

# The Festival

Rumour has it that Szek Jian Destron is within the town of Sornhill. Capitalising on this rumour Wallac Relaster, a young rake of a nobleman, has called for a festival. He hopes to lift the pervading attitude of gloom that infests the town and increase his public profile.

The centre of the festival is a giant bonfire, which burns for three days once it is lit. The bonfire is started on the first day of the festival. A large wicker warrior has been created to feed the bonfire. It represents the memory of those who died in fighting the Brotherhood to free Sornhill and its burning symbolizes their sacrifice. It will march through the streets of the town before burning — it is a giant, articulated wicker puppet controlled by six masked puppeteers paid for by Wallac Relaster.

The Brotherhood and Kesh Kekarav Madi particularly has been angered by the almost complacent folk of Sornhill. He has decided it is time to remind them of the true terror of the Brotherhood.

To this end he has sent an agent, from the fortress of Obelstone, to the festival this year to remind the people of the fear they felt during the Occupation and has ordered his agent to wreak havoc. The agent is a werewolf wizard named Markun and other lycanthes "bred" in Obelstone.

Markun's plan is this: on the first night of the festival, he shall secret a spell pouch inside the wicker body of the soldier. When it burns at the end of the parade the spell will trigger, sending a *scare* spell rippling through the crowd. Markun and his lycanthropic agents will then transform into their hideous hybrid shapes, and begin slaughtering innocents. He hopes this deed will strike such fear into the hearts of the populace.

Markun has an archenemy, a werewolf slayer named Altrigan Milnrow. Altrigan and Markun have alternately hunted and avoided one another for nearly three years since Markun slaughtered his warcompany. Altrigan is present at the festival and Markun has realised this and

intends to make sure the hunter is out of the way before his plan completes.

Events happen in the festival occur at certain times, regardless of the location or situation of the PCs.

## Beginning the Scenario

The scenario opens as the PCs arrive at Sornhill. Allow the PCs to explore the festivities. Once you are ready to move the story along an assassination attempt against Altrigan Milnrow occurs, and the assassin, a Brotherhood agent named Astin, tries to make his escape. This event occurs regardless of the PCs' location. Less than two hours after the assassination attempt, the festival parade is scheduled to begin, and fifteen minutes after the parade begins the wicker soldier reaches the bonfire, triggering the spell pouch and the slaughter of commoners. Those in charge are reluctant to cancel the parade, and so the PCs have only a brief amount of time to follow Markun's trail and discover his plot.

You may adjust the order of these events slightly for dramatic effect, to assure an interesting scenario. In general, this timeline and sequence of events needs to be kept.

***You have arrived at Sornhill finally. The weather has been inclement and the Storm Coast has lived up to its name. You are soaked through to the skin as you approach the city walls, the sun slowly setting behind the wall. Eight guards dressed in the dark colours of the Storm Coast watch your approach impassively.***

They take the PCs' names and professions. If the PCs show the tokens from Hazaraz they are admitted with no questions asked. Otherwise they are questioned at length by the guards who mention the festival — explaining that even given the rather solemn and macabre theme of the festival, it has grown into quite a revel. The rest of town is relatively deserted — most inns and taverns are either closed up or full.

# The Festival

If the PCs travel the town they may encounter townsfolk disguised as hobgoblins or dressed in Scarlet. Think of the potential for misunderstanding!

Assuming the PCs travel to the festival square, read aloud the following:-

*You arrive at the festival square, a large field surrounded by buildings and illuminated with many festive lanterns. Costumed men, women, and children dance around you, wearing the bright colors of knights, or masks imitating the monstrous armies of the Brotherhood. Bards play solemn songs remembering the dead and merry jigs mocking the Exalted Sister or cheering on the army of Rebellion. Lanterns line the streets, colored in shades of red and orange, lending an eerie glow to the proceedings. All around, there is celebration.*

*The real, ever-present threat of the Scarlet Brotherhood has been demonized into a comically exaggerated, wizened, stooped effigy of the Father of Obedience. Red robed dolls are burned in effigy on bonfires across the town. All around wear a Strawhead mask, with a wicker face and straw hair.*

Later in the night, a giant wicker man, the Fallen Soldier will be burned in a symbolic gesture of the sacrifices made in the war against the Scarlet Brotherhood. Even now, a roaring bonfire dominates the center of the festival square, ready to accept the wicker warrior later in the evening; its flames reach hungrily toward the sky beneath a whirlwind of embers and smoke.

The festival is being held in the large town-square, and along the streets nearby. The crowds are generally costumed, festive, and slightly drunk. Below are the locales of interest.

## A. The Combat Area

If the PCs investigate the trial of arms they will find that there are three competitions in progress - a trial of unarmed combat, a trial of melee arms and a trial of archery.

Each PC may enter only one of these competitions, facing a single opponent determined by APL. If they defeat the opponent, they will receive a purse of silver nuggets from Wallac Relaster, the master of revels.

Note: If more than one PC enters the same competition, there is a (20% x the number of PCs entering a particular competition) chance that the PCs will face each other in competition. Priests of Trithereon watch carefully for signs of PCs deliberately throwing a trial against a companion. PCs attempting to do so will need to succeed at an opposed Bluff check against the priest's Sense Motive (+7). PCs caught cheating will be disqualified.

## Trial of Unarmed Combat

The rules of the competition are quite simple, the PC entering must face a single opponent whom he must render either unconscious or pinned immobile for 2 full rounds.

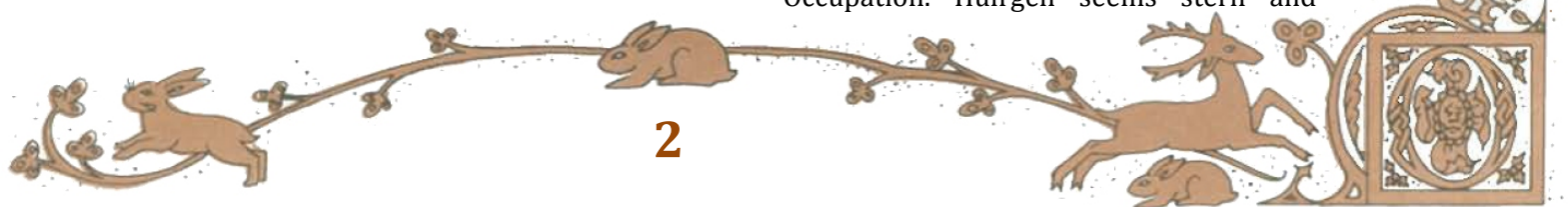
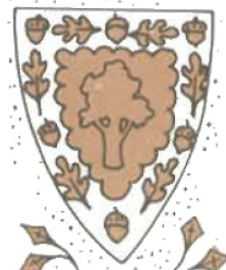
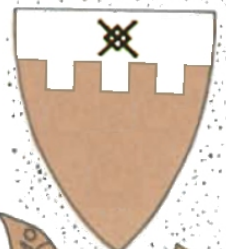
Use of magic or magical items is not allowed and is enforced by priests of Trithereon around the edge of the trial field. The opponents are as follows:

**Huirgen:** male human Bbn1 (see Appendix).

At this APL, the PCs face Huirgen of the Wardborn. The Wardborn are a people of Flan descent who dwell in the Wardwood that lies just south and east of the town of Silvervale. Loyal servants of the Barons of the Silvervale, the Wardborn are a proud and valiant folk, generous in victory and gracious in defeat.

