

AKILA :: Half-Orc Fighter (Champion), Acolyte
Pelte Mage-Hunter (Pelte Captain, Ekletheon Orthodoxy Paladin)

Akila is a member of the Pelte, working primarily on city guard duty. They are also an active member of the church, having grown up in a temple of Ceremar's. They considered joining the clergy, but had a formative episode at a young age after learning their parents had been killed by a rogue necromancer. Akila hunted the necromancer, was defeated, joined the Pelte and leveled up, went back, killed the necromancer. They've since learned strength and order are not for ones' self, but everyone.

Focused, protective, fierce, brooding

ARUNA :: Hill Dwarf Cleric (Death/Jagus), Soldier
Inquisition Heavy (Ekletheon Orthodoxy Anointed Priest)

Aruna's position in the Church is nebulous: they belong to the Temple of Jagus, are an Anointed Priest of the Ekletheon, and report directly to an Inquisition Tribunal member. Aruna balances all this by focusing on what's important: keeping the dead dead, the hungry fed, and someone hot in the bed. A life in the service of Jagus can take on in many ways, and in Aruna's case it went from battlefield to battlefield. Being surrounded by death can desensitize someone, but that only forced Aruna to develop two very different attitudes: at work they are brusque, matter-of-fact, and coldly efficient. At play they are boisterous, clever, and flirty.

Charming, desensitized, dedicated.

CHANNA :: Human Wizard (Diviner), Noble
Lodge Member in Good Standing (The Order of the Azure Lodge)

Channa has been a model University student and member of the Azure Lodge since they can remember. Born to a noble family, they were afforded every luxury. This came with exceptionally high expectations for performance. The stress nearly crippled Channa for their whole life, but molded them into a student that first impressed tutors, then shocked professors, then seemed to... fizzle out. Channa now passes the time with travel, idle entertainment, and socializing. This all hides the true Channa: a thrill-seeking wizard-for-hire working for the Lodge of Dusk. Channa's many connections with the criminal underworld sometimes require them to travel unexpectedly or take terrible measures – and this excites them.

Impulsive, brittle, intimidating, genteel.

HANSI :: Half-Elf Rogue (Thief), Charlatan
Wicked Duke (Court of Thieves)

Hansi is the life of every party, and the saving grace of most burgling expeditions. They're a perfect generalist, equally at home with second-story work, wetwork, scams and cons, and forgery. At the moment they're on loan from the Court of Thieves to the Misfit Mint. Their broad exposure to different cons, money laundering schemes, and the act of forgery means they're the best agent to track a counterfeiter. Hansi grew up poor, but safe, and resented it always. They now accumulate wealth not for any lofty purpose, but to provide for their family and their own entertainment.

Hedonistic, clever, jack-of-all-trades, well-informed.

HIRUNI :: Wood Elf Druid (Coast), Sailor
Pilot Extraordinaire (Kinship of Khnum Circlemember)

Hiruni's first love was a beautiful human named Naranya, but the love that's lasted much longer is for the sea. Their 'day job' is as a pilot for the port, moving ships in and out with incredible ease. Their partnership with the sea is rewarding, even if the work is tedious. They are saving up to purchase their own ship, preparing to travel all across the sea. This puts them, at times, deeply in the debts of the various thieves' guilds. They've worked with a number of agents, and the fine folk of the Misfit Mint have promised a perfectly-forged captain's license (usually almost as expensive as an entire ship itself) for this job – and maybe a few more.

Dreamer, wanderer, passionate.

KASUN :: Human Barbarian (Totem Warrior), Criminal
Mafia Enforcer (Gold Hands Member)

Kasun's allegiance has been to the Family for some time, before they even knew it. Now they know, and they don't care all that much. As one of the Gold Hands' top enforcers they have a lot of privileges. That means a lot of duties, as well. For the gambling, the floozies, the spare coin and the smoke they owe the Family a job every now and then. At the moment that means tracking a curse and dealing with it. Kasun is not well suited for any job that doesn't include slinking through the shadows and chopping apart debtors.

Ambitious, intimidating, confident, aggressive.

VAKKER, THE FENCE

A barghest that is in a continuous state of anxiety about being found out. He fences stolen goods in Knives, and lives in the Warrens. He hunts in the Tangle and the Blinds, always dodging gangs and the occasional Pelte patrol. Some time ago he got 'lucky' and killed a smuggler carrying a few thousand marks worth of large gems, and he's been slowly fencing them off ever since to get set up. He recuts stolen gems, fences the possessions of dead folks, and tries to avoid notice. He is also responsible for moving most of Asish's money out into circulation, and has some vague awareness that that's causing a problem – one of the reasons he's gotten rid of every bill Asish gave him. He wears a *ring of mind shielding*, claiming it's for privacy. Really it hides his fiendish nature from nosy paladins. It's likely the rarest item he has.

