

The House of Lisport



A **Gods & Monsters** Adventure

The House of Lisport

A *Gods & Monsters* adventure suitable for four to six 4th to 6th level characters

by Jerry Stratton

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<http://www.godsmonsters.com/Guide/Lisport/>

**On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And through the field the road runs by
To heavy-glittered Fork;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round a manor there below,
The manor of Lisport.**

**Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Through the wave that runs for ever
By the manor off the river
Flowing up to Fork.
Four grey walls, and two grey towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent town imbowers
The Lady of Lisport.**

See [godsmonsters.com/Guide/conversions/](http://www.godsmonsters.com/Guide/conversions/) if you'd like to use *The House of Lisport* in AD&D or other old-school games.

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September 6, 2014

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1. *Lost Castle of the Astronomers*, for 1st to 2nd level
2. *Haunted Illustrious Castle*, for 2nd to 3rd level
3. *The Vale of the Azure Sun*, for 3rd to 5th level
4. *Helter Skelter*, for 5th to 6th level

How to Use This Adventure

Read the quick overview first, to get an idea of the ghost story. Read (or re-read) the main inspirational media and a few of the secondary ones if you have them just to get a feel for the tone.

Then read about Fork. That's where the adventure starts, and there can be a whole lot of adventure there completely unrelated to the House of Lisport. If you want them to spend a lot of time in the city, you can even have them hang out with both Meril and Eldred before Eldred disappears. There's no need to rush them through the adventure.

Read about Lisport Manor. Look carefully at the description of Erisu. Erisu is the antagonist in this story, and you'll need to understand what that demon wants and what it's willing to do to get it.

Print out the supplementary material for hand-outs to your players. Don't forget to check at the Gods & Monsters web site for all of the resources listed in the resources section. Don't underestimate the power of player swag.

Involving the Adventurers

Someone must be friends with Meril Alegar III. Without a long-term relationship with Meril (or Eldred) the adventure doesn't work.

If there are any nobles in the group, they will certainly know of the Earl of Lisport and Lisport House. Any noble in Fork will prefer to stay in Lisport House if they can afford it.

Meril can offer payment to his friends, but he cannot offer a percentage of the treasure. First, that would be dishonorable, as the treasure is almost certainly myth. But second, if such a treasure exists it belongs to the family and not to any one member. There are other members of the House of Lisport well removed from him who will inherit from him if he dies childless. These are the descendants of Philip and Elena Agew in Newhorse. If they do find the treasure, however, he will give them a significant finder's fee.

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ADVENTURER LEVEL

This adventure is designed for characters of fourth to sixth level. At least one sorcerer or prophet is expected, and at least one warrior. While there are few creatures in this adventure, Erisu the Demon can call on some undead and has some demons in the vault. Some of the creatures can only be attacked with magic or magical weapons. Poison figures prominently in any fight with Erisu.

CHARACTER HISTORY

Those characters who know the Alegars will remember both Meril and Eldred, their mother Lady Miriam, and their crotchety old grandfather, Meril Alegar II.

Meril Alegar III was always fun, and always overshadowed by his more driven elder brother.

Characters from the river towns are likely to know the children's poem about the murders, "Melly Lisport took an axe...". If you have the time you might introduce the poem during an earlier game session.

MONEY

Coins in this adventure are given as coins in Highland. A shilling is one monetary unit, a penny is a twelfth monetary unit, a half-penny is half that, and a farthing is a forty-eighth monetary unit. If you use the generic system, just make a shilling one unit, a penny a tenth unit, and a farthing a fiftieth unit.

Most of the money here will be from the Black Stag mint, because of the Stag River agreement between Fork and Black Stag. Fork does not have its own mint. However, people in Fork will use whatever coinage they brought in with them or stole.

They're not technically "mints", but each casino strikes its own chips out of clay, wood, or stone. Casino chips may also be used as money in Fork.

AFTER THE ADVENTURE

If they find the vault and allow Meril to keep the treasure, the House of Lisport will be restored to a semblance of its former glory. Meril will pay off his debts and Lisport House will be safe. He may even attempt to rebuild the Lisport docks and the town, perhaps making a safe place for carousers outside of Fork. The latter course will definitely bring him into conflict with the gambling guilds, resulting in further opportunities for urban adventure.

Why Fork?

There's a lot of information about the gambling town of Fork in this book. It provides useful background for why it's important to help Meril. But it also provides a place for Erisu to go if it escapes. If Erisu can make it to Fork and hang out in casinos, it can gain 1-4 demonic power per evening, up to its maximum.

Fork is a great place for a demon to base itself.

Sources and Inspiration

Edgar Allan Poe's *The Cask of Amontillado* and *The Fall of the House of Usher* influenced this adventure, as has, of course, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*. John Irvin's movie *Ghost Story* and Leonard Wilson's Dungeons & Dragons adventure *The Ghost of Mistmoor* (from Dungeon #35) are more modern influences.

The Fork portion of the adventure is inspired by such movies as *The Sting* with Paul Newman and Robert Redford; the latest *Casino Royale*; and of course Alexandre Dumas's *The Three Musketeers*.

Other inspirational material includes Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*, Hunter Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, A.S. Byatt's *Possession*, Tennyson's *Lady of Shalott*, Michelle Shocked's *Ghost Town*, and the Eagles' *Hotel California*. And while I can't remember a specific episode I'd guess that watching way too much Scooby Doo in the seventies helped. *I'd have gotten away with it if it weren't for those darn kids!* If you let one of the characters accidentally fall through the wall in Elizabeth Mardel's room, it will definitely resemble the Mystery, Inc. hijinks.

The cover image—and the manor that the maps herein are based on—is Montacute House in England.

Background



Lisport was the home of the Earl of Lisport, but most of the family died during the Goblin wars. It was a foul murder, made all the worse not just because the murdered Earl, Colonel Elroy Courlander, was one of the West's most brilliant military leaders during the Goblin wars but also because it was perpetrated by one of the Earl's daughters.

Elroy Courlander raised an army from the men of Lisport and the surrounding areas and drove south to protect the embattled town of Brightwood Crossing. During the winter of 1897 Colonel Courlander returned home with his lieutenants to plan for the spring campaign and because they expected an attack against the river towns. That Christmas, Melody Courlander killed the Earl and his two Lieutenants along with the rest of her family.

Lisport was overrun by goblins a few days later.

Only Elroy's two-year-old grandson survived, and the son-in-law who raised him. Meril Alegar, heir to the House of Lisport, was taken to the family's home in Fork, where Fork's walls protected him from the war.

The family has not flourished. Lisport was never repopulated after the war, and the family remained in Fork where they manage Lisport House, the last of the family's holdings.

The current Earl is Eldred Alegar, who lives in Fork with his younger brother Meril. Both have reputations as carousers. While they are well-liked, it is expected that the family's holdings will be lost before either of the two brothers can pass it on either to their own (as yet nonexistent) children or to distant relatives in Black Stag.

Now Eldred is missing, possibly due to his gambling debts. Meril needs to find his brother or his brother's body and find some way of settling the debts his brother has incurred with Sparkling Danny Chaverson.

You can spice the adventure with gambling scams in Fork, goblins on the road, and family intrigues, as desired.

Quick Overview

THE MYSTERIES

There are three basic mysteries in this adventure. Depending on what they do, they might discover a few other mysteries as well, such as how to exit the vault and how to contact the ghosts.

Except for exiting the vault, these aren't particularly difficult (Erisu may decide to help them enter) but make sure you keep an eye out for misunderstandings between yourself and the players.

You will want to adjust the difficulty of these mysteries according to what your group finds interesting. This is especially important when it comes to the vault. They could conceivably be trapped in the vault forever. You may need to remind them, if they enter the vault before learning the way out, that they can combine their efforts into group effort for both bonuses and the ability to apply more than one player character's mojo to a roll.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 1898?

Erisu possessed Melody and convinced her to kill her family. She used a magic dagger of her father's, which Erisu had magically poisoned.

WHERE IS THE LISPORT FORTUNE?

It is in a secret vault in Lisport Manor, in a Lost Corner which can be entered by playing the correct melody on the piano in the drawing room. Exiting the vault requires a *different* melody, which is why Erisu is still trapped.

HOW DO THEY STOP ERISU?

They could find some way to keep Erisu locked in the vault. If they never enter the vault, then Erisu will remain there until someone else lets it out. Or they might destroy the piano, which will lengthen Erisu's time in the vault, since the piano makes it easy to draw victims into the vault. If they have a magic weapon, they could fight Erisu, although with Erisu's magic poisoned dagger this is a dangerous option. If they "kill" Erisu in this manner, it sends him back to the shadows.

If they can somehow bring about a moment of power or get Erisu to a place of power, they could perform a banishment ritual. The nearest places of power are Brigit's Springs and the Weaving Wood. If they can convince

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the three ghosts in Lisport Manor to assist them, they can use a spirit circle to bring forth a moment of power and perform the ritual.

There may be other solutions. They could even let Erisu go, which would make for more adventures later. If Erisu is freed, its first step will likely be to kidnap some likely soul and bring them to a place of power where it can possess them, so as to rid itself of Melody's rotting corpse. It may also attempt to use the Lisport fortune to cement its power in this world.

Erisu is not aware of any places of power except Brigit's springs. It might learn of more from the player characters, or of Ebeorie (see Helter Skelter) or Eliazu (see Illustrious Castle). It will use whatever knowledge it has to the best of its ability.

HOW DO THEY CONTACT THE GHOSTS?

They can contact the ghosts of the three sisters using Melody's diary, if they have it. A Monk with *spirit host* or *spirit summons* can contact them directly. They can also contact them by playing the piano.

HOW DO THEY PERFORM THE RITUAL?

Elizabeth Mardel knew the ritual. She just didn't know where the demon was going to strike, or how to create a place of power. Her notes in her secret room contain explicit details. The ritual itself is in the rafters upstairs.

HOW DO THEY GET INTO AND OUT OF THE VAULT?

Because entering and exiting the vault are important to the adventure, here is a summary of where the characters can find clues on how to do both. The entrance melody is the chorus to "I Saw Three Roses" while bearing the family seal. The exit melody is the chorus to "We're Marching to Zion."

1. Melody's diary mentions something about the way in and out, though not obviously.
2. Aunt Mardel created the vault, and her notes describe in detail how to enter and exit the vault (play on the piano while holding something), but not the melodies to use.
3. Melissa knew how to enter the vault and a little about how to exit the vault, and her ghost may provide clues. Her ghost cannot enter the vault, however.
4. Aaron Courlander's notes from the Lost Castle of the Astronomers, if they have them, do not mention the vault directly (it was created after he left) but do provide clues, where he summarizes correspondence with his sister-in-law, that the piano has some relation to the family fortune. If the characters have read these notes, they will know that there was at least a minor treasure hidden in the manor.
5. The Lisport seal contains a snippet from the song with the melody that gets them in, "I Saw Three Roses".

6. The Courlander family missal contains the melody that gets them out, “We’re Marching to Zion”.
7. Discordant melodies are heard whenever Melody’s ghost is near, when the piano is in the vault.
8. The missal contains the family seal on the front page; Meril’s gold ring also has the family seal on it.

Remember that there are two aspects to this mystery. The first is realizing that it needs to be solved; the second is solving it. The basic act of entering the vault isn’t likely to be difficult. The piano that opens a secret door is a common trope in fantasy horror (where *trope* is a fancy word for *cliché*). The melody on the Lisport coat of arms is a dead giveaway. Even if Meril isn’t with them, someone in the group is likely to know the song that it represents.

This means that they may well be able to get into the vault before they know how to get back out again. Remember that Erisu would prefer that they discover the way out, and will likely convince them (as Melody) not to send one person in after another until they have some idea of how to get out, whether they know it or not (Erisu will definitely draw them in if it knows they have a book of music).

MERIL ALEGAR III

Meril Alegar III is a good man. He is a gambler, a ladies man, and a carouser, skills he learned well from his older brother. But he is also versed in the arts and fencing. In his brother’s absence, he oversees the remains of their inheritance: the Lisport House inn and boarding house.

Meril has several “fallen noble” friends, and spends many nights in the more reputable gambling houses carousing with them. He gambles, but does not gamble more than he carries.

If Eldred survives, he is likely to be forced into selling Lisport House in order to pay off his debts. But by the law of Fork if Eldred is dead, even though his family (and thus his brother) will inherit his debts they will not inherit his deadlines. “I guess I’m the one with the most to gain by him dying.”

If Meril is convicted of Eldred’s murder, the Agews inherit the family holdings, including Lisport House.

This is moot unless the body or evidence of foul play is found, or Eldred reappears.

THE AGEWS

The descendants of Meril Alegar III’s grandfather’s sister, the Agews are the Earl’s nearest relatives. They live in Black Stag, and inherit all rights to the family fortune (as well as Lisport Manor and Lisport House) should the Alegar line fail. Lady Miriam (Meril Alegar III’s mother) blamed the Agews for her husband’s death. They had nothing to do with it, and haven’t left Black Stag for over a generation.

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If both Eldred and Meril died, the Agews would sell Lisport House quickly, because they don't have any attachment to it and because any travel to Fork would saddle them with the Lisport gambling debts as well. In fact, with the latest treaty between Black Stag and Fork, they might be subject to the Fork debts immediately on the death of the last remaining Alegars.

ARN GALLADE

Arn Gallade is the Alegar's servant in Lisport. A solitary man, he looks after the house but will not live in it. He fully believes the ghost stories, and can tell a few of his own. He has just returned with news that Eldred entered the manor and left Melody's diary in the drawing room. Arn searched the house for Eldred and did not find him. Arn did not see Eldred leave the manor, though he could have easily left without being seen.

DANNY CHAVERSON

Meril does not gamble to excess. But his brother did, and has left the family an insurmountable debt to "Sparkling" Danny Chaverson, the head of one of the largest gambling guilds in Fork. Chaverson wants Lisport House, and expects to get it when Eldred's legal options fail. Because of the laws, it is in Chaverson's interest that Eldred be alive. He'd like to see Eldred's disappearance laid on Meril's head, or he'd like to see Eldred return alive.

ELDRED ALEGAR II

Eldred, the Earl of Lisport, is Meril's older brother. He is a chronic gambler. Desperate to repay his debts and resume gambling, Eldred went to Lisport Manor to find the vault two weeks ago. He has not returned. He died of starvation and dehydration a week after he entered the vault.

ELIZABETH MARDEL

Elizabeth Mardel appeared to be little more than an old maid living in an upstairs room of her sister's prosperous home. In fact she was an accomplished sorceror and spy. She infiltrated the True Family and assisted her brother with information about the goblin army and the goblin mage. She knew about the hooded traveler (the goblin mage) and was aware that the Family had targeted her brother-in-law for demonic revenge. She was researching both magical defenses and ritual protections. One of Elizabeth's spells freed Melody from possession. Elizabeth cast it just before she died from Melody's poisoned dagger—a dagger she created for the Courlanders years ago.

If they speak with the Lady of Brigit's Springs, you might have her mention a Mardel or Elizabeth visiting her a hundred years past looking for knowledge about ritual and summonings.

ERISU

Erisu is a demon of despair. It feeds off of (and gains demonic power from) despair. It was summoned by the Goblin Mage during one of the battles near Brightwood Crossing. The Goblin Mage (actually, a prophet) used *Bloodbath* to create a moment of power amidst the battle's carnage.

Erisu is currently in full control of Melody Courlander's corpse in the Courlander vault. She continues to appear as a young woman due to *glamer of life*. Erisu is trapped in the vault and does not know how to escape.

FORK

Fork is an exciting and dangerous place. Known for its walls, its gambling houses, its arena, its crime and its corruption, Fork is the main trading center on the Fawn River. For all its problems, there is a hard beauty to the city. If Nelson Algren had a counterpart in Highland, he'd live in Fork.

LISPORT

The original Earl of Lisport, Abraham Courlander, moved to Lisport to provide an alternative to Fork's monopolies. Lisport lies abandoned fifteen miles downriver from Fork. It was deserted during the Goblin wars and mostly destroyed, one of the many ghost towns lining the river.

There is an old set of docks on the west side of the Fawn River, leading two miles up a short road to dilapidated, overgrown buildings.

LISPORT HOUSE

The Earl of Lisport owns and manages Lisport House in Fork. Lisport House is frequented by traveling nobles and by very well-to-do merchants. Only nobles stay at Lisport House, and they must be invited.

LISPORT MANOR

Lisport Manor was built in Lisport in 1758 by Abraham Courlander. It was deserted in January of 1897, after Melody Courlander murdered everyone in the house.

MELODY COURLANDER

Known to children around Highland as the "Melly Lisport" who "took an axe", Melody Courlander was one of three daughters of Elroy Courlander and Melissa Mardel. Her older sister was Melissa. Her twin sister was Meryl.

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Melody's fiancé Alan Mardel (a third cousin on her mother's side) died in the Battle of Brightwood Crossing defending the family's interests.

Melody killed her family under control of the demon Erisu. Before her aunt died, her aunt cast *Demonic Clarity* on Melody. Realizing what she'd done and why, Melody fled into the family vault. When the spell wore off, Erisu again took control, and tortured her until she died of starvation. Erisu has maintained control of Melody's corpse and remains in the vault.

Lisport Family History

Elroy Courlander was born in 1847. He married Melissa Mardel in 1875. In 1876 their first daughter, Melissa, was born. In 1877 the twins, Melody and Meryl, were born. Following the twins, Lady Melissa was unable to bear children again.

In 1894, Melissa Courlander married John Alegar. They named their son Meril after one of the twins.

In 1896 Goblins began attacking the town out of the west in larger and larger numbers. Elroy Courlander raised an army for the town's defense. Among them was Alan Mardel, a nephew of Lady Courlander's. Alan spent much time at Lisport Manor, and he and Melody became engaged.

The Lisport regiment, under the Earl's command, was so successful that they decided to drive deeper into the goblin's territory. They went downriver to Black Stag and east to Brightwood Crossing where they retook the town and the Courlander holdings. They were aided by information from Elizabeth Mardel, who had infiltrated the True Family cell near Fork.

In the summer of 1897, Alan Mardel died in battle. When Colonel Courlander returned to Lisport in mid-winter, this news had preceded him by several months. On the night he returned home, the brooding Melody went from room to room and murdered Elroy Courlander, Lady Melissa Courlander, her two sisters, her aunt Elizabeth Mardel, and the Earl's two most trusted Lieutenants, as well as some of the servants.

The town was overrun in the spring, and those who survived dispersed to the other towns of West Highland.

Elroy Courlander had a younger brother, Aaron Courlander, who joined the Astronomers. Aaron died with them when the goblins attacked the Astronomers' castle south of the Leather Road.

Following the war, young Meril Alegar was groomed to restore the family's glories. The family stayed in Fork, where they lived in a smaller manor near their upscale inn. The family's treasure vault was lost. Lisport was abandoned, as was Brightwood Crossing. Money was not plentiful, but there was enough in the post-war years.

In 1915, Meril Alegar married Mary Elena Camber. They had three children: Meril II, Elroy, and Elena. Elroy, always sickly, died in 1923 of cold sickness.

Elena eloped with Philip Agew, a well-to-do merchant who often frequented Lisport House, in 1937. Philip and Elena moved to Newhorse. There has been little contact between the Alegars and the Agews. The Agews have since moved to Black Stag.

Meril I had returned to Lisport Manor several times over the years, trying to find the vast treasure that his father assured him was somewhere on the grounds or in the town. In 1927 he went back and did not return. Meril Alegar II and the family servant found him, dead, just outside the old manor, trapped beneath a gargoyle that had fallen from an alcove. Meril Alegar II was twelve years old. He only returned to Lisport Manor twice after this: once to get married, and once to be buried.

Meril Alegar II married in 1939. Their only son was Eldred Alegar, born less than a year later. His wife, whose name is lost to history (she is always referred to as Lady Alegar), died in childbirth.

Eldred Alegar, when he could get away from his brooding father, went to the manor several times, but found nothing to restore their fortunes. Eldred married Miriam Wells in 1962 and devoted himself to her and to the inn for twenty years. Their son Eldred Alegar II was born in 1963, and Meril Alegar III was born in 1964.

As the inn's fortunes fell, Eldred began again to gaze south to the rumored treasure vaults. In 1978 he began to frequent the old manor again. In 1982 he died from a goblin attack while wandering the old town.

In 1983, Meril Alegar II sold their Fork home and the family – Meril III, his grandfather Meril II, his mother Miriam, and his brother Eldred II – moved into the Lisport House inn. The profits from selling their home left them financially secure, though their status was lessened. Meril II died in 1990. Eldred Alegar II, at 26, was the Earl of Lisport.

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RECENT HISTORY

Eldred Alegar is missing, but his debts are not. Eldred owes 18,959 shillings to Danny Chaverson's gambling houses.

Eldred disappeared two weeks ago. He didn't say where he was going, but Meril assumes, correctly, that he went to Lisport Manor. Arn Gallade confirms it, to Meril's despair. Meril is now going to have to travel to Lisport to try to find his brother. He had planned on bringing Arn with him, but with the player characters coming he'll leave Arn in Fork.

Eldred went there to find the long-rumored vault. He did find it, and got stuck inside. His despair before dying gave Erisu several points of demonic power.

