

The Story so far

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The setting

Baron Alden von Elbe-Elster a reclusive noble eager to kowtow to any political wind to guard his secret (that of being a Mage in a repressive society .. ooooh) having proven this within the last 5 years by not supporting his Markgraf's son who was declared traitor while his more morally dubious cousin, Constantia took over the Mark. But then he's also cautious as he's getting on in years. He's in his sixties now and is fairly desperate to find a way to prolong his life. Hopefully live forever. Which is why he went for the Wang. To be precise the Wu Shi Wang, the Wu Shi Wang Chian Tzu Kongzi Chen, Mage of the fifth Huan, Imperial Sorcerer of Kartar. But Wang didn't show. Where in the world is Wang (WWW)? Start of campaign Game date - 5th of March 3250

Session One

This is why Frie Herr (or Baron) Alden hired Thodric Jarl, a human (indeed, even somewhat Irolon in looks) mercenary of dubious employment background, straight from the semi-Arab reptilian nation of Zylstan. When you set forth to find a missing sorcerer in the wild and centaur-infested hinterlands, you want an experience mercenary to lead your guards. For while there is much inter-Duchy squabbling and skirmishes, guards tend not to have much campaigning experience in foreign parts. They're more used to beating up their neighbours or impressing the locals. Although it took until session two for Thodric to prove his worth (albeit by cleaving an unarmed, starving monster that had previously been shot by someone else, from horseback). Although he did offer valuable skills and advice on their journey into the Horse Wilds. Especially when they started discovering the partially eaten corpses of Wang's guards. Meanwhile, Red wakes up. He's a full monster with two heads and a large stomach full of feline Kartaran guard. But he doesn't know this. In fact he doesn't know anything at all, he has no memories - and only retains some language skills. Which come in handy when he examines the McGuffin in his hand, because he can read the writing on it - even though he doesn't know what it could mean. To add to the confusion, Wang - who was lying next to him, jumps up and runs away. Leaving Red with naught but a bag of odd things and another half chewed guard corpse. Luckily, along comes a bard named Cadmus, who just happens to be exploring the Horse Wilds (honestly, Bard's do that) and is willing to befriend this monster (who appears to be able to shape shift) and explain things to him." Along comes Team Alden and they all get together under what anyone would class as dubious plot reasons for a GM to get PCs into the same party". The we proceeded on to "dubious plot reasons for a GM to keep the PCs in the same party" -p" Red, named by Cadmus, and now shaped to appear like a midget relative of his, wearing the uniform of one of Wang's guards (which made Team Alden quite suspicious - almost overcoming the PC glow". Possibly they are just too polite to interrogate strangers in a forest), wanders off to have a look at a wandering band of centaurs. These centaurs were in the way the previous day when Team Alden wanted to follow Wang's tracks, but were now camped further south. Caution (because it is well known the centaurs despise humanoids) and a quick count of the 4 to 1 odds, delayed the further tracking of Wang until a more opportune time." It was then that everyone discovered Red's inquisitive nature, and the maximum level of unluck he had bought for his character (unluck" is a game related disadvantage that is otherwise known as "GM's Delight"). Alerted the centaur guards, killed one of

them, fled into the forest and dropped the pouch of the McGuffin. The pouch was picked up by the pursuing tribe when they sought this monster, and ended up surrounding the camp. Team Alden was volunteered by the centaur Chief (let's call him "Tim", because the PC's haven't asked for his name yet) to search the forest for the monster-what-done-them-wrong."

