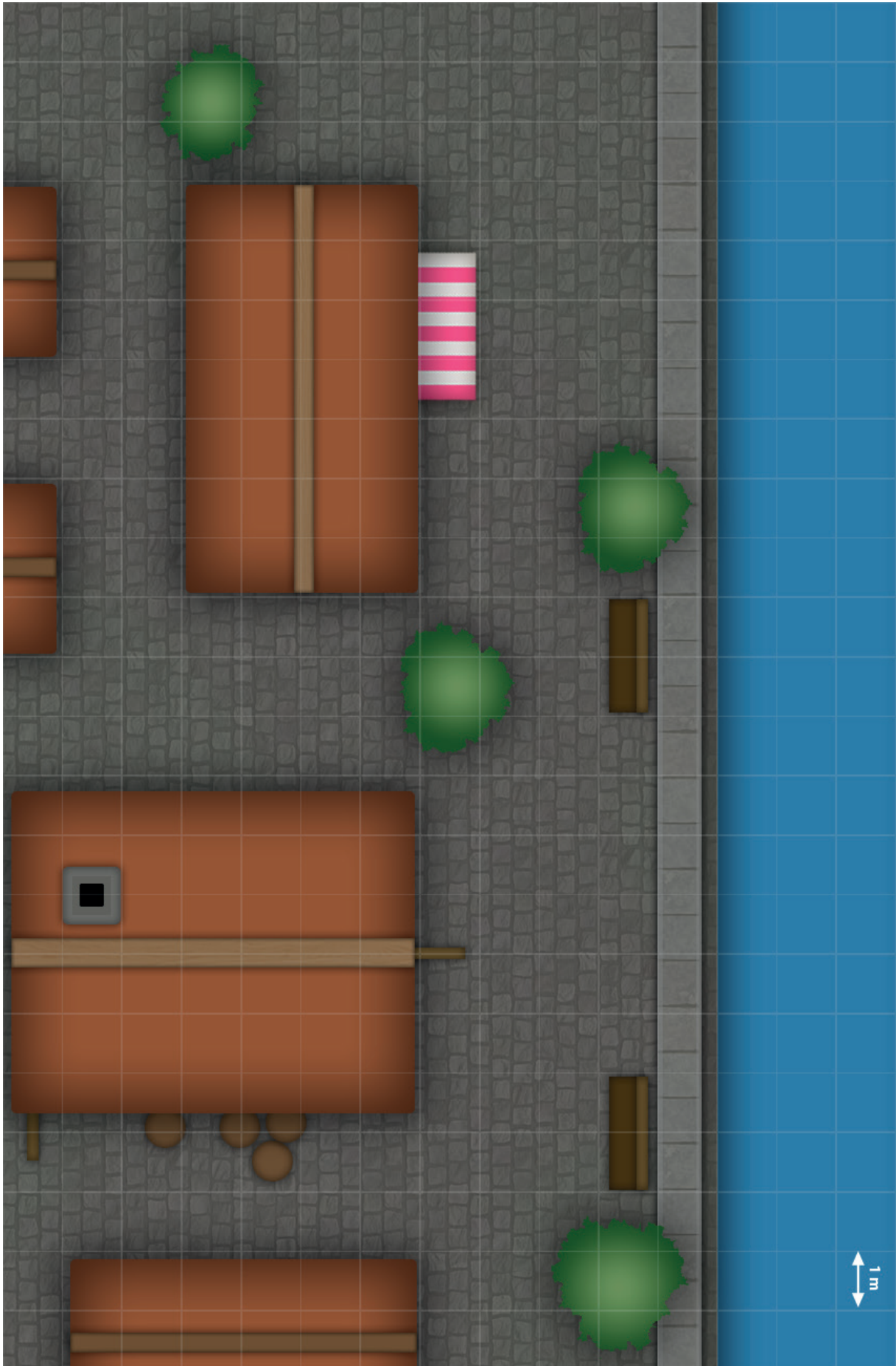
Objectives	Awards
Meet the King at the Lewd Dungeon	200 experience points and 100 gold coins per PC
Completing Persephone's quest	1 point de morale et 70 points d'expérience
Do not reveal the name of the culprit to Persephone	1 morale point
Defeat the Downbelow Gang (once)	100 experience points and 25 gold coins per PC
Recover the treasure of the Dungeon of the Damned	150 experience points and 75 gold coins per PC
Complete the scenario	50 gold coins per PC

