

Requiem for a Dead Mage

*"O mort, vieux capitaine, il est temps! Levons l'ancre!
Ce pays nous ennuie, ô Mort! Appareillons!
Nous voulons, tant ce feu nous brûle le cerveau,
Plonger au fond du gouffre, Enfer ou Ciel, qu'importe!
Au fond de l'inconnu pour trouver du nouveau!"*

*"O, Death, old captain! Time has come! Weigh the anchor!
O, Death! This country wearies us! Let's set sail!
The fire scorches our wits so that we intend to dive,
To dive to the bed of the chasm, Hell or Heaven, whichever it may be.
In the deep unknown to find novelty!"*

— Charles Baudelaire

This Drama takes place in Lorgol, during Fall 1450.
One way or another, the Troupe will be dragged into a strange situation
that concerns the Urganish Cipher-sorcerer.

The Plot

SYNOPSIS

On the first day of Fall 1450, Draedonius, a famous Obscurantist from Lorgol, died. The Cipher-sorcerer immediately shrouded the death in secrecy. Minuetto, one of Draedonius' most gifted Dancers, has disappeared. The Censor of Roundrock, Malarmel, has begun an investigation to determine exactly what happened and to make sure Draedonius was not the victim of a conspiracy seeking to capture Minuetto.

The mage Slakent, Draedonius' successor, is aware that Draedonius had an apprentice named Laliana, who has not been seen since the death of her master. He suspects her of being involved. She was not a registered apprentice, so to tutor her was, according to the order's laws, a serious offense.

If ever this were to be proved, Draedonius would be discredited and his possessions would be seized by the Cipher-sorcerer. Slakent does not want to lose Draedonius' legacy – especially his Dancers. He therefore cannot search for Laliana officially and is hunting for her without the authorization of the Cipher-sorcerer.

The situation is even more complicated than Slakent thinks. Laliana is not guilty of Draedonius' murder. Minuetto is the source of the problem; and this is not the first time it caused trouble. It already eliminated its two previous owners...

IN DAYS OF YORE

The story of Minuetto is enlightening. Captured twelve years ago, it was "adopted" by Irik Conversa, an old Jornist of Lorgol. Conversa lived in one of the Thousand Towers, Phalaen Tower, which features twinkling lights resembling white moths at nighttime. A deep bond connected these two. When Irik died of natural causes in early Fall 1445, Minuetto was devastated and decided to let itself die on its master's body.

♣ The Melancholy Waltz

But Vernashope, Conversa's inheritor, took over. He settled in Phalaen Tower and, little by little, tamed Minuetto. He discovered the Dancer's extraordinary abilities and strove to restore its taste for life.

Unfortunately, despair became the Dancer's primary emotion. In the early Fall of 1446, one year after Draedonius' death, Minuetto was troubled by suicidal tendencies. It then commenced a complex Dance, inspired by its deep anguish: suddenly, a branch of the Borrowlight Tree smashed through the side of Phalaen Tower.

The tree stabbed Vernashope in the heart, killing him instantly.

♣ The Memory of Souls

As the Dancer realized it had caused the death of its master, it attempted to commit suicide by impaling itself on one of the tree's black thorns. But it did not die; it only got a piece of the thorn stuck in its heart and gained a new power, the Memory of Souls, which gave it the ability to summon ghosts of the past.

Weighed down by despair, Minuetto began to haunt Phalaen Tower while invoking the ghosts of its memories, in the form of Irik Conversa and Vernashope. Soon, the tower was considered haunted and everyone began to avoid it.

♣ The Power of Despair

One spring day in 1447, an audacious Little Hunter named Tern Fool used a seasonling ritual to protect himself from the tree and entered Phalaen Tower. There, he discovered and captured Minuetto, whom he sold for a large amount of money to the Eclipsist Jurangon. It took quite a while for the latter to resonate with Minuetto, and the Dancer had to grow accustomed to Impulse for it only knew Empathy. But after several months, Minuetto became Jurangon's favorite Dancer, and gradually the mage was afflicted with the despair the Dancer radiated.

In early Fall 1448, disaster struck again. A despondent Jurangon freed his Dancers and threw himself out of the tower onto one of the jagged Borrowlight's branches. Minuetto returned to Phalaen Tower, living with its ghostly replicas of its former masters. This was the only place where, thanks to the Memory of Souls, it could transform its despair into nostalgia. Jurangon and Tern Fool joined this ghostly assembly.

♣ A One, and a Two and a Three...

During Winter 1449, some Little Hunters informed Tern Fool that Minuetto had been seen amongst the ghosts of the Phalaen Tower. Puzzled, the spriggan returned to the tower in the Spring and captured the Dancer once again. But Tern Fool saw Jurangon's ghost and began to suspect the Dancer of having caused the disappearance of the mage. Nevertheless, his obsession with making money prevailed. He sold the Dancer to an Obscurantist, Draedonius.

Minuetto was happy to endure Torture. Full of sorrow, the Dancer began to punish itself through pain. It considered Draedonius a redeemer, who would expunge its faults. Unfortunately, their common relationship became a destructive spiral: Minuetto wanted more and more pain, whereas Draedonius, fascinated by the Dancer's capabilities, became exponentially more disgusted with himself. This state of affairs reached its climax in the beginning of Fall 1450, when Draedonius committed suicide. Minuetto, having lost yet another master, returned to Phalaen Tower once again.

Change of Tempo

During the last months of his life, Draedonius had been secretly teaching Laliana, an Attuned Inspired, who wanted to learn Obscurantism in order to fight the Brotherhood of Senses. This Urgamish clique, originally Liturgical, aspires to impose pure reason upon Harmundia, and has been responsible for the destruction of many works of art.

Marcus One-Shot, the leader of the local Brotherhood, is a Marionette of the Masque who used his group to capture Concordists in order to corrupt their Flames.