Timeline

PRE-WAR

- 1849 Elroy Courlander born, heir to the house of Lisport.
- 1851 Aaron Courlander born.
- 1856 Melissa Mardel, fourth child (and second daughter) of the Earl of Stonegate, born.
- 1868 John Alegar born to a lesser noble family in Aletown.
- 1877 Elroy Courlander and Melissa Mardel marry.
- 1878 Melissa Courlander born.
- 1881 Elizabeth Mardel, Lady Courlander's older sister, moves into upper room.
- 1882 Melody and Meryl Courlander born.
- 1882 Aaron Courlander, after years of study, leaves for Kristagna and the Order of the Astronomers.
- 1886 Piano, secret room, sword, and dagger enchanted after Elizabeth Mardel draws down the moon from Brigit's Springs to Lisport.

WAR ERA

- 1892 Elroy's father dies. Elroy is now the Earl of Lisport.
- 1894 Melissa Courlander weds John Alegar.
- 1895 Meril Alegar I born.
- 1896 Goblins attack Lisport in ever greater numbers. Elroy raises a regiment to fight them.
- 1897 July 10: The Lisport regiment goes to Brightwood Crossing.
July 16: Elizabeth Mardel goes north to Brigit's Springs.
September 25: Alan Mardel dies in battle.
September 26: Elizabeth Mardel returns to Lisport Manor.
- 1898 On January 3, Melody Courlander murders her entire family.

POST-WAR

- 1898 Lisport is overrun by goblins and abandoned.
- 1915 Meril Alegar marries Mary Elena Camber, of the landless Cambers.
Meril Alegar II born.

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- 1917 Elroy Alegar born.
- 1918 Elena Alegar born.
- 1923 Elroy Courlander dies at the age of five.
- 1925 John Alegar dies of age-related sickness.
- 1927 Meril Alegar I dies on the grounds of Lisport Manor, strangled by Erisu’s shadow.
- 1937 Elena Alegar elopes with Philip Agew.
- 1939 Meril Alegar II marries.
- 1940 Eldred Alegar I born, and Lady Alegar dies in childbirth.

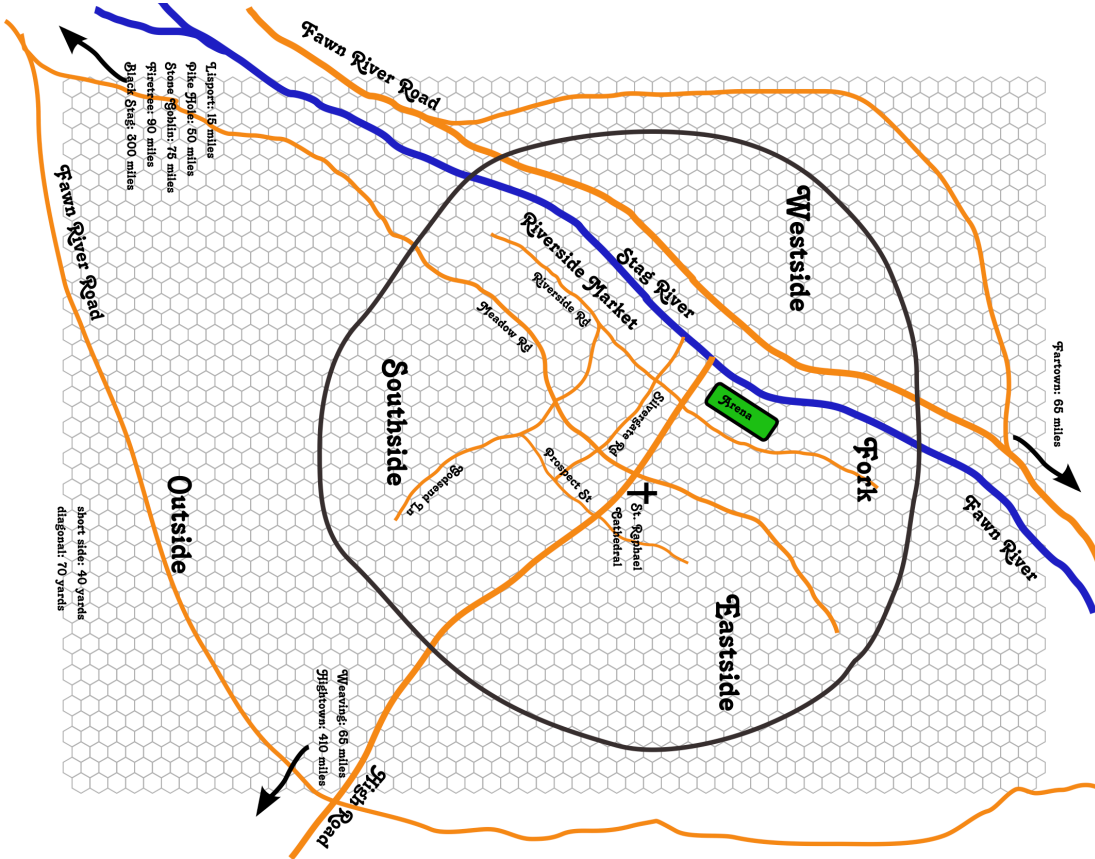
MERIL’S IMMEDIATE FAMILY HISTORY

- 1962 Eldred Alegar I marries Miriam Wells.
- 1963 Eldred Alegar II born.
- 1964 Meril Alegar III born.
- 1972 Lady Mary Elena Alegar dies of old age.
- 1982 Eldred Alegar I killed by goblins in Lisport.
- 1983 Meril Alegar II sells their home, and the Alegars move into Lisport House.
- 1988 Lady Miriam Alegar dies of sickness
- 1990 Meril Alegar II dies of old age
- 1992 Eldred Alegar II disappears, leaving the House of Lisport with serious debts.

MERIL’S RELATIONS

Brother Eldred Alegar II	
Parents Eldred Alegar I	Lady Miriam Wells
Grandparents Meril Alegar I	Lady Alegar
Great grandparents Meril Alegar I	Mary Elena Camber
Great-great grandparents John Alegar	Melissa Courlander
Great-great-great grandparents Elroy Courlander	Melissa Mardel
Brother Eldred Alegar II	
Great-great auncles Philip Agew	Elena Agew née Alegar
Third cousins Harold Agew	Judith Agew née Lundgren
Third cousins once removed Martin Agew, Harold Agew	Lucinda Agew

Fork



Smoke and dust rise from the chimneys and roads around the walled city. At the eastern gates, crowds queue up to enter. Merchants walk along the line to sell to those waiting in it. You smell warm beer, roasted meat, old vegetables, and the odor of the unwashed masses as you approach the crowds.

Where the Fawn River forks into the Fawn River to Black Stag and the upper river down to Aletown, merchants congregate to barter with northern hunters, furriers, and farmers. Anyone on Crystal Waters or north of the fork with something to trade will make their way to Fork.

This was once a small trading stop similar to Hightown, but the merchants recognized its importance and built it up as a full-fledged town. The merchant and gambling guilds run the town, and (as long as they fill out the proper forms) leave everyone alone unless they are adversely affecting trade. Merchants who use Fork for any length of time will find it safest to become a member of a guild. The Merchants Guild has branches throughout the river communities.

The town's unsavory appeal is assisted by the number who, having made lucrative trades, return home with little more than they started their journey with. The one that got away is a familiar story in Fork. Scams, ruffians, and gambling offer many opportunities for the newly rich to return to their common status. This is Chicago and Las Vegas combined.

The walls of Fork are twenty to thirty feet high, made of wood and reinforced with stone.

Entering Fork

There are two things they'll need to do to enter Fork through the front gates: wait in line, and dispose of their arms. It generally takes one to three hours to enter Fork during the day (d3 hours), and 20 to 70 minutes to enter at night (d6+1 times ten minutes).

ARMS IN FORK

Weapons and armor are not allowed in Fork. See elsewhere for Fork's weapons laws. Guards will not let any weapons through—if they see them.

Any suspicious activity will result in an individual or group being pulled aside for a search. For that matter, any unrecognized individual who looks like they have a lot of money but don't tip well are also likely to get pulled

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aside for a search. Because of this, nobility or merchants laden with merchandise offering a bribe isn't necessarily considered a sign that the individual is trying to sneak something past the gate.

The normal means of bringing weapons into Fork is to send it ahead of time to your lodging. Each place of lodging has licensed bondsmen who are allowed to bring weapons in and store them until you leave. Some places will keep their bondsmen outside the gates and use them as advertising: they'll take your weapons and a reservation for a small fee.

Higher-class establishments require that you arrange for weapons storage with them ahead of time. Nobles send their servants ahead to ensure that a bondsman for their choice of lodging is waiting when they arrive.

Scams abound in Fork, and this is one of the first: some thieves will pretend to be bondsmen for a place of lodging, take your fee and your arms, and never return. A thief with a stolen bond license can often keep up the charade for half of a day or more, handing off weapons and fees to an accomplice. Most, however, carry forged licenses, and will only attempt to scam someone who looks confused or new to the area.

CARRYING WEAPONS ANYWAY

Many people in Fork continue to carry weapons anyway, usually small knives, short swords, or rapiers. When caught without a license, a small bribe usually allows them to avoid arrest. If it doesn't, a somewhat larger bribe will allow them to avoid conviction.

For those who are connected and wish to avoid any sort of legal sanction, ceremonial bodyguard service can be purchased from any member of the official guilds. Guildmembers must pay their bodyguards for this service according to a standard minimum rate. However, they are allowed to deduct certain incidentals and expenses, and these deductions often exceed the minimum payment rate.

Meril may offer to "hire" the non-noble characters as his bodyguards – he has a legitimate worry now that his brother's gone – and pay for their bodyguard license. The license will allow them to carry up to a short sword, and wear up to banded leather.

Neither bows nor crossbows are allowed – even to bodyguards. Slings, while also illegal, are somewhat easily disguised and commonly carried. Some also carry hand crossbows, very small crossbows quickly wielded:

Weapon	Damage	Fire	Actions	Range	Hands	Bulk	Cost	Usage
Hand crossbow	d3	1		3	1	3	5	Simple
Hand bolt						.1	.2	

WALL GUARDS

Fork's guards are armed with long swords, spears, daggers, and crossbows when at their station. When not on duty they'll be armed with long swords or short swords, and daggers.

They also wear banded leather armor on duty, and have access to helmets and shields if they need them at their stations. Those at the gates will not wear helmets, but many on duty on the wall will.

Captains of the guard will be armed and armored similarly, but will always wear helmets, as these are their badge of rank.

Guards: (Warrior: 2; Survival: 11+d10; Move: 10; Attack: by weapon; Damage: weapon+1; Defense: 2-4)

Captains: (Warrior: 3-4; Survival: 13+1d10 or 13+2d10; Move: 10; Attack: by weapon; Damage: weapon+1; Defense: 3-4)

Wall guards are chosen for their burliness, so their strength and endurance will usually be above average (this is reflected in the guidelines above).

Bribes to avoid being searched, assuming no suspicions are raised, require a simple charisma roll and run about a shilling, and up to four shillings if the merchant is bringing in a lot of merchandise or the noble appears rich.

SAMPLE GUARDS

George Breller, 5'11", prefers to push people through quickly. He's annoyed by questions that need an answer (he doesn't mind the standard "how are you doing" sort of question that doesn't require a response). He hates it when people give him a reason to search them, and is likely to become abusive at that point.

Bruce Godela, 6'1", likes to look through small bags and pocket trinkets he thinks won't be missed until later. He also enjoys talking with people while he's searching their belongings. He is especially annoyed by people who bring their entire families into town, though he enjoys scaring the kids.

Brandon Miller, 6', dislikes people with Celtic names. He enjoys building relationships with gambling house personnel, and will drop names of people he knows if he wants to start a conversation with someone. He will usually let gambling house personnel or influential gamblers through without a search even if he suspects they're carrying contraband. He will expect (and generally receive) favors in return.

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OTHER ENTRANCES

The gates to Fork never close. Sometimes people may wish to enter other than the main gates, however. There are several entrances to Fork other than the normal entrance.

CLIMB THE WALL

Generally not a good idea in broad daylight, it is possible to climb the wall unnoticed in the dark, if one has skill.

The difficulty for trying to climb the wall unnoticed by the guards is 5 at night, and 10 in the day. Guards will fire crossbows at anyone they see climbing the walls. At any time, 2d6 guards will be in crossbow range of any point on the wall. Guards will also call other guards. The first call will bring 2d20 guards. The second call, if necessary, will bring another 20+d20 guards.

ENTER THE WESTSIDE

The riverboat glides beneath the wide stone arches of the Fork wall, bringing you into a cramped and bustling city. The roads astride the river are filled with jostling carriages and overloaded carts; barges load and unload their wares on the docks.

The Fawn River Road gates on the Westside are faster and the guards more easily bribed. The bridge across Stag River is guarded in the same manner as the main gates, but there is a toll gate crossing the river as well. The *silvergate* charges two shillings per person and four shillings per cart to cross. The gate is otherwise guarded in the same manner as the other gates and has the same restrictions. It takes 2d20 minutes to enter during the silvergate the day and 1d12 minutes to enter at night.

RIDE THE RIVER

Fawn River passes beneath the walls. Guards patrol the docks on both sides, and pay more attention to the east side of the river. There is a faster version of the gate search on the bridge over the river from Westside to Fork proper, and there are Wall guards at the exit from the docks as well.

Guards do watch incoming boats at the river gates from arches above the river, but cannot stop anyone. They may fire crossbows at obvious criminals, or call out warnings (or send messengers up the chain of command) when they see something suspicious.

In Fork, it takes a lot to look suspicious, especially on the Westside.

At the north river gate, there will be $8+2d6$ ready guards stationed on the walls above the gates at any time. At the south river gate, there will be $6+d6$ guards stationed and ready at any time.

THE GUILD GATES

There is a smaller pair of gates on the southside leading to Meadow Road. These gates are always closed. Entrance there requires a pass. The guards are empowered to refuse passes from anyone they deem suspicious. Anyone with a pass who looks like a guildmember of some kind will be unlikely to raise suspicion.

Crime

Crime's pretty high in Fork, unless you have a bodyguard. Anyone out alone at night, especially in the Southside gambling district, runs the risk of a mugging. The best way to avoid a mugging is to keep to crowds and always travel as a group. On the other hand, pickpockets work the district night and day and prefer crowds.

Encounters occur 30% of the time in the day or 40% of the time at night, half this on the eastside. If an encounter makes no sense, the characters successfully avoided it.

Southside	Westside	Eastside	Encounter
01-16	01-15	01-21	Pickpocket
17-34	16-35	22-31	Mugger
35-47	36-42	32-47	Scammer
48-55	43-50	48-52	Street gambler
56-67	51-58	53-57	Urchin
68-72	59-60	58-72	Helpful hanger-on
73-77	61-67	73-74	Cockfight
78-80	68-74	75-76	Dogfight
81-84	75-90	77-80	Brawl
85-00	91-00	81-00	Corrupt official

Thug: (Warrior: 1; Survival: 8; Move: 10; Attack: dagger; Damage: 1d4; Defense: 2)

Cockfights and dogfights provide opportunities to make bets and meet people. Helpful hangers-on will provide vocal assistance whether desired or not, and will expect tips, free drinks, and conversation in exchange. Corrupt officials will usually be the town guard. They aren't above charging some suspicious character with a semi-reasonable made-up crime if they think they can get a good bribe out of it.

In any case, criminals will judge the situation and only attempt their crime if they believe they'll be successful.

Crimes can (and should) be reported to the city guard. Unlike other cities in Highland, the victim of a crime or the discoverer of a crime is not expected to raise an alarm and chase down the perpetrator. They are expected to report the crime as soon as possible to the city guard.

Once a crime is reported, the city guard will, if the evidence allows, attempt to track down the criminal. The guard does keep records of crimes but does not attempt to solve crimes beyond an initial attempt to track down a criminal if the crime is still fresh.

Lodging

Fork provides a wide variety of lodging opportunities. The best lodging will be on the Southside, especially as it moves towards the Eastside. The Westside provides the cheapest lodging. The rates given here are per person. Bond fees are usually per group, as long as the arms and armor can be carried on one cart. It's a nice gesture to tip the bondsman twenty percent, but not usually necessary.

Lodging Style	Bond Fee	Daily Rate	Weekly Rate	Monthly Rate
Poor	4 pennies	5 pennies	2 shillings one pence	-
Average	6 pennies	8 pennies	4 shillings	16 shillings
Good	1 shilling	1-2 shillings	5-10 shillings	20-40 shillings
Rich	3 shillings	4-20 shillings	16-80 shillings	60-300 shillings
		+5-2.5 shillings per retainer	+2-6 shillings per retainer	+7-37 shillings per retainer
Lisport House	3 shillings	8 shillings	32 shillings	120 shillings
		+1 shilling per retainer	+4 shillings per retainer	+20 shillings per retainer

Rich lodgings are usually a suite, and can accommodate one or two nobles and two to eight of their servants.

I've given *Lisport House* as an example of rich lodging, since there's a good chance they'll be staying there. Lisport House is a prestigious place. As long as Meril's friend is a noble, Meril will expect them to stay at Lisport House and the character should want to. If, however, none of the characters is a noble, they'll need to stay elsewhere. If the characters are acting as Meril's bodyguard, he'll put them up in good lodging as part of their payment.

LISPORT HOUSE

The lodger's first contact with Lisport House is often one of their two bondsmen, sixteen-year-old Daniel Holt or seventeen-year-old George Davis. George is the son of one of Meril's servants. Daniel is himself nobility, the fifth son of the Earl of Melridge, a small town halfway between New Horse and Firetree. George hopes to support himself and one of the other maidservants at Lisport House. Daniel wishes to gain martial renown, and will be very impressed by any adventuring stories the group relates.

Daniel Holt: (Warrior: 1; Survival: 8; Move: 12; Attack: long sword; Damage: 1d8+1; Defense: 4)

George Davis: (Warrior: 1; Survival: 9; Move: 10; Attack: long sword; Damage: 1d8; Defense: 3)

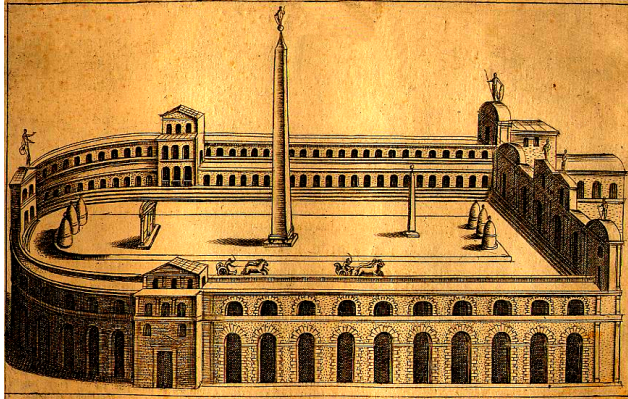
Lisport House is at the corner of Prospect Street and Godsend Lane, one block from Meadow Road. Its official address is 900 Godsend Lane.

Entertainment

Most of the entertainment in Fork is in the Southside triangle between the High Road, Meadow Road, and the Southside wall. Meril will consider it his duty to show his friends around the Southside at night. He'll take them to his favorite gambling houses, clubs, and bars. Alcohol is wine, port wine, and beer. Wine and port wine are preferred.

BARS AND SHOWS

There are many theaters and show-houses in the Southside, with concerts, plays, and musical plays. Bars and taverns will often have musical entertainment, and there are even a few places where people can go for nightly public dancing.



THE ARENA

The Fork Arena regularly hosts jousts and highball games. There are occasionally circuses, melees, and many other form of mass entertainment.

Merchants – especially gambling houses – sponsor jousters and highball teams. There is also a Civic Highball League, where each town can provide a team. Fork and Black Stag tend to dominate the league.

Highball is vaguely similar to soccer, but uses a “sword” (a sort of blunt, flat-headed bat) instead of body parts to move the ball. At any time a player may force an opposing team member to a spar, in which they beat each other with their

swords until one falls. The first player to lose their footing in a spar must leave the field (or be carried off of the field) and is not replaced or returned until a score is made by one of the teams. The game itself continues around spars, but the sparring area itself is off-limits to any player (though not to the ball, which can be used as a third-party weapon by non-sparring players).

Jousting is also a spectator sport, and there’s a lot of showmanship to the tournaments. Shields are designed to shatter spectacularly when hit. Some lances are designed to break. Armor is designed foremost to block a blunt lance and protect against falls. Jousting is a very difficult strength contest. Jousting lances can cause d6 damage.

“It’s a total bastardization of the sport. They don’t use real shields, real lances, or even real armor.”

Still, it’s a dangerous sport. Rarely will a month pass without serious injury, and you can pretty much count on one or two deaths every couple of years.

Jousting is semi-team-oriented. There are two or more teams, but jousters themselves pair off individually. Only rarely will a joust become a melee in which teams fight a general fight against the other team(s).

On game nights, the area around the arena will be filled with food stands and memorabilia stands.



SAINT RAPHAEL CATHEDRAL

The spire of Saint Raphael rises high above Fork, overshadowing every other building within the town. Smaller spires rise from the cathedral's wings, and the saints of old peer down from niches in the tower walls. Great wooden doors stand open atop a flight of stone stairs, revealing the arched interior of the church.