APPENDIX

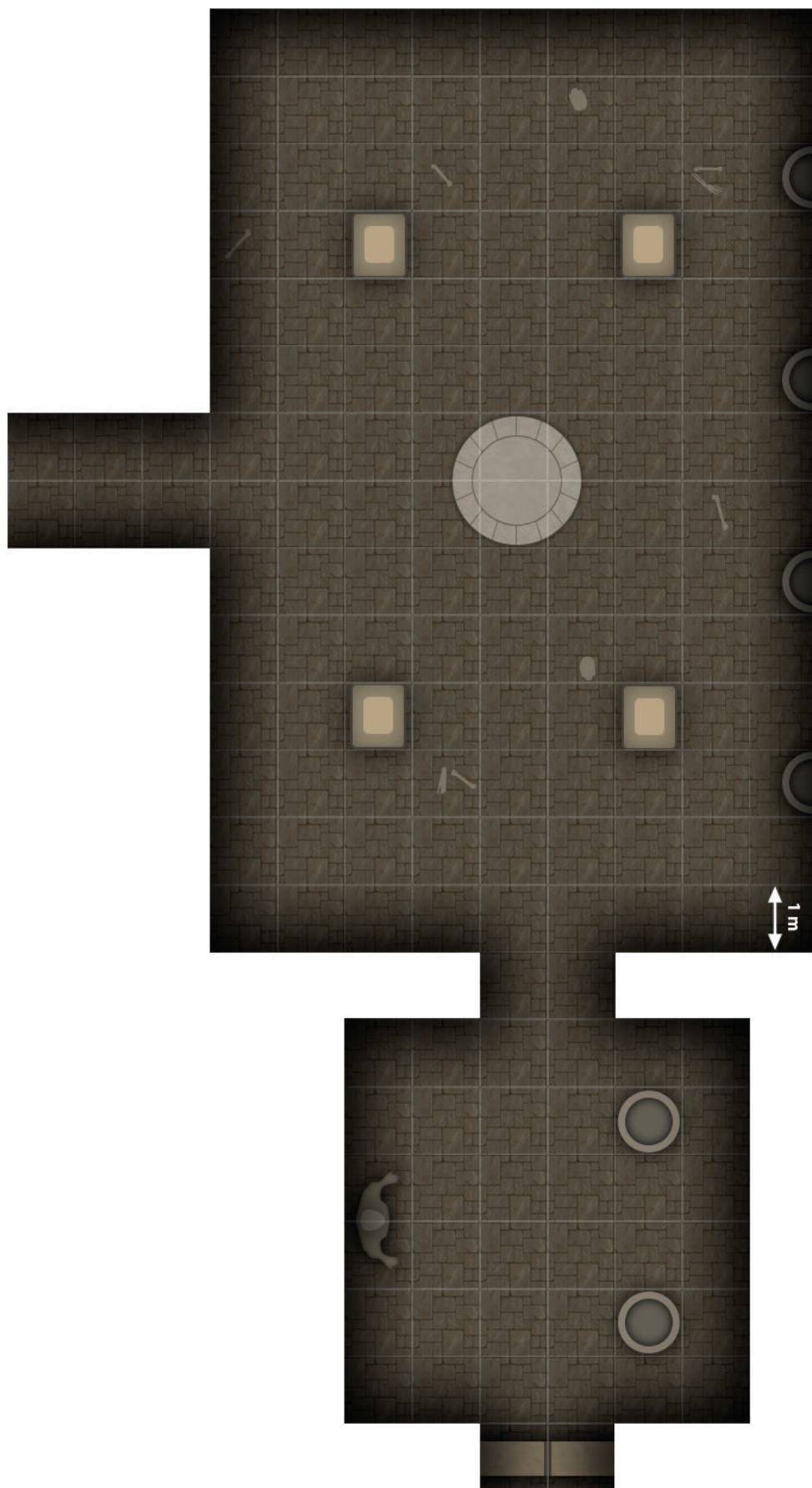
MAP OF CARLEON



STREET OF THIRST



GREAT HALL OF THE DUNGEON OF THE DAMNED



LETTER FROM THE SECRET ADMIRER

Dear Persephone,

Ever since you arrived at the tavern, I can't stop thinking about you.

Every time I see you dancing, I fall in admiration and I forget all my daily problems.

I wait every day for the moment when I can finally contemplate you.

You have become my reason for living and I hope that one day your eyes will be on me.

Until that happens, I will continue to come to observe you, drown in this crowd of admirers that surrounds you.

I love you.

A secret admirer

LIST OF SUPPLIERS

June Delivery Schedule

Friday, 2nd June: Vales Butcher - Meats

Saturday, 3rd June: Clark - Spirits

Saturday, 3rd June: Duff Brewery - Mead & Beer

Monday, 5th June: Tony's Farm - Fruits and Vegetables

Tuesday, 6th June: The Cormorant - Fish and Seafood

Wednesday, 7th June: The Right Slice - Delicatessen

Friday, 9th June: Vales Butcher - Meats

Tuesday, 13th June: The Cormorant - Fish and Seafood

Wednesday, 14th June: The Right Slice - Delicatessen

Friday, 16th June: Vales Butcher - Meats

Monday, 19th June: Tony's Farm - Fruits and Vegetables

Tuesday, 20th June: The Cormorant - Fish and Seafood

Wednesday, 21st June: The Right Slice - Delicatessen

Friday, 23rd June: Vales Butcher - Meats

Tuesday, 27th June: The Cormorant - Fish and Seafood

Wednesday, 28th June: The Right Slice - Delicatessen

Friday, 30th June: Vales Butcher - Meats

CREATURES AND NPCs

BANDIT

HP :  EP :

STR DEX INT CON PER CHA

Weapon	Range	ATK	DMG
