



Drama: Ophidian Tragedy

minence,

This Drama in three acts will guide your Inspired from Suleïdin's seraglio to Scarletstone, and thence to Laeghdoved. I advise you read carefully through these pages before staging this adventure.

Introduction

Melfinio, the bastard of Scarletstone, has decided to go into action. He wants to put an end to the dreadful yoke his mother, Iriena, has laid upon her slaves. He has secretly armed some slaves but he feels powerless against the medusa's Obscurantist magic. He would like to ally with Alfah, Iriena's twin sister, but she loathes him. In short, he needs help.

Melfinio thinks an event from the distant past may provide him with an opportunity. Five years ago, Suleïdin's caravan passed by Scarletstone, where Helicius spotted a pair of Inspired. The first, twelve-year-old Melfinio, refused to join the caravan, for he was already dreaming of the slaves' liberation. The second was a young woman who accepted the offer to join the travelers. Albena now leads the caravan. Though many years have passed, these two still cherish this enlightening moment they shared.

Albena remembers the young man very well and she fiercely hates medusae. She therefore has decided to help him.

Eminence, here are several possibilities for placing the Inspired in the center of this story:

♣ **Your Inspired are members of Suleïdin's Seraglio.** They might be the characters described in this book (Albena, Sipsum, Helicius and Baltasim) or others. Albena will show the letter (see below) to her companions and they will agree to lead the caravan to the upcoming jubilee.

♣ **Your Inspired come from elsewhere.** The jubilee will then take place several months after the receipt of the letter. Albena will wander throughout the Twilight Realms in search of Inspired who would help one of their peers. Thanks to Helicius, she locates the troupe and shows them the letter before asking them to join her. Your players accept, be it for Inspiration, for the desperate look in Albena's eyes, or just for the sake of adventure and profit. The caravan will then return to Mesirah with your Troupe.

♣ **Your Inspired are passing through Mesirah.** They will be contacted by a representative of the seraglio, who will invite them to stay over. The members of the seraglio will show them the letter only after the murder, in Act One. The troupe should be curious, and therefore will join Albena to help Melfinio.

Albena is the key character of this introduction. If she is a player character, ignore the script. Her player will be free to do as he or she pleases. In this case, pass on some background information to the player concerning her former Domain. Albena knows a bit about the village of Bloodrock, but not much about Scarletstone Manor itself.

Act One:

Murder in the Seraglio

This first act takes place in Mesirah.

TEKIRIOS THE MESSENGER

Melfinio's letter is brought to Mesirah by a messenger who is supposed to guide the Inspired to Scarletstone and introduce them to Melfinio. If your Troupe is hired out of the seraglio, he already set a rendezvous with Albena, to provide her with the latest information. In any case, the Inspired will meet the messenger a couple of days before their departure from the seraglio.

The messenger is an Inspired satyr (Helicius can confirm this) named Tekirios, who is staying with them in a suite of comfortable rooms that look down on the city. He is extremely kind (especially to women) and the eve-

ning the Inspired spend with him is very enjoyable. He tells them about his Domain, and the museum of Freighn and its keeper, the medusa Ardence. Tekirios is an artist and a talented harpist, and thus is highly valued in the manor. Nevertheless, he is disgusted by Iriena's treatment of her slaves. He is one of Melfinio's closest friends and is utterly devoted to the rebellion. During their conversation, Tekirios will come off as a bit manic. He can be wildly enthusiastic about his home when talking about the veneration of the arts, but he will also shed tears when referring to the cruelty of some medusae.

After the satyr has played a final air on the harp, the Troupe will turn in. Later in the night (on a successful PER + Alertness against DIF 20) an alert or an insomniac character will hear that the satyr is not alone in bed...

MURDER AT THE SERAGLIO

The next morning, the Inspired are awoken by a strident shriek. Hurrying out of their rooms, they will see a young seraglio clerk in front of Tekidios' room. She is breathless and panicked, leaning against the outside gallery rail that looks down on the garden. The Inspired will be the first to her side, but in a few minutes many members of the seraglio will have arrived. The young woman mumbles a few words and then faints:

"in this room... a satyr".

Inside, the satyr is lying naked on his bed and he is staring lifelessly at the ceiling. His hand clutches his harp. The Inspired (at least the members of the seraglio) are troubled – one of their own has been murdered in their Domain! The situation requires a Terror roll against DIF 12, and bestows 2 Darkening points to any character that fails (despair has awakened this character to the call of the Darkness).

Anyone not from the seraglio will be under suspicion by the Mesireans, especially Albena who will say so openly. Sipsum, who asked Helicius to check if their Flame was dark beforehand, is more prudent. He will even ask the Inspired to investigate the murder. The clever spriggan believes that keeping an eye on them is the best thing to do if they are guilty. He will monitor them during their investigation, shadowing them as necessary. Players must roll PER + Alertness against Sipsum's 15 (AGI + Stealth) to notice him, and against 19 (AGI + Disguise) to recognize him.

A LETTER TO ALBENA

To Albena of Suleidin's seraglio, or to any other loyal inheritor of the prophet:

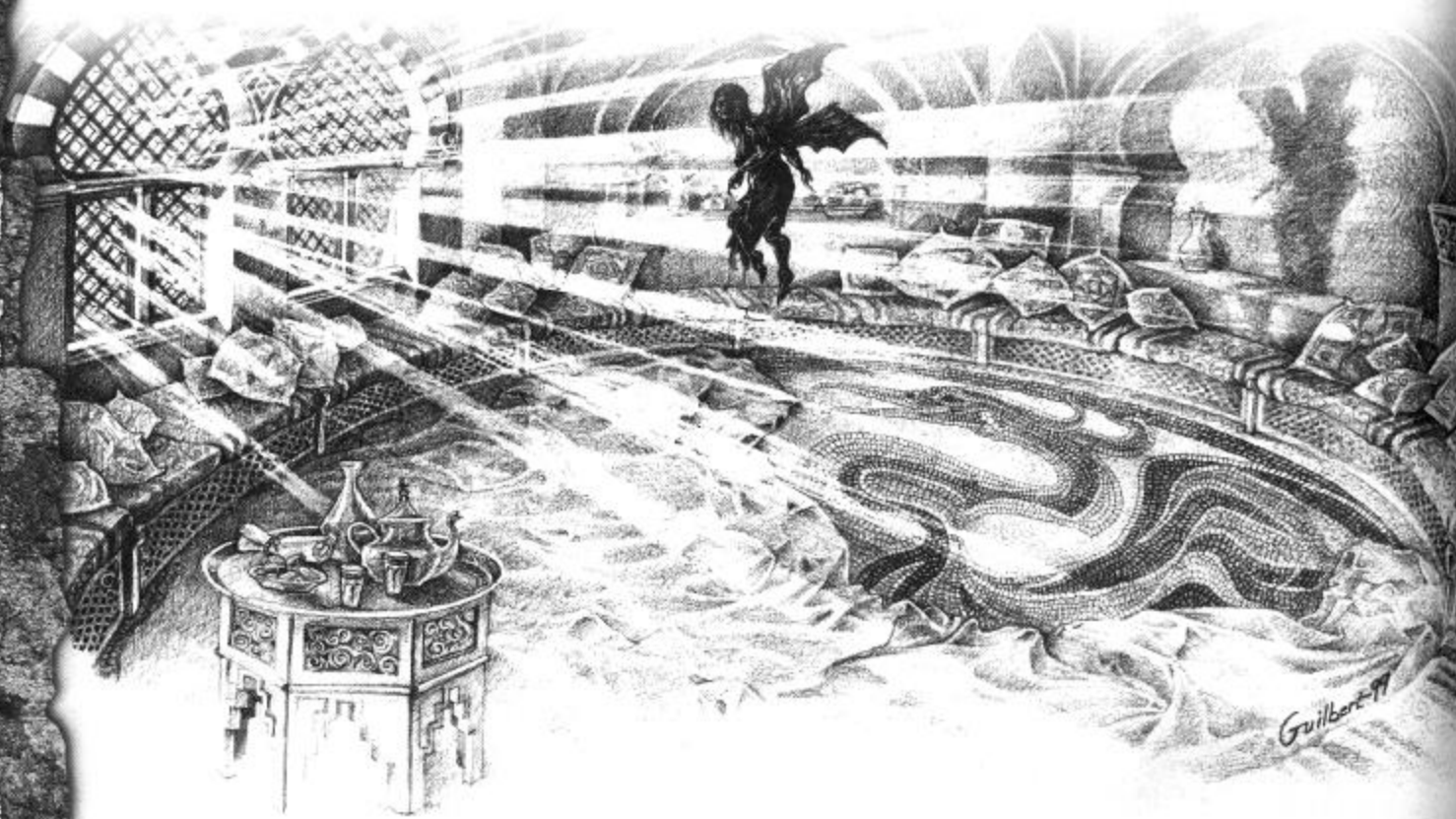
Dear friend,

You must be wondering why I wrote this letter after so many years of silence. I have urgent news. Time is short, and I must put an end to my mother's tyranny soon. Strange things are happening in Scarletstone and I fear the Enemy is involved. I need your help and the help of all the Inspired you can rally. I have decided to go into action during her jubilee on the first day of Phoenix-tide. I pray you, be with me at this cheerless festivity... or I will die.

In the name of our shared memory,

Melfinio





If they investigate, the Inspired will be able to discover the following clues:

☛ The door was open when the employee came in.

☛ Tekirios died from a heart attack during sexual intercourse (PER + Medicine against DIF 16).

☛ The only personal items in the room are scattered women's clothes: transparent silk veils that women wear in harems. A successful PER roll against DIF 28 will reveal a very subtle scent of seaweed mixed with a vanilla-based perfume.

☛ Sipsum can explain that all the members of the seraglio, Inspired and Dullen, have the right to stay in the dormitories. Moreover, as the caravan is in town, the dormitories are almost full. A guard controls access at nighttime.

☛ The Inspired can wake Melvil, the night watchman, in his small house in the labyrinthine bazaar quarter. He will tell the Inspired that no stranger, even accompanied, came in yesterday. A successful PER + Intrigue against DIF 18 will enable the Inspired to notice that Melvil seems uncomfortable. Could he be hiding something?

☛ If they search the guardroom, the Inspired will find a half-empty bottle of wine. On a successful PER + Poison against DIF 25, they will realize that the wine was

mixed with endorine (see AGONE rulebook, p. 177). If they mention their discovery to Melvil, he will admit having slept for a long while that night, but will have no idea who could have drugged his wine.

☛ The Inspired can request a list of the members of the seraglio to question them. We advise you, Eminence, to stage at least a couple of conversations with the following witnesses: a cook, a maid, a caravaneer, a pearl diver, and an accountant. They might even decide to go to visit Gardeline (see below for more information). In the end though, the result is the same: no one saw or heard anything. If the Inspired search the seraglio for a naked woman, they will not find anyone.

The day comes to an end without any leads.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED

This is for your eyes only, Eminence, but one day your Inspired may discover what follows.

Iriena had her agent, a demon devoted to the Masque, shadowing Tekirios, whom she suspected of belonging to the rebellion. Her agent was an Opalin who slept in the day and followed the satyr's trail at night. His connivance compelled it to report the satyr's location and to give a small mirror to any ally of the Masque it encountered.

The Opalin was successful, and Iriena was informed that Tekirios had contacted Suleïdin's caravan and a morgana named Luizel received the mirror. Through this

artifact of the Enemy, Luizel was asked by Irenia to find a satyr named Tekirios and kill him. Galdesh, the morgana's companion, works as a pearl diver for the seraglio. Therefore, it was not difficult for Luziel to obey the demon's injunction. Galdesh drugged the night watchman, then showed her in. They left at dawn, after killing the satyr.

A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

The night following the murder, a scent of vanilla perfume still floats in the corridors of the seraglio. One of your Inspired (male or female) will dream of a visit from a beautiful young woman, clad only in transparent silk veils. She slowly takes them off, one by one, and joins the Inspired in bed. She is irresistible...

The Inspired will wake up screaming.

Instead of staging this scene as a dream, we advise you, Eminence, to stage it as reality to emphasize the dramatic tension. Your Inspired will have to succeed in a Terror roll DIF 20 or gain 3 Darkening points from this vision of Luziel. He or she wakes with a vague seaside odor in his nose.

The scream of the Inspired will wake the other members of your Troupe sleeping next door. After everyone realizes it was only a dream, an Inspired who succeeds

in a PER + Alertness roll against DIF 15 will notice that the minaret's top floor is lit - Gardeline is awake in her den.

AN UNEXPECTED WITNESS

If the Inspired climb the stairs to the minaret, they will have to open a small trap door to enter the black fey's room. She has covered the mosaic with a large silk cloth and she is seated at the windowsill. When she notices the Inspired, she will fly around and examine them.