The Saint Raphael Cathedral stands at the center of Fork where the High Road meets Meadow Road. The Pastors of Black Stag appoint the priest of Saint Raphael directly, and it is a prestigious post. The opportunities for saving souls is unlimited! Those who win in the gambling houses make donations in thanks; those who lose promise to make donations in hope for later wins.

The current priest at Saint Raphael, Leonard Ormele, began his tenure twelve years ago. A few years later he started the tradition of "casting the first die" on New Year's Eve at one of the houses. Whichever house he chooses sees expanded business for several months, an important benefit in the cold winter months.

Father Leo is a highly charismatic back-room dealer. Think of him as George Carlin in Dogma, but with poker instead of golf. He is one of the people behind the Black Stag alliance.

If the characters have built up a reputation and the Black Stag-Fork alliance wants to draw them in, it will be Father Leo who opens up talks with them in Fork. He'll send one of the other priests to ask them over for a typical Fork gathering at the rectory, where they'll be able to hobnob with the elite of Fork and the river towns. Or he might invite them to the best seats in the arena to discuss their assistance.

They might be asked, for example, to help keep Hightown open all winter. The alliance thinks that this would help trade, he'll say, and it would certainly help morale, so close to the dark forest, to have someone with their reputation along. What the alliance really wants is to extend their military influence across the leather road.

GAMBLING HOUSES

Dice hit softly against padded tables. Smoke seeps around the doors of back rooms, and marbles clatter through the numbers as fortune's wheel turns for good and ill. Well-dressed patrons drink red wine from crystal goblets and talk as one of their number throws a pair of dice. Others lay clay markers down on the squares before the wheel of fortune. A loud conversational drone fills the room. Arguments break out—and are quickly quieted. Men are welcomed, and men are escorted out. And through it all, everyone waits on the turn of a friendly card.

Fork is known best for its gambling, and for the ways the natives fleece the unsuspecting. There are reputable and disreputable gambling houses in Fork, but they all want your money.

GAMBLING

If you want to lay your money down on a sure thing that's sure not to pay off, Fork is your place. You can play games yourself, you can be on other people playing games, and you can bet on sports in the arena. If you're inclined to ignore the law, you can bet on street fights, both human and animal.

Gambling houses have dice games, card games, and fortune's wheel. Dice is very much like craps. Cards are a lot like poker. And the wheel of fortune is similar to our own.

There are no rules specific to gambling in Gods & Monsters. If you want to gamble, it's a simple charisma contest. Gambling houses will generally be rated with a charisma of 12 to 15. The odds add themselves to the house's charisma as well. So, a game that pays 3 to 1 in a house with a charisma of 14 has a charisma of 17. The player will roll an opposed contest against that to win their three to one pot. Dealers will have a skill of 0 to 3.

If players want their characters to bet on specific events, whether they win or lose will depend on the outcome of those events.

MAGIC

Obviously, the casinos don't like magic. Since magic is rare, they don't have to worry about it much, but some will keep a first level sorcerer on hand to detect magic. Others will simply suspect magic when a patron is too successful, and ban that patron. A banned patron will not usually be allowed to keep their winnings. Some establishments will let the patron keep their winnings, and then hire thugs to take it from them later, along with a good beating.

MERIL'S PREFERRED HOUSES

Meril has three gambling houses that he prefers, and is on friendly terms with the owners and workers there. If the players show any interest in a night on the town, Meril is likely to bring them to one or more of these places: The Gypsy Room, Excalibur House, and The Red Wheel.

SPARKLING DANNY'S HOUSES

One of the most powerful guildmasters is “Sparkling” Danny Chaverson, head of the Two Horses Gaming Guild. The Two Horses includes in its ranks nearly half of all gambling houses in Fork, and controls quite a bit of underground trade and other unsavory activities.

Eldred went just about anywhere he could lose money, but spent a lot of time trying to gain back his debt at Sparkling Danny's houses.

Danny's own houses are the Horseshoe Room and the White Stallion.

Employment

PRIVATE GUARDS

With all the crime and money in Fork, guard services are in demand. A skilled, intelligent warrior can make anywhere from a shilling a week to several shillings a day guarding shipments, people, and payments. A prospective guard must be a member of the Guards Guild before accepting employment as a guard, and their employer must verify this. Extraordinarily good guards may have their membership paid for; less honorable employers may choose to ignore lack of membership.

Sorcery is mistrusted here just as it is elsewhere in Highland. However, if a skilled, intelligent warrior happens to have an intelligent advisor who can make things happen, that will increase the warrior's worth.

Guild membership is ten shillings per year.

Markets

RIVERSIDE

Every color of the rainbow hangs in riverside market. Bright green vegetables, varicolored clothes, and translucent trinkets vie for your attention in the stalls by the river.

But more than colors, sounds draw your attention as well. You hear the growl of animals and the chirps of caged birds all around. Bears in bright ribbons dance at the end of ropes. Actors in heavy greasepaint compete with the bears for your attention and coins. Merchants cry the value of their wares. Everywhere is action, noise, and spectacle.

The riverside market on the river in the south side provides food for the tables of everyone in eastside and southside. It is filled with food, clothing, and strange trinkets. It has a circus atmosphere, and even has the occasional dancing bear. While magic is as feared by normal people in Fork as anywhere else, magical ingredients (at least for first and second level spells) are easily available at the market.

WESTSIDE

Barges, rafts, and sailboats line both sides of the river. Burly men carry boxes out to the docks, and load and unload cargo from the boats. Children dart around them and under them, kicking highballs and hitting the sides of buildings – and each other – with their bats.

Here a nervous merchant harangues a group of longshoremen carrying his goods. There a group of nobles head towards silvergate after passing their weapons to the bondsman walking beside them. Everywhere people argue, fight, and barter. Money exchanges hands – you can almost watch the silver flow down the docks like it was part of the river itself.

All boats disgorge their goods west of the wall. Trade here tends to be in bulk, as merchants jostle for wholesale bargains, buying and selling their cargo. From here, goods are transferred further down (or up) the river, or through the gates into Fork proper.

OUTSIDE

Dust clouds blow slowly across grey tents. The smoky odor of sour meat wafts by, alternating with stale beer and bread. The sheer volume of noise dulls your hearing as you walk through the cramped alleys of the market outside Fork's tall stone walls.

Take the criminals who can't make it in Fork, all the merchants who can't afford to pay the fees, all the travelers who are easily convinced that the real deals are the deals unapproved by market officials. Mix a heavy dose of dust, mud, and noise. Toss in some brawls, murders, and brutal scams, and you've got the Fork Outside Market.

There are no paved roads outside of Fork. There is dust everywhere, and mud when it rains.

Outsiders

The people who choose to live outside of fork all have three things in common: a love of easy money, an eye for a mark, and the hope of a fast buck.

They tend to be folks who cannot afford to live inside, or who have too many enemies inside. Many of them came to Fork for opportunities or looking to start their own scam, and failed. Some came for trade or vacation and became addicted to Fork's distinctive charm.

Politics

The most influential organizations in Fork are the gambling guilds. After them come the other merchant guilds.

HIGH GUILDMASTER

The town is managed by the High Guildmaster, elected from among all guilds, but in practice controlled by the Gambling Guilds. The election occurs among representatives of each official guild in the Guilds Council.

The High Guildmaster has powers similar to mayors in other Highland towns, but he does not have a fixed term and is easily removed by the Council. A majority of the Guilds Council can at any point call for a new election. A quorum is required for the election vote.

THE GUARD

Being a guard is not necessarily prestigious, but it does afford the guard the potential for a fine income and the potential to advance politically. Also, guards are the only people allowed to carry missile weapons and wear armor within Fork.

Because of both of these benefits, guard duty is very lucrative, and guard is a desirable job. Most guards – especially wall guards – are well-connected; it takes connections to get a job in the Guardsman Guild.

There are two branches of the guard: the city guard and the wall guard. There are also private guards licensed by the High Guildmaster, the Guilds Council, or the Guards Guild.

Guards will not take bribes if they think it might cost them their job: if there is an inspector around, if they think the person offering the bribe is going to cause trouble, or if they think the person offering the bribe is possibly a spy for the inspectors. Guards don't like having to deal with the inspectors. Bribing an inspector will be ten to twenty shillings, depending on the offense, and might mean a night in jail if they can't immediately scrounge up the bribe.

THE CITY GUARD

City guards are chosen for skill and cunning. Their purpose is to apprehend suspicious elements and take crime reports from victims or those who discover victims.

Since most people in Fork are suspicious elements, the bribes can be very lucrative.

Because the city guard must confront criminals, their job is sometimes dangerous. City guards always travel in groups of at least two, and usually three or four. They carry short swords and/or long swords, and wear leather or banded leather as well as a helmet. Within a group, at least one will also carry a crossbow.

THE WALL GUARD

Wall guards are chosen for strength and intimidation. Their purpose is to enforce the weapons laws, to shoot anyone climbing over the walls to get in, and to shoot anyone climbing over the walls to escape. After entering, the intruder is the city guard's problem.

The benefits of being a wall guard are that it is an easy, if usually boring, post. No one's attacked Fork in a hundred years, and anybody dangerous doesn't use the main gates. The bribes aren't as lucrative as in the city guard but neither is the work as dangerous.

Most of the guards will readily take bribes. The necessary bribe will depend on how much the guard thinks the briber is worth and what the guard thinks the briber is covering up. However, for smuggling a sword and armor in, a half-shilling to five shillings will usually cover it.

PRIVATE GUARDS

Private guards must be members of the Guards Guild. They can only be appointed to the guild by the High Guildmaster or any member of the Guilds Council. Temporary membership may be purchased by any merchant who is an official member of a Fork-recognized guild, through the City Guard offices. Temporary membership is valid for two months. At the end of the two months the Guard is expected to have acquired full membership; however, temporary membership may be renewed by their sponsor.

Guards Guild membership costs twenty-four shillings per year. Temporary membership costs ten shillings to the Guards Guild and six shillings to the City Guard. The City Guard's approval can (for normal applicants) be assured and/or hastened with a bribe of one to ten shillings, depending on the official on duty and other circumstances.

The standard payment scale for private guards is 1 shilling per day. It is illegal to pay a Guards Guild member any less than this. Some deductions for expenses are allowed, however.

WEAPONS LAWS

Fork is a walled town and it guards its borders zealously. No one other than a licensed bodyguard may carry a weapon or wear armor without a license from the Office of the High Guildmaster or the Guilds Council. In practice, this is the most abused law within Fork. Bribes will speed the granting of a license, and bribes will also allow offenders to avoid arrest, to avoid imprisonment if arrested, and to leave prison early if imprisoned.

Licenses are easiest to acquire for rapiers (10 shillings per month) and short swords (12 shillings per month). Licenses usually take one to six months to acquire. Bribes are most effective when carrying those weapons, or other small weapons such as daggers.

For those who do not wish to purchase a license, bondsmen will carry weapons from the town's gates to storage for retrieval when leaving Fork. Most quality inns will have a bondsman on call.

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The High Guildmaster and any member of the Guilds Council may temporarily rescind the prohibition in emergencies.

THE ART OF THE BRIBE

The officials of Fork are well known for their ability to cut through red tape and speed a slow bureaucracy. This includes guards, council-members, and civil servants.

Officials do not like trouble, and any indication that the briber is going to cause trouble will cause the official to both refuse the bribe and apply the law even more stringently than they otherwise would have.

Bribing without preparation is generally a difficult Charisma roll. Setting up a bribe ahead of time is best, and can be either role-played or handled with a Charisma roll. A failed bribe is likely to mean an extra-careful search of the briber's goods or papers, or a more stringent punishment, depending on what the bribe was meant to accomplish.

Once a character is in jail, the necessary bribe rises precipitously. Of the jailer, the judge, the guard who brought them there, and the guard in charge of that guard, three of four will need to be bribed to ensure freedom; two of four might work for a non-infamous crime. Assume that whatever the bribe would have been initially, it will be two or three times that to get out of jail.

Meanwhile, while the character is in jail they may need to bribe other prisoners and the jailer for goods, services, and peace.

MONEY

Fork uses the coinage of Black Stag, as per the Black Stag alliance.

ALLIANCE WITH BLACK STAG

Fork has recently made a pact with Black Stag that brings them into a closer relationship. This mutual protection pact promises a pooling of military resources in time of danger, extradition of criminals and the use of Black Stag coinage. It also stipulates that the river's name is now Stag River.

The Stag River Agreement is a mutual trade and defense treaty. It enacts a common coinage (Black Stag) in Black Stag and Fork; a common naming scheme for important roads and landmarks, such as naming Fawn River Stag River; financial and military aid in time of trouble; and a shared law between the two cities.

Because Fork and Black Stag are the two most powerful cities in West Highland, the alliance means that Black Stag coins will be universally accepted and preferred.

The alliance is monitored by the Alliance Ministry, which consists of three ministers: the Defense Minister, the Financial Minister, and the Judicial Minister.

The Alliance Defense Minister attempts to coordinate defense and law enforcement resources between the two cities.

The Alliance Financial Minister coordinates the system of coins, and mediates fees that one city or the other calls for from its citizens.

The Alliance Judicial Minister maintains the Model Law, and mediates between the two cities to fix conflicting laws. Any dispute over how a law in one city applies in the other city can be taken to the Judicial Minister's court.

You may use the ministry for many kinds of subplots, from simple warmongering to kingdom building and legal harassment.

SPIES

Everyone's a spy for the right price. The Guards train guards as inspectors to spy on other guards who might be taking bribes. Casinos hire spies to watch for cheating at their gaming tables. Black Stag's Wizard Council is drafting a spy network throughout West Highland to help ensure that the alliance goes their way. The church has an informal news network that collects news from all its parishes. The city guard keeps a stable of low-level criminals who provide them information in exchange for the guard looking the other way.

Architecture

Fork's current wall is the third in its history. It was built several years before the war. Remnants of the previous two walls still exist inside the city, but most of the old walls were removed to help build the current wall.

Because of the depopulation after the war, this wall won't need to be expanded for at least a few decades.

The Townsfolk

Fork is a relatively cosmopolitan place for West Highland, so names can be any style found in Highland. Most common names will be English-style names. The next most common will be Anglicized Celtic names. Then Frankish, and (because of the Schismatic Orders) occasionally a bastardized Greek or Hebrew name. Usually the latter will be a single name rather than a first name and last name.

Christopher Atkinson	Sheila Abernathy
Luke Bannon	Shannon Bale
Dinky Bowman	Louise Barres
Cameron Bristol	Diana Brice
Brian Burke	Maria de Mer
Mike Chesick	Karen Douglas
Mark Clarkson	Phyllis Eggleston
Norbert Comstock	Martha Kimball
Robert Craly	Sarah Mumford
Alexander Dalton	Rachel Penn
David England	Natalie Reid
Albert Goodman	Gwen Sloan
James Jones	Margaret Swain
Steven Long	Mary Turner
Doug Martin	
Larry Michaelson	
Matthew Smith	
Francis Tanner	
Aaron Tucker	
Simon Turner	
Anton Verien	
Barry Warner	
Sean Yeodan	
Albert Zuller	

When you use one of these sample names, note what you used it for (and when you used it) for future reference.

Adventures in Fork

Fork itself can provide many adventures. Characters can be caught up in criminal activities, or track down stolen items, or solve murders. If they're of a more rakish bent they might run stings or scams, otherwise they might get caught up in a sting or scam.

See the upcoming Helter Skelter for an occult mystery that uses Fork as a starting point.

The Adventure in Fork

Meeting Meril

Meril will be overjoyed to see his old friend(s) and will do what he can to make them comfortable. It's been a long and despairing week for him, having to fend of Sparkling Danny's debt collectors and worried about his brother. He's sent a message down to Lisport to Arn to see if Eldred has been there.

Meril will be as nice about it as possible, but only nobles and their retainers can stay at Lisport House. The servants of a staying noble will generally come in the back entrance.

A night on the town

Depending on where they came from, Meril may want to give them fashion advice before taking them out on the town. If so, their first stop will be Riverside Market.

After that, he'll take them around to his favorite gambling houses, probably starting around eight or nine in the evening. During the evening, some of his landless noble friends will join them: Jack Munden (Lord Stonegate's first son), George Ralston (Lord Leicester's third son), and Eddie Doray (Lord Norton's only son). These friends are all in Meril's class: landless, but with a bit of money (and probably just a bit more than Meril). They're out for a night of fun but they aren't gambling their fortunes away. They'll gamble some, but they'll talk more.

If the characters aren't carrying any weapons, Meril will not wear his rapier either. Jack and Eddie will be wearing theirs.

They'll also run into the middle-aged Earl of Melridge, David Holt (Dan Holt's father). And Meril will introduce them to several bartenders and croupiers.

If they pay attention, they'll learn that Meril is worried about his brother, that Meril's friends are more worried about his brother's debts (and what they mean for the Lisport line), and that Danny Chaverson is accusing Meril of some part in Eldred's disappearance.

Make sure you check for encounters during their night out.

Meet Danny Chaverson

You may also want to play out a confrontation between Sparkling Danny Chaverson and his entourage, and Meril and his friends. Danny would very much like to know where Eldred has gone; two weeks is a long time for that fine boy to go without his entertainment.

If the confrontation becomes a fight, the player characters should be able to easily take on Danny's bodyguards. Depending on how they handle it, they may attract the attention of the City Guard. In any confrontation with the City Guard, remember that they will use group effort if it benefits them.

Also, in any fight there will be side bets, as long as there's enough warning or time to set them up. As the player characters and the bodyguards are sizing each other up, spectators will be sizing up the odds and placing bets, so play that aspect up. This is what Fork is.

Danny Chaverson: (human: 1; Survival 5; Move: 12; Attacks: hand; Defense: +1; Damage: 1d3; Charisma: 13; Intelligence: 12; Wisdom: 11; Agility: 11; Endurance: 11; Strength: 9)

Danny has four bodyguards. Stuart Forager, one of them, is his right-hand man.

Stuart Forager: (Warrior: 3; Survival: 23; Move: 12; Attack: rapier; Defense: +3; Damage: 1d6+1)

And Stuart manages three bodyguards, John Royer, Don Joplin, and Ron Mangel.

Danny's bodyguards: (Warrior: 1; Survival 8, 7, 7; Move: 12; Attack: rapier; Defense: +2; Damage: 1d6+1)

Danny doesn't play a big role in this adventure unless you want him to. But this encounter could also be a great way of involving the characters in Meril's plight.

Arn's arrival

When they return to Lisport House, Arn Gallade will be waiting for Meril.

A tall, gaunt man greets you as you step through the heavy doors of Lisport House. Meril introduces him as Arn, his servant in Lisport. The old servant's craggy features reflect both age and activity.

"I left as soon as I received your message, sir," he says. "Lord Lisport arrived at Lisport Manor fifteen days ago. I can't say when he left, for I didn't see him. I went inside to look after receiving your message, and found only young lady Melody's old diary."

Arn entered the house after receiving the message (mid-afternoon) and could not find Eldred anywhere in the house. He found Melody's diary in the drawing room, which he returns to Meril. This confirms Meril's suspicion that Eldred went treasure-hunting and brought the diary for clues to the treasure's location.

Volunteering to help

The day after Arn arrives, Meril will need to prepare for a trip to Lisport. He'll need to put Arn temporarily in charge of Lisport House, ensure that none of Eldred's (or the House's) debts can cause any problem for at least the next week or two, and hire a boat to head down to Lisport.

The player characters should volunteer their services at this point or there is no adventure. Make sure that you work with Meril's player-character friend(s) so that they know this.

Meril will be bringing Melody's diary, in case it helps him find Eldred. He can also provide a copy of the [Lisport Manor plans](#). There's also a copy in Arn's cottage. You'll want to have a suitable tea-stained map ready to hand to the players if they ask for it.

If the players ask why the map looks backwards, Meril will tell them:

“Heh. That’s pretty good. Yes, before Lisport was much of a town, Abraham built it facing west. But as the town built up it built up between the manor and the river, and it must have looked pretty odd to have the manor facing away from the town. They added an extra wall across the “back” to form what is now the front hall. It makes for a nice back garden.”

A day on their own

There’s a joust or a highball game at the arena today (whichever you think your players would be more interested in seeing). You’ll also want to check for encounters while they’re out on their own.

Two men peer across a long dry field and stare each other down. As one they flip their visors down, and you can hear the heavy metal clang shut all the way in the bleachers. They raise their lances, draw in tightly to the ear steeds... their horses leap forward, bright saddle blankets flutter behind in a cloud of dust, and the two warriors race towards each other.

Closer and closer they ride, closer, and lance meets steel as one is thrust bodily into the air to land with a thud on the hard ground. The victor continues his charge, and turns along the rim of the field to ride hard beneath a throng of cheering fans.

At some point in the future, your player characters should have a throng of cheering fans to match this scene.

Lisport

Long ago, Elisabeth Port was little more than a dock where horses could rest and feed while dragging boats upriver, a small way station between Fork and Black Stag. By 1500 AD, however, the riverboat culture was calling it Lisport, and the name took. When Abraham Courlander moved from Fork to Lisport in 1752, he chose to use the port's name for his manor. As the Courlander family rose to power, the manor became the town.

Abraham Courlander moved from Fork because Fork had already become the hive of scum and villainy it is today – but he didn't move so far that he couldn't continue to benefit from it. The Courlanders established Lisport as a warehousing and trading town outside of Fork for river merchants.