Appearance: Heavy set and standing 5' 8", Huirgen's bronze complexion, dark eyes and the tattoos that he bears on his powerfully muscled arms betray his Flan blood. He is clad in finely crafted hide and leather garments.

Character: Huirgen is one of the finest young warriors of the Wardborn. He came of age fighting the forces of the Brotherhood, who sought (unsuccessfully) to despoil Laerwyr's Ward and exterminate the Wardborn during the Occupation. Huirgen seems stern and



# The Festival

taciturn at first, but is quite warm and generous with those he trusts and respects.

In future Huirgen greets any who he competed against fairly as friends in the way of his people, claspng their forearm firmly. After the bout, he will either congratulate or commiserate with them without rancor, offering to share a pipe of smoking leaf with them.

## Trial of Arms

The PC entering this competition must face a single opponent with blunted weapons that do only subdual damage. The winner is the one who renders his opponent insensible.

Use of magic or magical items is not

allowed and is enforced by priests of Trithereon around the edge of the trial field.

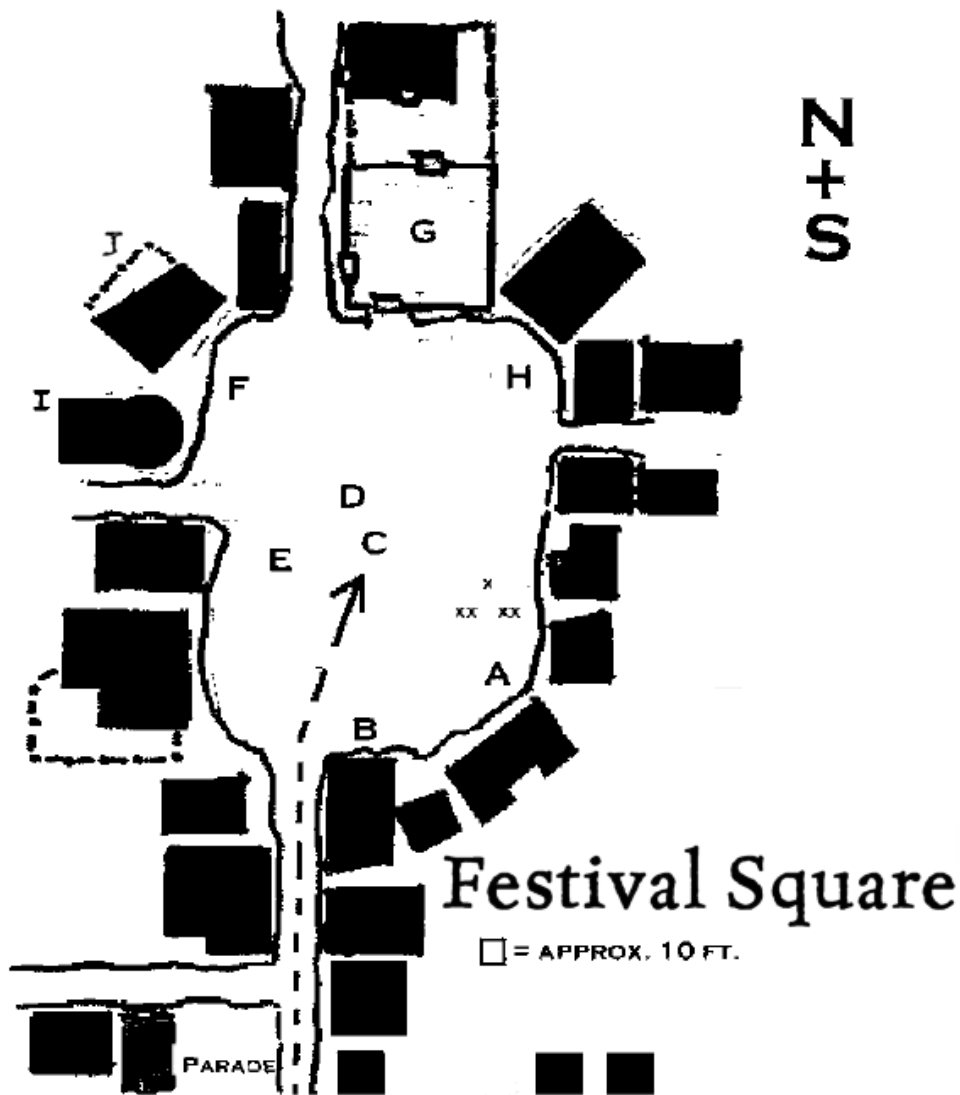
**Sergeant at Arms:** male human Ftr4 (see Appendix)

The PCs face one of Baroness Sailema's Sergeants at Arms. Girthed in mail, he wears the tabards of the Storm Coast.

A cheering crowd the PCs note in the Introduction is located here. This location is described in detail below.

## Trial of Archery

The PC entering this competition must face a single opponent. Each contestant names which of a series of straw butts dressed in captured hochebi armour (AC



Festival Square

□ = APPROX. 10 FT.

PARADE

# The Festival

15) set at 50 feet intervals between 50 and 500 feet they will hit.

A hit has to penetrate the armour of the butt to count i.e. the attack roll must equal or exceed the AC (hence the addition of the chain mail armour bonus to the butts' base AC of 10).

Each contestant has three shots. The one who has hit the farthest target is the winner.

If the contestants are drawn after three shots, they each have one shot to hit the next farthest butt in a sudden death competition.

Use of magic or magical items is not allowed and is enforced by priests of Trithereon around the edge of the trial field.

The PCs face one of Baroness Sailema's scouts to begin with. However eventually proceed to the Assassin - where Altrigan Milnrow enters the competition.

## B. The Costume Cart

Vendrenn (male human Exp3; Cha 13) operates this wooden cart. He is a tailor who has turned his talents to crafting masks for the festival.

His most popular ware is the strawhair mask, the pale wicker face and comical straw moptop that the PCs have already seen throughout the festival. These are the masks available: a paper-mâché mask of the Father of Obedience, which costs 1 silver, or a higher quality, better looking "strawhair" mask, which costs 3 silver. Both masks cover the entire face, and tie on with a leather string.

Vendrenn knows nothing about what happens in this scenario. He has sold a lot of masks during the festival, and remembers few faces.

## C. The Bonfire

A large bonfire has been built in the center of the town-square, and it is obviously the center of the festival. Costumed, carousing people are crowded around the bonfire, both enjoying its warmth, and guaranteeing themselves a good view later on when the wicker soldier burns. Several

Brotherhood effigies are stacked around the fire. They are occasionally tossed into the bonfire to riotous choruses of cheers, and the reciting of angry and bawdy poems and songs.