Gardeline is a very old black fey. She never stops mumbling about the return of a prophet, birds of fire, and flames in the desert. Even though she is mad, she will do her best to answer their questions. If they ask her whether she saw something odd last night, she will answer:

*"Ha, the seraglio and its guard wer' snoring loud.
Suleidin! Why did thee abandon them?
Ye mad, thee don't know of our treasure?
May the birds of fire eat the wet arm
Of the man who opened the drunkard's gate.
'Tis he who gave the autumnal harlot ingress,
But she was the one who laid the net,
And, o misfortune! A corpse found at dawn."*

LUIZEL

Race: morgana
Origin: Keshite Empire
Sex: female
Age: 20
Height: 5'11" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 128 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 0/1

Body: 0/1
Body bonus: +1
AGI: 7
PER: 5
STA: 5
STR: 2

Spirit: 0/1
Spirit bonus: +1
INT: 6
WIL: 6

Soul: 0/3
Soul bonus: +3

CHA: 12
CRE: 6

Secondary attributes

AIM: 6
ART: 9
ASC: -
DB: -1
HP: 48
MEL: 5
SWT: 16
CWT: 24

Fortune points: 0
Flame powers: none
Darkening: 0
Perfidy: 25

Skills

Trials: Weapon (dagger) 4,
Dodge 4, Swim 12
Rogue: Poison 8
Knowledge: Language: Keshite 6,
Season: Fall 6

Courtly: Eloquence 5, Fast talk 8,
Poetry 8
Occult: Concord 4, Tainted Scansion 6

Assets & Gifts, Faults & Sorrows

Tragic love, Trickster, Cruelty, Sensuousness, Lewdness, Stench (seaweed), Foresight

Tainted Scansion
Scansion APT 18

Opuses
Cerebral palsy, Tragic fate

Combat
Initiative: 12
Melee attack: dagger 11
Distance attack: -
Melee defense:
Parry: dagger 9
Dodge: 11
Distance defense: 4

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

Armor: none

This enigmatic verse contains several clues: the wet arm and the net hint that a fisherman opened the seraglio door for a prostitute. The "autumnal harlot" might refer to a morgana.

THE PORT

If the Inspired make further inquiries, they will obtain the name of a suspect, Galdesh the pearl diver, who rarely stays at the seraglio but was there the night of the murder. He has not yet returned. Another fisherman, named Aklush, can tell them that Galdesh was a constant caller at the Siren's Song, a tavern at the port.

If the Inspired are not extremely cautious, they will fall into a trap. The fraternity that bonds the Mesirean fishermen is strong, and Galdesh has already been warned of their arrival. He is waiting for them with some friends (twice as many as the Inspired) who do not appreciate their inquisitiveness. The innkeeper is also a former sailor and his tavern is the perfect place for an ambush.

The divers are cowards and will only attack the Inspired as a group; they will surrender when more than half of them have been incapacitated. The Inspired won't know which fisherman is Galdesh, but one of the divers will jump through the window and run away. If the Inspired succeed in following him (on an opposed STR + Athletics roll) or if they "convince" another diver to lead them, they will find Galdesh's hut.

GALDESH'S SHED

This hut is extremely old and the floating platform on which it is built is squeaky, so reaching it inconspicuously is very difficult. Clever Inspired can reach the shed by the water, for it is only four feet deep. A small boat is secured to the dock, and a trap-door leads back into the hut. From the pontoon, the door can be easily broken down (STR + Athletics against DIF 12).

Inside, daylight pierces the old wooden boards of the hut. In the single room, there are a straw mattress, a table, some clothes in a heap, and a small purse that contains several pearls and a small mirror. Nets hang from the ceiling.

When Galdesh enters, he spends a few seconds explaining the situation to his lover, Luizel the morgana, who has been living with him for the past few months.

When the Inspired appear in the shed, Galdesh will step between them and his beloved. He will fight desperately while Luizel tries to bewitch them with Tainted Scansion. If the Inspired undertake a diplomatic approach, the diver and the morgana will try to jump in the water at the first opportunity (they are both excellent swimmers).

A REVELATION

Galdesh will defend Luizel until his last drop of blood has been shed, and the two lovers will probably die together fighting the Inspired. Even though it seems clear that Luizel killed Tekirios, her motives remain a mystery.

An old fisherman, who is repairing his small boat next to Galdesh's shed, could help the Troupe. Once the combat is finished, he will approach, and tell them what he knows for a few dirhems.

A couple of days ago, he overheard a conversation between the gorgeous young woman who lived with Galdesh and another man with a croaking voice. This man asked Luizel to search and kill a satyr named Tekirios. The old fisherman swears Luizel was alone with this other man.

The only clue the Inspired will find in the shed (PER + Search against DIF 16) is a small mirror, gilded with interconnecting demons on its frame. The mirror is an artifact that the Masque hands out to his most zealous servants so they can communicate with each other. The Inspired cannot, of course, use it... unless one of them is a slave of the Masque.

Who is this mysterious man with the croaking voice? Why did they decide to kill Tekirios? What is the purpose of this mirror? The Inspired will find these answers in the Widowlands...



DIVERS AND FISHERMEN

Divers and fishermen have the same attributes as sailors (see p. 141).

Act Two:

Jubilee for two Medusae

The Troupe will arrive at Scarletstone without Tekirios, their messenger, who was murdered in Mesirah. Moreover, the person who orchestrated the murder has escaped. The Inspired will have to watch their step in order to get in touch with Melfinio without drawing his mother's attention. Maybe they will be cautious by not coming into town with the caravan. Or maybe they will decide to hide amongst the numerous merchants and caravaneers. Eminence, your Inspired are relatively free in this act; you may have to stray from the main storyline.

BLOODROCK

After a long and tiring journey, the caravan reaches Scarletstone, arriving by the north road, which passes through Bloodrock. Albena is a native of Bloodrock and she wants to visit her old aunt who raised her after the death of her parents. An old man lets her know that her aunt died last year from blood cough, the disease that kills underground workers. "All dis 'cos uv Iriena!" storms the old man. Albena is despondent; it is up to the Inspired to cheer her up. You should describe the misery that reigns here and hint that it is caused by Iriena. The

CHRONOLOGY

- D -5 Arrival of the Inspired observed by Iriena.
- D -4 Alfah shows them the Freihgn Museum. Members of the caravan (controlled by Iriena) try to kill her.
- D -3 Because of the attempted murder, Iriena expels the caravan from Scarletstone. Melfinio hides the Inspired.
- D -2 Melfinio sends the Inspired into the manor to make inquiries.
- D day Iriena's jubilee

caravan pitches its encampment in M'ethrane, the village at the foot of the manor. Everyone is exhausted from the journey and needs some rest. The following day, the Inspired have some free time to visit their new surroundings: the narrow streets, the famous taverns, the artist ateliers and the statue of the twin rulers. This is probably the best moment to inform the Troupe of the latest rumors concerning the sisters. Sooner or later, they will have to deal with the Drama's three main protagonists: Iriena, Alfah and Melfinio. (Attributes for these 3 NPCs are given in the Scarletstone Domain section pp. 74-75.)