Session two

In the morning, that's what they did, spending many a long intercharacter discussion on the odds of centaurs-to-humanoids, what weapons they had, and how many they may be able to take. Strangely enough, they didn't find the monster, because the 8-foot two headed beastie was currently looking like a midget bard. However, Cadmus did trade with a centaur, his one and only sword, for the Pouch of Obvious Plot Device. Back at camp at lunch time, one of the guards - who is also a brewer's apprentice - proved his worth by demonstrating how much centaurs like alcohol. Tim and his centaurs settle down for food, and Alden supplies the drink. Sometime later, Team Alden carries on their way, leaving the drunk centaurs to their own devices (or as Alden describes it gay horse sex" - which I found amusing at the time, in a very childish way of course)." Tim's troop of nomadic centaurs mentioned these monsters having attacked a fellow centaur tribe in the past. And that tribe being wiped out. So it came as no surprise to the PCs as they continued east, that they started coming across warning markings made by centaurs beware of the monster, it has horrible pointy, nasty teeth, and many pamphlets on Avon products". Heedless of warnings, as every PC party is (although to be honest, the warnings are more akin to "oooh - possible treasure ahead"), Team Alden proceeded into the Even More Forbidding Forest." Making camp, they took more precautions than usual, and included some fortifications. Possibly because they had spotted an orange/red shape shadowing them. I think they suspected it was a plot significant monster (possibly because I don't believe in random encounters). Wandering into camp came a young man, fleeing a caravan that had been attacked by a group of these monsters. The caravan was doing illegal trade between Kartar and the Duchy of Irolo, and Alden had his suspicions that this man may be the missing traitorous heir to the Mark. They placed him in the centre of the camp and kept watch. During this time, Red decided to come out of the midget" to Alden. Red had some suspicions that this stranger was another monster like himself. After that, Red left the camp to sleep - these monsters revert to their true shape when unconscious, as noted the stranger didn't but he was only pretending to be asleep when Team Alden got him drunk and strip searched him (note - interrogation of strangers that don't have the "PC glow" is likely to happen in Even More Forbidding Forests). Red climbed a tree nearby to sleep." Further along that night, Baron (I'm not a Mage) Alden chanted (Religiously, only) in his tent (not because they would see the spell gestures, honestly) and there was a great wind (not because of the wind servant sent to bring his bestiary from his castle to him). Later on, there was another great wind as a mysterious book went into Alden's tent. During this time the stranger fled, and Red Mr Unluck" the Beast fell out of his tree, right on top of him. Thodric, alert to the stranger, went after him and surrounded them both. Alden tottered up later and cleared up the matter of Red being a "Rakshasa". Next day, the strange young man lead Team Alden northwards towards where his caravan was attacked. But then he tried to make a break for it, and was shot at by one of the guards. Losing his pretend form, the stranger turned into a Rakshasa. But a rather small and starved one - who had just the time to change shape before Thodric cleft him (and there was much rejoicing). Red scouted ahead and discovered an entire tribe of Rakshasa, so prudently, Team Alden left the forest. After further religious rituals" Alden determined that as yet, Wang had most certainly entered the EMFF, but had not yet left - or at least not within easy reach of the party."

Session Three

After camping for another day, the forest became strangely normal. Which intrigued Thodric. Alden managed to examine the McGuffin and came to the conclusion it was a mind transference device, that had malfunctioned. Wang's mind was in Red's body and vice versa. The cut lengths of hair that connect the main crystal to the anodes, that transfer the different aspects of a mind from one body to another, would need to be replaced. They were made of the tail hair of a unicorn. Once again Red wandered up near the monster camp - and discovered many tracks. Getting the rest of the party there, Thodric gave the tracks a profession once-over. Felines, many of them. Going east. They set forth again on horseback, eventually coming within sight of the group of some 30 or so felines - all appearing identical, except for one holding a staff. The Rakshasa have decided to infiltrate Kartar. With the help of a Rakshasa mind in a feline body, and therefore not prone to change shape when he loses consciousness, they seek to wreak evil in the empire. But the party has caught them in the open, have superior weapons, a devout religious man who is sure a holy item of his will act very much like a spell cast by one of those damned illegal mages if he but chants and gestures with it, and horses. The horse archer guards are up for it, and the page boys with the pack ponies are left behind. After a false casting (ahem) use of the holy item, Alden does eventually target it in the centre of the monsters, causing them to scatter, one third coming towards them, one third away, and one third caught to take the effect - which stuns them and eventually knocks many of the unconscious with hordes of biting insects. The Rakshasa left, including the feline (Wang) with the staff, charge the party - only to be cut down with bow fire (Strangely enough, guardsman Albrecht kept hitting them in the groin, causing major damage) - truly demonstrating the need for armour. Five of them made it to Thodric, who, using nearly all of his endurance (and therefore becoming heavily fatigued) managed to lay about himself with multiple attacks. During the charge, Cadmus shot the feline in the leg. The feline fell to the ground, bleeding - and after the battle was over, was discovered to be dead. Red was only slightly miffed he wouldn't be getting his body back. During the time of the battle, Red himself was not present. He decided to stay back - and realised too late that he couldn't cover the distance in time before the battle was over. It took about 4 turns to make short work of the beasts and mop up. They quickly scattered, those that were left.