## D. The Master of Revels

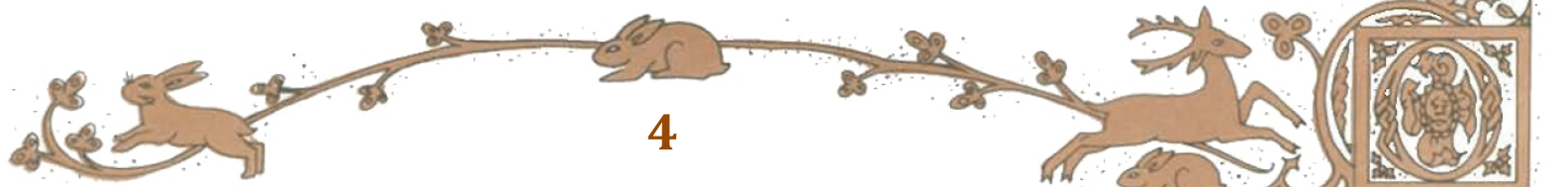
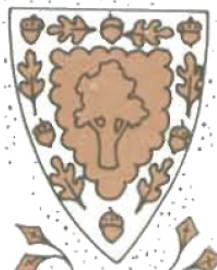
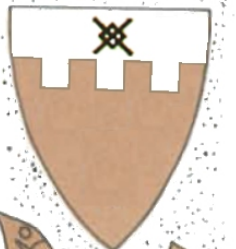
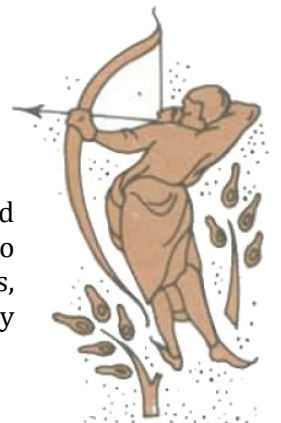
Sitting as Master of the festival is Wallac Relaster (male human Rog7; Cha 17), a noble and known blacksheep of the Relaster house, the ruling house of Sornhill. This is his "throne," a tapped keg of ale put up on a tall, decorated dais standing near the bonfire. He is wearing a finely tailored, brightly-colored tunic and a feathered cap, and he totes a large mug of ale, which he constantly fills from the keg beneath him. Wallac is, needless to say, content to get unashamedly drunk and "press the flesh" with the common man.

**Wallac Relaster:** male human Rog7.

**Appearance:** In his early forties, but looking much younger, Wallac cuts an extremely dashing looking figure, with his flowing blonde hair and catlike elegance. Tall and broad shouldered despite his startling quickness he possesses the languid manner of a noble born man who greatly enjoys life and its pleasures, but has a keen and sharp wit, as well as a shrewd understanding of reality.

**Character:** Wallac is extremely friendly, seeming to have nothing whatsoever of the sense of snobbery or aloofness of many nobles. Wallac considers himself a man of the common people, and of the future.

After later events, including The Assassin below, Serjeant Doran will dispatch a man to inform the Master of Revels about the assassination attempt. Wallac knows nothing other than what Eaton relates to him. He cares little about events as they have transpired so far; he is having far too good a time to concern himself with matters that he feels the guards can handle quietly.



# The Festival

## E. Keg Cart

Near the Master of Revels is a two-wheeled horse cart that has been parked, propped up, and opened for business. Four kegs are lined up on the edge of the cart, all of them full of ale. Ale is 1 sp per mug-full; buyers must bring their own mugs. The ale is of passable quality.

Caroff (male human Com2; Cha 14), whose inn, the Worn Boot, is some two streets over—far enough from the festivities to affect his sales—runs this cart. The portly innkeeper, ever-mindful of the value of a gold piece, left his wife in charge of the Boot and hauled these kegs to the bonfire to assure himself a piece of the action. Melick resents his presence, but there is little the pub owner can do about it.

If the PCs arrive here later, they discover that Caroff knows nothing about Markun or Altrigan. He is simply here to sell ale, and has sold drinks too far too many people to remember a particular face.

## F. The Magician

An illusionist delights several children here with dancing lights and other magical treats. He is covered below.

## G. Melick's Pub

This building is not really an inn, though there are four small rooms for rent in the back (4 gp per night during the festival, or 5 sp per hour). Melick's Pub is the only drinking establishment fronting the town-square, making it a very popular place during the festival. All the tables are full, as is the bar, and several of the corners are filled with drinking revelers. Drinks are currently triple the costs listed in the Player's Handbook ("a simple case of supply and demand," Melick will cheerfully claim if anyone complains). There is food to be had all at triple the Player's Handbook prices. Four overworked barmaids weave their way through the crowds. A young bard sits on a stool near the bar, playing tunes on a lute. He has been playing most of the day,

and gladly takes a break if a PC wants to play for the crowd (Tiderrus, male human Brd1; Cha 14; Perform +4).

Two nondescript human men and a dwarven male occupy one of the tables in the pub, all wearing brown robes and carrying strawhair masks. They all nurse drinks and mutter amongst themselves. These three are evil, and are all members of Markun's band; their names are Naghol (the dwarf), Strietch, and Trodley. Unless something happens to draw them away (see below for one possible scenario), these three will stay in this location until a half hour before the parade, at which point they don their strawhair masks and make their way to the wicker soldier.

If the PCs arrive here after the Assassin (below) and begin asking questions, they will find no useful information. Most of the people here have been drinking and carousing the whole afternoon, and are in no mood for inquiries. The three agents of Markun are taciturn if questioned, and they will tell any PC who pressures them to answer to "shove off." They are under orders to avoid drawing attention to themselves, and so they will not pick a fight.

## H. Guard's Tent

In response to the anticipated crowds at this year's festival, Saielma and Wallac have paid a number of guards to patrol the town-square and the surrounding area. This tent, set on the very edge of the town-square, is their temporary headquarters.

Stationed here at all times, unless there is an emergency, is Serjeant Doran, a gruff and wizened old guardsman who lacks a sense of humor. Doran does not like the festival. Also present is Eamon, Doran's reliable and soft-spoken second-in-command. There are a dozen guardsmen patrolling the festival grounds. Two of them will be at the tent at any given time; the rest are patrolling the festival, and all of them will come if Doran gives a holler.

Doran, male human Ftr5: see Appendix.

# The Festival

**Lieutenant Eamon:** male human Ftr4, see Appendix.

**Guardsmen (12):** male human War2, see Appendix.

## I. Temple of Trithereon

This makeshift temple to the Summoner has been taken over by the church of Trithereon to preach its message of vengeance against the Brotherhood. The faithful are led by Heramell Senned, the local high priest of Trithereon.

**Heramell Senned:** male human Clr7.

## J. The Temple of Pholtus

A makeshift pavilion tent has been erected to the Blinding Light. Here Cathera of Ogburg, resplendent in white robes preaches against the iniquities of the festival. She sees the festival as a dangerous indulgence and she and her fanatics have taken it upon themselves to police the festival. At your discretion white cloaked Pholtans could hinder the PCs in the later sections of this scenario, or come to their aid.

**Cathera of Ogburg:** female human Clr6.

## The Assassin

*A large crowd stands before an archery range here. Five hay bales have been stacked side-to-side, and each has been affixed with a paper bulls-eye. The center target has been pulled back, and it stands nearly double the distance from the crowd as the rest. Three crossbow bolts are stuck in its target—one on the outer circle, and two, side-by-side, in the red bulls-eye.*

*A large man is aiming for the center target, a light crossbow balanced expertly against his left forearm, his right hand tensing the trigger. He fires, landing a third bolt in the red bulls-eye. The crowd around him cheers, and the fruit of may wagers change hands.*

*“There!” the large man shouts. “Who’ll be the next to try their luck? I’ve*

*five gold for the person who can beat Altrigan Milnrow!”*

**Altrigan Milnrow, male human Rgr6:** see Appendix.

**Appearance:** Altrigan is a stout warrior who looks more at home in the city than the wild. He is quiet but jovial, with deep-set brows and long, greasy black hair. He carries a dagger and a fine looking longsword.

**Character:** Altrigan is stalking Markun through Sornhill. His warcompany was slain by the were-mage in the Volanots two years ago and since then he has become obsessed with seeking Markun.