IRIENA: A PLAN IS HATCHED

Thanks to a traitor, the spriggon Egon Scampa, the Masque has been manipulating Iriena directly for the past few months. Egon brought her a Pictureworld through which he can visit her. They soon became lovers and the spriggon, even though he does not know the true nature of the medusa, is rousing Iriena's murderous hatred for Alfah. Under his sway, the medusa is acting even more cruel toward her slaves.

Ever since Egon's arrival, Iriena refuses to see her son Melfinio. Left to himself, he has set his plans in motion. But Iriena suspected him and his companion Tekirios of treachery. With Egon's help, she murdered the satyr and she now knows that Suleidin's Caravan is coming to support the uprising. Once again, Egon has helped her set a trap...

Iriena avoids any conversations with strangers, unless they have been recommended by a medusa from Scarletstone. The Inspired should only meet her two days after their arrival.

ALFAH: WELCOME TO SCARLETSTONE

In contrast, Alfah heartily welcomes the Inspired. The day after their arrival, in the afternoon, she invites all the members of the caravan on a tour of Freihgn Museum tomorrow afternoon. This is a good opportunity to make her acquaintance.

Quite surprisingly for a medusa, she is respectful of humans. Albena will be taken aback and try to provoke her. Alfah remains calm and courteous and, when the young Inspired finally tells her that she is a former slave, the medusa will display sincere compassion for her suffering.

MELFINIO: REBEL IN NEED

Sooner or later, the Inspired will want to find Melfinio. If they inquire about him, they will be informed that

he lives in the manor and that visitors have to be invited by one of the two rulers. However, a servant can deliver a message to him. If they ask to speak with him, Melfinio will discreetly meet them in town.

The Inspired can also make inquiries about Tekirios, who used to stay at the Three Aspics. The Inspired can meet its innkeeper, a spriggon named Servisio. He remembers Tekirios but denies knowing Melfinio. Actually, Servisio is a member of the rebellion and he will go to inform his chief as soon as the Inspired have left. Melfinio will then contact them.

Their first conversation with Melfinio takes place as follows:

A young man wearing a long cloak approaches the Troupe. He tells them his name is Melfinio and thanks them for coming. If Albena or Helicius are present, he will recognize them. He then tells them to meet him one hour later at the Three Aspics. He seems nervous.

At the tavern, Servisio seats them in an alcove behind a heavy curtain. Melfinio is already there. He takes his hood off and the Inspired can admire his three dead snakes. He immediately explains the situation and what he expects from the Inspired:

"My mother is becoming unbearably cruel. I have decided to kill her for the good of Scarletstone.

Ever since her last birthday, I noticed she has been killing more slaves than usual, and has tormented her servants excessively. Her behavior with me has also changed. Whereas I used to be her confidant, she now treats me as her toy. I can no longer enter her suite and I have overheard her whispering to strangers. I sense the Master of the Sham's presence...

In a couple of days, she will celebrate her jubilee and I think she will be vulnerable during the festivities, in the middle of the crowd. I have gathered and armed fifty resolute men who should be able to break through her guards.

Why haven't I ever been able to do it alone? When she comes to me, I wish I could take my dagger and stab her. But I can't. I think she's staying my hand in some way.

That's why I need your help. I know very little concerning magic and the powers of the Masque. We must find a way to get rid of her. I need you to help me face her magic. I believe Alfah could become our ally. Unfortunately, she hates me and has forbidden me from her wing of the manor. I have therefore never been able to contact her. Could you try?"

Melfinio sets all his hopes on the Troupe. Facing such a situation, your Inspired may feel quite put upon. They can question Melfinio for another couple of minutes before he must take his leave of them so his absence is



not noticed in the manor. If questioned about the medusa's magic, Melfinio answers that they have no known master, but that Alfah is a Jorist and Iriena is Obscurantist.

The Inspired are free to encourage or restrain his rebellious eagerness. They can even refuse to help him. Even though he will have his way in the end, he will respect the decision of the Inspired, whom he holds in high esteem.

THE MUSEUM

In the hot early afternoon, Alfah guides the Inspired to Freihgn in a palanquin supported by four horses (instead of slaves). The Inspired sit in the palanquin with the medusa while the rest of the caravan follows. The column must cross the rocky desert, under the scorching sun, to reach the museum village.

Once they arrive, the Inspired enter a surprisingly cool building. The magic of Ardence, the curator, preserves the works of art from heat and dampness. Ardence welcomes the Inspired and begins a short tour of the museum. Eminence, we advise you to improvise some legends of the Flamboyance to describe the works of art. The masterpiece of the collection is a statue of the barbarian chief Crookvile, who was petrified by the lost medusa power.

After her speech, Ardence lets the Inspired wander around by themselves. While the numerous visitors (Inspired, members of the caravan and others) are walking around the museum, Helicius informs the Inspired that Ardence is also an Inspired. The Troupe may decide to chat with her about Concord or some other legend she mentioned. Alfah is with her, but the Inspired are free to join their conversation...

Suddenly, three members of the caravan attempt to murder Alfah!

Have your players roll PER + Alertness against the AGI + Stealth of the caravaneers (12). Each Inspired who succeeds this roll can try to stop one of the assassins. Although Albena attempts to reason with them, the three men are extremely resolute. Their movements are jerky as if they were puppets, not in control of their actions. They will be difficult to subdue, so the combat will almost certainly end in their deaths.

Alfah must stay alive. If she is wounded, even seriously, she will be saved by Ardence or Albena's opuses. If the Inspired don't fight, the assassins will be killed by the other caravaneers. Alfah will thank her rescuers warmly, and invite them to dine with her in the manor.