Laliana was identified by a member of the Brotherhood while investigating him. She was imprisoned in an underground cell, and though she is resisting their ministrations, her will is faltering.

WHAT IF...?

There are numerous ways to involve your Troupe in this Drama, depending on the relationship between your Inspired and the Cipher-sorcerer.

If one of your Inspired is an Obscurantist, you can make him Draedonius' heir (you will have to remove Slakent from the story).

If one of your Inspired is a Censor, he could have been summoned to investigate the murder of Draedonius.

If one of your Inspired is a Little Hunter, he can be one of Tern Fool's friends. He will want to help Tern discover the truth.

If one of your Inspired is an Attuned, he may have met Laliana and can be curious about her disappearance.



Lorgol

The new capital of Urgamand is a strange city. It is located far from the center of the realm, and its atmosphere is rather somber because of the slums and the rogues and above all, because of the Borrowlight Tree. But the First Baron Agone has imposed his decision, so most Urgamish nobles have accepted his choice of Lorgol as the capital.

Consult the following pages for a precise description of the city: AGONE rulebook, pp. 52, 55, 274, 276.

Lorgol is ruled by a triumvirate: Lady Kerielle (the burgomaster), Sir Gotran (head of the militia) and Admiral Escadol (head of the Watchers).

THE PORT

This is the most cosmopolitan part of Lorgol. There are citizens from every realm and of every race. The south part of the city is made up of canals, warehouses, taverns and piers. The harbormaster's office is where all naval trade is tracked and taxed. It is the headquarters of Admiral Escadol who commands the Watchers. This elite corps is composed of fewer men than the militia, but its members are far more experienced and they are also good sailors. They are capable of naval actions with their own frigates. Moreover, they are sponsored by the naval taxes and are far better equipped than the militia.

The Lorgol lighthouse is financed by the Cipher-sorcerer in exchange for control of the Thousand Towers.

THE HIGH QUARTER

This area, where the wealthiest inhabitants of Lorgol live, is located in the eastern part of the city, next to the roads that lead to the Mercenary Republic. Most of the beautiful buildings were built by dwarven architects.

The Citadel is at the center of the High Quarter; it is where the Lorgol militia is based and where the First Baron, Agone, rules. He usually leaves daily affairs to his chamberlain because he is devoted to resolving complex problems – international relationships, interactions with the Cipher-sorcerer, etc. – and is often traveling.

Sir Gotran, the commander of the militia, is responsible for security in Lorgol, but the slums are still extremely dangerous.

CENTER ALLEY

This is the merchant district of Lorgol. It is a long avenue located in the center of the city, between the

slums and the High Quarter, and it connects the port to the Thousand Towers.

The Council House is the heart of Center Alley; this is where Lady Keriell runs the city administration.

The New Spark Inn, a famous Eclipsist academy, is located between Center Alley and the slums.

THE SLUMS

The western part of Lorgol is disreputable. Running from the Thousand Towers plateau to the sea, it is a labyrinth of small dark streets, malodorous lots, and dim alcoves. This area is a rogues' paradise, for the militia does not dare go there at night.

There are several thief-princes in Lorgol, all of who fight to control the slums. Rumor has it that Agone himself is at the head of one of the gangs, but this seems quite doubtful, for the First Baron would have little time for such activities.

THE THOUSAND TOWERS

The plateau on the north side of the city is covered by a labyrinth of enchanted towers. This is where Agone planted the Borrowlight Tree (a progeny of the first Borrowlight). In the last 30 years, it has grown to a colossal size, covering most of the Thousand Towers. The black tree is called Nigrescent Wood or Treenebra by the inhabitants of Lorgol. Most now avoid this area. Only powerful mages, Little Hunters and seasonlings dare to approach Nigrescent Wood.

Phalaen Tower is located in the western part of the Thousand Towers.

THE UNDERGROUND

Many rumors and legends concern the underground network of Lorgol. Some say there is a necropolis where restless dead rise to attack those who intrude upon the underground. Others say there are monsters living beneath the port. It is even said that demons from the Abyss lurk here... Indeed, strange creatures have been spotted in the upper levels of the underground network.

There are thousands of entrances to the underground: sewers, cellars, catacombs, etc. Many rogues use this network to hide from the militia.



Characters

SLAKENT, GREEDY MAGE

Who he is

This Obscurantist is a tall and broad man with short blond hair. He considers maintaining one's appearance an obligation for the powerful and is always smartly dressed.

Slakent is an ambitious, determined and heartless man. His only motivation is his obsession with profit. He uses Torture remorselessly but without pleasure. He knows the value of Dancers.

What he knows

He is convinced that Laliana is an ambitious young wench who only sought Draedonius in order to steal his occult knowledge. He does not suspect her of having killed her master. Slakent knows that Malarmel will not spare him (because Malarmel is a Jor-nist); however he also knows that he has nothing to reproach himself with (well, almost nothing).

What he wants

He wants to recover the inheritance of Draedonius (including Minuetto, of course).

He also wants to take vengeance on Laliana because he is convinced that she stole from him. But Slakent knows that no one must discover Laliana's existence

SLAKENT

Race: human
Sex: male
Age: 43
Height: 6'1" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 186 lbs.
MOV: 3

For Slakent's attributes, use those of the Obscurantist Censor archetype (see AGONE rulebook, p. 133). Slakent is not an Inspired; add 1 extra point to each Skill in order to compensate for his lack of a Flame.

Magic
ASC: 10
ASC APT: 22
Dancer lore: 8
Resonance: 8

Dancer	Mem.	ASC bonus	Empath.	Endur.
Erdwin	24	+4	6	6

Typical quote: "You must understand that I am counting on your prudence. Since this morning, everybody is talking about your involvement. Well, it is in the past... So, tell me, what did you discover?"

because if ever the Cipher-sorcerer knew, he would lose all his rights to Draedonius' legacy.