Session Four

Sunday 24th July 2005 - Session 4 - Western Shores Campaign Current Game date - 12th of March 3250 The bodies of the beasts were gathered together and burned, extra special care taken to make sure that Wang's body left no identifying parts. Red took all of Wang's possessions and now is considerably rich - in Kartaran money. Having it converted to local currency may be somewhat problematical considering the somewhat paranoid nature of the Duchy of Irolo at this time. The party travelled back as fast as they could to the Duchy's closest march - Uckermark. Eager to get away from the evidence of conflict. Cadmus still keeping the McGuffin safe. Various campfires were noticed off to the south. Alden saw one more than the others. Strangely enough, even when asleep it nagged at his mind - giving him a troubled night and a headache in the morning. In the morning Alden saw two sun rises. The normal one, and one from the south. It was a blazing magical disturbance, only viewable by those with the sight. Con-vincing others to scout ahead to see what it was, they discovered a large army approaching their region. In the midst of this army was a single figure, an elf on the back of a unicorn. Could it be the Weeping Prince? Surely not. Aren't all the rumours in a roleplaying update just simple rumours? Does that mean Kartar is really mobilising as well? Surely not. For that would mean dire things to those that lived in the eastern-most region of a Duchy. The various high priests in the army were hurling magic, after magic at him - fireballs, lightning blasts, high winds, everything they could muster. Which he ignored. He appeared to be travelling to the

northeast, the army was there to make sure he caused no problems with the Duchy of Irolo - and possibly to kill him if they could. They continued past Team Alden, who was, in this case, far less interesting. Whether they do anything when they go past the ashes of the Rakshasa or how they return to the Duchy is left as an exercise for the active imagination of the paranoid. Sometime later Team Alden approached the fortified and patrolled borders of the Uckermark - to be greeted by one of their roving patrol captains. Alden himself made sure that any suspicious items were in a field of unsuspectingness while they passed the borders - to stay with the Baron Uckermark as befits a noble. The Baron Uckermark, a fairly politically naive elderly man - with a new young wife who just happens to be a cousin of the current Marquessa. Cadmus even entertained those present whilst the two Barons discussed politics and Baron Bovo Minheim von Uckermark had his assurances that Alden's loyalties lay with the Marquessa to such an extent, that he could count on Alden's support if Constantia ever went after the Duchy herself. Marquessa Constantia being rumoured as quite ambitious. Thodric made mention of the Corpsemaster of Uckermark, but in general just lurked in the background, out of sight - too common to entertain thoughts of talking with the nobility, perhaps - and seeing to the quartering of Alden's men in the guard barracks. Red left his quarters during the night to sleep out of sight of potential gossiping servants who would not likely take kindly to the appearance of an 8 foot two headed monster in their castle. He did try to track down Cadmus, who had left earlier to go bar crawling, and catch up on Bard-gossip but unfortunately - due to a lack of interest in tracking the meandering path of a dedicated drinker through the quite numerous amount of pubs in the town (and the lack of any memory of a town's layout) - Red was not present when Cadmus was mugged. Bit of a blow that - at that stage Cadmus was still carrying the McGuffin. He lost it, as well as much money to a number of brigands who were intelligent enough to attack him AFTER he was completely off his face on beer and ale. This sad news was brought back to the castle the next day and started a side quest of inquiry into the disappearing McGuffin. The local constabulary were able to recommend the interrogation of a blacksmith near the docks area based on the description given by Cadmus. However the blacksmith proved unhelpful - as his son, the one most likely to be able to commit a violent crime, due to age, had gone missing. The blacksmith himself had not committed a crime for several years. Meantime Cadmus and Red were questioning the various patrons of the bars that Cadmus had visited previously, although no further information on who stole Red's brain has yet been forthcoming. Nor indeed who has Thodric's heart, or Alden's courage :)