The behavior of these three Keshite warriors is disquieting (WIL roll against 10 + 5 per each warrior killed for a 2 point Perfidy increase). They were clearly manipulated by a supernatural force. If the Inspired search their bodies,

they will find one drachma on each dead warrior. This currency is quite probably unknown to the Inspired. As long as they do not buy something with the money, they are not at risk, but if they do, they will suffer a 1d10 point Perfidy increase and gain 1 Dark Soul point!

A short inquiry will reveal that the three assassins were seen last night accompanied by a cloaked silhouette the size of a sprite or a spriggan.

A SMALL INSTIGATOR?

There are several spriggans and sprites in Scarletstone and the Inspired can spend an entire evening following up this lead. Here are some likely suspects:

♣ A famous spriggan sculptor named Marblentes who stays at the manor. He sculpted the statue of the twin medusae on the main square of M'ethrane.

♣ Servisio, spriggan innkeeper of the 'Three Aspics', who is sympathetic to the slaves. The Inspired have maybe already met him.

♣ A spriggan was present during the visit to the museum, probably a foreign emissary. In fact, it was Egon Scampa who came to discreetly enjoy the drama he is orchestrating.

♣ Perverlio Mycosful, a sprite, who has been spotted several times in Korantra and at the manor.

Only Servisio does not live in the manor, and he can thus be shadowed or questioned the night after the assassination attempt. He usually stays at his inn to serve his customers, he does not know anything about the assassination attempt and denies having talked to the warriors.

THE CARAVANEERS

AGI: 7
PER: 5
STA: 8
STR: 7
AIM: 6
DB: +1
MEL: 7
MOV: 3
HP: 54
SWT: 18
CWT: 27

Combat

Initiative: 14, targe 10, saber 14
Melee attack: saber 14, targe 12
Distance attack: -
Melee attack: targe 15, dodge 10, saber 14
Distance defense: 5

Weapons	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ
Saber	+1	+1	+1	+5 (I/S)	0
Targe	-3	+1	+3	0 (C)	-1

Armor: studded leather (penalty -2, protection 5)





HUNTED!

The next morning, at dawn, a loud noise wakes the Inspired. The eunuchs, the manor's guards, have entered the encampment to bring all the witnesses of the attempted murder back to the manor. If the Inspired sneak away (AGI + Stealth against DIF 20), they will probably witness the procession of the guards through the crowd.

The members of the caravan are led to a large room in Iriena's wing of the manor, from which she co-rules the Domain. Her servants look at them spitefully while others spit out insults. The medusa is sitting on her throne; her snakes nervously hold a Dancer on her head. Melfinio stands right behind his mother.

Iriena accuses the caravan of attempting to kill her sister. Her sentence is final: the caravan must leave before mid-day with all its members. The Inspired can make the case that they are not responsible for every member of the caravan, that they are not even members of this caravan, or even that they actually saved Alfah. It is useless. Iriena is obstinate! If the Inspired ask to see Alfah, Iriena refuses on the pretext that her sister is resting.

Iriena's words drip with insincerity. The Inspired will probably notice that the medusa's servants seem surprised to see her caring about her sister. The motive is simple: she planned the murder and intended to accuse the Inspired of it, in order to kill two birds with one stone.

If the Inspired insist on seeing Alfah before leaving Scarletstone, a chamberlain will come to them as the caravan is departing. They will thus meet Alfah alone in the manor (see below).

THE THREE ASPICS

The only choice for the caravan is to leave. The Inspired are quite probably packing their equipment in their camp when Servisio, the innkeeper, approaches them. The spriggan explains that Melfinio has sent him to ask the Inspired to stay in Scarletstone during the jubilee in spite of Iriena's judgment. Servisio offers to hide them in the inn's cellar, which is actually the headquarters of the rebellion.

Melfinio will come to see them to discuss the plan. The caravan must leave now, but the Inspired could sneak away from it and return to Scarletstone at night-time. Albena sincerely regrets the fact that she cannot stay, but she must lead the caravan. Let your Inspired organize their return to Scarletstone, and then to the Three Aspics. The cellar is full of weapons beds, and food – everything is prepared for the rebellion. Shortly after

their arrival, Melfinio enters the cellar to discuss the jubilee. The Inspired now should have good reason to hold a grudge against Iriena, and should be willing to go along with the plan. Melfinio offers to discreetly let them in the manor. The building is huge and there are many hiding places; as long as the Inspired are disguised as visitors or servants, they should be able to make their inquiries. As for Melfinio, he will be with his mother to alleviate her suspicions.

INSIDE THE MANOR

One way or another, Melfinio smuggles them into the manor. For example, they can come through the kitchen entrance with the morning delivery of flour. Melfinio will open the door and let them pass by the guards. There are many servants in the manor, so once the Inspired are inside, they can be virtually anonymous as long as they are careful. (Of course, a Troupe composed of seasonlings such as black feys, minotaurs or giants will have more difficulty sneaking around.)

The manor is a huge building with many unused rooms – a labyrinth in which the Inspired will certainly feel lost. Eminence, you should make the players feel very uncomfortable by staging several suspicious incidents. Eerie harpsichord music is playing from some unidentifiable place... Someone is following the Troupe... A servant is staring as if he recognizes one of the Inspired... You should improvise encounters with eccentric characters: artists, strange servants or a lost ambassador.

The manor is divided into two symmetrical wings, with rooms on both sides that are identical except for the furnishings. Iriena's wing is gloomy and disquieting, with dark red carpets and large bronze statues. Alfah's wing feels more spacious, with smooth marble statues and fountains. The slaves are treated differently depending on the wing in which they are. In Iriena's wing, they are supervised by an overseer armed with a whip, while those in Alfah's wing come and go freely.

The Inspired may make inquiries during the two days before the jubilee. The following paragraphs detail the events that will enable them to solve the Drama. Depending on what they discover, they will have to plan their course of action: killing Iriena before or during the jubilee, stopping Melfinio, etc.

♣ Jubilee Preparations

A large part of Iriena's wing is devoted to the jubilee preparations. Many servants are working on the floats, the fireworks, the banners, the instruments and the decorations. If the Inspired inspect a particularly gloomy preparation room, they will find an old medusa apparently talking to herself: "But of course, little one, don't worry. You're for the black viper..." If the Inspired light the room, they will see numerous

metal cages holding slaves. The old medusa is one of Iriena's chamberlains and if the Inspired are persuasive, she informs them that her mistress is going to sacrifice one slave for each of her snakes at the jubilee. The chamberlain's task is to choose the best slaves and she would appreciate it if the Inspired did not let anyone know about this big surprise. It will be the main attraction!