If they arrive by boat, Captain "Black Pete" Ashton will dock the boat at the pier and remain on the boat to guard the ship.

Black Pete turns the boat westward into the slow-moving waters of Lisport, and docks his ship beside the stone pier. "Ready?" asks Meril. "Let's go."

The rising sun drives your shadow before you. Only the barest outlines of roads remain in the town, and the buildings are mounds of bushes and flowers with the occasional black beam poking through ferns and grass.

On the west end of town a many-gabled manor rises. Meril identifies it as Lisport Manor. As you follow the slow rise westward, Lisport Manor looms before you, a wide, tall, two-winged building almost as much a castle as a manor home. The roof is covered with gables, and as you come closer you see the ornamental line around the top of every floor come into focus as gargoyles and angels.

Lisport Manor is a relic from a lost world, guarding a dead town, its prewar grandeur oozing like blood from its crumbling masonry.

It is one mile from the port to Lisport Manor, with the town spread between, along the overgrown roadway.

Because of the storm coming in from the north, the boat will move to the small town of Maryvale another 18 miles downstream at about noon.

Encounters

In Lisport, encounters occur about 10% of the time every 12 hours.

MAIN TABLE

01-37	Civilized Peoples	37%
38-64	Natural Encounters	27%
65-86	Animal	22%
87-98	Humanoid Encounters	12%
99-00	Fantastic Creatures	2%

CIVILIZED PEOPLES

01-30	Farmers (d6)	30%
31-51	Small village (d30+5)	21%
52-66	Travelers (d12)	15%
67-80	Brigands (d4)	14%
81-86	Hermit (1)	6%
87-90	Masquerade	4%
91-94	Elves (d20)	4%
95-97	Halflings (d20)	3%
98-99	Mixed-Race Brigands (d6)	2%
00	Dwarves (d10)	1%

MASQUERADE

36-59	Wererats (d4)	24%
01-20	Werewolf (1)	20%
21-35	Werebear (1)	15%
60-74	Apparitions (d4)	15%
81-92	Phantoms (d6)	12%
75-80	Phantasm (1)	6%
93-95	Dryads (d6)	3%
96-98	Vampires (d4)	3%
99	Alamen	1%
00	Deities (1d2)	1%

HUMANOID ENCOUNTERS

01-70	Goblins (2d12)	70%
71-90	Orcs (d12)	20%
91-97	Ogres (d4)	7%
98-99	Trolls (d3)	2%
00	Yeti (d2)	1%

NATURAL ENCOUNTERS

01-25	light storm (d80 hours)	25%
26-39	unmarked tomb	14%
40-52	swarm/flock	13%
53-63	stream in path	11%
64-72	heavy storm (d20 hours)	9%
73-81	fog (d20 yards visibility)	9%
82-87	extra hot/cold (d6 days)	6%
88-92	lake or pond	5%
93-96	remains of small camp	4%
97-98	Celtic ruin	2%
99	part of animal skeleton	1%
00	human skeleton	1%

ANIMALS

01-11	Deer (d20)	11%
12-20	Squirrels (d20)	9%
21-27	Wolves (d10)	7%
28-33	Dogs (d8)	6%
34-39	Stags (d3)	6%
40-45	Owls (d4)	6%
46-50	Badgers (d8)	5%
51-55	Rats (d20)	5%
56-60	Skunks (d6)	5%
61-65	Snakes	5%
66-69	Ravens (d6)	4%
70-73	Black Widows (d8)	4%

74-76	Cattle (d20)	3%
77-79	Goats (2d10)	3%
80-81	Bull (1)	2%
82-83	Horses (d4)	2%
84-85	Bats (d40)	2%
86-87	Hawks (d3)	2%
88-89	Rams (d3)	2%
90-91	Weasels (d2)	2%
92-93	Bobcats (d3)	2%
94	Pheasants (d20)	1%
95	Eagles (d6)	1%
96	Wolverines (d4)	1%
97	Wildcats (d3)	1%
98	Bear (d2)	1%
99	Cougars (d2)	1%
00	Leopards (1)	1%

SNAKES

01-51	Garters (d6)	51%
52-71	Blue Racers (d4)	20%
72-85	Watersnakes (d20)	14%
86-94	Copperheads (d8)	9%
95-99	Rattlers (d4)	5%
00	Huge snake (1)	1%

FANTASTIC CREATURES

01-17	Large Spiders (d4)	17%
18-34	Faerifolk	17%
35-46	Giant Spiders (d8)	12%
47-55	Hippogriffs (d2)	9%
56-62	Unicorns (d3)	7%
63-69	Pegasi (d2)	7%
70-76	Wererats (d20)	7%
77-82	Gryphon (1)	6%
83-88	Werebear (1)	6%

89-92	Demons	4%
93-96	Undead	4%
97-99	Deep Forest encounter	3%
00	Dragon	1%

FAERIFOLK

01-40	Brownies (d20)	40%
41-60	Dryads (d20)	20%
61-71	Naiads (d10)	11%
72-81	Satyrs (d20)	10%
82-90	Petraiads (d6)	9%
91-95	Centaur (d6)	5%
96-99	Pixies (d20)	4%
00	Treherders (1d3)	1%

DEMONS

01-38	Screeching Bats (d8)	38%
39-70	Strigae (d20)	32%
71-90	Perytons (d6)	20%
91-98	Blood Puddles (d6)	8%
99-00	Gargoyles (d2)	2%

UNDEAD

01-24	Werewolves (d8)	24%
25-42	Vampires (d6)	18%
43-60	Apparition (1)	18%
61-69	Poltergeist (1)	9%
70-78	Revenant (1)	9%
79-86	Ghouls (d20)	8%
87-94	Phantoms (d6)	8%
95-00	Phantasm (1)	6%

DRAGON

01-29	Fire Dragons (d2)	29%
30-55	Water Dragons (d2)	26%
56-81	Forest Dragon (1)	26%
82-96	Storm Dragons (d2)	15%
97-98	Alamen	2%
99	Erikenian	1%
00	Absoloth	1%

Lisport Manor

As you step into the wide alcove between the north and south wings of the empty building, you see that small parts of the masonry have begun to fall. A stone gargoyle, one of its wings broken beside it, stares up at you from the left side of the path. From the grass around it, the gargoyle has been there many years.

"That's the one that killed old Meril," says Meril softly.

Above, angels and demons alike gather bird droppings in the alcoves. The wind whistles through the open windows, and just for a moment you see something move in the northern balcony.

The movement was in the bay window/balcony attached to Elizabeth's old library. It wasn't the ghost yet, but rather birds, which congregate everywhere in the attic but there most of all.

Encounters

There are three ghosts in the manor: the ghosts of the three sisters. There is also a demon, a shadow summoned years ago by Erisu. Use the shadow and the ghosts for effect. A touch of cold... a discordant melody, objects that move when no one's looking, shadows at strange angles. The shadow is evil and murderous. It will attempt to kill anyone that walks alone, or perhaps two people on their own, though it will try to avoid anyone that could kill it (it is immune to normal weapons, but not to magic).

The ghosts are neither evil nor murderous, but they are confused and lost. Remember that Melody and Meryl are twins, but only Melody will appear in the daytime. Build up to her true appearance. First the cold and discordant melodies, later accompanied by a dripping noise, later the dripping noise is accompanied by dark spots appearing on the dusty floor, and finally Melody's ghost.

Once Melody awakes to the presence of others, she's likely to re-scrawl "despair" in blood on the main stairs.

Don't forget the magic resistance of the shadow and the ghosts! When Melody is around, especially, magic is likely to fail as often as it succeeds.

It should rain good and hard at some point in the night, just for effect. They may notice the clouds coming in as they go ashore. They will definitely notice them by the time they reach the garden.

Once Erisu notices them, the piano will appear in the Drawing Room. Erisu is likely to wait until evening to make it appear, so that the shadow will be more effective. Erisu will attempt to convince them to “find the secret of the way into the vault”, but it really wants them to find the secret of the way out. When that fails, Erisu will try to draw them into the vault to feed on their despair. If anyone needs to die either in the vault or before they enter the vault, Erisu can (given time) summon demons or raise corpses.

ARN GALLADE

Characters that ask Arn the right questions can hear some of the rumors and legends surrounding the castle’s fall.

He keeps an official bible by his bedside, which he reads each night before sleeping. This bible is one of three Courlander family missals, and contains prayers, masses, and songs as well as biblical remembrances. (The other two missals are at Lisport House in Fork.) The missal was given to Arn by Meril and Eldred’s father.

He may loan the missal to the characters if they are going to the house.

“Take this missal back to my cottage, if you would,” he says. “And here’s a treat for Saul.”

“Saul is a dog that lives down there,” he says. “He’s a good fellow.”

“There is something unhealthy sad in that house. It could wither the unguarded heart. I read a verse from the bible every night when I’m there to drive the desolation from my soul.”

If asked whether he has to worry about night trolls, Arn will reply along the lines of:

“Well... yes.”

“I was going to say that as long as its not in their interests to bother you, they won’t, but that’s not true.”

“I keep the doors locked at night. And I keep the missal on the bedstand and a crossbow on the wall. I mostly worry about Saul, but food’s plentiful enough down there now.”

“You know, when you live out in the middle of nowhere – sorry, sir – like I do, the wild begins to ignore you. I’ve talked with a few of them. They’re an interesting group. But they don’t appear to have any sense of right or wrong, only of pride and greed. It’s like the bible just passed them by.”

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Arn's grandmother (God bless her soul) was a teenager when the murders happened. She believed that the Courlanders drew too much attention to themselves by the Colonel's success on the battlefield.

SAUL (ARN'S DOG)

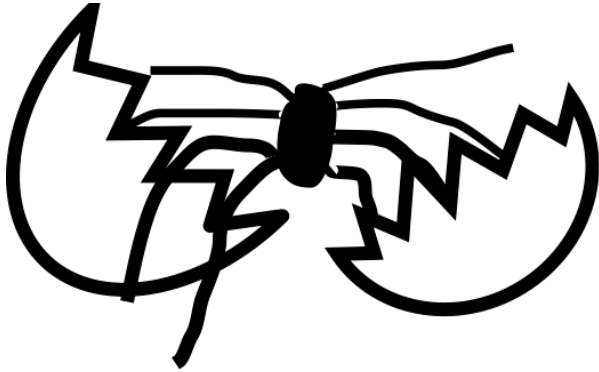
A medium-sized dog looks up at you. He barks but does not move. He is curly-haired and light, and stands perhaps one and a half feet at the shoulder. His tail wags, and he barks again.

Saul is a water spaniel; he is partly wild and keeps his own company. The dog has survived in the wild by knowing who to trust. It trusts Arn. Whether it trusts the player characters is up to them.

Saul has no specific purpose in this adventure. Use Saul as flavor, perhaps waiting at Arn's door when they arrive, or showing up at the end of the adventure, or when they stop to have lunch in the garden. Saul could use some grooming; there is a brush in Arn's cottage.

Saul will not go into the haunted house. Saul will also run away if he sees corpses walking around, even if they have glamor of life.

Saul: (Dog: 1; survival: 7; move: 12; attacks: 1; damage: 1d4; defense: +3)



ERISU

Erisu Redbreast, an Emotional Demon of despair, is trapped in the Lisport Manor vault. Erisu often takes the form of a robin. Its sigil is a broken eggshell or an empty nest, sometimes with a spider crawling out of it. Erisu gains power from despair.

The Goblin Mage summoned Erisu and sent him to Lisport Manor, where he seduced Melody Courlander following the death of Melody's fiancé. When Colonel Courlander arrived with two trusted lieutenants, Erisu goaded Melody into stealing her father's dagger and striking them all. Erisu poisoned the dagger.

Erisu is still trapped in Melody's body in the vault. Erisu has used *Glamer of Life* to make Melody's body appear as it did when she was alive: a beautiful young woman. Note that despite being in a corpse, Erisu is not undead, he's a demon.

DRAWING PEOPLE IN TO THE VAULT

Erisu knows how to get into the vault, but not how to get out of it. It will occasionally goad people into coming into the vault, so as to drive them to despair and increase its power.

It desperately wants to leave, however, and is continually trying to determine how to leave the vault. Erisu will make various suggestions, using surface telepathy, to people in the drawing room who might have some way of helping it out.

1. "You might try playing it backwards."
2. "Maybe there's a secret door on the wall?"
3. "Maybe there's a secret entrance in the corner behind the piano?"
4. "Are there any strange circles inscribed anywhere?"

None of these are the answer. Note that while the players will be trying to enter, Erisu is trying to leave. That's why its suggestions will not be the one it knows brings them into the vault. It will save that for later, when it just wants to mine the characters for their despair. For all of its suggestions, it will try to make them seem "natural", as if they were the recipient's ideas.

"There's a melody that starts... doesn't that sound familiar?"

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It will also act as if it has only been in the vault for a few days or weeks.

“Oh, thank god, you have found me.”

“I ran here to hide when my sister tried to kill me. She was crazy! She tried to kill everyone! I think she did kill them!”

“But I don’t know the way out. I thought I did, but the melody for the way in does not work. I have been here for weeks.”

“I do not know why I live when he died. I don’t know why I live when I neither eat nor drink and my tongue thirsts like fire.”

Erisu Redbreast (Emotional Demon: 8; Evil; Survival 43; Move: 12; Attacks: 1 dagger+1; Defense: +2; Damage: 1d6+1; Special Defense: immune to normal weapons; Magic Resistance: 8)

Demonic powers: Glamer of life, summon unnamed demons, surface telepathy, raise skeleton/corpse, familiar, familiar’s eyes, Long Hall of Despair, poison

Demonic power points: 20+ (can store up to 24 points and have up to 32 points in play at any one time)

Intelligence 13, Charisma 16, Wisdom 11

Erisu has 20 points at the start of the adventure, but may have used some or gained some depending on the characters’ actions.

Erisu carries the dagger that Melody used to kill her family. It is a +1 dagger. He’ll likely poison it if he expects company. Remember that using poison will require a called shot. Also, because Melody is dead and mostly a desiccated corpse, it is easier for Erisu to hide the weapon. Attempts to perceive a hidden weapon on Melody are at a penalty of two.

If Erisu fears defeat, it can pretend to die at an opportune blow and let the *Glamer of Life* fade.

“Why have you done this to me?” she cries, and she crumples to the floor. Her eyes stare dully toward you from the ground as her body decomposes before your eyes.

Erisu almost never reveals itself as a demon. It waits for the victim to solve the puzzle or for despair to set in when the victim realizes they’re going to die. Either end is a win for the demon, since it either gets to escape the vault or feed on despair.

POISON

Erisu can enchant a blade with demonic poison for two demonic power points. This is how Melody killed everyone in the house except the one servant who survived. The poison is strength 5 (level minus three), and causes 2d6 points damage per round. It lasts for 80 minutes (level times ten).

THE LONG HALL OF DESPAIR

The walls loom inwards and the hallway buckles beneath you. You are in a dense city, its ancient walls lurching inwards. Dull eyes stare out of tiny, misshapen windows.

Sending a victim into the Long Hall costs Erisu four demonic power points and requires that Erisu touch the victim. The victim is allowed a Willpower roll to avoid the effect, but at a penalty of Erisu's level. Once affected, the victim crumples to a fetal position and becomes insensible, trapped in a mental nightmare of twisting, looming barriers filled with everything that has ever caused them despair or might cause them despair.

The halls will appear differently to different people. To a person raised in the country, it might appear as in the flavor text above. To a person raised in the city, the halls might appear as looming trees, with dark, sinister branches grasping inwards.

Things inside the Long Hall can range from replaying despairing scenes from the character's life over and over with more and more despairing outcomes; to such strange scenes as their dead grandmother bringing them tea and cookies and berating them for everything bad they'd done since she died – while holding a bloody butcher knife between her teeth.

If they try to get out of the Hall this is a Charisma contest between the victim and Erisu. Each attempt takes one round in the real world. Erisu can only send one victim at a time into the Long Hall.

DEMONIC POWERS

Erisu gains one point per day of despair per despairing person. It currently has twenty points.

As an eighth level emotional demon, Erisu can have up to 32 points in play at any one time. It currently has the Gargoyle (5 points), the four Crowns of Eyes (2 each, for 8 points), the shadow (1 point), and the Glamer of Life (1 point), for a total of 15 points in play. If Erisu does other things, such as raising Eldred as a walking corpse or sending a victim to the Long Hall of Despair, you'll need to make sure that Erisu's total points in play do not exceed 32, and that the total spent after the adventure starts don't exceed its current demonic power total.

Power	Cost	Running total
Gargoyle	5 points	5 points
Crowns of Eyes	8 points	13 points
Glamer of Life	1 point	14 points
Shadow	1 point	15 points
<i>Long Hall of Despair</i>	<i>4 points</i>	<i>19 points</i>
<i>Corpse Eldred</i>	<i>2 points</i>	<i>21 points</i>
<i>Eldred's Glamer of Life</i>	<i>2 points (includes independence)</i>	<i>23 points</i>
<i>Poisoned dagger</i>	<i>2 points</i>	<i>25 points</i>
<i>Up to four other corpses</i>	<i>2+ points each</i>	

If Erisu's power in play exceeds its limit, Erisu will need to drop some of the powers, such as letting the victim out of the Long Hall, or letting Melody's Glamer of Life drop, or Eldred's glamer and raising.

THE SHADOW

Erisu summoned a *shadow* years ago to keep his secret safe. The shadow strangled Meril I; Erisu animated Meril I's corpse and had it push the stone gargoyle off of the roof, and then arrange itself underneath the fallen stone as if it had been struck by it. This demon waits in the attic for orders from Erisu. Erisu can see what is happening through the shadow.

Shadow: (Demon: 1; Moral Code: Evil; Survival: 7; Movement: 12; Attacks: cold grab or suffocation; Damage: d6; Defense: +9; Special Defenses: immune to normal weapons, -10 to perceive in shadows; Magic Resistance: 1)

Suffocation requires a called shot. If successful, the victim is allowed an Evasion roll, or the shadow has them by the neck and automatically hits every round thereafter.

Erisu may also summon other demons or animate available corpses, if necessary. If the shadow is destroyed, Erisu will need to summon another demon or animate a corpse before it can perceive what is happening beyond the vault. It will still be able to use surface telepathy to communicate with anyone outside the vault, but will not be able to see or hear what is happening.

THE GHOSTS

The three daughters are trapped in the house by the monstrous nature of their murder (or crime) and the lingering demonic power of Erisu. If Erisu is banished or killed, the ghosts will be freed.

If anyone attacks Melissa or Meryl, they are likely to cower in fear, crying “Melody! Why?” before fading back through the walls.

Remember that Meryl and Melody are twins, and sixteen years old. Meryl will be submissive and meek; Melody will be frightening and crazy. Meryl appears healthy. Melody appears thin and gaunt.

The first ghost they see is likely to be Melody’s, though they might feel the presence of someone next to them as they look out the window at the garden, or surprise Meryl in the twin’s bedroom or her mother’s bedroom. They might see faces – Melody’s, Meryl’s or Melissa’s – peering out of the upstairs windows if they spend any amount of happy time in the gardens. Joy is not something the ghosts have seen much of this past century.

When Melody’s ghost is around, they’ll hear a faint cacophonous music from far away.

You hear a strange noise far to the south. It sounds like a piano, like someone clumsily moving a piano. Notes with no melody over and over, very faintly.

Second, they’ll hear a dripping noise before they hear the music.

You suddenly realize that you’ve been hearing a dripping noise from up the stairs. It gets louder, as if it were approaching, a loud liquid plop on the stone floor. It stops for a moment. In the silence you hear that faint cacophonous melody as of someone banging away randomly at a piano. And then the noise fades, and you hear the plop-plop-plop disappear into the distance.

Finally, the music and dripping noise will be followed by Melody’s appearance. Remember that the melody only occurs if the piano is still in the vault and Erisu is playing it.

You hear that faint, cacophonous melody again, at the barest edge of your hearing, and then an out of sync beat, like dripping water. A dark spot appears on the floor, oily, black, with a hint of scarlet; again, a few feet away; and a few feet away. The line of dripping liquid follows the music past you and into the hallway beyond where it and the melody fades into the distance.

Meryl and Melissa will appear walking down hallways at night, or peering around corners day or night. Meryl and Melissa can also affect small objects, moving them slightly. As a phantasm, Melody has even more power to affect the material world.

They might also see a face peering down at them momentarily from a window while they’re outside in the garden.

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The ghosts have the run of the house, but cannot enter the vault except by going along with a living person playing the piano. They will not do so, however, unless convinced to do so.

Melody can appear day or night. Meryl and Melissa can only appear at night.

Meryl Courlander: Apparition: 1; survival: 5 ; nocturnal; movement: 20; attacks: none; defense: +2; special defense: immune to non-magical weapons, space-shifting; special attacks: cold fear; magic resistance: 5

Melissa Courlander: Apparition: 1; survival: 7 ; nocturnal; movement: 20; attacks: none; defense: +2; special defense: immune to non-magical weapons, space-shifting; special attacks: cold fear; magic resistance: 5

Melody Courlander: Phantasm: 3; survival: 16; movement: 20; attacks: none; defense: +2; special defense: immune to non-magical weapons, space-shifting; special attacks: cold fear, poltergeist power, magic resistance: 10

MELODY COURLANDER'S PHANTASM

Melody's ghost is the most troubled and the most active of the three. Erisu seduced Melody into killing everybody. It used its telepathic abilities to undermine every belief and love she held. Her murders allowed Erisu to take control of her body. But when it took control, Melody understood what happened. She went wild, and took Erisu into the vault, and refused to leave.