Session Five

The McGuffin having been lost through tragic luck, the party sallied forth in various guises to retrieve it. The Baron and his grumpy bodyguard (Arrgh, name? Something the Bald... :) threatened a poor, unprepossessing, though red-haired, blacksmith who had, in his youth, been something of a troublemaker. Stylish and amusing though the Baron's threats were, the poor, trembling fool turned out to be innocent. Meanwhile, Red and Cadmus set forth to search the pubs the McGuffin had been through before that vicious, unprovoked assault robbed the party of it. Unfortunately, no real clues were turned up. Yet, (I believe) we felt that a town nearby might hold the clues we needed (not to mention the local High Priest of Odin was coming by the castle soon and no-one was really that keen to meet him, which struck us all as rather strange, yet no-one argued about the need to leave), and so we said farewell to our kindly hosts in the castle and rode to this nearby village. There, we found a red-headed man who somewhat matched the description of the foul thieves' leader, but after some short investigations and questioning by our honey-voiced bard proved that we were once again at a dead-end, this man being obviously the wrong one. Cadmus, knowing some people who knew some people who might, possibly, have some slight chance of knowing some other people who could just possibly know things, set about contacting his contacts. They said they would get back to him. There

was nothing to do then but wait, and the Baron, having been away from home for far too long, needed to settle some affairs, thus we rode back to his city, discussing various things—namely Cadmus's future employment with such a stylish, rich and generous man. We stayed at a port town for some days. Red, that bastion of strength and multiple forms, got a job that, much to his disgust, paid sod-all. Cadmus continued happily sponging off the Baron, as did his bodyguard, who, however, actually had to pretend to work. At least he got paid a substantial amount, and then spent a substantial time looking through items he could suddenly afford, often with exclamations of joy. :) Cadmus was contacted by some men, and, having obtained from the Baron some money to purchase what they claimed to have for him, set off to see if the McGuffin had been found. The Baron did some business, as did Red, and I think Bodyguard (Damn, sorry, Nathan, really can't remember his name... Take 'Bodyguard' as his name, not an intended insult.. :) talked to some of his contacts. During the day, smoke was seen over the docks. The Baron immediately sprang into action, ordering fire-chains to be set up. Fortunately, these were barely in operation when the skys clouded over and unforeseen rain put the fire out—the Baron's prayers to Odin having obviously worked nicely. In the fire was found a headless body. Some investigations occurred, proving inconclusive. Party members were distracted by an odd looking priest who seemed to be following them. Whenever they looked around, he seemed to be unobtrusively nearby. Suspicions were raised within the minds of every party member with something to hide from the church—that is to say, none of us, obviously. Many hours later, Cadmus returned, tired, despite his mighty thews, from bearing a wooden box. Once it was levered open, inside we found a blood-soaked rag wrapped around the McGuffin, though the gems were missing. The blood was soon explained by the presence of a head—the owner's red hair being naturally that colour and not changed by his life's fluid that made everything else inside the box quite tacky to the touch. Our thief had been found, and the McGuffin returned. Much celebration happened. The next day we rode back to the Baron's castle, keeping a close eye out for that priest. He was not seen, much to our relief. After a few days sponging at the castle, Cadmus received a message from a tradesman at the Port saying a commissioned piece of jewelry was ready for him. Our thoughtful bard convinced the Baron to give Bodyguard the day off, and we rode back to the Port, pausing only to deliver some letters for our kindly Baron. Cadmus quickly picked up his jewelry and then met Bodyguard in the pub of his choice. Fun, it was not, though Cadmus was polite enough not to say that serious drinking among silent men was not his idea of a great time. However, this politeness soon helped to thaw, at least a little, relations between our greatest fighter and our wonderous morale officer. Cadmus even extracted a grunted assent that next time Bodyguard might just, possibly allow Cadmus to choose the pub in which we would have 'a good time'. Cadmus took this as sign of true friendship from Bodyguard, given the friendliest he had ever seen him up to that point was to not gut someone the instant he met them. Special Guest Writer Torben. The part of Bodyguard was played by Thodric Jarl. Victims were dressed by Generic NPC suits-R-Us. When travelling, PCs prefer Encounter-Free-Shipping.