Nothing can discourage him from recovering Minuetto, even the story of the Dancer's "curse". If Slakent feels that the Inspired are trying to fool him, he will make them understand that they are making a big mistake. No one mocks an Obscurantist.

TERN FOOL, JAUNTY LITTLE HUNTER

Who he is

Tern Fool is one of the most famous Little Hunters of Lorgol. This Eclipsist is easily identifiable by a long braid of dark hair clipped in a golden triangle that is supposed to help him attract Dancers. This small (even for a spriggen) and stocky Hunter likes wearing colorful and eccentric clothes. His mischievous look suggests resourceful and roguish behavior.

He has always been independent and he is said to have trafficked in Dancers in order to survive when the Brotherhood of the Minuscule (a band of Small Hunters, active during Agone's youth) still existed.

He has sold several exceptional Dancers in the last few years, but, as he lives extravagantly (he loves parties and gambling), he is not rich.

What he knows

Tern knows the secret of Phalaen Tower; he has developed a spell (DIF 20) that gives him protection against the ghosts. Moreover, he knows a seasonling ritual that slows down the movements of the Borrowlight Tree. Unfortunately, this ritual only works in springtime.

The Hunter also knows that Minuetto radiates an aura of nostalgia and sadness and that he only seems happy in the Tower.

Tern is aware that Draedonius was working on activities other than his normal duties for the Cipher-sorcerer. He sold a mediocre Dancer to the mage that was not been recorded by the Order. (This Dancer now belongs to Laliana.)

What he wants

Tern suspects that Minuetto is dangerous but he does not want to reveal this to anyone because if a Censor found out, he could be found guilty of having killed Draedonius.

He prefers not getting involved in this situation; however, he will support the Inspired in their investigation.

If he trusts the Troupe, he will help them directly.

If he feels that the Inspired will give him away, he will point them toward other leads (the archives of the New Spark Inn for example - see AGONE rulebook p. 103).

If Malarmel suspects him, Tern will hide within the Thousand Towers. In this case, he will negotiate with the Troupe, assisting them if they help him escape possible punishment.

TERN FOOL

Race: spriggen

Sex: male

Age: 52

Height: 4'2" (SIZ -1)

Weight: 101 lbs.

For Tern's attributes, use those of the spriggen Eclipsist Dancer Huntress (AGONE rulebook p. 135). Tern is not an Inspired; add 1 extra point to each Skill in order to compensate for his lack of a Flame. In addition, Tern has these skills: Etiquette (the slums) 8, Gambling 8.

Assets and Faults

Famous, Creative mage

Magic

ASC: 9

ASC APT: 18

Dancer lore: 7

Intuitive APT: 18

Resonance: 7

Dancer	Mem.	ASC bonus	Empath.	Endur.
Lubaro	20	+2	6	4

Typical quote: "What d'ya say, fat snout? Me? A Dancer trafficker? You betta be jokin'! By Agone's gem, you should be car'ful. All me bizness is legal. And I do good bizness 'cos I'm good at it."

MALARMEL, JORNIST CENSOR ON A MISSION

Who he is

For his attributes and appearance, see AGONE rulebook p. 275.

What he knows

He suspects Slakent of not being completely innocent and wants to investigate further, so he has petitioned the Cipher-sorcerer has delayed the succession process. Unfortunately for Malarmel, Slakent is a red herring.

What he wants

He wants to clear up this situation and catch the murderer of Draedonius. The day after the arrival of the Troupe, Malarmel will suspect a connection with Jurangon's death. He will then want to question Tern Fool, who will stay hidden.

If the Inspired thwart Malarmel's investigation, he will accuse them of obstruction of justice, and will try to find a way they may have broken the Ciphered laws.

FANDOR DIM, THIEF-PRINCE

Who he is

This tall, thin ogre is the head of a network of spies and thieves. His gray eyes and pale skin add to his charisma, but his appearance is more fascinating than beautiful. Fandor prefers to be underestimated; this is how he has already avoided several murder attempts. Indeed, his enemies often forget that he is not only an intellect but also an athlete. He veils himself in an aura of mystery even though he is actually quite honest and straightforward. In Lorgol, many persons of note have used his services in order to obtain secrets... and more.

What he knows

He has met Laliana and he respects her for her determination, though he is not aware of her exceptional talents (as a Concordist and an Obscurantist). Fandor Dim also knows that Tern Fool has been spending large amounts of money since he sold a Dancer in 1447.

What he wants

If possible, he wants to help Laliana. But he does not want to risk the concealment of his network. He wants to maintain his image as a powerful crime lord. If the Inspired seem kind, he will help them, especially if the help doesn't cost him anything.



FANDOR DIM

Race: ogre
Sex: male
Age: 44
Height: 6'2" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 182 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 0/0

Body: 0/0
Body bonus: 0
AGI: 9
PER: 6
STA: 9
STR: 9

Spirit: 0/0
Spirit bonus: 0
INT: 5
WIL: 6

Soul: 0/0
Soul bonus: 0
CHA: 6
CRE: 3

Secondary attributes

AIM: 7
ART: -
ASC: -
DB: +2
HP: 59
MEL: 9
SWT: 19
CWT: 29

Fortune points: 0
Flame powers: none

Perfidy: 3
Darkening: 6

Skills:
Trials: Weapon (ogre axe) 6, Alertness 6, Dodge 6, First aid 5
Rogue: Conceal 5, Disguise 7, Gambling 5, Intrigue 8, Poison 8, Search 3, Stealth 7
Courtly: Eloquence 8, Etiquette (the Slums) 8, Fast talk 5, Trade 5, Traditions (Urgamish) 5
Knowledge: Alphabet (Armgaridic) 2, Language (Urgamish) 5, Language (Keshite) 2, Law 6, Plant lore 2, Season (Summer) 5, Surgery 5
Occult: Cipher-sorcerer 1, Dancer lore 1, Demonology 1

Seasonling power: Noon blaze

Assets: Spy network, Secret hideout

Combat
Initiative: 15, axe 16
Melee attack: axe 15
Dodge: 11
Parry: axe 13
Ranged defense: 5

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ
Ogre axe	+1	0	-2	+10 (5)	0

Armor: partial scale mail (penalty -4, prot. 7)

Typical quote: "So, You want to know where young Laliana is? 'Tis true, the damsel knows many things... things she shouldn't tell anyone. I see you understand me. She came to me to do business and I swore I wouldn't say a word. Well, I didn't actually swear... she paid me. So I can't tell you anything, though you seem honest. I think I know what you can expect from me; now, what can I expect from you?"