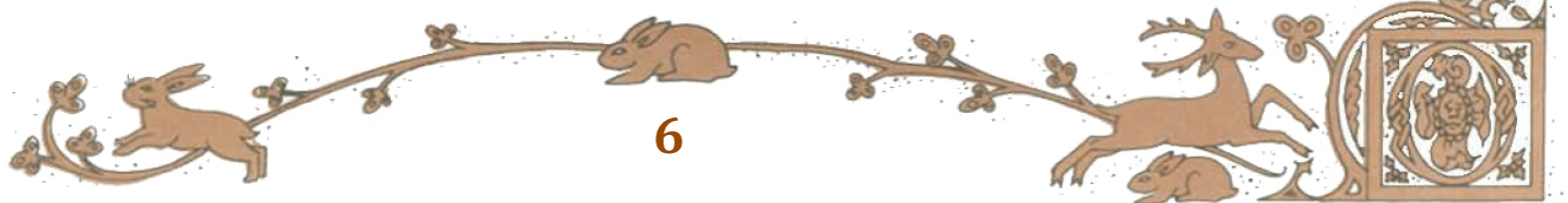
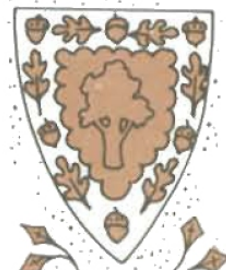
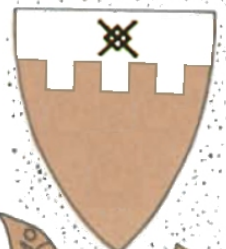
As soon as Altrigan issues his challenge, a young man with dirty blonde hair pushes his way through the crowd, shouting that he’ll take the challenge. If a PC also steps forward, let the PC challenge Altrigan first using the rules above. Should a PC best Altrigan, he gladly pays them the 5 golden gulls, acknowledging the winner but insists light-heatedly that the PC was “very, very lucky.”

The challenger from the crowd is Astin. When his turn to challenge Altrigan comes, read the following:-

*Altrigan takes aim, and fires off a bolt. It flies wide, and strikes the edge of the bulls-eye. Several excited cheers roll through the crowd. The challenger steps up, and carefully aims his crossbow. His finger tightens on the trigger... just before he turns and fires off the bolt, point-blank, at Altrigan!*

Astin has a +1 to his attack at point-blank range. Altrigan, surprised, flat-footed, and lacking his shield, dropping his AC to 12. The DM can roll the attack, but for dramatic purposes, declare that the arrow pierces Altrigan in the shoulder. The bolt is laced with the venom of a purple worm, particularly nasty and capable of incapacitating even a man like Altrigan.

**Purple Worm Poison:** Injury DC 24; Primary 1d6 Str; Secondary 1d6 Str.



# The Festival

Immediately after Astin fires his bolt, combat initiates. Assume the first round is a surprise round for all but Astin.

**Astin, male human Rog3:** see Appendix.

**Character:** Astin is an agent of the Brotherhood, a lackey in the employ of the were-mage Markun.

**Tactics:** Astin will attempt to flee immediately after firing the shot, and will attempt to blend into the crowd. Several people in the crowd begin to shout, but none of them are brave enough to try to stop him. If cornered Astin will turn and attack, but he is no fool—if five or six PCs with swords and spells attack him, he will not stand and fight. To aid in his escape, Astin has two more arrows tipped with the same purple worm poison; in a pinch, he will shoot a pursuing PC in an attempt to buy himself some time.

If Astin is captured, he says nothing to the PCs. He will not answer questions out of fear—not fear of the PCs, but of Markun and the Brotherhood. He is eventually hauled to the local guardhouse. He will be found dead the next morning, the victim of a poisoned bolt much like the one he fired at Altrigan.

At the same time, Altrigan is succumbing to the poison. The purple worm poison is strong, but not automatically lethal, and can be treated magically as normal. If any PC stops to help Altrigan, he smiles at them gratefully, then delivers the speech below as they tend to his wounds. Otherwise, he speaks at the first opportunity once the assassin has fled or been dispatched.

***“Please, you look like folk of good character and an adventurous spirit. Listen, quickly, as I feel weak.***

***“I’ve come to the festival for a purpose. I seek a foul minion of the Brotherhood, one of the freaks they made in that dark tower, Obelstone, who’s up to something at the festival. I know not what, but I have been hunting him long enough to know it cannot be good. His name is Markun; he is a werewolf, and a wizard of no small skill.***

***He’s a tallish man, human, with a shock of dark brown hair and a scar that cuts across the bridge of his nose — I gave him that scar, when last we confronted one another. He remembers me well, and it is probably he who sent that terrible marksman to kill me.”***

***Altrigan removes a bundle of ten crossbow bolts, tied with a leather string, from his quiver. In the flickering light, you can see that each is tipped with silver. He also offers up two vials of a silvery liquid.***

***“I feel weak. I fear that even if I survive this poison, I’ll have not the strength to stop him tonight. Please, find him. Stop whatever he’s up to. Use these, if you can.”***

These are silver bolts, and silversheen - a potent applicant to weapons to make them act as if made of silver.

The commotion also summons the guards from the nearby tent, including Serjeant Doran. Doran takes charge quickly. He tells his guards to begin questioning the assembled crowd, and insists on bringing Altrigan to the nearby Temple of Trithereon regardless of whatever healing the PCs have given. Two guardsmen go off for a litter and return in five minutes to carry Altrigan off; Altrigan rests the remainder of the night, and will not be able to assist the PCs in their search for Markun. If any PC is suffering from the effects of the poison, they, too, are taken to the temple, where the priest Kennik tends to them. Kennik can cast neutralize poison, and will do so for a very moderate donation to the Temple (25 gp).

Meanwhile, Doran begins to demand information (Doran is not the type to “ask” when a crime has been committed). If Astin has been killed or apprehended, Doran wants to know who the responsible party is. The crowd around the archery range will quickly identify any PC who captured or killed Astin. Doran is not interested in arresting the PCs if Astin is dead, since the crowd will also quickly identify Astin as the assassin.

# The Festival

If any PC looted Astin's body, and especially if they took the poisoned crossbow bolts, Doran finds out from the assembled crowd, and asks the PC to return any and all looted items. Not only does Doran consider the bolts and anything else on Astin save coinage, as evidence, but poison-tipped weapons are illegal within the town, and any PC who takes them away to use later may face an arrest, if the bolt is discovered.

Whether Altrigan succumbs to the poison, falls unconscious, or survives the PCs will have his request to deal with. Furthermore, Doran knows much of Altrigan's story; Altrigan spoke to Doran earlier that day, and related everything, including the description of Markun. If the PCs tried to stop the assassin, or tried to save Altrigan, but seems reluctant to track down Markun at his request, Doran himself asks them to help:

*"Altrigan came to me earlier with his story. I wasn't able to act. You've done a good service here, for both he and myself, and for that I thank you. Perhaps, if you are so inclined, you could do more."*

*"I'll put the word out to my men that this monster is about. If my men see anything, they will be sure to act, but this sounds like something beyond their abilities. If you can find this monster, if you can bring him in, I would be most grateful. I ask only that you keep your weapons sheathed unless absolutely necessary, and that you be discreet in your inquiries — I don't want to disrupt this crowd anymore than this attack already has."*

Doran cannot promise any reward, and makes no mention of it, unless the PCs ask. If he must, he will use as leverage the fact that certain PCs have themselves committed murder, if they slew Astin; even the killing of a known assassin is murder, after all.

He will want to leave soon after so that he can coordinate his men, though he can stay to answer a few more questions.

Under no circumstances can Doran be persuaded to shut down the Festival. He does not, technically, have the authority to do so, and the man who does, Master of Revels Wallac Relaster, is too drunk to consider such a thing.