Session Six

Sunday, 2nd October, 12.30, Torben's Game date - 7th of April 3250 T'was the end of the month and the gods' bribing days came by once again[1]. All the populace was happy, knowing the wrath of the mighty ones would be bought off for another few weeks. As the Baron spent excessive amounts of time in pious 'prayer', completely unsuspectingly near the magic items of Wang, Cadmus made himself known as a happy, friendly man-about-town, impressing all and sundry with his stories, songs and ability to avoid paying for any drinks. One fine day, a new priest, Brother Rizzo[2], appeared to take the place of the last poor castle priest who died of 'Loki's curse' - a sudden onset cancer that left him wearing a rictus grin, which is nothing at all like the results of a fatal poison[3]. Brother Rizzo, covered in dangly charms and amulets, turned out to be happy, friendly man-about-town, who went with Cadmus to learn the best waterholes in the Baron's demesne. Meanwhile, Red tried to learn the

intricacies of roofing, only for Thodric to see true merit in turning him into a huge champion for the Baron, wielding two greatswords. Then, late at night, while thunder rocked the peaceful town and strobes of light played across the hills preparing for their first real dramatic role in this adventure, a damp Cadmus and Rizzo saw, in one flash of Thor's hammer, a dark robed man on the hill. Knowing a GMPD (GM Plot Device) when they saw one, they decided to check it out. Much to their disgust (Well, Cadmus's at least[4]) the dark figure turned out to be an overly garrulous, far-too-truthful-for-anyone's-comfort, 40-ish man who proclaimed himself to be The Seer, a mythological agent of scary power. He had come to give a PROPHECY and a WARNING! Instantly, a slit throat and a meeting with the castle pigs were considered for him, but he blurted out so much so quickly that these thoughts became redundant and settled to mere irritation and defeatism. We were going to be prophesised at and warned...sigh... Firstly, we were told the Hand of Loki[5] (according to Rizzo, an evil organisation/Loki priesthood) has The Wang (aka the McGuffin), and what the Baron has held 'something else', so the Baron should stop playing with it. After that, no-one suspected the Baron of being a mage. Really. More dire, the 'red star' (aka a bloody big war we want to avoid but probably can't) is coming. Worse still, Conrad, Cadmus's ailing grandfather, was due to be kidnapped soon by Cadmus's father, who Cadmus did not know and who turned out to be one Krantor, possibly a pirate king of Dornica-a man so vile but rich he had bribed the Duke of Bayern. Thodric was also told that he really should visit his mother, the poor old dear. He refused. After some private chats, the rain stopped and the Seer left, saying, to our everlasting 'joy', that he would be around quite a lot.