Melody's ghost carries a dripping dagger, dropping blood on the floor. When she is invisible, the blood simply appears on the floor, blotting the dust and moving with her.

If they follow Melody's ghost, it will turn, crying, and flail at them in self-loathing.

A thin, gaunt, teenage girl walks around the corner in a torn and tattered nightgown, crying, holding a bloody knife out in front of her as if it were the most disgusting worm in the world. Tears mingle with blood, falls from the knife, and splatters on the floor.

She looks at you, and her nightgown billows up like a robin's wings, launching her towards you.

Melody is thin and pale from starvation. That's how she died in the vault. She will try to attack once on her way past any offending characters.

Melody retains her paranoia from life.

1. Her older sister never liked her. That's why she named her son after her twin.
2. Her father deliberately put Alan in danger so that he could force her to marry one of his lieutenants.

Melody will, if possible, write "DESPAIR" in huge, bloody handprints on a wall, probably the main stairs.

As a third-level phantasm, Melody has the *poltergeist* power and the *cold fear* power.

CONTACTING THE GHOSTS

There are two means, within the adventure, of contacting the ghosts: writing in the diary, and playing the piano. Depending on the abilities and magic items that the characters have, they may also have other means of contacting spirits. Monks with spiritual fields, for example, may be able to contact the ghosts.

With the right calmness of tone and clarity of words, the characters can ground the ghosts back into reality. Depending on what they write, a Charisma roll might be necessary to succeed.

If the player characters write in Melody's diary, Melody, and eventually the other ghosts, will write back, usually in the middle of the night or several hours later. If they leave the diary lying around, there will be entries from December 26. The most detailed entries will be found in the drawing room or the twin's bedroom. If the diary is left alone it is likely to be moved to one of those rooms by the ghosts.

Entries will be chaotic and random at first, things like:

"Is the war back on?" (Meryl)

"Where is Meril?" (Melissa)

"Where is my son?" (Melissa)

If one of the characters plays the piano, this will bring the ghosts of Meril and Melissa.

You feel the temperature drop; the hair on the back of your neck rises. You feel a cold presence sitting on either side of you at the piano.

The first few times this happens, they'll need to withstand the *cold fear* that all ghosts have when they manifest. The ghosts will play the piano in response to any questions at first, lightly, old melodies.

If someone continues playing with them, they can eventually be coaxed to appear more substantial, and to speak. Meril especially will be very eager and bubbly, and will try to sit next to the piano player on the bench. She's a confused sixteen-year-old girl who has just found a friend. Remember that both ghosts are confused, they don't know what's happened to them, they do know that Melody did something awful, and they know that none of the rest of their family is around. They have little sense of time and still think it's a day or so after Melody's attack. Melissa wants her husband and her son. Meril wants her mother and father.

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MELISSA ALEGAR'S APPARITION

Melissa Alegar was twenty years old when her sister murdered her. She was married to John Alegar and had one son: Meril Alegar (the current Meril's great grandfather). Melissa is worried most about her son and husband. She sees her husband John Alegar in Meril III, and will mistake him for her husband. Melissa can affect the material world but is a less active ghost than Meryl. She will likely write, or join at the piano, only after Meryl does.

MERYL COURLANDER'S APPARITION

Meryl Courlander is Melody Courlander's twin sister. They were sixteen years old when they died. Meryl can affect the material world, moving very small objects slightly, or picking up a pen and writing with it, or playing the piano.

Lisport Manor Grounds

THE FAMILY PLOT

You walk along an overgrown path southwest, around low hills dotted with buckthorn, boxwood, and wild bramble in flower. After a quarter of an hour you arrive at the gates of Courlander cemetery.

Headstones and monuments line the sides of hills, overlooking a small river running southeast.

This is the Lisport family cemetery. All Courlanders mentioned in the text are buried here, except for Melody (whose body was never found) and Aaron (who died with the Astronomers). Elizabeth Mardel is buried here, as is Alan, though theirs are makeshift graves. John Alegar and his descendants are also buried here, including all of Meril's immediate ancestors.

John Alegar was responsible for the tombstones for all those who died in 1898, as well as young Elroy who died at age five. John chose the quotations for all except Lady Melissa and Lord Courlander, who had already chosen their quotations.

Clumped together on one hill are the tombstones of those who died in 1898 as well as Elroy's immediate parents. There is a small rounded pillar marking his parent's tombs, but no such markers for any later tomb. Up to Elroy Courlander I, each man who served as Earl has the Lisport seal on their marker. The seal does not include the melody; this was added in the late 1800s.

1. Here lies Elroy Courlander 1811-1882
2. Here sleeps Emily Courlander 1815-1885
3. Here sleeps Lady Melissa Courlander “Walk the golden streets” 1856-1898
4. Here lies Elroy Courlander, Colonel, Lord of Lisport “Men of courage, be strong” 1849-1898
5. Here sleeps Elizabeth Mardel “Wisdom is better than weapons of war” 1845-1898
6. Here sleeps Melissa Alegar “The desert cries in sorrow” 1878-1898
7. Here sleeps Meryl Courlander “Join in a song with sweet accord” 1882-1898
8. Here lies Alan Mardel “The end of the upright is peace” 1876-1898

If this is the first time that they have seen the name “Mardel”, remember that any sorcerers might have heard of this family, and that there is a tradition of sorcery in the family.

And just a few steps away are the post-war tombstones. The tradition of including quotations ended with John Alegar’s death, and the tombstones became much simpler (and less expensive). The Lisport seal is not on the tombstones of post-war Earls; if asked, Meril will say that they stopped because there are no earls in Lisport manor. Meril won’t mention that it also helps that it’s less expensive.

1. Here lies Elroy Alegar “Precious in the eyes of the Lord” 1917-1923
2. John Alegar 1868-1925
3. Meril Alegar 1895-1927
4. Mary Elena Alegar 1890-1972
5. Eldred Alegar 1940-1982
6. Miriam Alegar 1941 - 1988
7. Meril Alegar II 1915-1990

Servants from the manor, including the Gallades, are buried in the church graveyard south of town.

THE SERVANT’S HOUSE

Arn Gallade lives simply. His one-room cottage contains a bed, a small wood stove for both cooking and heating, and a small table with a single chair by it. Another chair sits in the corner by the bed.

THE GARDEN

Ivy and weeds drape bone-white columns that flank the path leading away from the house towards a small pool. Rising from the pool an imposing statue of a man, left hand on sword, faces away, gazing west, his right hand most likely shading his eyes. His suit is rich but functional, hard leather and trousers, with high boots striding forward.

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Waterbugs flit across the pool. Crickets chirp in the grass, and every time the sun pokes out from the clouds you hear the lazy buzzing of flies. Dark clouds are gathering in the north, and a chill wind blows downriver. A handful of walnut trees dot the garden, and oak trees rise up beyond the hedge.

The garden behind the house is mostly overgrown. The hedges, trees, and vines run rampant. But Arn does keep it up as well as he can. He cleans the pool there regularly, cleans the benches, removes walnuts in the autumn before they can take root, and keeps the flowers trim and proper. One of the few times he goes into the house is to bring flower bulbs into the cellar for winter.

The wide path down the center of the garden area is flanked by Roman columns. The center of the pool has a statue of one of the early Courlanders. It was built back when this was the front of the manor.

Each of the garden areas has a statue of an angel, holding water buckets, playing harps, singing from a book, doing the things that angels do in gardens.

The semicircle around the garden is a tall hollow hedge. It can be entered at the top and at the top ends, as well as at the end of the two upper paths. If it were better kept, it would make a nice, romantic tunnel for walking, but it's a bit overgrown today.

Thin branches from an arch into a bright green tunnel of leaves and twigs. Sunlight shines in myriad tiny shafts through the cramped and overgrown interior.

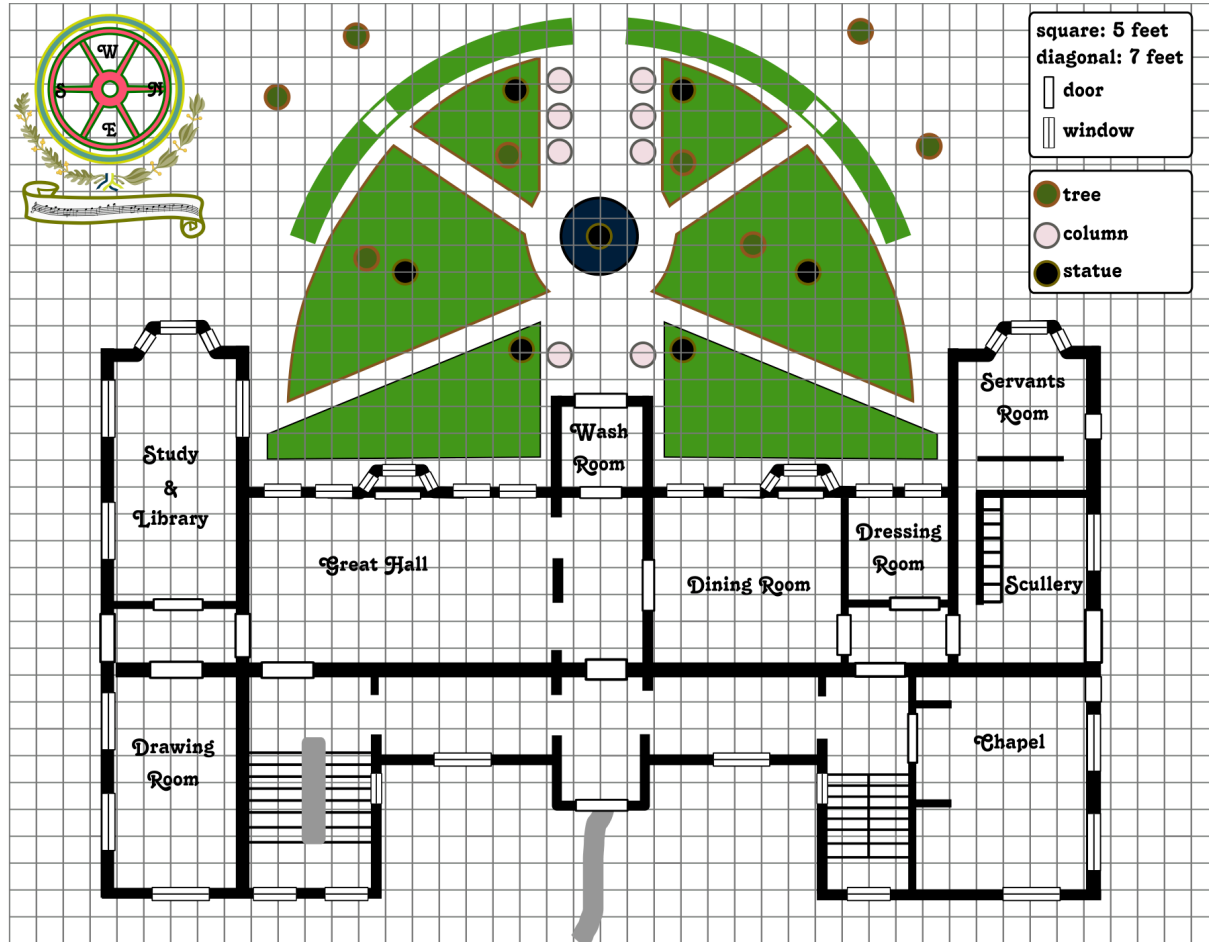
Except for the areas just in front of the windows, the garden is a grassy lawn. Beneath the windows, however, flowers grow, still tended by the Lisport family's servant, Arn.

While here, characters might see ghostly faces in the twin's room, if the ghosts are appearing now.

WANDERING MONSTERS

For the most part, encounters on the grounds will be the same as anywhere else in Lisport. Once Erisu is aware of them, it may call some demons (or undead, if corpses are available) to attack.

Lisport Manor



WANDERING ENCOUNTERS

There are fewer encounters within Lisport Manor, but those that are, will be of the same sort as outside the manor, until Erisu becomes aware of their presence. The bodies of those killed in Melody's attack have returned to the manor. The skeletons of those who died in the house after it was abandoned will also attack relentlessly.

Melody, Melissa, and Meryl will appear as ghosts (Melody as a phantasm, the others as apparitions) at various points. Remember that Melody and Meryl are twins.

GENERAL FEATURES

Lisport Manor is in pretty good shape for a house that hasn't seen much upkeep in over a hundred years. However, it is beginning to show its age. Wood is warping slightly, beams are just a little out of true, and pieces of masonry have fallen to the ground. The floors creak loudly, especially upstairs, and the wind will raise moans and low whistles.

The kitchen was a separate building near the scullery, and is destroyed.

The first floor has its ceilings 21 feet high. The second floor has its ceilings 12 feet high – which means that the first floor's great hall and chapel have ceilings 33 feet high. The third floor has 9-foot high rafters, and about six feet of space between the rafters and the apex of the roof.

Many of the windows on the west side of the house are walk-in bay windows.

All of the floors are covered in dust, especially near windows. Arn maintains the gardens, but nobody cleans the house. An easy perception roll will let them track the faded steps of Eldred and Arn. Anything, including the player characters, walking through this house will leave tracks. This includes mice, insects, and walking corpses, but not ghosts or shadows.

MAIN FLOOR

FOYER

The huge oaken doors creak loudly as you pull them open. Light shines in through the open doors into a dark foyer. Eight yards down a smaller pair of arched doors lead deeper into the manor; just beyond the short foyer, a hallway leads left and right to each wing.

DRAWING ROOM

(Morning: Sunlight streams in through the front window.)

The piano in the southeast corner is almost never there. Melody brought it in when she hid in the vault, and it stayed there until Erisu began luring people in to feed his hunger for despair. He did this to Eldred. He tried to do it to their great grandfather, Meril Alegar I, but Meril I was too frightened to play. Erisu summoned a shadow to strangle Meril I before he could let the secret out. When the characters arrive the piano will be flipped to the vault side. Erisu (as Melody) plays the piano incessantly, looking for the right melody. It has long since left off recognizable melodies and plays harsh, discordant tunes which are faintly discernable around Melody's ghost.

If they get to the drawing room before Erisu is aware of them, the piano will be in the vault. As soon as Erisu realizes that someone is in the house, it will knock Eldred's body off of the piano bench. Five minutes later, the piano will flip back to the drawing room. When the piano is in the drawing room, the wall near the piano will appear much less faded than the rest of the room: it hasn't been in the sun nearly as much.

If Erisu discovers that Meril is Eldred's brother, it will raise Eldred's body as a walking corpse. It will do so before returning the piano to the drawing room. If Erisu has already returned the piano to the drawing room, Erisu will return it to the vault when no one is looking, to ensure that he has a life-like Eldred when Meril enters.

If Erisu finds out that they have a missal full of songs, especially if it finds out that the missal was the Courlander family missal, it will almost certainly begin plotting to kill the characters. If it can't safely do so, then it won't, but it would be nice if no living person knew that Melody Lisport was still alive and had exited the vault. It will use summoned creatures first, as it can act scared at first and hide behind the big strong fighter.

CHAPEL

Two thin oaken doors rise into an arch, and over the arch are engraved the words "Marching to Zion".

The doors open to an empty room; sunlight streams in a multitude of beams through shuttered windows illuminating a marble altar in the east end of the room.

Empty of anything worthwhile. Sunlight and moonlight shine through the empty windows. But the stone altar is still there. The family still uses this chapel for important ceremonies, such as marriages.

The top of the altar is marked with the ancient symbols "alpha" and "omega", which is common for altars.

There is a small closet, empty, underneath the stairs.

GREAT HALL

(Evening: The great old hall is brilliantly lit by the afternoon/evening sun.) It is over thirty feet to the ceiling, decorated with vines and circles. About twenty feet up, a balcony and railing runs along the north and east.

DINING ROOM

(Evening: Light streams in from several windows.) Through the windows you can see a green garden, its hedges still trimmed after all these years.

SCULLERY

This area is more of a wide alcove off of a hallway than a room of its own. A thin pair of double doors leads to the outside. You can see a small ramshackle building with a stone chimney, partially crumbled, through the wide window next to the door. A long stone countertop runs along the north wall beneath the window. A small wooden door in the southwest corner lies ajar, but all that escapes is darkness.

The small ramshackle building is the kitchen. All wood except for the oven and chimney, it has not survived as well as the manor. Much of the roof has fallen in on the single-room building. It's about twenty feet by thirty feet, and about forty feet from the side of the manor house.

SCULLERY STAIRS AND CELLARS

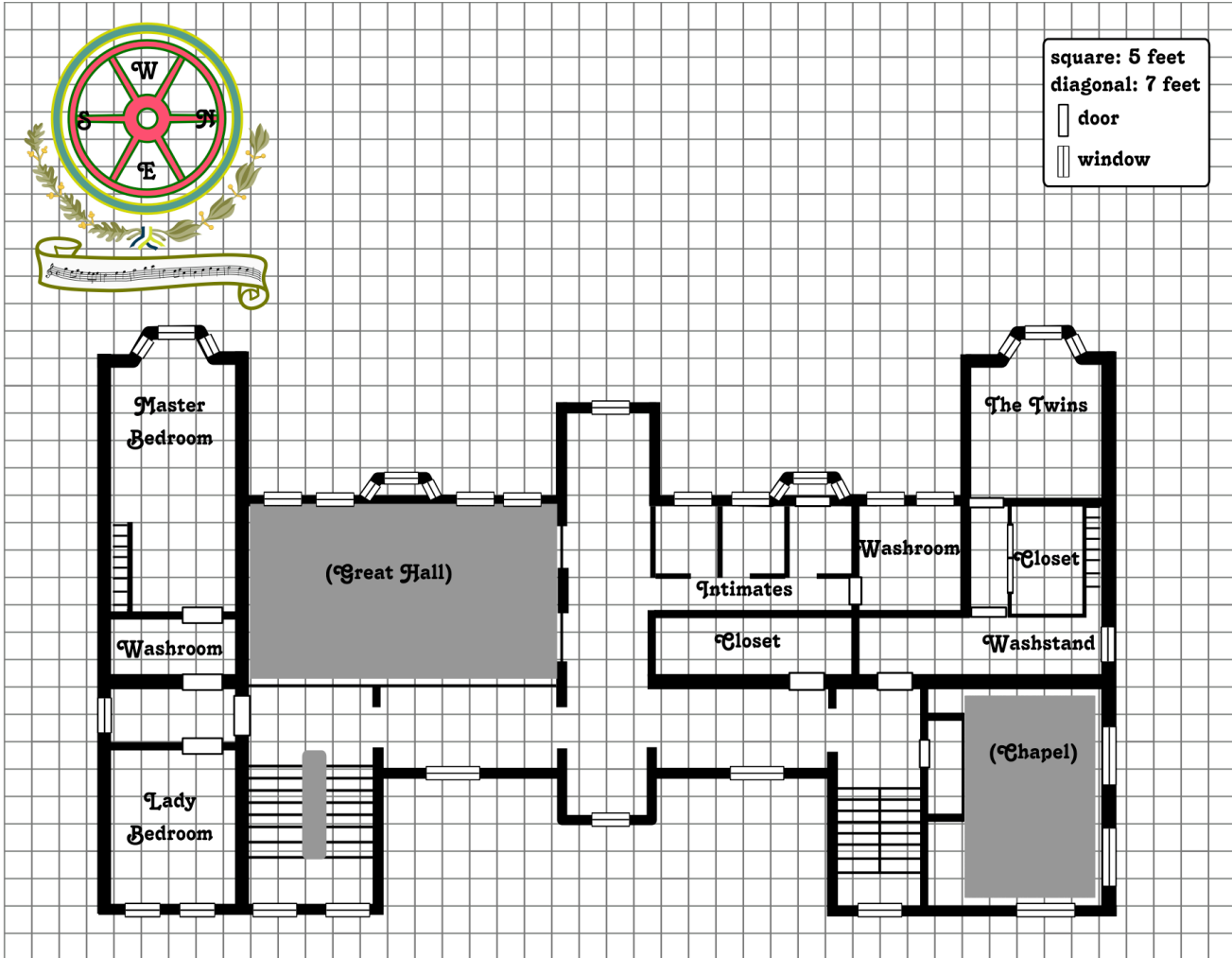
This cramped, three-foot-wide stairway leads down into a dry, cool room covered in cobwebs ancient and new. Dust rises from the dirt floor as you step from the stairs into the room. The walls to your left are hard clay. The walls to your right and forward are wood, with thick beams going from the ceiling into the grey floor. A few dried husks of ancient roots lie scattered amidst fallen shelves. Dry wooden doors stand partially open to your right and forward.

Parts of the cellar have been cleared away, and if they look before they trample it they'll see that someone was here recently. Eldred looked around for a secret vault here in the basement, but didn't find anything. It's typical of Eldred that he didn't close the door behind him when he left.

There are three rooms down here, each separated by wooden walls. They enter the main room, which was for grains, oft-needed vegetables, and fruits. Off to the right is the wine cellar. Forward is the root cellar. The main room and the wine cellar are each about ten by twelve feet. The far room is more of a large closet at five by seven feet. Only a few dried husks of ancient roots remain, and they're on the floor amidst the torn-down wood shelves.