Common Weapon of choice	-	-	-

Armor	Prerequis.	Malus	AP
Padded armor	-	-	1

Bandits roam in gangs and are sometimes led by thugs, veterans or mages. Not all bandits are bad. Oppression, drought, epidemics or famine can often lead honest people to a life of banditry.

NECROMANCER

HP : EP :

STR DEX INT CON PER CHA

Weapon	Range	ATK	DMG
Magic Weapon of choice	-	-	-

Necromancers are specialized magicians who study the interaction of life, death and the afterlife. They enjoy digging up corpses to create undead slaves.

Special moves: Elemental Fire Spell, Health*, Recover*.

**applicable only on creatures with the Undead strenght*

ZOMBIE

HP : EP :

STR DEX INT CON PER CHA

Weapon	Range	ATK	DMG
Fang	-	D20	1D4+2+STR

A zombie is the result of necromantic magic cast in order to reanimate a corpse, usually humanoid. Sometimes a zombie will also rise on its own if it is in a place strongly imbued with an aura of death or necromantic energy.

Strengths : Undead

Special moves : Mark

SKELETON

HP : EP :

STR DEX INT CON PER CHA

Weapon	Range	ATK	DMG
Common Weapon of choice	-	-	-

A skeleton is the result of necromantic magic cast to reanimate bones, usually humanoid. Sometimes a skeleton will also rise on its own if it is in a place strongly imbued with an aura of death or necromantic energy.

Strengths : Undead, Magical creature

CITADEL GUARD

Warrior :

HP :  EP :

STR DEX INT CON PER CHA

Weapon	Range	ATK	DMG
Sword	Melee	D20	1D10+STR

Armor	Prerequis.	Malus	AP
Half plate armor	Constitution > 1	-2 Dexterity	4
Shield	Strenght > 1	-	2*

**only applicable in a defensive position*