[6] Now, being a man of honour and a loyal grandson (who knows a 15-point disadvantage coming into play when he sees it)[7], Cadmus instantly began to ready himself to rescue his grandfather from a kidnapping that would probably only begin the moment Cadmus arrived. Red informed the others that he had told, and got, the Baron to stop playing with The Wang, and we all unconditionally believed him. Red's just that sort of guy[8]. The Baron agreed to go to Irolo too, as he had business there. After much discussion with Thodric and Cadmus, we went north by boat, the Baron travelling incognito as a merchant.[9] We paused at Marchioness[10] Constantia's town, horrified but impressed to see an army possibly close to 50,000 strong encamped there. We all wandered into town. As we wandered the byways and highways, searching for information, bells and horns began to sound, the town gates closed. Why? Cadmus, meeting up with Rizzo, near the hotel where the Baron stayed, returned there, and we waited some time until Red, who apparently had been near the causal event arrived to tell us what had happened. As Constantia had ridden down a main street, surrounded by guards, two small 'birds' flew at her head, stopping mere inches[11] away by some form of mystic shield. Closer inspection proved the birds to be darts. Unfortunately, this caused her guards to go wild, arresting every obviously armed man they could find. Even worse, Thodric just 'happened' to be one of the nearest armed men[12] in the street of the assassination attempt, and he was quickly whisked away to be questioned. What shall happen to him? Shall he escape? Shall the mighty PCs mount a valiant rescue attempt? Shall the Baron break cover to get his man released? Find out next time! *Special Guest Writer Torben*. GM footnotes for session six: [1]The Dezenaka (high mass) of Loki, usually a small sacrifice to ward off bad luck at the end of each month. Mass ceremonies are not traditionally held by any legal order of the Church. [2]Riso" is how I originally spelt it. But it's pronounced rizzo. He's a Friar of the Brotherhood of Cunradus" [3]And completely different to all the other tragedies and accidents that befell resident clergy in the castle within short periods of time after their residency. [4]This was purely intentional. In and of himself, the Seer isn't powerful or very immortal. The Gods just won't let him die. Ever. [5]See Religious Orders. [6]Or may not, he travels on foot and in general PCs travel a lot faster. It took the PCs a week by barge to reach Havelland. However - He takes bookings and will do parties for reasonable sums. [7]Just to be clear, this is a DNPC disadvantage. Not must follow plot whims of GM" psych lim. As that's a house rule and not worth any points." [8]Shapeshifters have trustworthy faces. [9]South leads to pirates, zombies and necromancers. The PCs assumed that politics was the lesser of the two evils. [10]Marquessa if you're French. Otherwise

it's Markgräfin (or Margravine). Unlike the Baron, she isn't a Prominence either, she's a Nobleness. [11]Almost a metre, actually. [12]And masked.