MARCUS ONE-SHOT, AGENT OF THE MASQUE

Who he is

He is officially an alderman of the Preceptorial Fraternity who works as a scribe and a private tutor in Lorgol. With his severe look and short blond hair, Marcus resembles a typical member of the Preceptorial – a stern teacher whose motto is “learning through discipline”. In fact, Marcus is a Marionette (see AGONE rulebook, p. 253) and he is the head of the local Brotherhood of Sense.

What he knows

He considers Art an abomination. Artists are liars and fools, unable to live worthwhile lives. Pure common sense is the only virtue. Marcus wants to destroy

the Muses and their creations, for he thinks that the Masque is the avatar of Perfection. Marcus is aware of the existence of the Inspired (whom he mistakes for Concordists). He captured Laliana before she could organize her attack against the Brotherhood of Sense. He is confident that she will succumb to contact with the Rot (see below) and become an agent of the Masque.

What he wants

To capture and corrupt Concordists so they will become agents of his master. He also wants to use the Brotherhood of Sense to spread Perfidy and destroy works of art.



MARCUS ONE-SHOT

Race: human

Sex: male

Age: 45

Height: 5'11" (SIZ 0)

Weight: 180 lbs.

MOV: 3

Attributes

Flame: 0/0

Body: 0/1

Body bonus: +1

AGI: 8

PER: 8

STA: 6

STR: 5

Spirit: 0/0

Spirit bonus: 0

INT: 8

WIL: 8

Soul: 0/2

Soul bonus: +2

CHA: 7

CRE: 2

Secondary attributes

AIM: 8

ART: -

ASC: -

DB: 0

HP: 50

MEL: 7

SWT: 16

CWT: 25

Fortune points: 0

Flame powers: none

Perfidy: 38

Darkening: 7

Corrupt powers: Masquerade

Skills

Trials: Weapon (dagger) 7, Alertness 7, Dodge 7, First aid 2, Survival 2

Rogue: Intrigue 7, Search 3, Stealth 7

Courtly: Eloquence 8, Etiquette (scholars) 4, Fast talk 5, Trade 7, Traditions (Urgamish) 8, Traditions (Liturgical) 4

Knowledge: Alphabet (Armgardic) 7, Geography 4, History 6, Language (Urgamish) 8, Language (Keshite) 3, Language (Sacred tongue) 5

Occult: Cipher-sorcerer 1, Concord 2, Dancer lore 2

Assets & Gifts, Faults & Sorrows

Eidetic memory, Light sleeper, Spartan, Doggedness, Smooth talker, Foresight, Blasé, Disabled senses (taste, smell and touch), Acrimony, Grandiloquence, Hand confusion.

Combat

Initiative: 17, dagger 17

Melee attack: dagger 17

Dodge: 15

Parry: 16

Ranged defense: 7

Note: when Marcus uses 'Foresight', he can either gain a +5 defense bonus against one attack per round, or a +5 initiative bonus.

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ
Dagger	0	+2	0	+1 (I)	-1

Armor: partial leather armor (penalty -1, prot. 3)

Typical quote: “Oh yes, lack of restraint is the sign of decadence. Only discipline can save our souls – an absolute rigor at every moment. Believe me, the control I learned at Preceptorial saved me. It is now my burden to convey order and obedience to all.”

LALIANA, CONCORDIST IN DISTRESS

Who she is

Laliana is a temperamental free thinker. Since her master was killed by the Brotherhood of Sense, she has sworn revenge.

She amassed large amounts of money and influential supporters thanks to her artistic talent and her beauty.

However, Laliana is a solitary soul who only relies on herself. She has developed numerous talents. Indeed, as Tune was not enough for her struggle, she made a deal with Draedonius to initiate her into Ascendancy. She chose Obscurantism for she desired powers that could destroy her enemies.

The corruption of the Masque has aged Laliana. When the Inspired find her, she will appear to be sixty years old. But, in spite of her white hair and her

wrinkles, she has kept the energy and dynamism of her true age. Her bright eyes and athletic figure contradict her apparent age.

What she knows

Laliana suspects Minuetto of having affected Draedonius in a strange way, but she does not really care. The death of her master rather suits her, for only he knew she had become an Obscurantist.

What she wants

She wants to survive, to conceal her magic abilities and her Dancer. But, most of all, she wants to eliminate the Brotherhood of Sense in all the realms.



LALIANA

Race: human
Sex: female
Age: 26 (looks 60)
Height: 5'7"
Weight: 143 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 1/0

Body: 1/1 Body bonus: 0
AGI: 7 PER: 7
STA: 6 STR: 7

Spirit: 1/0 Spirit bonus: +1
INT: 5 WIL: 8

Soul: 2/0 Soul bonus: +2
CHA: 9 CRE: 7

Secondary attributes

AIM: 7 **ART:** 8
ASC: 8 **DB:** +1
HP: 48 **MEL:** 7
SWT: 16 **CWT:** 24

Note: when the Inspired find her, she is affected by Slow Death (Virulence 8). She thus has a permanent Serious Wound.