Meeting Alfah

If the Inspired ask to see Alfah, she may agree to receive them (especially if they saved her in the museum). The meeting takes place during one of the rare moments when Iriena unconsciously lets Alfah take over. The Inspired will have to wait for her a long while in a small sitting room. Finally, the medusa receives them in her chambers. She is very kind to them and carefully listens to what they have to say. If they try to use her against her sister on the day of the jubilee, she will refuse because she is not attending the festivities, so as not to irritate her sister. If they want to intervene before the jubilee, Alfah could agree to let them meet Iriena. But she wants to be sure that they do not intend to harm her. If the Inspired tell her about her sister's macabre plans for the jubilee, she agrees to find her sister in order to reason with her.

After trying to make an appointment, which is refused by one of her sister's chamberlains, Alfah decides to go to see Iriena on her side of the manor. Obviously, Iriena is not there but the Inspired could search her room – even though Alfah is against it – and thus find the painting (see below).

The Mysterious Spriggan

Three suspects live in the manor:

Perverlio Mycosful: The Inspired can discreetly follow him to the manor's cellars from where he travels secretly to Eddrig's cave. If found, the old woman can be manipulated (CHA + Fast talk or CHA + Intrigue against DIF 18) to provide the Troupe with an extremely powerful drug to incapacitate Iriena...

Marblentes: The sculptor is busy carving a huge colossus that goes through three floors of the manor. Nothing else interests him.

Egon Scampa: If the Inspired question the servants concerning a mysterious spriggan, they find out that an emissary named Egon Scampa is staying in the manor even though he does not have a room. Some hint that he is Iriena's lover. He should become their suspect.

Entering Iriena's Room

The Inspired will first have to eliminate several eunuchs and pick a complex lock (DIF 24) in order to enter her room. They can also use Alfah's room, which is not guar-

EUNUCHS AND SLAVES

The eunuchs – guards of the manor

The eunuchs are loyal to both Iriena and Alfah. If your Inspired are not discreet in the manor, they will have to deal with them. They will also defend the medusa during the jubilee if she is attacked.

Their attributes are equivalent to those of soldiers (see p. 143) and they fight with sabarababs (halberds with long curved blades). They wear no armor but have high endurance (60 HP).

The slave rebels

There are fifty armed slaves, totally devoted to Mel-finio. Their attributes are equivalent to those of brigands (see p. 134). They have many different kinds of weapons.

ded but is also locked, if they find the secret passage (either they saw Alfah use it, or they must succeed on a PER + Search roll against DIF 25).

If you can time it right, they should witness one of Iriena's somnambulism fits. The medusa gets out of her bed, naked, and goes to her sister's room through the secret passage. She then falls asleep in Alfah's bed and her snakes also fall asleep one after the other. The Inspired have discovered the secret of the two Scarletstone rulers!

The Painting

One way or another, the Inspired will probably have the opportunity to search Iriena's room. It is full of works of art, but the Inspired will immediately notice a large fresco representing a mountainous landscape. The bottom of the fresco is the beginning of a small path running along the side of a cliff. There is mud on the floor in front of the fresco, and slippers and a small dressing gown rest on a nearby stool. The gown looks about the size of a spriggan...

THE JUBILEE

The day of the jubilee has arrived. The celebration will be magnificent for many artists have come from all over the Widowlands. Several wooden stages have been set up on the main square.

If the Inspired have not yet solved the secret of the



fresco and of the twins, Melfinio will attack – with or without their help – and will succeed! While his henchmen create a diversion, he stabs his mother with his dagger. He then enters the manor to publicly offer the throne to Alfah. Unfortunately, she seems to have disappeared. Soon he finds the fresco in the manor and asks the Inspired for their advice.

If the Troupe has mentioned the fresco and the spriggan's influence on Melfinio's mother, he will agree to delay his revolution until the Inspired can catch the spriggan. (He may even join them in this quest.) The jubilee will then take place as planned, slave sacrifices and all.

If the Inspired have discovered the true nature of the Scarletstone rulers and if they tell Melfinio, he will believe them. He will tell them that he has dreamt that Alfah was his mother. His first reaction is to want to kill both of them, but the Inspired can easily reason with him. The chaos of the jubilee is then a good opportunity to study the fresco.

THE PICTUREWORLD

The spriggan has obviously escaped through the Pictureworld. Only one person in Scarletstone can help them use the fresco: Ardence.

After a thorough study of the picture, Ardence uses a paintbrush to draw invisible lines on the fresco. The pigments come to life and a passage is opened. Ardence warns the Inspired that she cannot help them return. She advises them to destroy the fresco once they arrive on the other side.

Timorous Inspired might prefer destroying the fresco instead of chasing the spriggan. In such a case, they will never play Act Three, but the spriggan will find another way to return to Scarletstone and take revenge on those who destroyed his fresco.



EGON SCAMPA

Race: spriggan
Origin: Princely communes
Sex: male
Age: 80
Height: 4'3" (SIZ – 1)
Weight: 69 lbs.
MOV: 2

Attributes
Flame: 1/3

Body: 1/5
Body bonus: +4
AGI: 12
PER: 10
STA: 6
STR: 4

Spirit: 1/3
Spirit bonus: +2
INT: 8
WIL: 3

Soul: 1/4
Soul bonus: +3
CHA: 8
CRE: 9

Secondary attributes
AIM: 11
ART: 8
ASC: -
DB: -1
HP: 45
MEL: 9
SWT: 15
CWT: 22

Fortune points: 2
Flame powers: none
Darkening: 42
Perfidy: 52

Powers of the Masque:
Masquerade, Curtain sorcery

Skills
Trials: Weapon (rapier) 6, Weapon (paintbrush) 5, Weapon (crossbow) 5, Dodge 5
Rogue: 8 in every skill
Knowledge: Alphabet: Septentrian 8, Language: Keshite 8, Language: Kiemenite 8, Language: Ophidian 4, Season: spring 5
Courtly: Painting 10, Sculpture 8
Occult: Concord 4, Demonology 6, Shape 3, Vista 9

Assets & Faults, Gifts & Sorrows

Consummate acting, Doggedness, Experienced imp, Invoking Circle I & II, Cruelty, Meanness, Venomous blood, Hypocrisy, Grandiloquence, Trickster, Nightmares, Mischievous demon, Sleepwalking

Combat

Initiative: 26, rapier 28, crossbow 31
Melee attack: rapier 21
Distance attack: crossbow 20
Melee defense: rapier 20
Dodge: 20
Distance defense: dodge 10

Magical arts

Vista APT: 20
Shape APT: 14

Opuses:

All Fall Vista and Tainted Shape. In combat, Egon only uses Torment and Trompe-l'oeil wound. For this last opus, Egon must touch his opponent with his paintbrush to inflict a Serious wound (with no HP loss).