Session Seven

Sunday, 16th October, 12.30, Torben's Game date - 7th of April 3250 to 9th of April Deciding to wait a day to see if Thodric would be released before we tried anything more...straightforward, the Baron moved to a pub nearer the castle in order to mentally overwhelm a, uh, rat and send it in to look for the dungeon. Meanwhile, Cadmus took Red to learn the ancient art of rumour-mongering-spreading the rumour that the assassin belonged to mercenaries Constantia had hired as guards-only to have his young apprentice blindly talk to a captain of said mercenaries. Fortunately, Red managed to escape, change his features and continue on with Cadmus. He was nonetheless barred from making further attempts at rumour-mongering. Thodric, having told the truth in front of a truth-seeing priest, was released, disappointing all who had been hoping for slightly more death (theirs, not ours) and destruction to go along with such a momentous event. Unfortunately, the town gates stayed shut while the Hand of Odin began doing Constantia's dirty work. Neither our mage, which we of course do not have, nor our monster, which we definitely do have, felt like being found by these somewhat zealous priests, so we decided to look for alternate exits to the city. We noted a Doomsday Cult of the Red Star, wearing a red dot on their foreheads, and all went, Huh." The Baron and Red went to look for clues at the building where the assassination attempt had occurred. They saw a priest cast a divination spell, then searched themselves, but, despite a muddy footprint, found nothing. Cadmus and Riso, however, found Rotha, a smuggler, and in order to get out of town cheap, agreed to transport a certain item Rotha did not want found in town either to Viltz[1] at the Grey Duchess in Kremaburg[2]." We left at midnight, rowed upstream, and then walked for two days, with the Baron as a humble merchant on a pilgrimage. On the way, the Baron failed to resist temptation to look inside the chest with the magic item we were transporting, but his flea could not see in the dark. However, to distract us, we found an old man crying by the side of the road. Knowing the stories of gods et cetera doing the same, we were all instantly suspicious. Nevertheless, we agree to take him to the next town to put his wedding ring on his wife's grave. Riso took up the unpleasant duty of trying to jolly the man up and convince him to do the job himself. Ultimately, Riso placed the (magic) ring on the grave while we all stood well back, waiting for the dark forces of hell to rise up and unleash themselves upon him. They did not. Oh well, maybe next time. Unknown to us, Riso found the same ring in his backpack a few days later. He wisely palmed it off on some unsuspecting priest. It might have been a good magic item, but why take a chance with strange, crying old men?[3] We got to Kremaburg. The baron bought us all horses, Cadmus handed over the item, which turned out to be a youth potion, much to the Baron's chagrin. We moved on, having heard a rumour that Constantia was obviously nuts, killing all the birds in her city. On 9 April, Heroes Day, we found ourselves in a village. Cadmus immediately became the centre of attention at the festival. The less party-minded of us kept to the sidelines, more interested in watching the plain-clothed but armed strangers also in the village than in having fun. At least the Baron kept his end up and had a good time. There was a shooting star overnight, and bad omens the next morning. Riso advised us to stay, but we decided to keep moving-until we discovered a guard missing, the useless bastard. So we searched, eventually finding him sans head. But in true Godfather style[4], we found the head in the Baron's unslept in bed. A warning? A Threat? If so, pretty damn ineffectual as we do not know for what or by whom. Still, the plain-clothed but armed figures had vanished, apparently never having been in the pub we know they were in, and we were left answering the questions of the local constabulary. A fun day was had by all. The punchy was getting antsy, the Baron pissed, Red hungry, Cadmus bored and Riso rattled (or maybe that was just his rune stones...), so the plain-clothed but armed figures better keep out of our way or some serious dice rolling may just occur...next time...[5] *Special Guest Writer Torben*. GM footnotes for session seven: [1]Viltz. [2]Kremmenberg. [3]It was in fact the Ring of Woe - giving minus

one to all rolls until it was willingly taken by someone else, or buried with the body of its creator. From Harn Encounters. [4]The body was placed where the Baron slept, after he had left, in the morning. The head had been placed where the Baron would have slept, while he was checking out the body, also during daylight. There were multiple heavy footsteps at both locations, but no one saw (or perhaps remembers seeing) the culprits. [5]Making the PCs nervous may in fact be part of their plan.