BLACKTEETH

The (current) leader of the Vicious Reavers, a vampire spawn told by its master to gather up a gang of ghouls and raid the Warrens for victims, goods, and information about the outside world. Blackteeth is a poor example of the kind, emaciated and stringy – this may come from hanging with the ghouls. It tends to run ambush tactics, and travels with a pack of six ghouls and five ghasts. He calls his pack the "deadly dozen," because he sucks.

BRONZE CLAWS

A contract devil named Khelehasz, he's made a deal with Asish to grant him as much cash as he'd like, with the caveat that it will all be cursed and those who spend it will take that curse on as well. Eight feet tall, with broad curving horns, red skin, black eyes, and black claws dipped in bronze. The devil is smug, businesslike, and very confident it can handle whatever problems arise.

ASISH

A small man with a big moustache, Asish was a competent bureaucrat with a weakness for losing dogs, women with big tits, and spending too much on his wife to make up for it. When he found a sealed *iron flask* he hoped he'd found a genie. Rubbing that lamp poured out a red-skinned figure that offered to grant wishes, but only after did he find out that demons and djinni are distinct. He'd do nearly anything to get out of this deal, but doesn't know how. His weak will got him into this problem, and it's not going to get him out. The threat of physical pain and condemnation of his soul keep him pliant. If he backs out of printing counterfeit cursed cash his soul is forfeit. That's the deal.

RAVIK, THE KING OF CURRENCY

The leader of the Misfit Mint, Ravik has a job that needs doing. That job is finding whoever's bringing all this attention to counterfeit cash, and 'dealing with them.'

YANISH, INQUISITOR

A member of the Tribunal of Sarandib serving the Ekletheon Orthodoxy, Yanish is concerned that the curse has the smell of necromancy, hags, or fiends about it: in any of those three cases it's in the best interest of the Church that the curse be eliminated.

PROLOGUE

A contract devil [BRONZE CLAWS/KHELEHASZ] has forged a pact with a local forger/counterfeiter [ASISH]. Asish wished for money, and Bronze Claws needed someone to put cursed currency into circulation.

The notes carry a curse of -1 to saves (max -10) for every 100 marks the owner has, whether on their person or not. This means the wealthy of the city are suddenly being stricken by terrible luck, disease, crippling falls, weak will, etc.

The currency is counterfeit, but virtually undetectable, so the only way to be rid of the curse is to go through every bill individually and find the tiny errors or flourishes of Asish's work. Asish no longer wants to be engaged in this but fears for his health and soul; Bronze Claws goes out in disguise to see the havoc he's wrought.

NOTES

One or two of the PCs will own a business, the Golden Pig Import Company. This is where they wound up with their cursed coins. The value of the Pig's coffers is enough to impose a -3 on all saves of the PCs involved. They don't own the Pig for love, but rather for money: this is a way out of the life, or a retirement package, or a way to keep the family comfortable while they adventure a little bit.

The Golden Pig: in Midtown, a third-floor office managed by a middle-aged halfling woman named Nashuna. She has 14 kids and may or may not be skimming off the top to support her family. Brutally efficient, and considers herself more the owner of the Pig than the owners: it's been traded in dice and card games three times since she's been there. The Pig deals mainly in local import/export from the farms and Weej to Talmussin, and from the docks back out to Weej. Has good relationship with three or four short-haul caravans that run this route.

Dust, grime, salt air. Fish smell, people smell, greenery and flowers. Three-and-four storey buildings, brick roads, interior plumbing. Plaster and wood. Stalls outside, crowding the road - florist right out front. Stairs exterior, wrap around back to a door over an alley facing a 4 floor building, 10 ft away. Smell of urine, homeless, opium poppies (sold by florist?). Half of first floor is warehouse, half of basement below is also storage. First floor shared with dentist. Second floor is shared office: one broke lawyer, one public bureaucrat (crooked?), one bookie, one artist of hentai-style erotic graphic novellas (often feature locals, which makes office-mates angry).

SCENE 1 - VAKKER, THE FENCE

The PCs are directed to go visit Vakker the Fence. Both Ravik and Yanish are aware of Vakker, and their informants (Whisperers) have let them know that Vakker is the source of the majority of the cursed bills. The running theory is that there's a powerfully cursed item in his shop. A bit of intimidation and deduction will lead PCs toward the right idea.