## Absent Friends?

If the PCs do not approach the archery range within a short time of the adventure's opening, this encounter occurs anyway, and the PCs are likely to be drawn by the hue and cry raised by the crowd. They may still be able to apprehend or kill Astin as he flees the scene. In this instance, the request for assistance will come from Doran himself to any PC who assists, as the PCs will likely not have an opportunity to speak to Altrigan.

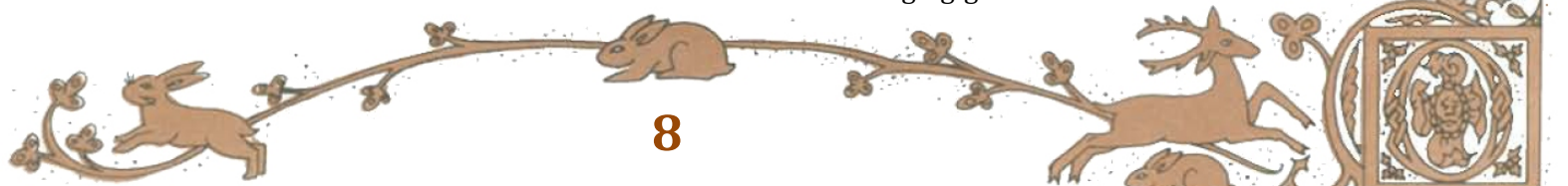
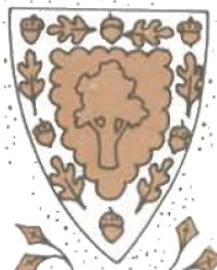
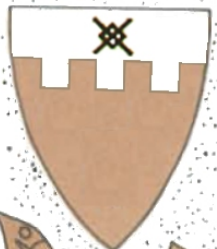
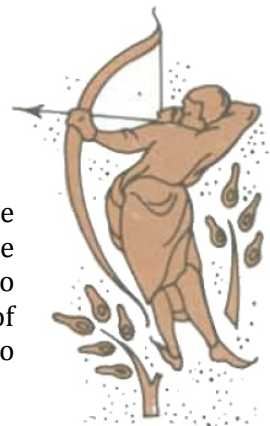
## The Villain

Unbeknownst to the PCs, Serjeant Doran, or Altrigan Milnrow, the very topic of their conversations is on the edges of the archery range crowd, watching events as they develop. Markun is walking the festival disguised as a strawhair, an anonymous reveler amongst a thousand.

Markun's mask is identical to those worn by half the revelers at the festival, and it will be very difficult for the PCs to notice him without arcane means (Markun gains a +10 for any PC to make note of a particular masked man within the crowd trailing them). Markun's full statistics can be found in the Appendix.

Markun watches the developments of the assassination with interest. When the PCs leave the archery range he trails them, curious about this new development. He tries to listen in on any conversations the PCs have, shifting into hybrid form beneath his mask to improve his Listen skill (Listen +17 as wolf or hybrid). If the PCs split, he follows whichever group appears to be heading toward either Noblish's shop or the creek where the bodies are hidden.

If Astin escapes Markun makes his way to the staging grounds as soon as the PCs



# The Festival

leave the archery range. He has arranged to meet the assassin after the attempt (see below) for the possible consequences of their meeting). The meeting takes about fifteen minutes; afterwards, Markun returns to the festival, finds the PCs, and once again begins trailing them.

If the PCs discover the bodies, or if at any time he deems they are too close to discovering the truth of his plot, Markun decides to act. He leaves the PCs and gathers Naghol, Strietch, and Trodley from Melick's Pub, and orders them to attack the PCs if the opportunity arises. He orders them to follow the PCs at a distance, and take the first opportunity to attack either a lone PC, or a pair of PCs. Under no circumstances, he notes, are they to attack the entire party. The stats for Naghol, Strietch, and Trodley can be found in the Appendix.

If Markun is somehow discovered before the burning of the wicker soldier, he flees. He will shift into wolf form and head for the nearby woods, where his superior speed (50 ft.) and skills may help him elude capture. He attempts to rejoin the crowd at the festival as soon as he has eluded pursuit, killing an anonymous commoner if need be to obtain a new mask and outfit. If this happens, Markun immediately sends Naghol, Strietch, and Trodley after the PCs, delivering the orders detailed above.

If the PCs discover the spell pouch before it burns, thereby foiling Markun's plans, he gathers all of his agents together and attacks the PCs in the street. In this instance, the attack is one of vengeance, and all of the villains — lycanthropes and Brotherhood agents alike — will attack the PCs.

Markun will not begin killing innocents in this instance. Regardless, the appearance of lycanthropes in the middle of the crowd, as well as the dangers of being too close to a sword fight, will send much of the crowd into a panic. This will incapacitate the patrolling guardsmen, whose duty is first and foremost to control

the panicked crowd. They will not be able to assist the PCs in their battle.

## The Wizard

Read aloud the following:-

*A thin man in red and blue robes performs here for a crowd of onlookers, mostly children. He balances some brightly colored balls of light in one hand, and in the other he manipulates the image of a dancing knight. The wizard is skinny and tanned, with a shock of dark hair and a prominent jaw. A dull red scar stretches across the bridge of his nose and down his left cheek.*

Eldubrais Feylight is an illusionist. He has dreams of being an entertainer, but he has no skill with instruments and a weak voice that does not carry. What he does have are illusions, and he is quite good at making them enjoyable. When the PCs approach, he is entertaining the audience with prestidigitation.

The PCs may quickly note that Eldubrais looks like the description Altrigan gave them, straight down to the scar cutting across his nose. Eldubrais is not the man Altrigan is hunting, however much he superficially matches the description. The scar and the dark hair are actually one of his illusions; part of a change self spell he cast on himself for the festival. Beneath the illusion Eldubrais is older, with gray along the temples of light brown hair, and he has no scar.

Eldubrais' resemblance to the mage sought by Altrigan is not coincidence. The results of Eldubrais' change self spell are based on an encounter with the Markun, the weremage — a gruff stranger with a shock of black hair and a ripping scar across his nose and cheek that questioned Eldubrais' about certain magical components. His story is as follows:-

*"You're looking for someone who looks like me? Then you're looking for the man I met yesterday. He came to my home, and started questioning me about spells. Heard I was an accomplished illusionist,*

# The Festival

he said. Well, I'm not slouch in that department, but I had no clue what he was talking about. He was asking about scrolls and triggers and such that I've never studied, never worked with. I told him that Noblish, the old tallow-maker down the way, knew more about the kinds of things he was talking about."

"Anyway, when I couldn't answer his questions, he mocked my 'meager skills' then asked if I had any of the things he was asking about. Well, I wasn't going to just ignore the insult and sell him my stuff. I told him to shove off! Only, this morning, I found that the things he was asking about were missing from my shop. Stolen, I'll bet!

"He creeped me out, and that's why I look like this tonight. He stole my things, so I stole his look!"

The items stolen from Eldubrais include some common spell components (all of them used for illusion spells, Eldubrais' specialty) and a scroll of minor image. Eldubrais can direct the PCs to the home of Noblish the tallow-maker. He cannot remember any other details of his encounter with Markun, and has no other useful information.

The PCs at this point may ask to make a Spellcraft check based on the information Eldubrais has given them. Eldubrais' information is incomplete enough that determining much of anything will be difficult.

- 1-25: The PC can think of nothing relevant.
- 25+: The components being sought are unusual enough that whatever Markun is planning, it is not a standard spell or magic item.