Fortune points: 2 **Flame powers:** none
Perfidy: 16 **Darkening:** 5

Skills

Trials: Weapon (dagger) 7, Weapon (rapier) 5, Alertness 5, Athletics 3, Climb 3, Dodge 9, First aid 2, Survival 5
Rogue: Acrobatics 3, Disguise 5, Intrigue 2, Search 3, Stealth 5
Courtly: Etiquette (the Slums) 5, Fast-talk 6, Music (flute) 8, Music (cittern) 8, Traditions (Urgamish) 4, Traditions (Mercerin) 5

Knowledge: Alphabet (Armgardic) 1, Language (Urgamish) 5, Language (Mercerin) 5
Occult: Cipher-sorcerer 1, Concord 5, Dancer lore 5, Resonance (Obscurantist) 5, Tune 9

Asset & Gifts, Faults & Sorrows

Young, Lightning reflexes, Elusive dancer, Orphan, Flaring temper, Obsessed (fighting the Brotherhood of Sense), Disciple, Premature aging

Combat

Initiative: 14, dagger 14, rapier 16
Melee attack: dagger 16, rapier 14
Dodge: 14
Parry: dagger 14, rapier 13
Ranged defense: 7

Weapons	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ
Dagger	0	+2	0	+1 (I)	-1
Rapier	+2	+2	+1	+4 (I)	0

Armor: partial studded leather (penalty -2, prot. 5)

Magic

ASC: 8 **ASC APT:** 17
Dancer lore: 5 **Resonance:** 5

Dancer	Mem.	ASC bonus	Emp.	End.
Pumpkin	20	+3	2	5

Magical Arts

ART: 8 **Tune:** 9
Music: cittern 8 **Music:** flute 8
Tune (cittern) APT: 18 **Tune (flute) APT:** 18
Opuses (cittern): Thought Transference (15), Recall Memory (15), Alter Memory (20).
Opuses (flute): Order (10), Ban (15)

Typical quote: "Great, but there's no time for congratulations. We better get out of here before any other servants of the Enemy arrive. Let's move!"

MINUETTO, CURSED DANCER

Who it is

Minuetto was originally a joyful Dancer, but its tragic history has deeply affected it, so it is now extremely melancholy. It is identifiable by a musical note drawn under its left foot and a black mark on its chest.

What it knows

Minuetto is probably the only one aware of its tragic history, but it will be unable to tell anyone. It emanates nostalgia when it is in the Tower and will emanate sadness and despair if it is captured.

What it wants

Rest. It only feels relatively at peace when it is in Phalaen Tower amongst the ghosts of its past. If it is captured, it will cause the death of its master in a couple of years, at the beginning of Fall. Minuetto accepts this fate. Only extremely powerful magic that affects memory could free it from this malediction.

MINUETTO

Memory: 42
ASC bonus: +6
Empathy: 10
Endurance: 9

Special ability: Memory of Souls

After a fifteen-minute Dance, Minuetto is able to create a ghost that resembles someone it knew. Nigrescent Wood must be in proximity, otherwise the ghost will vanish in a few seconds.



Overture

AN EVASIVE EMPLOYER

The simplest way to draw the Inspired into this adventure is for Slakent to hire them. He will offer them either a talented Dancer (21 points to distribute), two normal Dancers (14 points to distribute) or a favor from the order (nothing impossible – a character may ask to become a neophyte, for example).

The case is problematic. He will portray Laliana as a former lover who seduced him in order to steal valuable documents. He can describe her exactly, and he knows that she recently stayed at the *Red Lantern*, an inn located in the slums. Slakent wants the Inspired to find her and bring her back alive. He would take care of this himself but he has much official business to deal with.

The Inspired can notice that Slakent is lying (PER + Fast talk against DIF 18). If they question him a little, he will end up by telling the truth: Laliana stole his most talented Dancer, Minuetto, which is easily identified by a black mark on its torso. He wants to recover this Dancer more than anything else.

AT THE ACADEMY

The Inspired can gather much information at the New Spark Inn, either by questioning the students and teachers (CHA + Intrigue or Fast talk, restrictive Cipher-sorcerer), or by checking the archives (INT + Cipher-sorcerer, restrictive Alphabet: Armgardic).

If the Troupe obtains any information, they must succeed on a CHA + Cipher-sorcerer (restrictive Diplomacy) roll against DIF 20 so that no one notices their investigation. If the roll is a failure, the Inspired are spotted by a NPC.

About Slakent

- ◆ DIF 18: Slakent is the legal inheritor of Draedonius, a mage who recently died.
- ◆ DIF 20: Draedonius and Slakent have been the targets of several fruitless investigations. They are quite definitely not the most honest members of the Cipher-sorcerer.
- ◆ DIF 22: Draedonius is supposed to have committed suicide, but the Censor Malarmel is carrying out an investigation.

If the Inspired are not discreet, someone will relate their investigations to Slakent, who will begin to mistrust them.

♣ About the dead mages

- ◆ DIF 13: Draedonius, an Obscurantist, committed suicide on the first day of Fall 1450.
- ◆ DIF 18: Jurangon, an Eclipsist, died under similar circumstances in 1448.
- ◆ DIF 22: Vernashope, a Jornist, died the same day in 1446.
- ◆ DIF 24: Vernashope was the legal inheritor of Irik Conversa, a Jornist who died of natural causes in 1445.

If the Inspired are not discreet, someone will relate their investigations to Slakent, who will question them suspiciously.

♣ About Minuetto (archives only)

- ◆ DIF 13: A Dancer named Minuetto, recognizable by a black mark on its chest and a note of music on its left foot, was registered under Draedonius name, during Summer 1449.
- ◆ DIF 14: The Hunter who captured Minuetto is called Tern Fool.
- ◆ DIF 16: The same Dancer was registered, in Spring 1447, under Jurangon's name.
- ◆ DIF 17: The Hunter who captured Minuetto for Jurangon was Tern Fool.
- ◆ DIF 21: Rondo, a Dancer with the same capabilities as Minuetto, was registered under Irik Conversa's name and then Vernashope's. It had no black mark, only a note of music on its left foot.