Weapons	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ	Range
Paintbrush	0	0	-5	special	-1	-
Rapier	+2	+2	+0	+3 (I)	0	-
Spriggan crossbow	+5	0	-	+4 (I)	-2	35 y.

Armor: none

Act Three:

Intruders at the University

THE CONFRONTATION

The Inspired are walking along a mountain path leading to a grotto that opens into a sumptuously furnished room. Going through, they find themselves back in the Twilight Realms.

The fresco from which they entered is a copy of the one they used in the Widowlands, but they are far from Iriena's room. Cold wind enters the room through an open window that looks down on a large city built at the foot of the tower containing the fresco. A beautiful palace is erected close to the tower, and the horizon is divided by crenellated ramparts. It is snowing outside, and it should be easy for the Troupe to deduce that they are far from the Keshite Empire and the Widowlands. The Inspired are actually in the Princely Communes, in the Atu Sika of Laeghdoved, the Hai Shul building devoted to the Arts.

More precisely, they are in a small but luxurious room, decorated with many works of art. Its usual occupant does not seem to be here. Searching the room allows the Inspired to discover notebooks devoted to specific paintings, and class schedules – they are in a teacher's room. One detail may interest the Troupe: a mirror, identical to the one they found in the shed in the Act One.

There are also many letters scattered about. If the Inspired read them (PER + Search against DIF 20), a series of incomprehensible poems from a certain "O" will catch their attention. In fact, these are coded messages from Olgreta Savansk (see p. 23), who is allied to Egon Scampa. On a successful INT + Intrigue roll against DIF 25, the Inspired will suspect the letters of being encrypted, but they will not be able to penetrate the code.

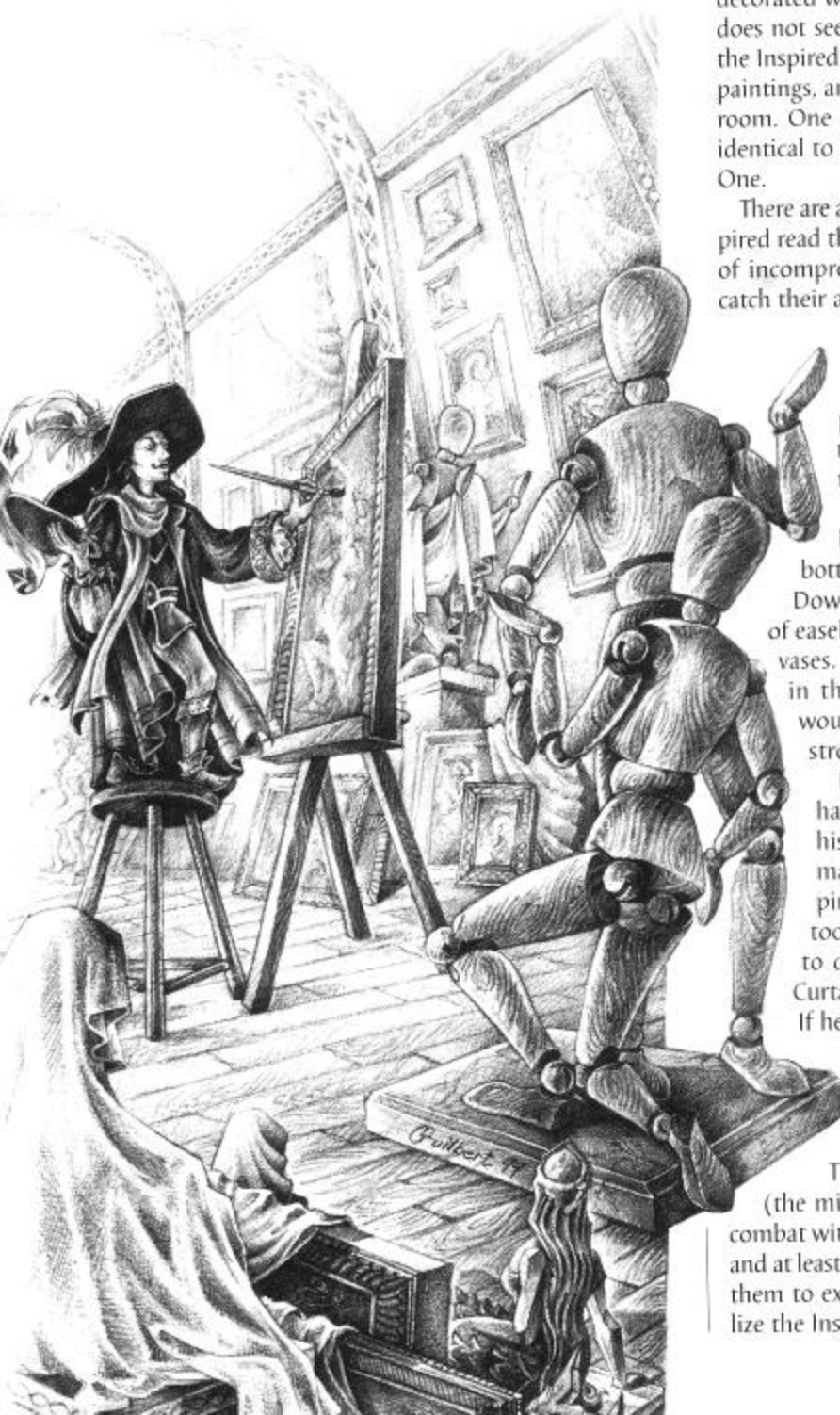
The only way out of the room is a door leading to a staircase that runs down to the bottom floor of the tower.

Downstairs there is a large artist's studio, full of easels, articulated wooden lay figures and canvases. The spriggan, Egon, is painting on a stool in the middle of the room. He paints as he would conduct an orchestra, with momentous strokes.

He looks up when the Inspired arrive. He has been waiting for them. As soon as he is off his stool, he raises his hand and his wooden mannequins come to life and attack the Inspired! Egon also joins the fight, but if he feels too threatened, during the combat, he will try to disappear in his cloak (a manifestation of Curtain Sorcery, see the AGONE rulebook, p. 252). If he gets away, make sure, Eminence, that one day he takes vengeance on the Inspired.