Knives: a neighborhood next to the canal, pressed up against the Tangle on the North end, Pugil to the East, and abutting parts of the Tumor District to the SE. Smells of blood mainly, and brackish water. The canal is unfit for drinking, but folk drink it anyway. Tons of butchers, tons of bars. Street stalls don't exist here. Gangs control the territory, though it's not as bad as Blinds/Pugil/Tangle.

Vakker's Shop: Bloody Good Stuff, a narrow pawn shop. Slender tables and racks line the walls, all seemingly held together out of hope. The goods on display are a mix of trash, and mundane items sold at mark-up as a front/money-laundering move. The real stuff is in the back: a selection of nicer goods stolen, bartered, or legally bought. Some have stories of their provenance, and some even have certificates of authenticity (some are forged). Mainly Vakker deals in easy-to-move middle-tier goods, like gems, art objects, historical artefacts, and from time to time a collector's piece. His expertise is stones and metals - truly fine art, mechanisms, alchemics are all beyond him, so he rarely stocks them. In the basement, in a safe, are the really nice pieces - magical, cursed, or perfectly cut. Also down there are the trappings of a barghest. He dumps the bodies into the canal once the heart is eaten, then holds their goods for a few months or a year, and resells them.

He can be intimidated easily - he doesn't want to fight and doesn't want anyone nosing around too much - but he keeps two bruisers from the Golden Hands in his shop, big guys that have poisons and drugs to juice up (don't feel pain, Str increase, size increase, posion damage, etc. - think Bane). These guys owe more to Vakker than the Hands, at the moment, but could be commanded by Kasun.

He doesn't know where the curse came from, but he does know the cash is counterfeit, mainly half and full suns, but with a few lotuses in there. He was aware it was cursed, and wanted it out of his shop. He didn't tell anyone because he didn't want the attention. He doesn't know where Asish is, but sees him once every two weeks or so. He mainly buys gems (at a steep markup due to Vakker knowing the cash is funny), but sometimes home goods, once a magical dagger. He knows Asish is somewhere in the Warrens, but doesn't know where. He does have a scroll of *locate person* if you'd like to buy it, or you can go to the Warrens and ask around... Vakker also helps facilitate the purchase of rare inks and dyes for Asish.

SCENE 2 - OVER THE LEDGE

After being told that Vakker's contact, Asish, is somewhere in the Warrens with a printing press and some stolen plates (that, note, were never reported as stolen by the city's mint), the PCs pursue. They travel toward the Ledge, and are ambushed in the Warrens by Blackteeth and his gang.

When asking around the Warrens it becomes apparent that most people know Asish is somewhere in the old tunnels, and they don't mind pointing him out. The old tunnels are dangerous, though. Unlit, bad air, pit falls, traps, wyld magic.

After encountering some bad magic and an antique trap or two the PCs wind up in dark tunnels where Blackteeth ambushes them near a 20 ft. spiked pit trap and a pipe he can bust for steam concealment in 20 ft, as *fog cloud*. If left alive he can guide PCs straight to the workshop. If not it's not hard to find - only one path has been scuffed into the dust, and there's the smell of inks and dyes.

SCENE 3 - MAKING MONEY

Upon confronting Asish it becomes apparent that he's not the brains of the operation. Bronze Claws, disguised as a simple-minded attendant, throws off the concealing spells and lays about himself. He prepares for the fight with a few spells, mainly summoning: he expends his 8th and 7th level spells to summon a few elementals. He takes pot-shots where possible, and carries a handful of *healing potions*. He takes the potions only out of sight, so if he's invisible or missing for more than a few rounds he's back at full health. He runs if brought below 20 hp, which helps account for his high CR being a little more reasonable.

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PCs have intimidated Vakker, know he is a cannibal (they think, from context). Have gone into Warrens, have killed all but 2 ghouls & ghosts, and killed Blackteeth. One PC dropped, eaten by ghosts. Ghosts ran away with their meal.

Ghouls didn't use any traps.

Summoned devils and elementals will make first encounter. Steam mephits, imps, and fire elementals.

Trap ideas:

Pit Trap (yeah, with spikes)

Boiler Room (low visibility, fire damage, many pipes to crawl through, maze that's concealed by steam)

Poison Needle Trap (set up as an imp-triggered trap proly)

Fire-breathing Statue: actually a statue with an imp in it that's invisible, with *thaumaturgy* and a *potion of fire-breathing*.

Glyph of Warding with a *suggestion* that says to talk rather than fight, maybe?

Throw in a puzzle about wording, maybe. Like an SAT puzzle but you solve it by unraveling the contract's legalese, correcting it, and signing it. Contract devil, yo.