If the Inspired are not discreet, their investigations will be related to Tern Fool, who will decide to meet or avoid them, depending on their approach.



First Movement: Laliana

IN THE SLUMS

The *Red Lantern* is easy to find, but if the Inspired are too well dressed, they will probably be attacked on the way. Brigands rarely fight to the death, and shouldn't cause the Troupe too much trouble.

Master Lauzster, the innkeeper, does not remember Laliana (she altered his memory before leaving) and he keeps no guest register. The two other employees of the *Red Lantern* do not remember her either.

However, on a successful CHA + Eloquence roll against DIF 15, the Inspired will find a couple of regular customers who do recall the young lady.

- ◆ DIF 12: Several people remember "a cute brunette who walked around with a cittern". She stayed a couple of months at the inn.
- ◆ DIF 14: Laliana was taciturn and irritable. Oddly, she spent most of her time hanging around the Thousand Towers.
- ◆ DIF 16: Laliana left the *Red Lantern* two days ago. No one knows where she was going.
- ◆ DIF 18: Laliana was in contact with Fandor Dim, a thief-prince.
- ◆ DIF 20: Laliana was investigating the theft of a painting.

The Inspired will probably try to meet Fandor Dim. The Etiquette (slums) or Intrigue skills will be useful here. Money (used with the Trade skill) can also be of assistance.

Fandor will agree to meet the Troupe if he feels that their request is important. He will then send a messenger to lead them through the labyrinthine streets. If you wish, Eminence, the Inspired could encounter Fandor's rivals who would try to convince the Troupe to work with them instead of the thief-prince. If the Inspired still want to deal with Fandor, they will eventually be led to a damp cellar that Fandor uses for meetings. The cellar is only lit by a small window; nevertheless, there are as many comfortable armchairs as the number of members in the Troupe. Several minutes later, the thief-prince will enter through a secret door. He will not sit down, preferring to make the most of his height during their discussion. He will act overconfident, reminding the Inspired that they are on his turf.



The cellar is surrounded by ten hidden men armed with rapiers and crossbows. Five are already pointing their quarrels at the Inspired through tiny holes in the cellar's walls. The five others will appear rapidly if there is trouble. The Troupe should therefore show respect to Fandor...

The thief-prince will ask the Inspired to tell him their request. He will listen to them without interrupting. If the Inspired are convincing, the ogre will reveal a certain amount of information...

- ◆ DIF 12: Laliana has already contacted Fandor several times. Their contacts concerned art theft.

- ◆ DIF 14: Laliana is fighting a sect that steals and destroys works of art. Fandor agreed to help her (because destroying valuable objects is contrary to the spirit of thievery).
- ◆ DIF 16: With Fandor's help, Laliana wanted to attack the Brotherhood. She could finance the attack but she wanted to check her information first.
- ◆ DIF 20: Laliana was investigating Marcus One-Shot, a member of the Preceptorial Fraternity who lives in Center Alley.

If the Inspired pay Fandor well, he will order a couple of his underlings to shadow them and help in case of danger. He knows how to protect good clients.

THE CAVE OF THE ROT

In order to find Laliana, the Inspired will have to inquire about Marcus One-Shot. This alderman is extremely hateful toward artists. He considers art a perversion that must be destroyed. Marcus is devoted to reason and discipline.

Once a week, at nighttime, a dozen Brothers of Sense gather at Marcus' house. They enter through the back door. Each member reports what he has done and seen during the past week. Marcus then gives specific orders to them. Finally, the group burns a painting, an instrument, a book or a sculpture. For the moment the local Brotherhood only destroys minor works of art, but Marcus hopes to find more valuable targets soon.

Every evening, Marcus goes down to his cave to see Laliana, who is chained and guarded by a Rot (AGONE, p. 253). The Rot is used to corrupt the Concordists Marcus captures.

The Inspired can discover (on a successful CRE + Hunt roll at DIF 17) a secret entrance that leads from the Center Alley sewer to the cave of the Rot.

If the Inspired attack while the Brothers are still meeting, they will all (except for Marcus) transform into Grinning Puppets (AGONE, p. 252) and attack the Troupe. As soon as Marcus feels threatened, he will flee the combat. Thanks to his 'Foresight' ability, the Inspired will probably not catch him this time.

In the cave, the Inspired will find a much-aged Laliana and her Dancer. Moreover, the EG can decide that Marcus has kept a Corrupt work of art. It will be up to the Inspired to decide whether to destroy it or keep in a secure place.



Second Movement: Minuetto

WITHIN THE THOUSAND TOWERS

The Thousand Towers are a place of mysteries and enchantments. Before arriving at Phalaen Tower, the Inspired will face bizarre creatures and unexplainable phenomena. The EG should choose which of these encounters will be the most disturbing for the Troupe.

♣ **Shard**

As the Thousand Towers are a Remain, the entire area is full of Shard (from value 3 to 10). The Emotions radiated vary, so there is no Emotion strong enough to leave its imprint on the Inspired. However, those who stay in one place for a few minutes may be affected by the influence of the Shard. Unless spending an entire day in the same place, resistance is rolled with a +10 bonus, because of the diverse assortment of emotions. These are usually benign: joy, curiosity, ambition, generosity, greed, etc. Some contend that the mages who live in the Thousand Towers in order to benefit from the power of the Remain often become haunted by the chaotic medley of emotions.

♣ **Nigrescent Wood**

The true source of danger in the Thousand Towers is the Borrowlight Tree that Agone planted. This thorny tree is black, such a deep black that it absorbs surrounding light. Therefore, the tree is always enveloped in a hazy atmosphere. Even with a powerful source of light, a -1 penalty to actions due to darkness, should be applied to rolls made while among the Thousand Towers. Nigrescent Wood is nearly indestructible. Only magic seems to affect it, and it resists like a living being with WIL 15.