Session Eight

Sunday, 27th November, 12.30, Torben's Game date - 10-24th of April Having buried our dead guard, but having no idea what evil lurked in the hearts of the men who obviously intent on doing something nasty to us, we continued Irolo's capital. We heard that there were lots of immigrants down south, but had no idea why. Coming upon a walled town, we decided to stay overnight. Some of us took rooms, while the guards and Rizo (Argh! Sp?) slept in the common room downstairs and Red decided to sleep out of town. During the night our brave priest awoke to see an assassin one of the watchers from Kremaburg standing over the bodies of two guards, including (alas!) Vitals Albrecht, so, of course, he screamed long and loud. Instantly those upstairs awoke and rushed to his aid except Cadmus, who, despite being a light sleeper and having a high perception, blissfully slept on. Meanwhile, a third guard died, his head rolling free to join those of the other guards. The party piled onto the stairs, Thodric wearing nought but a loincloth and a helmet fortunately, really, given the assassin advanced up the stairs (while yelling something in a strange language none of us understood) and proved himself to be a flashing master of the blade, yet his one true hit bounced off you guessed it Thodric's helm. Unfortunately, Thodric, being unprepared, had trouble keeping his fully armoured opponent off and was stunned. However, much to his good fortune and chagrin he was healed by the priest, while the Naked Bard finally joined them and threw a dagger straight over Thodric's shoulder and into the assassin's stomach! The Baron then did not join the fray and definitely did not cast a dispel magic spell on the assassin's sword. However, this non-action led to the assassin teleporting away and everyone else going: Cool! I want his magic cloak! There being much wailing and gnashing of teeth for Vitals Albrecht, and a muttered Dammit! Now I need to hire more guards! for the other two red shirts, we wasted the next day burying them and talking to the Sheriff. Thus, we stayed another night, this time all in the common room, with Cadmus-prepared alarms of string, bells and one crossbow. We slept, though Red, now with us, stayed awake. Bells rang. Red leapt. The assassin was grappled! He dropped a letter! He vanished! Aargh!! We read the note. Kill Thodric and you may go free! While daggers were for a while fingered thoughtfully, the note really did not give us enough reason to kill our own punchy not to mention that unsigned notes really irritate PCs, who will often automatically do the exact opposite out of sheer bloody mindedness. So we ignored it, but pressed forward to the capital at speed. Our pursuers seemed to leave us alone. However, having noted that there are now 4 red stars in the sky (joy) and still wondering what our friendly visitor yelled, we headed to the nearest big town the capital of Badenmark for information. Cadmus and the Baron went to Margrave's palace, but found nothing in the library though the Margrave himself noted that the Duchess was now raising her own army to counter Constantia. Rizo and Thodric found at the church library that the assassin yelled, You shall not disrupt the evil sorcery! in Elvish and mentioned Morghul. Umm huh? Sigh assassins go figure We pressed on and, after a few weeks, reached Irolo. Now one red star had dimmed. Oh ok. The amazing celestial lightshow and us without astronomy knowledge skills! Cadmus immediately went to his Grandfather Conrad's place, with Red and Rizo, and took him out for a meal and not a moment too soon. Coming up the stairs as we descended were two sailor types. Could these be the prophesised kidnappers? One way to find out. We let them pass. Having forgotten something,

Cadmus snuck back up after them while Red and Rizo continued on to lunch. Cadmus soon joined them, nothing untoward having happened. Well, that's what he told his grandfather. Really, this happened (i.e. player, not PC knowledge): The bastards kicked in Conrad's door! For that, they must pay! Cadmus stepped into the doorway. Two daggers flashed from his hands, knocking one sailor down, into permanent darkness. "Surrender or you'll get the same as your friend!" ordered Cadmus, and the sailor instantly put up his hands, dropping his weapons. As Rizo questioned Conrad about Cadmus, Cadmus questioned the sailor about, well, everything. Then Cadmus killed the kidnapper, not wanting the aggravation of explaining things to officials, messed up the house as though it had been robbed (being careful not to break anything of sentimental value to Conrad, but placing it as though it had been roughly thrown aside), and set up the corpses as though they had been killed by an ally while arguing over the valuable jewellery Cadmus had left only a short while before in the apartment for safekeeping. *dammit!* Meanwhile, Baron Alden and Thodric were at the university library. Alden got a marginally magically book about Morghul, but could not read the language. He offered a reward for information. Back at the hotel, he received a letter from the Eternal Guardians of the Torch of Flame (well, better than the Torch of Water). Intrigued, he followed the instructions and went to the noted warehouse, where there was no door, well none Thodric could see. So Thodric was sent off and the Baron dispelled the door. Inside he found the remains of a demon summoning ritual, a book on the subject (with the standard missing pages) and other good stuff. Treasure at last! Now all we need to worry about is: where are the Guardians? What happened to the demon? And did the Baron clearly say the three magic words before picking up the book? Find out next time!

Session Nine

Sunday, 11th December, 12.30, Peter C's Game date - 24th of April

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Last update: **2013/03/13 00:35**