The wine cellar is empty. Meril will know that all of the wine left after the war was brought to Fork.

SECOND FLOOR



THE MAIN STAIRS

You climb the ancient marble stairs. The high morning sun shines brightly into your face. You are momentarily blind as you round the corner away from the sun...

If they are climbing the stairs behind the Great Hall, and the first character makes a Perception roll, they'll notice an old scribbling on the wall.

...but something captures your attention to your left. Something is there, a pattern on the wall, scratched in dust and faint with time. As your eyes adjust to the light, it coalesces into form. Behind the dust and years, you barely make out one word: "despair".

Otherwise, they'll just see the upstairs.

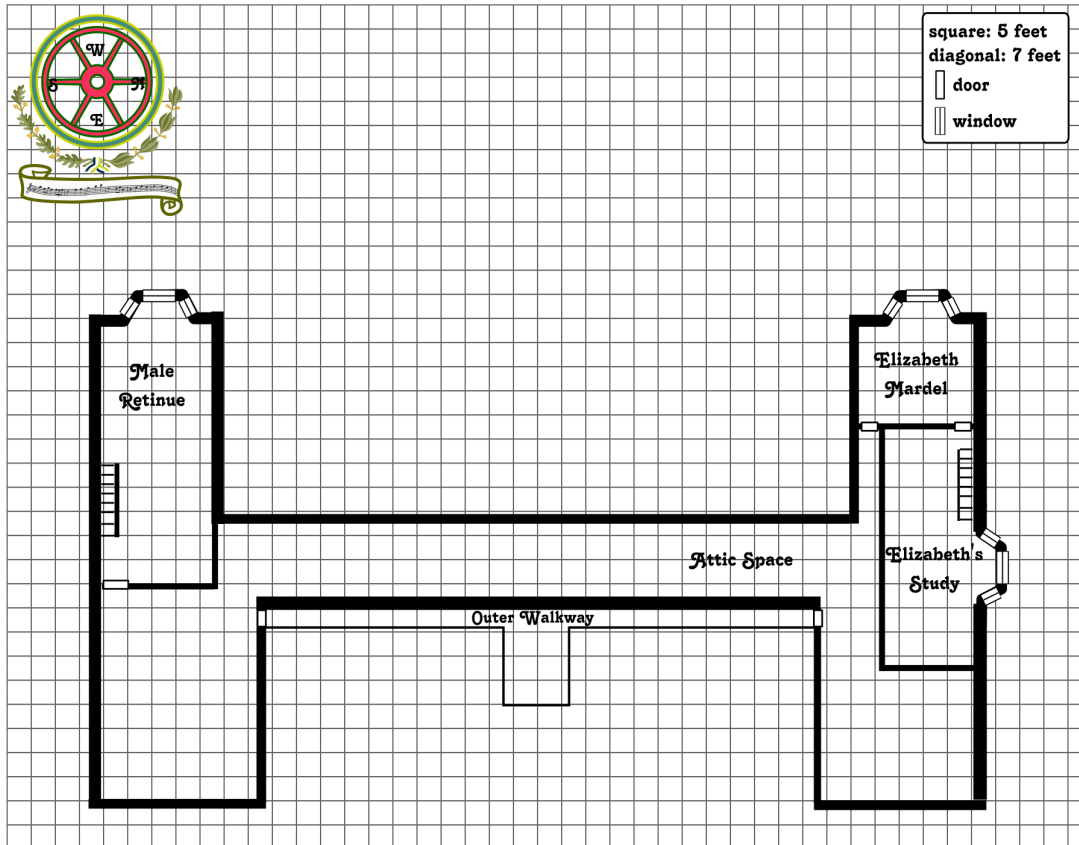
...until a long iron railing fades into view overlooking the tiled and marbled ballroom you just walked across a few minutes ago.

Don't worry if no one notices the writing, Melody will be emphasizing it in blood later on.

WASHSTAND AREA

Birds, disturbed by your presence, fly through the window and up the stairs, out of sight.

UPSTAIRS



ERISU'S SHADOW

If Erisu hasn't had the *shadow* move yet, it will be in the storage spaces here, and will act autonomously. It will tend not to attack groups, but if anyone lags behind it is likely to attack them, and then flit away as soon as assistance arrives. It will avoid sorcerors and people with magical weapons to the best of its ability to perceive them. However, don't forget that it has magic resistance 1. There is a 1 in 20 chance that magic will simply not work around it.

OUTER WALKWAY AND ROOF

On either side of the attic, slightly hidden doors open out to the outer walkway. The railing of the walkway is the gargoyles and angels visible from the front of the house. This thin walkway makes a perfect place for the shadow to ambush a lone intruder.

There are also ladders to the roof on either side of the walkway.

NORTH STAIRS (ELIZABETH MARDEL'S STUDY)

The narrow stairs creak loudly as you step slowly up into the high room. Paint flakes from dry wood on the stairs and wall. You hear the fluttering of birds roused by your presence, and as you reach the landing you see them escaping the rafters into a small alcove to the north. Shelves line the walls, and light shines through from the alcove.

The birds are flying out of the window, but the window isn't immediately visible from their vantage.

THE RAFTERS

Birds live in the rafters, and spiders, bees, and mice. There is dust everywhere along the beams, and nests of all kinds in the nooks and crannies where beam meets beam and beam meets wall.

THE SOLVED ERISU RITUAL

In the rafters of Elizabeth Mardel's study is the solved version of the Erisu ritual. She had it in her hands when she died, and a bird brought it up into a nest. A character who looks at the rafters can make a Perception roll to see a piece of paper in a nest. Anyone who actually climbs into the rafters and looks will find it.

The paper is old and cracked with age. There's a magic circle, and a sigil of some kind in one of the corners. Scrawled in faded, wide ink is "M back corn", but the "n" trails off as long as the rest of the letters combined.

AUNT ELIZABETH MARDEL'S ROOMS

The Mardels were a magical family of minor repute, and Elizabeth Mardel maintained that tradition. Ostensibly, Aunt Mardel's room is small, a perfect spinster's attic room. There is very little indication that she was a sorceress. Aunt Mardel's magical library and laboratory are in a hidden part of the upper floor, created as a permanent *lost corner*.

Elizabeth Mardel was aware that there was a shadow over the family, but was unaware of the source. She has extensive notes on demonology as well as spell notes. See [ELIZABETH MARDEL'S NOTES](#) in the appendix.

Someone doing a close examination of the walls might notice that the northwest corner is in better shape than the rest of the walls.

In the northwest corner the paint runs in a thin unbroken line from ceiling to floor, where all around it is chipped and flaked.

That's because the northwest corner is the entrance to Elizabeth's *lost corner*. The trigger to entering it is to back into it. This is the meaning of Elizabeth's scrawled message to her sister on the solved Erisu ritual.

If they don't have those clues, it is unlikely that they'll figure out how to enter the room, and that's fine. Entering this room gives them a lot of information, but it isn't necessary. That said, leaning against a corner is not a totally uncommon thing to do. If the characters hold long conversations in Elizabeth's bedroom, give the bored ones a chance, depending on the situation, to lean against the northwestern corner. If they do, they'll need to make an Evasion roll or fall backwards into the room. They'll fall fully into the room – there is no half in/half out of a lost corner.

To those watching them, especially as they're likely to be watching them only tangentially, it will look like the falling character has fallen down three stories, except that the corner should have been in the way.

If the character makes their Evasion roll, they'll be momentarily off-balance and realize that there's nothing there behind them.

ELIZABETH'S LOST CORNER

There is a writing table against the wall, and a bookshelf next to it. The walls of this small room are stone embedded in hard clay. A strong light permeates the room, illuminating the papers on the table next to pen and ink that appear as if they were left yesterday.

The room is eight feet square. There is an ink blot on the paper just below the writing pen.

Leaving the room is easy – there is no lock on leaving this lost corner like there is in the drawing room. They just need to walk into the southeast corner of the magical laboratory; they can leave whether they walk into it backwards or not.

The papers on the table are Elizabeth Mardel’s demonology notes. They are open to a page of word after word, Elizabeth’s attempt to decipher the anagrams on the Erisu ritual. Both the paper and the ink on the table is dry.

Her bookshelf contains her earlier notes from 1881-1891, Aaron Courlander’s letters, and several books.

Suggested books:

1. Lawrence Bisson’s *The Residual Auras of Human Writing*
2. John Isaacs’s *Metaphysical Magic*
3. Michael Berkman’s *The Mathematics of Temple Architecture*
4. Kenworth Shirley’s *Divine Ratios of Geometry*
5. *Herbal Lore of the Celts*
6. *The Biblical Remembrance of Oren Thomas*
7. *Strange Tales for Dark Nights*

Strange Tales provides useful information about demons couched in allegory and parable. As a mojo resource, it has a rating of 5.

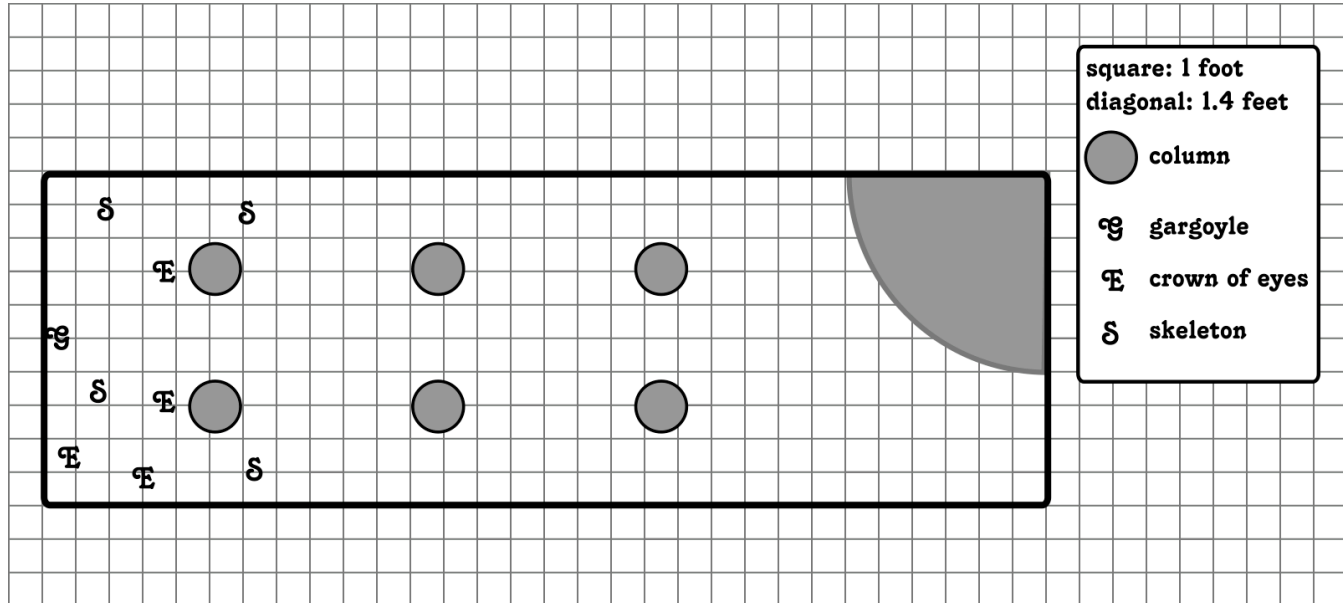
SOUTH STAIRS (MALE RETINUE)

The narrow stairs creak loudly as you step slowly up into the high room. Paint flakes from dry wood on the stairs and wall. You hear the fluttering of birds roused by your presence, and as you reach the landing you hear them flying away through the rafters.

BASEMENT

There are two sections of the basement: storage areas, including an underground pantry, and a small storage room. Both have little in them, as they were looted by people running from the goblins, then by the goblins, and then by vagabonds after the war.

The Vault



Melody died in the vault. Her body is still possessed by and animated by Erisu. In the vault today are Erisu (as Melody), and five corpses: Eldred Alegar II who died here last week, a soldier named Tom Romer who died here only a little after the war, a vagabond named Andrew Ingerson who died here thirty years ago, a merchant named Donald Gemmon who died here ten years ago, and a thief named Scott Preston who died here four years ago. Erisu can raise these corpses as undead given enough demonic power. Eldred's despair was a feast for Erisu, which is why the ghosts and creatures are more dangerous now than they've been in years.

The vault is an other-worldly, ethereal place, created as a permanent *lost corner*. The walls, ceiling, and floor appear as stone, but that is an illusion. They are the edges of this pocket world and thus indestructible.

The vault is ten feet wide, ten feet tall, and ten yards deep. There are three rows of columns, two columns each, in the vault. Each column is decorated with faces, vines, and flowers.

THE ENTRANCE

The piano swings into the wall – and disappears into it.

You feel a momentary dizziness as the piano pivots around the corner. It stops only halfway around the circle. and the air goes dry and musty.

If they have light: The wall is now ornate stone, and strange faces leer at you mouths agape.

If they're in darkness: Total inky blackness surrounds you like a cloak. In almost total silence your own breathing echoes like a storm wind.

The vault is entered by playing the chorus to the Courlander family song while bearing the family seal, in the southeast corner of the room and facing that corner. The family crest has a single measure from a melody on it, one popular in the late 1870s and early 1880s. The chorus from that song will send the player and anyone touching the player into the vault. Normally it is played on the piano, but it can be played on any instrument in that corner, or even sung. It's an easy enough song – an easy Agility roll will do, if they know it (remember that Melody knows it, and so does Melissa, and can help them if convinced).

The song is an obscure tune from the mid-nineteenth century, "I Saw Three Roses". The Lisport coat of arms contains the first and second lines from the third verse.

Chorus:

*I saw three roses on the sidewalk,
Someone left them there, but why?
I saw three roses on the sidewalk,
And everyone slowed down to pass them by.*

*I saw a desert cry in sorrow.
I saw a river rush from stone.
I heard a mountain howl in anguish.
I heard that rushing river moan.*

Chorus

*I saw the ocean burn in anger.
I saw the flames reach for the sky.
And in that boiling sea of anger,
I felt the tender forest sigh.*

Chorus

*When will we learn love from hatred?
Why can't we tell truth from lies?
How can our children learn to cherish,
What we destroy? What we let die?*

Chorus

The seal may be found on Meril's ring, on the missal's first page and might also be able to be drawn by a character with artistic talent.

If they immediately start playing the tune again after entering, Erisu (as Melody) will tell them not to bother:

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“I’ve been trying that for days,” you hear a soft female voice say from the darkness behind you. “I don’t think it works in here.”

THE EXIT

If no one is at the piano and no one and nothing is in the vicinity of the piano, it will flip back around on its own after five minutes, returning to the drawing room. The piano will not flip back to the drawing room while anyone is in the vicinity of the piano.

There is a secret means of returning the piano back into the vault if someone gets stuck in the vault and the piano is in the drawing room. There is a flute which, if played, returns the piano to the vault (the flute could be used to leave if the right melody is played on it). The piano will not return if anyone is in the Drawing Room. (Erisu has found this secret, and plays the piano constantly.)

Normally, however, the piano is the exit in the same manner as it is the entrance, except that the melody is different. If the right melody is played on the keyboard while it is in the vault, then the piano will flip around and whoever is at the bench will back in the drawing room. Only someone on the bench or touching the floor will come through.

Melody didn’t know the exit melody: she had never heard it played.

The exit song is number 250 from the Courlander family missal, “We’re Marching to Zion”. There are 325 songs in the missal; it would take about twenty-eight hours to play them all; if they play them in order it will be twenty hours before they get to number 250. As for the entrance song, playing it successfully is an easy Agility roll for someone who can read music. Remember the group effort rules, if two or more characters have similar musical skill rolls.

The lyrics to “We’re Marching to Zion” are:

Come, we that love the Lord,
And let our joys be known.
Join in a song with sweet accord,
Join in a song with sweet accord.
And thus surround the throne,
And thus surround the throne.

Chorus:

*We’re marching to Zion,
Beautiful, beautiful Zion;
We’re marching upward to Zion,
The beautiful city of God.*

Let those refuse to sing
Who never knew our God;

But children of the heavenly King,
But children of the heavenly King
May speak their joys abroad,
May speak their joys abroad.

Chorus

The hill of Zion yields
A thousand sacred sweets,
Before we reach the heavenly fields,
Before we reach the heavenly fields,

Or walk the golden streets,
Or walk the golden streets.

Chorus

Then let our songs abound,
And every tear be dry;
We're marching thro' Immanuel's ground,
We're marching thro' Immanuel's ground,
To fairer worlds on high,
To fairer worlds on high.

Chorus

The trigger is the melody to the chorus.

THE FAMILY TREASURE

A pile of money and gems surrounds one box. This box has recently been emptied so as to make room for Eldred's body.

The vault contains 17,215 shillings worth of coins and 4,125 shillings worth of jewelry, including thirteen gold Courlander rings. These rings are worth 150 shillings each and are marked with the Courlander wheel and circle. The family gave such rings to strong allies and heroes.

There is also a magic sword, and of course the magic dagger of Melody/Erisu. Elizabeth Mardel created these magical weapons while at Brigit's Springs. Both the sword and the dagger bear the Lisport family seal. The sword is a +2 long sword. The dagger is a +1 dagger. The sword exhibits its magical bonus when wielded by someone with the moral code Good (including Ordered and Chaotic Good).

The sword is in a special box carved from maple, and locked. The box was specially designed to hold the sword and the dagger. The key is long gone.

There is also a small box, velvet-lined, with three vials in it. These are the waters Elizabeth drew from the springs at Brigit's springs. One, marked with the Elvish symbols for "ra" (short for "rael", or serenity), is a healing spirit of fourth level, which will manifest as *restore vitality*. Another, marked with the Elvish symbols for "ar" (short for "arlie", or understanding) is a peace spirit of fourth level, which will manifest as *understanding*. Finally, there is a

72—Lisport Manor Vault

vial marked with the Elvish symbols for “ma” (short for “madra” or making), that is an earth spirit of fourth level, which will manifest as *clay wheel*. A prophet can control which manifestation these spirits take, as normal.

If the characters have been especially honorable and friendly, Meril may offer to loan them the use of the sword when they go on adventures.

THE GUARDIANS OF THE VAULT

Erisu has summoned some demon servants to protect himself from anyone who comes into the vault. There are four *Crowns of Eyes* and one *Gargoyle*. This cost it 13 demonic power points.

Erisu will keep these creatures hidden until they are needed.

Small blobby creatures jerkily rush around the old statues and piles of treasure. These rust-red craggy creatures rush and jump around you on three bird-like legs, a crown of eyes on stalks around the tops of their heads.

4 Crowns of Eyes (Demon: 2; Survival:6, 9, 12, 14; Move: 20; Attacks: 1; Defense: +6; Damage: 1d4; Special Attack: explosion, grip; Special Defense: eyes, blunt weapons, heat; Magic Resistance: 1)

The crusted stone wall seems to tear itself apart. The gargoyle's head in the center grunts. Arms pull out of the stone, and legs, and the grey horned creature trails rocks and mortar as it trods toward you.

Gargoyle (Demon: 5; Survival 33; Move: 10/12; Attacks: 2 or weapon; Defense: +8; Damage: 1d6/1d6 or weapon; Special Defense: immune to normal weapons; Magic Resistance: 3)

Appendix

Dispelling Erisu

Assuming that they bring forth a place of power or somehow get Erisu to a place of power, they also need a ritual to dispel him. The characters might already have a ritual of dispelling, the one from Illustrious Castle. If so, those words will work fine – but the symbolism will need to be Erisu’s symbolism.

If they find Elizabeth Mardel’s ritual of dispelling, that will work also, assuming they’ve been through enough to believe that the tree is a real force in the world along with Christianity.

If they have to make one up themselves, that’s also fine. The important bit is the symbolism – the actual sigil of Erisu and the secondary symbols in the circle – and calling on greater powers that not only exist but that the characters have some connection with.

If Erisu escapes, remember that rituals can be performed if they have something “deeply attached to” the target. Melody’s ghost is deeply attached to Erisu, because Melody was how Erisu was summoned.

Brightwood Crossing

It is unlikely that the adventurers will travel all the way to Brightwood Crossing during this adventure. But there is information there, information that they might run across before starting the adventure or after completing it. You might also include information in the goblin stronghold that leads to further adventures for the characters.

Alan Mardel was captured in a trap that was meant to net Colonel Courlander. He was taunted by a demon, Erisu, summoned by a Night Priest.

THE WINDMILL

This is where Joe Lakono turned Alan Mardel's love for Melody into a curse on the House of Lisport.

THE BATTLEGROUND

The Goblin Mage used carnage at the battleground as a moment of power, and summoned Erisu. He used Alan's love for Melody to send the demon to Lisport to possess her.

Today the battlefield is a field of lilies and poppies. But the great battle here fueled the moment of power that allowed the Goblin Mage to summon Erisu into Melody Lisport, using her fiancé Alan Mardel as the catalyst. Mardel led the Lisport armies into battle when Colonel Courlander was taken with fever.

Special Items

Resources

The resources archive for this adventure contains the following documents. Any that you give to the players should be suitably aged by staining it with tea or by other aging methods.