THE TRIAL

The Inspired are arrested by the Won Taidu (the militia), who were drawn by the noise of the combat with Egon Scampa. They batter down the door, and at least a dozen soldiers enter the room. After asking them to explain their presence in the tower, they realize the Inspired are intruders, and throw them in jail.



WOODEN MANNEQUINS

These man-sized wooden mannequins can move like human beings. They are used as models for the painter. Egon has awoken two of them, and they serve him loyally.

Height: 5'6" (SIZ 0)

Weight: 216 lbs.

AGI: 5

PER: 1

STA: 20

STR: 8

DB: +1

HP: 95

MEL: 6

MOV: 3

SWT: 31

CWT: 47

Perfidy: 5

Combat:

Initiative: 2

Melee attack: arm 15

Distance attack: -

Melee defense:

Dodge: 10

Distance defense: 5

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.
Wooden arm	-4	+1	0	+3 (C)

Armor: none

They will be judged by the Seng Ido, the council of the university deans. The Troupe is accused of clandestinely entering the Hai Shul and assaulting an Eldin (master). They will be questioned by each member of the council before defending themselves in an assembly composed of Sengs and Eldins. Thereafter, the council will gather to ponder its sentence.

Each of the seven members of the council will question them about their presence in the university, about the way they arrived there and how they know Egon Scampa. Depending on their answers, they can influence each Seng's decision. Below is each Seng's initial opinion as well as the arguments that can influence them. Indicating the difficulty of influencing the Sengs, there is a (DIF) next to each that can be opposed by Fast talk, Diplomacy, Eloquence or Intrigue rolls. Moreover, intelligent arguments presented by the players can apply modifiers to the rolls.

♣ Ho Chide, Min Seng (30)

The dean cannot bear the idea that the Inspired got into the Hai Shul. He is conservative and seems impossible to convince. He trusts Egon and cannot imagine that the spriggen could be a traitor.

♣ Drek Mordant, Won Seng (28)

This ogre warrior feels personally offended by the intrusion of the Inspired into the Hai Shul. However, if the Inspired mention the threat of the Enemy upon the Hai Shul, he will be willing to support them (-8). Moreover, Drek is an Inspired. If the Troupe understands this, and if they confide their Inspiration to him, he will join their side (-10).

♣ Bayud Oshram, Kati Seng (20)

This young Keshite will carefully listen to the Inspired. He knows Suleidin's Seraglio and if the Inspired mention it, he will be interested. Negotiating a trade deal with the seraglio could be extremely profitable, and the Inspired could provide a connection with the Keshite traders. If he considers this possible (-5), he will end the conversation thus: "I believe you and I will support your cause before the Seng Ido". If the Inspired are freed, he will come to see them again in order to discuss a preliminary deal.

♣ Patril Leo, Daeli Seng (22)

This dwarf will be more willing to listen if there are one or several seasonlings among the Troupe (-4), especially if they are Winter seasonlings (-6). Furthermore, if he is convinced that the Inspired have accomplished magic or mystical deeds (-4), he will see them as a potential help regarding another problem: Laeghon's crypt (see p. 19). Patril is a pacifist who will appreciate characters who do not favor violence (-5). Conversely, he loathes quarrelsome people (+5).

CONSEQUENCES

Supportive Sengs	The Inspired are...
0	Sentenced to death
1	Banished forever and stripped of their equipment.
2	Banished forever.
3	Banished for a year.
4	Authorized to stay.
5 and more	Welcomed, and they gain free tuition at the Hai Shul.

♣ Anoch Griess, Atu Seng (30)

This satyr, who is master of the artistic Way, will not support the Inspired for two reasons. First, he hates Concordists and the Inspired have arrived through a Pictureworld. Furthermore, Anoch was one of Egon's best friends. Egon never told Anoch he was a Concordist and he pretended to hate them also. He grieves for Egon and thus will not help the Inspired.

♣ Esvam Ideritch, Xios Seng (18)

This Eclipsist is particularly interested in the Pictureworld and the dangers it may represent. If the Troupe included a member of the Cipher-sorcerer (-4), Esvam will listen to him or her and could be convinced that Egon was a threat to the Hai Shul. If the Inspired seem powerful, he will vote for them in order to gain potential allies.

♣ Olgreta Savansk, Qyn Seng (20)

This Princean, who is in charge of the university of women, has an ambiguous role. She was one of Egon's allies and she wants to know if the Inspired are aware of their alliance. She will question them about the spriggan. If the Inspired have seen her poems, they can try to blackmail her. If the Troupe seems mighty and incorruptible (+10), she will try to get rid of them. If the Inspired are freed, she will pretend having voted for them. But if she thinks she can corrupt them, she will accept their blackmail (-5). She will come up with a deal: she asks them to incriminate the Atu Seng in front of the assembly by telling the council that the spriggan was only a servant for the true instigator: Anoch Griess. If the Inspired accept her deal, they risk Perfidy (WIL roll against DIF 25, for a 5 Perfidy point increase), but Olgreta will support them (-10).

THE VERDICT

Once they have met all the Sengs, the Inspired are brought before the assembly to defend themselves. Unless the Inspired use radically different arguments, the Sengs will not change their decisions at this point. The assem-

bly goes to deliberate, and returns shortly thereafter to read their sentence. The judgment depends on the number of Sengs the Inspired convinced (see the table below). If they are authorized to stay, they will become Sibas (foreigners). If they pay tuition they can become Zitos (students).

The Troupe will then be able to spend their Inspiration points in one of the most prominent universities of Harmundia.

Inspiration

In order to distribute IP to your Inspired, you should consider the three acts as three separate scenarios. For the number of IP to award per act, refer to the AGONE rulebook p. 180. In addition to the IP given to your Inspired based on their actions, here is a reward for their overall success:

ACT I

Unmasking Galdesh: 3 IP
Getting rid of Luizel: 4 IP

ACT II

Discovering the Iriena/Alfah duality: 5 IP
Finding the Pictureworld: 2 IP
Freeing Scarletstone; be it by destroying or using the fresco, or by killing Iriena/Alfah: 3 IP
Killing the medusa without having discovered her secret: 0 IP

ACT III

Killing Egon: 5 IP
Being freed by the council: 1 IP per supportive Seng
If your Inspired enroll in the Hai Shul at the end of the third act, they can spend their IP in Knowledge or Occult by training with one of the many prestigious teachers.