## The Tallowmaker

You should describe Noblish's shop as follows:-

**Noblish's shop is located just off the main road that will be used as a parade route. The carved placard that hangs**

**outside the door—a candle in a brass candleholder—easily identifies it. When you arrive outside the shop, you notice that the inside is dark. The door is ajar.**

If the PCs knock, they receive no response. Pushing open the door and shining a light inside (or using darkvision or low-light vision) reveals the following:-

**Inside the shop is a stuffy mess of jars, pots, bowls, and bundles of herbs. A strong, earthy odor hangs in the air. There are places in the front of the shop where lanterns and candles once sat for sale; most of these have been sold, and the shelves are nearly bare. On the floor are several spilled jars of dried leaves and powders.**

**Some of the jars are broken, and potsherds are scattered across the floor.**

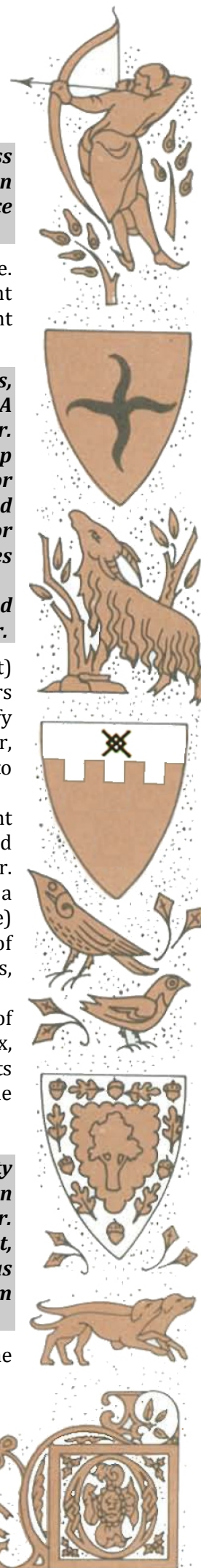
Any PC with a Profession (herbalist) examining the spilled herbs and powders is allowed a Skill check (DC 15) to identify the spilled herbs: whig plant, red clover, and aconite. All three jars were tossed to the ground as Markun searched the shop.

PCs spending time to Search the front room will find (DC 15) a still damp and muddy footprint near the main door. Caught in the footprint is a bit of leaf; a successful Survival or Knowledge (nature) check (DC 20) will identify it as a piece of water reed, common near lakes, streams, and rivers.

The back room is full of the tools of Noblish's various trades—chunks of wax, balls of string, herbs and spell components of every variety, and a small stone fireplace with a cooking pot.

**In the center of the room, a small, warty form with pale skin, dressed in a brown robe lies face down on the wooden floor. The back of his head sports a large welt, from which a small amount of blood has trickled. As you enter the room, the form begins to stir.**

The form on the floor is Noblish the Tallow-Maker.



# The Festival

**Noblis, male human Wiz3:** see Appendix.

**Appearance:** Noblish is an old man just over four feet in height, with tufts of pale hair strewn over a nearly bald head. He constantly stoops and is riddled with arthritis and

**Character:** Noblish is a skilled candle-maker, as well as a herbalist and a hedge wizard. He is a cheerful old fellow and is sensitive to any hostility.

He is providing a unique service to the festival - unique lanterns, colorfully decorated, that generate minor magical effects. To light them, Noblish makes a special lantern tallow, a short, fat candle with a slight enchantment and special mixture that burns for an extra-long period of time without spending itself.

Noblis is also an accomplished herbalist, but when Markun came to him earlier this day, the old man was unable to provide him with all of the components he needed, as he was busy creating enchanted lanterns and other items for the festival. Markun, unhappy with Noblish, reacted violently.

Below is Noblish's full recounting:-

*"Yes, I met the nasty man. Busy day, today was, and I was making lanterns for the festival—enchanted lanterns, you see? Lots of ingredients, lots of charms. And he comes in, and he wanted tallow, he did, and the last of my shallow root. Tallow and shallow! Both of them I need, to make my lanterns.*

*"But that's not all! Asked me even for nightshade, he did. Nightshade! I've no clue where to get a poison so nasty, and if even I did, I still would not have any!*

*"So he accosted me! He threatened hurt, until I gave him what he wanted. And he warned that if I shouted for help, I'd 'pay for it handsomely.' His words, not mine—'handsomely,' he said.*

*"So I didn't call for help, but hit me anyway, he did. Hit me back, and I hit my head, and out I went until you came."*

Noblis's story is true. Markun was seeking "tallow and shallow" for the spell

packet, to help it burn, along with a few other ingredients. He wanted the nightshade to kill Altrigan, just in case the purple worm venom did not do the trick.

Noblis will willingly answer any other questions the PCs have, though he has little other useful information. The "shallow root" Markun sought is a dry, flammable root that, when powdered, helps tallow to burn brighter and faster. If the PCs ask Noblish about the shallow root, he will think to look for the jar he keeps it in. It is missing, taken by Markun. If the PCs ask about the muddy footprint, Noblish tells them that it has not rained for several days. The only muddy places nearby would be along the small creek that runs near the town.

At this point, PCs who wish to make a Spellcraft check based on the items they know Markun has collected may do so. Their information is incomplete, however, and the results of a roll (based on having both Eldubrais' information, and Noblish's information) is listed below:

- 1-19: The PC can think of nothing relevant.
- 20-25: The components being sought are unusual enough that whatever Markun is planning, it is not a standard spell or magic item.
- 26+: The components are of a type common to spells in both the Illusion and Necromantic schools. The missing shallow root implies that fire might be involved.

So long as the PCs are civil to Noblish read the text below as the PCs are about to leave.

*"If you're looking for him, a lantern you'll need to light your way. Here, take this to protect you; long it will burn, even into the night, and maybe save you from harm. Borrow it, you may; return it to me when you are done."*

Noblis hands the PCs a small lantern is decorated with colorful panes of glass. This is a festival lantern, one of several special lanterns that Noblish has crafted

# The Festival

for the festival. While most of the lanterns lighting the town square mundane this lantern duplicates the effect of the light spell, this lantern carries with it the benefits of a protection from evil spell to the carrier for as long as the candle is lit. The candle inside is specially crafted lantern tallow that will burn for the rest of the night.

## The Bodies

***The muddy footprint in Noblish's shop came from the banks of the Saltirn, just inside of town.***

***The banks of the river are wet and muddy, filled with water reeds and long grass. The creek flows past the town to the southwest, very near to a field where, even now, you can hear the assembled commotion of revelers and performers, and several voices shouting orders.***

The commotion the PCs hear comes from the festival parade staging grounds, where assembled performers await their cue to begin. The staging grounds are described below in The Parade.

There are six bodies to be found in the reeds near the staging grounds, but the ease or difficulty of finding them will vary. PCs searching the muddy banks must slog through muck and dirt, as well as puddles of stagnant water. It will take a successful Search roll at DC 25 to find what is hidden here quickly, or a careful "take 20" Search. The DM is advised to keep careful track of time at this point, as the start of the parade is likely close. Once the PCs find the bodies read aloud the following:-

***The bodies before you are probably a day old, at most. They have been tossed, pell-mell, into a stand of water reeds, and lie variously on their sides, backs, and stomachs. Their faces have been mutilated, to prevent quick identification, and they have been stripped of all but the barest of undergarments. There are six of them altogether.***

If Astin, the assassin escaped the PCs, but Altrigan survived the attempt, the PCs find Astin's body nearby (Spot, DC 10, for anyone standing over the six bodies). Astin's throat has been cut, apparently by a dagger blade. PCs examining the wound will also find bruises around his throat, where he was either grabbed or choked just prior to death.