1. Meril Alegar's character sheet in Scribus and PDF format
2. A Scribus and PDF 6x4 card about the Earl of Lisport, for Meril's player character friends
3. A Scribus and PDF 6x4 card of Melody's diary
4. A Scribus and PDF 6x4 card of Elizabeth Mardel's notes
5. An Inkscape and PDF of Elizabeth Mardel's attempts to solve the ritual's anagrams
6. The Erisu ritual circle in Inkscape format, with the solved and unsolved versions as PDF
7. Elizabeth Mardel's exorcism rite in Scribus and PDF
8. An Inkscape map of Fork, with the Guide and Player versions as PDF
9. The cover image in GIMP format
10. An Inkscape map of Lisport Manor, with each floor as a PDF
11. An Inkscape and PDF map of Lisport Manor that Meril can give to the players
12. An Inkscape and PDF map of the Lisport Vault
13. An Inkscape and PDF sketch of the war and post-war tombstones in Courlander Cemetery
14. A Scribus and PDF 6x4 card about Melody's diary
15. An Inkscape and PDF 6x4 card with the Lisport Arms graphic
16. "We're Marching on Zion" PNG file
17. A Lilypond document for the Lisport Arms melody
18. An mp3 file of the entrance and exit melodies

The software used to create these resources are all freely available and open source:

1. GIMP: <http://www.gimp.org/>
2. Scribus: <http://www.scribus.net/>
3. Inkscape: <http://www.inkscape.org/>
4. Lilypond: <http://lilypond.org/>

You should be able to download and install any of these software packages for Mac OS X, Windows, and Linux.

Books

ELIZABETH MARDEL'S NOTES

SPELLS

Elizabeth Mardel was an eighth-level classical sorceror, so she didn't have spellbooks. But her spell notes describe several spells she learned and researched, including Lost Corner and Demonic Clarity.

Research 1881-1891

First Level: Ghost Lights, Ghost Walkers, Understand Languages

Third Level: Hide Item, Levitate, Locate Origin

Fourth Level: Glue, Lost Corner (Discerning the hidden pockets of extra angles and forming them into temporary refuge)

Fifth Level: Fighting Prowess

Seventh Level: Dampen Magic

Research 1892-

Sixth Level: Demonic Clarity (A spell for dispossession of spiritual entrancements)

Also includes her demonology notes.

GENERAL MAGIC

She is aware of Aaron Courlander's attempts at creating a magic ring, and that his diary contains more information about it. She gave some advice to him about creating it.

Her notes on *Lost Corner* go in depth into making spells truly permanent. Magic isn't enough; permanence requires rituals, and rituals require places of power. How does one make something permanent if it is permanently attached to a non-place of power? Great acts can sometimes create temporary influxes of power, as can great losses of life. Three or more ghosts can make a spirit circle, and the ritual performed within it. But there are more benign sources of power that can be attracted, predicted, or simply waited on randomly. Such places will leave

power in their wake, and they can be attracted, or “hooked” by ritual in a true place of power. Part of her journey north was to bring such power to Lisport in order to create her secret rooms. She called it “drawing down the moon”.

Because the corner room is an extra-dimensional space, there is no teleportation or other extra-dimensional travel into or out of the corner.

GENERAL DEMONOLOGY

Her notes on demons are in her [Research 1892](#)- notebook. Because her information is from the True Family (her notes call it “the true family in Fork”), much of what she knows was originally in anagram. Common anagrams include “a spider” and “aspired” for despair and “use spider air” and “sure I aspired” for despair Erisu. There are a lot of guesses about what the Erisu ritual’s anagrams really mean covering several pages.

As she becomes more worried about the plot to call a demon onto her family, she becomes more frantic to find a way to perform a ritual at will. She called down the moon onto the manor grounds to make her secret rooms, but that takes months of planning. When she discovers the demon, she won’t have months of planning.

She never did solve this problem.

She has created a “Demonic Clarity” spell to temporarily block a possessing demon. This is how Melody regained control long enough to enter the vault.

Her notes on emotional demons, imps that feed on fear, despair, lust, and such, will include such information as that they can “hear” magic spells being cast. Demons can sense “etheric fluctuations”, for example, spell-casting, drawing spells from the ether.

Perhaps a drawing of an inert guardian: a Death’s Head.

She wants a spell to exorcise a demon (spells wouldn’t require a place of power) but “the only way to send these creatures home to shadow is by ritual.”

Ritual requires a ley node. Summoning and banishing a demon both require special markers for the ritual, and it must be at a place of power. Lisport Manor is not on a place of power; the nearest places of power are Brigit’s Springs and the Weaving Wood.

She originally considered Eliazu as the imp haunting her family, because her sources in “the family” said they wanted to summon him “to bring down a great and learned warrior clan”. See *Illustrious Castle* for more about Eliazu.

78—Special Items

She visited the oracle at Bridget's springs. Her notes also describe a trip to Brigit's springs in the north, and mention Ebeorie in Red Jack's. See *Helter Skelter* for more about Ebeorie.

Ebbeorieh. Temet Fiti? Fpiti? Feeds on argument, dissension. His name means discord.

She knows little about any of the demons, but her notes mention Eliazu, Erisu, and Ebeorie:

Eliazu: His sigil is some sort of closed door with something visible behind its edges. He gains power from fear. She thought at first that Eliazu was going to be summoned to attack her family, but now thinks it's Erisu. The Night Priests definitely have plans for Eliazu, but she's pretty certain he's being summoned by someone to attack the Stigmas di Cristo. "Redstar?"

Characters who have read the war notes of the Illustrators might remember that name. "Wendell Redstar" was a captive that the Illustrators brought back after fighting the Stigmas di Cristo.

Erisu: His sigil is a cracked egg, with a spider coming out of it. He gains power from despair. She's pretty certain that this is the demon that she needs to be worried about. That's why she's been working hard at cracking the ritual to send him back. The Night Priests aren't the ones summoning Erisu. It is the goblin mage, or someone working for him. "The man in the hollowed log."

Ebeorie: His sigil is a pair of deuces. He gains power from chaos, or conflict. He may be out of reach of the Family. He can be found through some sort of magic door in Fork. Very dangerous, and she's fairly certain that Ebeorie was not going to be controlled by either the Family or the other goblin mage.

THE RITUAL OF DISPELLING

Her notes contain a Latin rite for dispelling demons. Her instructions say to draw the circle with the demon's sigils, carry the cross and sanctified water, confront the demon, and speak confidently and faithfully.

If anyone speaks the ancient tongue, the rite says:

Father protect us, deliver us from evil.

Mother protect us, deliver us from evil.

Mother of our Lord protect us, deliver us from evil.

Holy Ghost protect us, deliver us from evil.

Redeemer of the world, deliver us from evil.

Glory belongs to god on high; peace belongs to men on earth. Be not afraid.

I exorcise you, every unclean spirit, in the name of God the Almighty Father, and in the name of Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord and Judge, and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be not afraid.

But you, devil, begone, the judgment of God is at hand!

Almighty Father, grant us that which though we pray we do not deserve to obtain; Thou who didst create men of nothing, that they might pray to Thee. Through Christ our Lord, demon, depart.

Lord Father crucified protect us.

Queen Mary trinity protect us.

Holy water protect us.

No pestilent spirit nor corruption remain, and may the schemes of the hidden enemy be dispelled.

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen

See *The Adventure Guide's Handbook* for ritual guidelines.

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“WHO IS LORD THEW?”

She has infiltrated the lower echelons of the True Family. Her name among the Night Priests is Clayblood.

She’s learned that the enemy is going to summon a demon to attack the Courlanders. She thinks the demon will take her brother-in-law or her sister.

While infiltrating the True Family, Elizabeth heard of a rusted watch, circled by red ants, that when used can “turn back the world”. It was also called the timepiece of second chances. The Goblin Mage wants it.

ERISU

Remember that because this is not a place of power, the ritual is useless; Mardel’s notes say this, too.

THE VAULT

Elizabeth’s notes also describe the magics and rituals behind the Lisport vault.

1. It can only be entered by playing a melody on the piano while bearing the Lisport family seal.
2. It can only be exited by playing a melody on the piano.
3. The piano will return to the front if it is left unused.
4. There is an emergency means of bringing the piano back if a person is trapped inside but the piano is not inside.

This information can be found by reading the notes over an evening, or with a Learning roll if quickly scanning them.

A close reading might give a clue as to what songs Elizabeth would choose. Her most quoted songs in her notes are Sweet By and By (204), I am Coming to the Cross (59), We’re Marching to Zion (250), There is a fountain (91). This is a difficult Learning roll (the numbers are for the Adventure Guide’s reference, not the players).

THE LISPORT FAMILY MISSAL

There are three known copies of the Lisport Family Missal remaining. Meril has two copies in the Inn, and Arn Gallade has one beat-up copy that he carries with him most of the time.

The missal includes Biblical remembrances, prayers, rituals, and songs.

The Lisport Family Missal is inspired by the various *Gospel Hymns* collections from John Church/Biglow & Main published throughout the late 1800s. They’re very inexpensive despite their age. I used the 1879 *No. 1, 2 and 3* as a stand-in for Arn Gallade’s copy of the Missal. It is beautifully ancient-looking and the right age!

MELODY'S DIARY

Meril will bring Melody's diary (that Arn brought with him from the manor) because, if Eldred was using it for clues, it might help him find Eldred. The diary was originally taken from the manor the morning after the murders by John Alegar. It was found in the drawing room, and has been kept by the Alegars in Fork ever since. Most of what Meril knows about his family at the time of the murders comes from the diary, though he knows it isn't necessarily reliable, especially after Melody starts to become paranoid.

The diary can (and should) be used as a means of passing clues to the player characters. Some clues in the diary include:

1. Melody became sickly right about the time that Alan would have died, despite her not knowing about it.
2. The name "robin" should, if they find Elizabeth Mardel's notes, ring a bell when they read about Erisu's sigils.
3. A very close reading will indicate that the family's money is "all from a heavenly march". This is a Very Difficult clue to catch.
4. Somebody else has been writing in it recently.

The strangest entry in the diary is the very last question, "why, Melody?" Anyone with the skill can realize that it was written in the last few weeks, not a hundred years ago. Meril swears that it wasn't there when he last looked at the diary several years ago. "Eldred has started talking to dead people." It wasn't Eldred, of course. It was Melissa's ghost, writing on it in the drawing room after Eldred entered the vault.

Melody's diary also contains clues on how to get into the vault. Melody was always trying to figure out how to get in and out. She knew that the way out was not the same as the way in, but didn't know the way out.

"I'm so happy," reads her diary, "I figured out how to play the piano! I need to keep the missal with me – that's the secret, and keep it open. But I'm not ready yet. I must learn the right songs. Father says I'm not ready yet and won't tell me. But Aunt Liz knows, too. Someone who doesn't know the music would be lost in darkness. This is so much fun, I'm so glad we learned to play!"

Someone looking for information about Aunt Elizabeth might also notice this non-sequitur on a successful Perception roll:

"I wonder if Aunt Liz has a piano in her bedroom? I know she wasn't there when I looked and then she comes down the stairs like she'd always been there."

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Melody had looked in Elizabeth's bedroom while Elizabeth was in her *lost corner*, assumed that her aunt wasn't in her room, and then was surprised to see her aunt come down the stairs later.

At some point, Meril will notice that he no longer has Melody's diary. When they find it again, in Melody's room, it will have an extra entry: dated the day after Melody died.

AARON COURLANDER'S LETTERS

Aaron Courlander was Elroy Courlander's younger brother. His letters mention clues about how the Elvish rune sword was found and what it does, and also clues about their creation of the Moonstone Ring.

Aaron signs his letters with a symbol of Pisces, his symbol in the Order.

Aaron's letter are the letters of an ambitious young man who recognizes the world of magic and ritual, and who wishes to learn the secrets of ritual use of places of power and ley lines.

Aaron suggested the exit song to Elizabeth, and a close or lucky reading will find this reference in one of his letters of 1886.

"Remember, the old two-fifty. If ritual requires significance, what could be more significant?"

Aaron is referring to hymn 250 in the Lisport family missal, "We're Marching to Zion". Those words are also engraved above the entrance to the Lisport Manor chapel.

AARON COURLANDER'S NOTES

These are not part of this adventure, but if the characters have gone through *The Lost Castle of the Astronomers* and have Aaron's notes, his notes include summaries of letters from Elizabeth. These summaries have references to the family treasure vault, and that the piano was somehow connected to it. There's also a reference to "nobody backs you into a corner but yourself" in odd relation to her studies.

Props

You can, as always, make these props look a lot cooler by soaking them in hot tea and drying them to give them an aged look.

For the solved version of the Erisu ritual, you might consider covering it with yogurt, stained with yellow food coloring or mustard to make it look like it's been in a bird's nest in the rafters for a hundred years. It's a good idea to have a prop ready for the solved version, so that it doesn't look like you're just giving it to them because they couldn't solve it themselves.

Elizabeth Mardel's Notes

ELIZABETH MARDEL'S NOTEBOOK 1881-1891

Elizabeth Mardel is clearly a Classical Sorcerer. Her earlier notes describe several spells of interest. Most of them are fairly commonly known throughout West Highland's Classical Sorcerer community. These are Ghost Lights, Ghost Walkers, Understand Languages, Hide Item, Levitate, Locate Origin, Glue, and Fighting Prowess. She's also researched John Isaacs's Dampen Magic, normally a Mnemonic spell.

Her most interesting spell is a spell she worked on from 1883 to 1885. She calls it Lost Corner and it "attaches hidden pockets of extra angles to form them into a temporary refuge." After 1885 she's perfected the spell and begins to look for a means of making it permanent. Making magic permanent can't be done solely with magic. Magic can extend the duration of a spell (and here she refers to Isaacs's research) but true permanence requires a ritual, and a ritual requires a "place of power".

A friend of hers – Colonel Courlander's brother Aaron of the Order of the Astronomers – assisted her in researching ritual. She provided him with her research and he successfully created a magical ring whose effectiveness changed with the moon.

For some purposes, traveling to a place of power is sufficient, and she traveled to Brigit's Springs to study ritual. She drew water from the well and enchanted it, and she created a powerful sword and dirk in this manner. But some things aren't so easily carried. How can a place of

power be created where one is needed? Great acts can sometimes create temporary influxes of power, as can great losses of life. Three or more ghosts can make a spirit circle and the ritual performed within it. But none of these options were available to her. She discovered that some places of power can be moved. Some move randomly and some in a predictable manner, but some can also be affected. A ritual she discovered from the wandering lady of the springs can "draw down the moon". The ritual must be performed in a place of power, but the drawing down may be performed to any familiar location. Her notes describe a complicated, month-long ritual, new moon to new moon, that takes effect at the next full moon.

She did this in 1886, and created two permanent Lost Corners in Lisport Manor. One – her research room – could be entered by knowing the right place to enter. The other, which she calls a vault, can be entered by using a special instrument to create a sequence of notes while bearing an identifying seal. The instrument itself is part of the door, and enters the vault when used. It also leaves the vault automatically after a short period of time, though there is a means of returning it to the vault. For security, the exit sequence and the entrance sequence are different, and the instrument will not leave the vault if anyone or anything is near it. For safety reasons, there is a special means of returning the instrument to the vault if someone is trapped inside.

ELIZABETH MARDEL'S NOTEBOOK 1892-

In 1893, there is an underground sorcery movement along the river towns, "the true family in Fork". She joined the movement to spy on them for her brother-in-law. There is a mysterious hooded figure in the south who the Family has allied itself with, and this person has allied himself with the goblins. Elizabeth's name in the Family is "Clayblood".

The hooded man is searching for some sort of item of power. "A rusted watch, circled by red ants, that can turn back the world." She also calls it "the timepiece of second chances".

The family worship Nias ("the bishop of bone, the twin bishop, of the dry city"), Laten ("the rider who was not there, oblivion,"), and Hetae ("the hidden word, queen of insects"). Their secrets are kept in anagrams such as "the fit may rule" and "Lord Thew?"

In 1895, Elizabeth's thoughts turn to demons. The Family are working on summoning demons to aid them in war. One of their targets are the Stigmas di Cristo. One of their targets is Colonel Courlander.

As the years move on, she becomes more and more frantic about finding a means to dispel a demon back to shadow. Initially, her research is on magic spells, and she creates a demonic clarity spell that temporarily frees an afflicted soul from possession. Any permanent removal eludes her, however. She becomes convinced that just as they may only be summoned by ritual, "the only way to send these creatures home to shadow is by ritual".

It took her months of planning and weeks of ritual to draw down a place of power. When she discovers that a demon is

attacking her family, how can she dispel it? Lisport is not on a ley node.

Besides researching ways of dispelling demons, she's also trying to learn what demon the family will summon. At first she thinks it is a demon named Eliazu, who feeds on fear, "to bring down a great and learned warrior clan", but after more spying she learns that Eliazu will be summoned to the Stigmas di Cristo under the control of a family member named "Redstar".

Another demon that her sources mention is "Ebbeorieh. Temet Fiti? Fpiti? Feeds on argument, dissension. His name means discord." Ebbeorieh is reached through some sort of magic door in Fork, but he is very dangerous and she concludes that neither the family nor the hooded man from the south will control him.

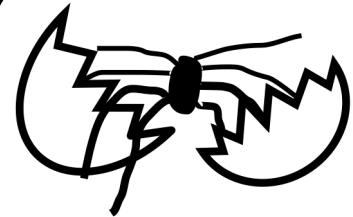
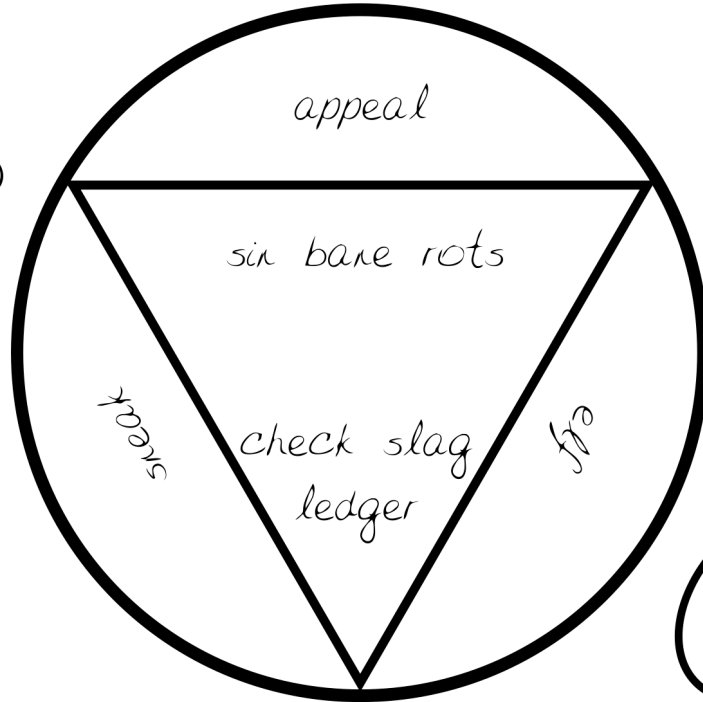
By 1898, she is certain that the demon targeting her family is Erisu, and it isn't the family that's summoning him but the hooded one, "the man in the hollowed log". Erisu's sigil is a cracked egg, with a spider coming out of it. He gains power from despair. She's not sure if the demon will attack her brother-in-law or her sister Melissa.

Common anagrams include "a spider" and "aspired" for despair and "use spider air" and "sure I aspired" for despair Erisu. The final pages are filled with guesses about what the Erisu ritual's anagrams really mean.

These demons are powerful creatures, attuned to "etheric fluctuations", and can sense spells being cast as well as create powerful effects of their own when they are well-fed.

THE RITUAL OF ERISU

SURE I
ASPIRED

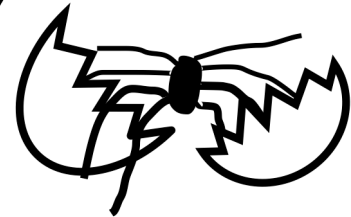
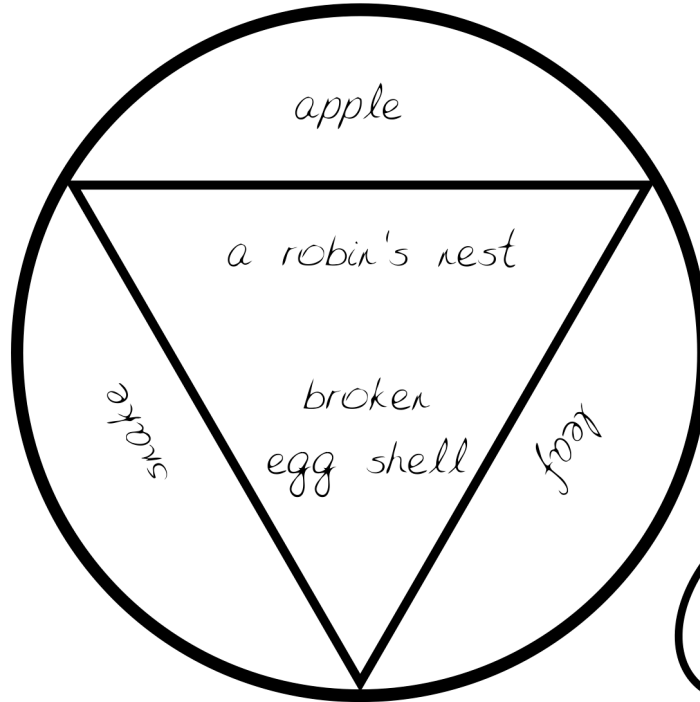


THE RITUAL OF ERISU (SOLVED)

ERISU

DESPAIR

M BACK - CORN



RITE OF DISPELLING

Pater patronum, libera nos a malo.