Moreover, the tree is able to grow and move at will. If an object or a being is in the way of a branch when it grows, the object will be speared and trapped by the ethereal branch. In this situation, the only way out is either to cut the branch (the thorns would then become solid and wound the person) or to wait until the branch moves on.

In certain places (such as Phalaen Tower), Nigrescent Wood's roots and branches slowly move. In other places, the Borrowlight Tree is calm and grows normally. It is difficult to say which is more dangerous – the faster the branches move, the more chance there is to be imprisoned by them, but the quicker they move on.

♣ **A Mysterious Encounter**

This is only an encounter suggestion for the Thousand Towers area. The EG can, of course, decide to use other encounters.

Pader Fayn, an Eclipsist and Invoker, has summoned four Opalins that he used as guardians for the last two days. The connivance the demons demanded said that they could stay to throw rotten eggs on the first eight people they saw. As Pader Fayn did not have enough time to keep an eye on them, he gave them the eggs and asked one of his apprentices, a dwarf named Udgall, to stay with the demons.

The Opalins are lying in wait on a footbridge between two towers. Of course, the Inspired will pass right underneath...

A couple of yards before passing under the overpass, the Inspired will hear Udgall warning them: "In the name of the Cipher-sorcerer, and for your own safety, halt!" Udgall will refuse to say more. He explains that he is only there to warn them but that they can continue "at their own risk" if they want to.

Udgall is only an apprentice of the Cipher-sorcerer. He will not tell the Inspired his master's name, nor will he warn them about the Opalins. He does not yet have a gem or a Dancer, but he will tell them to check in Ciphersed records at the New Spark Inn to verify his identity.

If the Inspired succeed in a PER + Alertness roll against DIF 22, they will notice small silhouettes moving around on the footbridge. If they continue the way they were going, a bombardment of eggs will fall upon them. The Inspired will not be wounded... but they will stink.

Udgall will remain serious and, sighing, will say: "I warned you". He will do his best to prevent the Troupe from attacking the Opalins. "Please. Once again, you are acting recklessly." At the same moment, the Opalins will be roaring with laughter. The demons will stay on the overpass if there are less than eight members in the Troupe. If they are attacked, they jump into the closest shadow and return to the Abyss.

If the Inspired attack the Opalins in spite of Udgall's recommendations, he will warn his master, who will feel somewhat resentful towards the Troupe.

If the Inspired attack Udgall, they will face serious problems; indeed, they will be transgressing the most basic Ciphersed laws, and it will only be a matter of time before Malarmel is on the scene.

THE POOHRK SENTRIES, OPALINS

They look like winged frogs, the size of dogs. Their dark yellow skin resembles an old banana peel and they smell dreadful.

Alertness: 10
Density: 25
Dodge: 7
MOV: 1/9 (flight)
Opacity: 5
SIZ: -2

5 in each attribute

PHALAEEN TOWER

This simple 30-foot tower contains three round rooms, one per floor, connected by a staircase. The roof is conical. Only the windows on the top floor are wide enough for someone to pass through.

Branches from Nigrescent Wood, enter and leave the Tower through the walls as if they didn't exist. Though these branches move slowly, they are quite strong – yet another reason to avoid the tower.

The Value of Phalaen Tower Shard is 8. Its primary Emotion is nostalgia, and the two secondary emotions are pride and discontentment.

Every night, the tower seems to be surrounded by a cloud of luminous spots that resemble moths. Against the somber background of Nigrescent Wood, this ballet of fireflies seems all the more fantastic.

Each night through the small windows, ghostly figures can be seen inside the tower – Minuetto's ghosts.

It is difficult to enter the tower. It is even more difficult to move around inside it. The Inspired will have to succeed on an AGI + Dodge roll against DIF 10 (every round) because of the branches. On a failure, the character is wounded by the thorns – he will lose 1 HP and undergo a -6 penalty to all his actions that round. The damage caused by the tree ignores all armor (even magical armor). If the roll is successful, the character only suffers a -1 penalty to his actions for the round (because of the concentration required to dodge the thorns).

Neither the ghosts nor Minuetto are affected by the tree.

There are two ways to reach Minuetto: climbing through a window on the third floor or entering through the main door... and fighting the ghosts.

♣ Climbing

This way is extremely dangerous, but the windows are a way to reach the third floor, where Minuetto is located, while avoiding the ghosts.

The branches that emerge from the walls of the tower can trap those who try to climb. In order to climb successfully, the Inspired must roll AGI + Climb (restrictive Dodge).

RESULT

- ♦ 16 or less: a fumble. The Inspired is impaled on a branch. He immediately suffers 25 HP of damage and must succeed on five STA + Climb rolls against

DIF 16 in order to remain still while the branch moves out of the way (for each failure, the Inspired suffers an additional 5 HP of damage).

- ◆ 17 to 25: a failure. The Inspired is obliged to go back down. The thorns wound him for 3 HP of damage.
- ◆ 26 or more: the Inspired reaches the third floor; he only loses 2 HP.

A black fey can easily fly to the third floor. It will require only two rounds but she will have to roll STA + Athletics against DIF 15 to flap her wings long enough. On a failure, the black fey will have to succeed on an AGI + Dodge + 5 roll in order to enter the tower through the closest window while avoiding the branches (use the table above for the result).

THE GHOSTS

These creatures do not really exist. They are slightly transparent and luminous, and they will not speak. They wander the Tower as if they were alive (mages are studying invisible books, Tern Fool is setting imaginary traps, etc.).

Their appearance is based on Minuetto's memories of them:

Irik Conversa looks like a smiling old man. He is completely white: white robe, beard and hair.

Vernashope appears to be Modehan. He has long dark hair, tanned skin and wide brown eyes. He seems thoughtful and preoccupied.