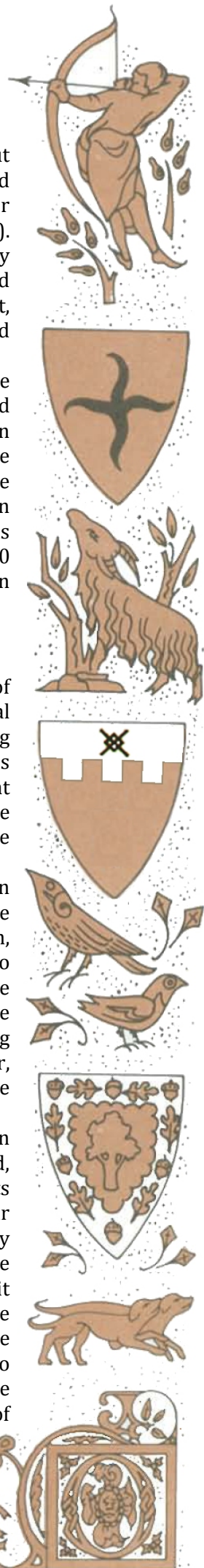
Markun killed Astin once Astin made good his escape, and after Markun realized Astin has fouled up the assassination (Markun does not tolerate failure). The murder took place by the banks of the Saltirn, where Astin was to meet Markun to receive his payment. Astin's body has not been looted, and the PCs will find 20 golden gulls and a platinum eagle coin on the body.

## The Parade

The festival parade is both the highlight of the evening's festivities, and the focal point of Markun's plans. The clues leading the PCs to the parade are subtle, but PCs who have collected all the pertinent information should be directed toward the parade and/or the bonfire, if not the wicker soldier itself.

The parade staging grounds, located in the southwest part of town very near the place where the bodies have been hidden, are a riot of activity in the hours prior to the parade itself. All of the parade participants listed below rush about the field, dressing up, acting up, and polishing up their performances. The parade leader, Brevis, is trying to get them into some semblance of order.

At this time, the wicker soldier lays on its side at the far edge of the field, surrounded by the six Brotherhood agents who will be carrying it in the parade (their statistics appear in Appendix !!). They chase away anyone who tries to examine the wicker soldier closely, claiming that it is delicate, and cannot be touched. If these agents are questioned before the parade begins they plead ignorance, pretending to be nothing more than members of the parade. If accosted before the beginning of



# The Festival

the parade they do not fight back, but call the guards and demand the arrest of the PCs.

If the PCs reach the staging grounds after the parade has begun, all they find is a dark, littered, and trampled area. They hear the sounds of the parade in the distance, as it heads toward the bonfire.

The following descriptions are written to anticipate the PCs wishing to examine any or all of the parade, as it occurs. The DM can use these descriptions to play staging ground encounters, as well. The festival parade takes approximately twenty minutes to walk from the staging ground to the bonfire.

The leader of the parade is the Father of Obedience himself. The parade leader is wearing a particularly realistic visage of the old red robed monk, an animated version of the popular mask that alternately sneers, grins, and growls at the assembled revelers. In one hand, this "Father" holds a wooden staff topped with a cow's skull. He gestures wildly to the crowd, scaring the children and drawing hoots and cries from the adults.

Six masked monstrosities resembling hochebi, ogres, and "strawhairs" attend the Father. They shamble along behind their leader, growling at the crowds and waving swords and daggers.

The parade leader's name is Brevis (male human Wiz2; AL CG; Cha 14). His "face" is an illusion, a change self spell cast just prior to the parade (Spellcraft, DC 12 to identify). Brevis, if accosted, will shout for the guards. Under no circumstances will he consider halting the parade. Brevis realizes that there are a lot of excited and drunken revelers who have been waiting all evening for the parade, and especially the burning of the wicker soldier, and he is not about to risk drunken disturbances if they do not get what they want.

The six "monstrosities" are all costumed, 1st-level commoners. They know nothing about Markun.

Seven maidens make their way along the parade route. Their hair is strung with black and red ribbons, and each carries a

wicker basket from which they toss nuts to the crowd. Several of the maidens wear paste-and-paint scars across their foreheads and cheeks, and all of them have paled out their skin with white powder.

These maidens are all 1st-level commoners. They scream loudly if accosted, summoning nearby guards. They know nothing about Markun.

Following the maidens are a score of soldiers wearing paper mail and swinging wooden swords. A gang of monstrous minions of the Brotherhood, all ragged clothes and sickly skin, is setting upon them. The warriors fight valiantly as they march along, but it seems the minions of the Brotherhood are gaining the upper hand.

These revellers are all simple commoners (Com1; hp 3). They are re-enacting a battle from the retaking of Sornhill. The "minions of the Brotherhood" are wearing green and brown face paste to give themselves scaly skin. The warriors and minions flee if accosted and return with some guards in four rounds.

Next are two men leading a large brown bear on a collar and chain. The bear is muzzled and docile. One of the two men is dressed as a "strawhair" complete with an wicker mask, and carries a leather strap on a long, ribbon-decorated truncheon that he occasionally whacks the bear with. When he whacks the bear it stops for the crowd and performs a trick, standing on its front paws and waving its rear legs high in the air. The crowd applauds, delighted, and the bear and its handlers continue down the route.

If any PC cast detect evil they discover that the man with the lash is neutral evil. He is not one of the villains the PCs seek. Evil comes in all shapes and sizes, and this man is simply a cruel and self-serving entertainer. He knows nothing about Markun.

If the PCs attempt to accost the trainer, whose name is Krobid, he hits them with his lash, and begins to cry out for the

# The Festival

guards. His assistant, Castcot (male human Com2; Cha 10; AL N), does not fight, but tries to drag the bear away from any fighting for fear of the bear getting excited. He has little to fear; the bear is so docile from years of training and poor treatment that it has no propensity for violence. It could not survive by itself in the wild.

**Krobid, male human Exp2:** see Appendix.

A small group of bards dance down the parade route, playing a merry tune on lute, pipe, harp, and drum. They are all dressed in the colors of the day—red, orange, and black. The spry, white-haired flutist seems to be leading them.

The lute player (male human Exp3; Perform +5), harpist (female human Exp4; Perform +8), and drummer (male human Exp2; Perform +5) are all non-adventuring musicians. The leader of this troupe is Gheldon (male half-elf Brd4; Cha 17; Perform +10; Spells Prepared (3/3/1): 0-level—daze, mending, read magic. 1st-level—sleep (x2), summon monster I. 2nd-level—scare.

Gheldon casts his sleep and scare spells on anyone who tries to accost his troupe. He is not interested in stopping the parade, as he and his troupe are looking to earn a lot of coin from the generous crowds. He knows nothing about Markun.

Another troupe of knights follows the musicians, along with more minions of the Brotherhood. Here, though, the faux soldiers seem to be driving the monsters back, as if clearing a path for what follows.

These are all commoners, and react exactly as those described above. Behind this group, lumbering down the parade route, is the highlight of the evening: the wicker soldier.