Okay, so let's arrange the bits and pieces: the PCs need to clean up after the ghast attack, rest, pick up a new PC, and then track down the counterfeiter Asish.

Cleanup: not much needs doing. They're on the border between the Warrens and the Necropolis. The bodies will get cleaned up.

Rest: strongly recommended they back up a ways. However, this means losing the trail, and they'll need to reestablish a way to track down Asish. Last time it was a tabby cat via *speak with animals*, this time it might be old-fashioned tracking or a *locate person* spell.

New PC: Channa (or another) was assigned to track these doofuses after they were spotted around Vakker's. Either the Pelte is quietly investigating forays out into the Necropolis (Akila), or the church is (Aruna), or the Lodge of Dusk has asked someone to trail them as a way to get leverage over the other guilds (Channa). Whatever the case, they'll make an appearance during the rest.

Tracking: the cat is gone, or different. A *locate person* spell has an effective range of 1000 ft, so the PCs don't have to get too close to make it accurate - the cliff is only 740 ft high, and the workshop is maybe 200 ft into the cliffside. Manual tracking is tough, requiring a Wisdom (survival) check DC 25, or 20 once in the Necropolis borderlands.

Either technique is likely to take them along a different route - that's how the bad parts of the Warrens are.

The new route goes through a red-light district, then through a series of abandoned rooms set up with traps in one direction intended to keep the undead out, then undead territory, then traps in the bad direction, then a boiler complex, then the destination.

Trap rooms on the way out are pretty simple. A pit trap or two might pop up. A crossbow trap with a tripwire tags the third PC back (as the tripwire is usually oriented the other way). The locked doors are just as often barred. At one point there's a salt line.

Undead territory is spooky but not dangerous - today. Make Stealth checks, Percep checks, play up the ambiance. Shuffling in the distance, bloody marks in places, the smell of rot, rats and spiders everywhere. Maybe dead air that adds a level of exhaustion or two.

Traps in the bad direction described above. Logic puzzles (to keep out the zombies) and riddles are actually quite useful here. Put time pressure on with howling and footsteps in the distance. Collapse a ceiling at some point. Start introducing more infernal imagery.

Boiler rooms filled with steam and sewer pipes. Have a busted steam pipe in the distance causing the ventilation failure - dead air here too. Also imps and mephits and a fire elemental or two. Be a dick about it.

Moving through tight spaces: all movement costs 3 squares, you can't Dash. DC 15 Dex (acrobatics) check reduces this to 2 squares and allows Dash. Small creatures count it as difficult terrain, check to move normally. Tiny creatures take no penalties. Heavy weapons and two-handed weapons take disadvantage.

Steam: visibility is reduced as though everything beyond 5 ft was lightly obscured, 15 ft is heavy. Some sections of the tunnels are extra hot, and deal 1d6 fire damage on entry. You can mend steam pipes with an action and a DC 10 Dex (tinkerer's tools) check.

Then Asish and Bronze Claws. Drop an evil Michael laugh when they figure it out. Make Asish a tiefling, in appearance. His contract has been bad for him.

Puzzles

Foxes and Peacocks

Three cannibals and three anthropologists have to cross a river.

The boat they have is only big enough for two people. The cannibals will do as requested, even if they are on the other side of the river, with one exception. If at any point in time there are more cannibals on one side of the river than anthropologists, the cannibals will eat them.

What plan can the anthropologists use for crossing the river so they don't get eaten?

Note: One anthropologist can not control two cannibals on land, nor can one anthropologist on land control two cannibals on the boat if they are all on the same side of the river. This means an anthropologist will not survive being rowed across the river by a cannibal if there is one cannibal on the other side.

A: First, two cannibals go across to the other side of the river, then the rower gets called back. Next, the rowing cannibal takes the second across and then gets called back, so now there are two cannibals on the far side.

Two anthropologists go over, then one anthropologist accompanies one cannibal back, so now there is one anthropologist and one cannibal on the far side.

The last two anthropologists go over to the far side, so now all the anthropologists are across the other side, along with the boat and one cannibal.

In two trips, the cannibal on the far side takes the boat and ferries the other two cannibals across the river.

The Mechanical Frog

A frog is at the bottom of a 30 meter well. Each day he summons enough energy for one 3 meter leap up the well. Exhausted, he then hangs there for the rest of the day. At night, while he is asleep, he slips 2 meters backwards. How many days does it take him to escape from the well?

A: 28, on day 27 it will leap 3 meters up to 30.

What's my name?

I'm never seen,
But can be heard by all.
I'll never speak,
But to answer your call.

A: Echo