Mater patronum, libera nos a malo.

Mater Domini patronum, libera nos a malo.

Spiritus Sancti patronum, libera nos a malo.

Redemptor mundi, libera nos a malo.

Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. Nolite timere.

Exorcizo te, omnis spiritus immunde, in nomine Dei Patris omnipotentis, et in nomine Jesu Christi Filii ejus, Domini et Judicis nostri, et in virtute Spiritus Sancti.

In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti, nolite timere.

Tu autem, diabole, effugiat, appropinquabit enim judicium Dei.

Praesta, Pater omnipotens, sine merito quod rogamus, qui fecisti ex nihilo qui te rogarent. Per Christum Dominum nostrum, diabole, egredior.

Pater Domini crucifixus patronum.

Regina Maria Trinitas patronum.

Aquae Sancti patronum.

Non illic resideat spiritus pestilens, non aura corrumpens: discedant omnes insidiae latentis inimici.

In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen

Lisport Family Missal

1. Old Hundred
2. Hallelujah, 'tis Done
3. I Need Thee Every Hour
4. Safe in the Arms of Jesus
5. The Lord will Provide
6. The Ninety and Nine
7. We Shall Meet By and By
8. Jesus of Nazareth Passeth By
9. Calling Now
10. Whosoever Will
11. I Am Praying for You
12. Where Are the Nine?
13. That will be Heaven for Me
14. Hold the Fort
15. The Gate Ajar for Me
16. Once for All
17. Knocking, Knocking, Who is There?
18. Rescue the Perishing
19. Ring the Bells of Heaven
20. Home of the Soul
21. What Hast Thou Done for Me?
22. We're Going Home To-morrow
23. Jesus Loves Even Me
24. Rejoice and be Glad
25. Revive us Again
26. Something for Jesus
27. Pass Me Not
28. One more Day's Work for Jesus
29. What a Friend We have in Jesus
30. Wondrous Love
31. "More to follow"
32. Bless Me Now
33. Where Hast Thou Gleaned To-day?
34. Ah, My Heart
35. All to Christ I Owe
36. Oh, how He Loves
37. Tell Me the Old, Old Story
38. The Prodigal Child
39. I Love to Tell the Story
40. Holy Spirit, Faithful Guide
41. The Light of the World is Jesus
42. The Holy Spirit
43. The Cross of Jesus
44. The New Song
45. Bear the Cross
46. Oh, Sing of His Mighty Love
47. Now Now, My Child
48. Every Day and Hour
49. The Wondrous Gift
50. Precious Promise
51. He Leadeth Me
52. When Jesus Comes
53. White as Snow
54. Just as I Am
55. To-Day
56. The Great Physician
57. Substitution
58. In the Presence of the King
59. I am Coming to the Cross
60. All the Way My Saviour Leads Me
61. Go Bury thy Sorrow
62. Come to the Saviour
63. I Hear Thy Welcome Voice
64. A Sinner Forgiven
65. Let the Tower Lights be Burning
66. Wishing, Hoping, Knowing
67. There is a Land of Pure Delight
68. In the Cross of Christ
69. Till He Come
70. Ye Must be Born Again
71. How Sweet the Name of Jesus
72. The Precious Name
73. It Passeth Knowledge
74. Oh, to be Nothing
75. Almost Persuaded
76. Fully Persuaded
77. Sweet Hour of Prayer
78. No Other Name
79. What Shall the Harvest Be?
80. There is Life for a Look
81. Yet There is Room
82. Only an Armour-Bearer
83. Pull for the Shore
84. Sun of My Soul
85. Jesus, Lover of My Soul
86. Rock of Ages
87. Even Me
88. Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah
89. Yield Not to Temptation
90. I Left it All with Jesus
91. There is a fountain
92. The Home Over There
93. My Prayer
94. Only Trust Him
95. Yes, There is Pardon for You
96. Nothing but Leaves
97. Jewels
98. Go Work in My Vineyard
99. Depth of Mercy
100. When the Comforter Came
101. Coronation
102. O, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing
103. What Various Hindrances We Meet
104. So Let Our Lips and Live Express
105. The Mercy-Seat
106. Sinners, Turn
107. The Lord's My Shepherd
108. O for a Faith That Will Not Shrink
109. Salvation! Oh the Joyful Sound!
110. Joy to the World
111. Alas and did My Saviour Bleed
112. My Soul, Be On Thy Guard
113. Not All the Blood of Beasts
114. Blest Be the Tie That Binds
115. Am I a Soldier of the Cross
116. Fount of Every Blessing
117. New Haven
118. Nearer, My God, To Thee
119. Arise, My Soul, Arise
120. Hark! The Voice of Jesus Crying

90 – Lisport Family Missal

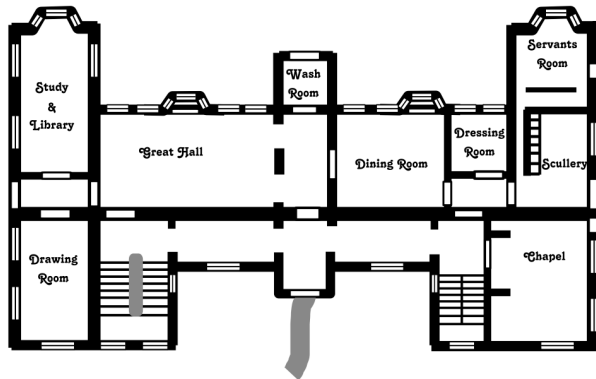
121. Stand Up! Stand Up For Jesus!
122. Work, For the Night is Coming
123. I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say
124. Shall We Gather At the River
125. I Waited For the Lord My God
126. Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us
127. Come, Ye Sinners
128. Come, Holy Spirit
129. He Loved Me
130. The Christian's Home
131. Did Christ O'er Sinners Weep?
132. Come to Jesus
133. O Happy Day
134. Salvation
135. Onward, Upward
136. More Love to Thee, O Christ
137. Wholly Thine
138. Draw Me Nearer
139. Fully Trusting
140. Hallelujah, What a Saviour!
141. Jesus Shall Reign
142. My Song shall be of Jesus
143. Windows open towards Jerusalem
144. Only a Step to Jesus
145. To the Work
146. All for Me
147. Immanuel's Land
148. Dark is the Night
149. Hear the Call
150. Ho! Reapers of Life's Harvest
151. Joy in Sorrow
152. The Heavenly Land
153. Call Them In
154. The Half was Never Told
155. Oh, Where are the Reapers
156. I Bring my Sins to Thee
157. Song of Salvation
158. Dare to be a Daniel
159. Lord, Dismiss Us With Thy Blessing
160. At the feet of Jesus
161. A Little While
162. The Solid Rock
163. Just a Word for Jesus
164. Look Away to Jesus
165. Trusting Jesus, That is All
166. Who's on the Lord's Side?
167. Remember Me
168. Behold, the Bridegroom Cometh
169. Whiter than Snow
170. Blessed River
171. My High Tower
172. I Stood Outside the Gate
173. Hold Fast till I Come
174. Scatter Seeds of Kindness
175. Onward, Christian Soldiers
176. Close to Thee
177. Seeking to Save
178. I am Sweeping Thro' the Gates
179. Jesus is Mine
180. Hallelujah, He is Risen!
181. A Crown of Rejoicing
182. His Word a Tower
183. In the Silent Midnight Watches
184. We shall Sleep, but not forever
185. Watchman, Tell Me
186. Give me the Wings of faith
187. The Land of Beulah
188. Room for Thee
189. Home at Last
190. The Mistakes of my Life
191. Come; for the feast is Spread
192. One Sweetly Solemn Thought
193. Refuge
194. Oh, what are You Going to Do?
195. Art Thou Weary?
196. The Valley of Blessing
197. Come, ye Disconsolate
198. Arise and Shine
199. Shall we Meet?
200. It is Well with My Soul
201. Jesus is Mighty to Save
202. What shall I do to be Saved?
203. Eternity!
204. Sweet By-and-By
205. Expostulation
206. Cross and Crown
207. There's a Light in the Valley
208. The Palace of the King
209. Out of the Ark
210. Waiting and Watching for Me
211. I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord
212. Come, Sinners, Haste
213. Amazing Grace
214. Hasten, Sinner
215. Faith
216. Olive's Brow
217. Come, My Soul
218. A Place in that Land
219. The Shining Shore
220. Waiting by the River
221. Thine the Glory
222. Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!
223. Revive Thy Work
224. I've found a friend
225. He will Hide Me
226. Thine, Jesus, Thine
227. Out of Darkness into Light
228. Jesus Calls Thee
229. My Redeemer
230. Jesus Christ is Passing by
231. Come near Me
232. Hiding in Thee
233. A Light upon the Shore
234. Consecration
235. The Gospel Bells
236. Joy to the World
237. Ye must be Born again
238. Cut it Down
239. Christ Returneth
240. Why do You Wait?
241. Is Jesus able to Redeem?
242. Verily, Verily
243. The Lamb is the Light thereof
244. How Happy are We
245. Blessed Hope
246. Why not To-night?
247. Over the Line
248. Save, Jesus, Save!
249. Tempted and Tried
250. We're Marching to Zion
251. I cannot Tell how Precious
252. Beautiful Valley of Eden

253. I'll Stand by You
254. Saved by the Blood
255. Come now saith the Lord
256. I'm going Home
257. Jesus Only
258. Christ for Me
259. Will Jesus find us Watching?
260. Blessed Home-Land
261. To be There
262. Crown Him
263. Fix your Eyes upon Jesus
264. The Heavenly Canaan
265. Oh, I am so Happy in Jesus
266. The Gospel Trumpet's Sounding
267. The Hem of His Garment
268. "None of self and all of Thee"
269. Can it be Right?
270. The Smitten Rock
271. Thou art Coming!
272. Only Trusting in my Saviour
273. There is a Green Hill far away
274. Forever with Jesus there
275. Ten Thousand Times
276. Singing all the Time
277. Mine!

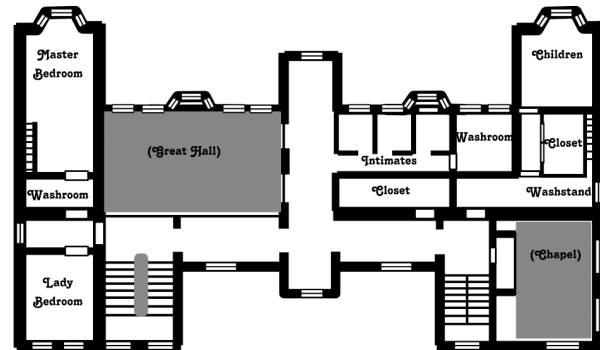
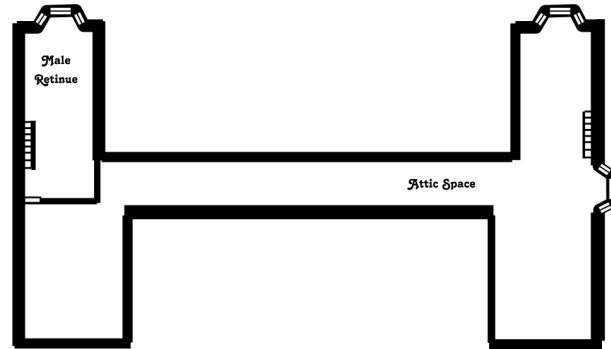
278. "Sing and Pray!"
279. Where is my Boy to-night?
280. Only for Thee
281. It is finished!
282. Wonderful Words of Life
283. What must it be to be There
284. Have you any Room for Jesus?
285. There's a Work for each of Us
286. Jesus, only Jesus
287. Paradise
288. Rejoice with Me
289. Triumph By and By
290. I am Trusting Thee
291. Good News
292. Evening Prayer
293. Sound the High Praises
294. Pressing On
295. There is Joy among the Angels
296. Over the Ocean Wave
297. Memories of Earth
298. Must I Go and Empty Handed
299. My Faith still Clings
300. The Pearl of Greatest Price
301. Faint, yet Pursuing
302. Ho, every One that Thirsteth

303. On Jordan's Stormy Banks
304. We'll Work till Jesus comes
305. Beulah Land
306. I'm a Pilgrim
307. He Knows
308. When we get Home
309. "Come"
310. Not Half has ever been Told
311. Are you coming Home to-night?
312. Where is Thy Refuge?
313. Brightly Gleams our Banner
314. My Jesus, I Love Thee
315. He that Believeth
316. Father Take my Hand
317. Parting Hymn
318. Mercy's Free
319. Spirit of Truth
320. Awake and Sing the Song of Moses
321. From all that Dwell Below the Skies
322. Ashamed of Jesus
323. Stay, Thou Insulted Spirit
324. O Holy Spirit Come
325. Come Every Joyful Heart
326. Looking Home

Lisport Manor plans



Lisport Manor



Melody's diary

Melody's diary begins like any teen-age debutante's diary. She's very proud that she's "figured out how to play the piano", and compares not playing it to being "lost in darkness". She's learning all of the songs in the family missal because she doesn't feel she's ready to play. The diary unexpectedly darkens in the autumn of 1897. One moment she's talking about the view of the garden from her window in September, then a few weeks later she discovers her fiancé is dead.

She begins keeping her diary in 1894 when her sister marries John Alegar of Aletown. She dotes on her nephew, Meril Alegar and at the same time she's jealous of her twin sister, whom the boy was named after. Why can't Melody be a boy's name too?

In the spring of 1896 – May 3 – she notes in passing that her father is worried about the night trolls crossing the Leather Road. On May 29, she writes that some goblins are attacking from the west. Her father is very busy, organizing the town and neighboring towns to fight the creatures.

Her mother's nephew Alan arrives in July, for on July 8 Melody writes that he is uncouth and annoying. Alan is a volunteer soldier from Brightwood Crossing (which had been overrun by night trolls) in her father's regiment and he often stays in Lisport Manor. Melody's attitude changes over the next few months, however, and on February 17, 1897, they are engaged to be married.

There are battles near Lisport throughout the summer and autumn, and her father's army is victorious. She writes that her father keeps regular council with his lieutenants, and at

other times with her mother and her aunt. In these, Alan sometimes takes part.

In the spring of 1897, after a decisive victory around March 31, her father takes his regiments down to the Leather Road to assist the other regiments that have formed throughout Highland. She thinks he's going to try to retake Brightwood Crossing, and restore the Mardels and Courlanders who fled the goblin hordes. Alan is going, and she's worried.

Alan leaves on April 27, 1897. Most of her diary afterwards is about her sisters, her young nephew, and her mother and aunt. Her aunt is often gone, and during July leaves for over a week to travel north. When she asks her mother about it, her mother tells her to pray for her aunt. So she does.

In late September she becomes sick, and stays often in her bedroom. During this period she gains a friend named Robin, whom she speaks to late into the night. Robin sympathizes with her about her fiancé's absence. Robin fears that maybe her father doesn't approve of the marriage.

In late October she discovers that Alan died a month earlier. Her entries begin to be more incoherent at this time, and even worse after her father returns in December. She writes that he hates her, that he deliberately killed Alan just like in the bible. Her mother is always taking his side, and she's afraid for her life.

The last entry is on December 25. She writes that Christmas is dead to her, followed by some undated incoherent ramblings about spiders, her father, Alan, and "this stupid war". The last page repeats "a spider" several times, and finally "why, Melody?"

Meril Alegar ୧୧୧

You can use Meril as a character if you need an extra. Whoever plays Meril will need to be aware of their weakness compared to the other characters. He'll be more appropriate for experienced players because of this.

Meril knows how to play the piano in the drawing room, and knows the family song by heart.

If they find the treasure after great danger, Meril will give them a finder's fee of 10% of the coins. If he's impressed and grateful, he'll give them up to six of the Courlander gold rings.

Quotes

"We don't have any official records. When word got out that the Colonel was dead, and his lieutenants with him, the army scattered back to their homes. The goblins attacked Lisport a few days later. The town was destroyed. My great-grandfather came back after the battle to bury the family, then he retired to Lisport House and our manor here in Fork. It was all we had left."

"It was chaos. He didn't even know who he buried. By the time they got back, only one of the twins' bodies could be found."

"Yes, that's the poem. It wasn't an axe, though. She used a knife. And we don't really know anything. All we have is the word of one servant who survived the attack. Honestly, we don't even really know who did it if the servant's account is right. Meryl and Melody were twins. One of them died, and one of them disappeared."

"There had to be some treasure. The armies were volunteer armies but they still needed to be paid occasionally. But a cache hidden all these years? From goblins, looters, and my own family searching for it? I doubt it. The treasure was probably a chest of coins long plundered by the night trolls."

"I thought I saw her once... my crazy aunt. Out in the garden, I was only nine or ten. Our parents used to take us out here at least once a year. They'd get us dressed in the morning, we'd set out early, see the house and Arn, and play in the garden. Then we'd go home late, spending the night on the river. One of those days, bright, sunny, and peaceful,

I looked up in the upper window and saw a pale face staring down at us. I cried, I can tell you that, and it was gone. I had nightmares about that for years.”

“I don’t know if you can prove a curse from two deaths, but it’s not a lucky place.”

Meril Alegar, Earl of Lisport																																														
Abilities																																														
Wisdom: 13 (+1) Charisma: 14 (+1) Endurance: 5 (-2/-1) Strength: 11 Agility: 8 (-1) Intelligence: 13 (+1)	Level: 1 Experience: 100 Moral Code: Good Archetype: Warrior Movement: 9 Injuries: Carry: 40 Lift: 183 Mojo: 0 Money: 43 s	Species: Human Height: 5' 10" Weight: 151 lbs Age: 23 Home: Fork Advantage: -1 Surprise: 0 Defense: -1 Hand Attack: 0 Thrown Attack: 0 Propelled Attack: 0 Survival: 8 (10) OOOOO OOO																																												
Saving Rolls																																														
Evasion: 4 Fortitude: 4 Health: 2 Learning: 5 Perception: 5 Willpower: 5																																														
Skills		Specialties																																												
Native Culture 2 English, literacy, West Highland nobility Fighting Art 1 unarmed combat, unfamiliar weapons, rapier, short sword, long sword, bow Personality Art 2 carousing, contacts Political Science 1 Fork law, Fork political etiquette Performance Arts 1 keyboard music		Nobility																																												
Weapons		Armor																																												
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>damage</th> <th>fire</th> <th>range</th> <th>bulk</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>rapier:</td> <td>d6</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>short sword:</td> <td>d6</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>long sword:</td> <td>d8</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>bow:</td> <td>d6</td> <td>1</td> <td>20</td> <td>8</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>20 arrows: OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO</p>		damage	fire	range	bulk	rapier:	d6	2	3	7	short sword:	d6	2	2	6	long sword:	d8	2	3	8	bow:	d6	1	20	8	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>defense</th> <th>agility</th> <th>bulk</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>banded leather:</td> <td>+3</td> <td>-3</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>shield:</td> <td>+1</td> <td>-1</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>small shield:</td> <td>+1</td> <td>0</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>full helmet:</td> <td>+1</td> <td>-1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		defense	agility	bulk	banded leather:	+3	-3	8	shield:	+1	-1	8	small shield:	+1	0	2	full helmet:	+1	-1	2
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full helmet:	+1	-1	2																																											

Equipment
quiver: 1 gold Lisport ring: 1
Archetypal Abilities
Combat points: max 2 Strange weapon: -2 Nobility pool: level*50 at 2nd level and above.
Story
Meril (b. 964) is the last earl of Lisport, unless his brother Eldred remains alive. Meril's great-great-grandfather was John Alegar, who married Melissa Courlander, daughter of the famous and tragic Colonel Elroy Courlander, the West Highland military leader who died at his younger daughter's hand in the winter of 897-8 at the start of the Goblin War. The family dominated the Fawn River town of Lisport, but Lisport fell to the Goblins in early 898 and remains one of the many abandoned towns along the Fawn River.
Today, the family's holdings have contracted to one: the Lisport House hotel in Fork. They still, however, maintain a watch on their ancestral home in Lisport. Family servant Arn Gallade lives in the servant's quarters and reports to the family in Fork every three months on the state of Lisport Manor.
Quotes
"Eldred had more... endurance at these games than I."
"Well, Alvin here took all my money. Put it on his tab."
"It isn't my money. It's my family's money. Should I die, it isn't mine to give."

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The House of Lisport

A brutal family murder left Lisport Manor empty and the town of Lisport undefended in the great war. Today the last holding of the Earl of Lisport is Lisport House, an inn in the bustling and dangerous gambling town of Fork.

Melly Lisport took an axe,
and gave her mother forty whacks.
When she saw what she had done,
she gave her father forty-one.

Her sisters each got forty-two,
her aunt got forty-three.
And when her family all was dead,
She took her axe and lost her head.

Only little Meril
survived the family peril.
He fled the town.
He went to Fork.
The trolls came down,
and burned Lisport,
and danced on Melly's tomb.