## The Wicker Man

When the PCs first see the wicker man read aloud the following:-

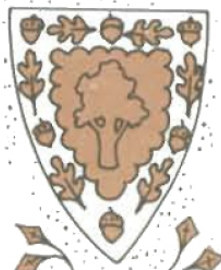
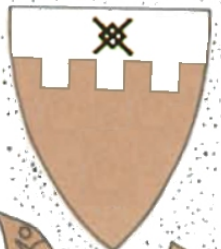
*A giant wicker puppet lumbers down the parade route, towering above the crowd. This is the center of the parade, and of the evening—the wicker soldier.*

*Six robed men, their faces hidden beneath monstrous masks, “walk” the wicker soldier down the street, manipulating arms and legs to make it stride toward the waiting bonfire. The highlight of the night will be when the wicker soldier falls into the bonfire, a brilliant reminder of the sacrifices made against the Brotherhood.*

The wicker soldier is a 15-foot-tall wicker figure, articulated by 6 handlers using long poles attached to its waist, legs, and arms. The six men handling the wicker soldier are all loyal to the Brotherhood; they are minor Brotherhood agents—wicked men who seek the favor of Kekarav Madi.

PCs specifically examining the wicker soldier as it lumbers down the street have a chance to spot the spell package that Markun has secreted there. The pouch is lashed to the wicker around the soldier's midriff, hidden in the darkness and the shadows. It can be found on a Spot or Search check, DC 25.

The Brotherhood agents have one mission: get the fallen soldier to the fire. If the PCs try to stop them during the parade, Markun's agents step from the crowd and confront them while the Brotherhood agents try to rush the soldier to the fire. As a last resort, the Brotherhood agents drop the wicker soldier and grab for several of the torches



# The Festival

that are lining the parade route; they attempt to light the wicker soldier in the street to trigger the spell pouch.

The real threat to both the PCs and the festival are in the crowd, where Markun and his band are stalking, awaiting the parade to end. The moment the spell pouch within the soldier is triggered, Markun's men have orders to transform themselves and attack the revelers at the festival. The transformation is important; Kekarav Madi wants to mar the festival as much as possible, and the shape-shifted lycanthropes will be much more terrifying than men with swords will. Any attempt by the PCs to halt the wicker soldier's progress toward its destination draws Markun and his lycanthropic agents from the crowd to distract the PCs while the Brotherhood agents attempt to burn the soldier.

If the PCs do not discover the plot and remove the spell package from the wicker soldier, its burning spews forth gobs of thick, unnatural purple smoke. A unique spell is triggered — a combination of minor image and scare spells. The minor image triggers first, sending dancing, ghostly faces swirling out of the mist, rasping the motto of the Scarlet Brotherhood, "Order, Purity, Obedience". These images are appealing, and catch the attention of the crowd assembled around the bonfire. One round after the minor image triggers, the scare triggers, affecting any viewer who is watching the minor image. In that second round, the ghostly faces produced by the minor image turn hideous and frightening, and it is that change which triggers the scare — the scare is tied to the illusion, and does not affect those who deliberately look away. The scare is particularly strong, and requires a Will save (DC 18) to negate its effects. Markun has ordered his agents to look away once the soldier hits the bonfire, and to only look back once the screaming starts (a sure sign that the scare has triggered).

There are at least 200 revelers crowding the area around the fire, as well

as those in the parade. The DM can determine how many of these revelers are affected by the scare by rolling 8 Will saves (DC 18), with a +0 bonus (the average for a human, 1st-level Commoner), and assuming that each represents roughly 25 revelers. The more revelers affected by the scare, the more chaotic the ensuing battle becomes, as frightened revelers frantically rush about. Regardless, the crowd at this point is panicked especially when Markun's lycanthropes begin their attacks.

The crowd situation will have one other important effect: it will remove Serjeant Doran and his guards from the coming confrontation. Doran's interest is in the safety of the crowd first and foremost, and he will set his guards (those, at least, who were not affected by the scare spell) to the task of evacuating and controlling the crowd in the square.

Tactics: The minute the scare spell triggers, the lycanthropes transform to their hybrid form and attack. Their first and preferred targets are common revelers; once the scare has taken effect, they will not directly attack the PCs unless confronted. The Brotherhood agents are not part of the slaughter, and they gladly step forward and engage the PCs in the name of the Brotherhood and Kekarav Madi, to buy the lycanthropes some time. They wear their armor and carry their swords under their loose fitting robes.

Markun will change as well, but he will remain hidden, preferring instead to cast spells in the shadows, bolstering the power of his men and preserving his own life. That doesn't mean that he will not fight if confronted; he simply will not choose to engage combat. If Naghol, Strietch, and Trodley are all taken down, Markun will attempt to flee.

## EL 6

**Markun, male werewolf Wiz4:** see Appendix.

Character: Markun is both werewolf and wizard and a singularly evil creature who delights in cruelty in malice. He has

# The Festival

little patience for fools, and even less for failure. He was bred as a werewolf by the Scarlet Brotherhood as part of an experiment to "improve the breed". He delights in what he is. He prefers the company of his own to all others.

He spent most of his years in Onnwal, subverting the morale of the military and ripping the throats out of men and women. He enjoys the quiet, subversive activities.

**Combat:** As a weremage Markun is practiced in casting spells in both human and hybrid form. Casting in hybrid form affords him the best advantages, and so he will normally take that form before entering a combat.

**Naghol, male wererat:** see Appendix.

**Strietch, male wererat:** see Appendix.

**Trodley, male wererat:** see Appendix.

Trodley is short-limbed and nearly hairless in human form, with a bald head and a large, hawkish nose that tends to twitch. Like all wererats, Strietch has both a hybrid and an animal form.

Trodley fights with an intricately decorated masterwork rapier that will be very noticeable to his opponents. The rapier was looted from one of the wererat's victims.

**Brotherhood agents (6):** male human War1, see Appendix.

## Concluding the Adventure

By the time the battle is over, Serjeant Doran has gained sufficient control of the crowd. While there are still frightened and panicked villagers about, the majority of the revelers have fled the area. Within a few minutes of the battle's end, Doran leaves the crowd in the capable hands of his lieutenant and approaches the PCs, offering his congratulations. He offers to take the wounded to the Temple of Zilchus where they can be tended to for free, as a sign of gratitude from the city. He insists in fact - this healing includes removal of any lycanthropy!

Doran also carries a message, and a gift, from Altrigan Milnrow. Altrigan bids the

PCs to keep whatever silversheen and silver-tipped crossbow bolts remain from the bundle he provided you. He has also sent for the group a masterwork silver dagger, as a reward for saving his life and doing the job he had come to the festival to do.

The bodies of the villains are particularly sparse. None of the items stolen from Eldubrais or Noblish will be found, as all of them went into the making of the spell pouch. The only things of value on the villains are coins, a few pieces of equipment, and the intricately scrolled rapier wielded by Trodley. On Markun, the PCs also discover a small, travelling spellbook (Markun's primary spellbook is secreted away, and cannot be found). The book contains all the 0<sup>th</sup> level spells, enlarge, and blur, as well as the unique spell *ripclaw*.

If the spell pouch was not burned, then Eldubrais, the illusionist, will request it for study—he is very interested in how Markun put his *minor image* scroll to use. To thank the PCs for tracking down the thief, even if his stolen property was unrecoverable, Eldubrais will gratefully copy the unique spell (*ripclaw*) found on Markun, if the weremage is captured, as well as taking a copy for himself. He also offers the PCs a rare spell from his own spellbook: resist lycanthropy.

Noblish the Tallow-maker's gift may already be in the hands of the PCs—the festival lantern. If it is not, he will reward the PCs with it, at the personal behest of Serjeant Doran, later in the night.

Lastly if the PCs have acquitted themselves at all well they receive a summons by Duchess Sailema to the Stormhaven to attend the Gathering of the Warcompanies. Given rumours the szek is in Stormhaven this presents interesting possibilities.