Jurargon is to be a handsome forty-year-old man. He wears ostentatious court clothes. He seems to be worried, for he is constantly looking around.

Draedonius' ghost is somber and tortured. Older than the others, he wears a long black robe. His smile is cruel.

⚔ Fighting the Ghosts

The five ghosts, the four mages and Tern Fool, wander the three floors. There is always at least one ghost with Minuetto on the third floor.

The ghosts automatically attack whoever enters the same room they are in. There is no way to hide from them, except for Tern Fool's spell. Then only, on a successful AGI + Stealth roll against DIF 15 (one roll per Inspired and ghost) can someone avoid being spotted.

Of course, the ghosts are not the only danger in the Tower. The Inspired will have to avoid the branches each round. Moreover, they will have to find their way up to the third floor (PER + Hunt against DIF 15).

Reaching the third floor requires four rounds: one to cross the first floor (an empty wrecked room), one to climb up to the second floor, another to cross the second floor (an old library), and one last round to reach the top floor (Irik's room).

FIGHTING GHOSTS: TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ghosts do not have true attributes (except SIZ 0 for the mages and SIZ -1 for Tern Fool).

Each combat round, they will seem to be casting complex spells (and their invisible Dancers will radiate many sparks), but their only attack is a powerful electric shock. Their attack base is 15 and the damage caused is 1d10 + SM (or 2d10 + 5 + SM if the target is wearing metal armor).

Their defense base is 15, but the only way to dispel them is either to cause 20 points of magical damage in one spell, or 20 points of physical damage in one blow.

Minuetto will be immediately aware of the "death" of one of his ghosts. It will begin to Dance in order to replace it (the spell takes 15 minutes to cast).

CAPTURING MINUETTO

The Dancer is not reticent. It can be easily captured by any member of the Troupe (DIF 12). The true difficulty is to face at the same time the tree and the ghosts. Once Minuetto is captured, the ghosts will stop attacking the intruders and will return to wandering the tower. However, the branches will not stop.

If Laliana is present, and if the Inspired have explained Minuetto's story to her, she will attempt to alter the Dancer's memory. She will perform a slow requiem on her cittern, to soothe the souls of the dead. The Nigrescent thorn in its heart will then slowly sprout out of the Dancer's body. Hopefully, an Inspired will help Minuetto extract it. The wound will exude black blood for a moment.

Minuetto has lost the Memory of Souls but it has recovered its will and its good temper. It will begin to dance joyfully. Its Memory is halved, but Minuetto remains an exceptional Dancer.

If one of the Inspired is an Attuned of the cittern, he could assist Laliana in performing her opus more effectively. In this case, Minuetto would only lose 10 Memory points.



Finale

The Troupe opened many doors during this Drama. How will they close them?

MINUETTO

If the Dancer is not healed, its curse will continue. Hopefully, an Inspired will end the malediction someday.

MALARMEL

The Censor needs a culprit in order to save face. Though the Troupe will investigate this affair more quickly than he, they will have to account for their discoveries eventually. Moreover, Malarmel wants to take care of Tern Fool and Laliana. Tern is partly responsible for the death of a mage, and Laliana is a non-registered mage. Depending on Malarmel's discoveries and the characters' explanations, these situations may be resolved with minimal fuss... or not.

TERN FOOL

He is willing to take some responsibility for Jurangon's death. The Inspired could be his intermediaries with the Censor. The situation could be resolved to Malarmel's satisfaction by barring him from practicing Ascendancy for a couple of months. Tern Fool would have to hire some apprentices to help him stay in business...

FANDOR DIM

If the Inspired promised money or offered their services, the thief-prince will soon ask for his payment. Laliana could surely contribute, for she possesses large amounts of money hidden in Lorgol.

Moreover, Fandor Dim could help (illegally, of course) Tern Fool and Laliana escape Malarmel's clutches.

SLAKENT

The Obscurantist cannot believe that the Inspired would break their deal, even though he planned to betray them from the beginning. If the Troupe decides to keep the Dancer, Slakent will become one of their mightiest enemies.

If Laliana has become their ally, Slakent will give her away to Malarmel and will try to convince the Censor that the Inspired are accessories.

On the other hand, if the Inspired are honest and if they stay on good terms, Slakent could use his influence on the local dean to help Laliana enter the Order.

LALIANA

The Concordist will, depending on her situation, either leave Lorgol to fight other Urgamish Brotherhoods, or stay in town to finish her magic training. She will never forget the debt she owes the Inspired.

If Marcus One-Shot has fled, she will pursue him. She will not ask Slakent to rectify her situation with the Cipher-sorcerer. She is not afraid of being a renegade.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF SENSE

The Brotherhood has been usurped by many agents of the Masque; this is a good way to incorporate corrupt Concordists, such as Egon Scampa into the Drama (see *The Gray Papers*).

This group still has many humans and seasonlings who are truly devoted to the destruction of works of art. The struggle against this sect can become a long and arduous campaign.



INSPIRATION ALLOTMENT

Each of the following deeds earns two IP for each Inspired (only one IP if the character would not have succeeded without help):

- Understanding Draedonius' death (connecting it to Jurangon's and Vernashope's deaths)
- Freeing Laliana from the Rot's cavern
- Dismantling the local Brotherhood of Sense
- Capturing Minuetto in Phalaen Tower
- Finding a way to release the Dancer from his despair.

Each of the following deeds earns one IP for each member of the Troupe:

- Killing Marcus One-Shot
- Assisting Malarmel in his investigation
- Resolving Laliana's situation with the Cipher-sorcerer
- Resolving Tern Fool's situation with the Cipher-sorcerer
- Returning Minuetto to Slakent

Subtract one point from this total for each major NPC (Slakent, Tern Fool, Laliana or Fandor Dim) who has good reasons to hold a grudge against the Inspired at the end of the Drama.

Depending on individual performance (ideas, role-playing, etc.), you can award one or two additional IP.

